

I N T E R N A L I N F O R M A T I O N B U L L E T I N

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ROBERTSON-MAGE-WHITE-HARPER-IRELAND

CASE

Part I

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Part I

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Attachment to P.C. Minutes No. 1, August 2, 1962.

Motion by Cannon-Dobbs-Hansen-Kerry and Warde:

On Robertson-Ireland-Harper Case

During the pre-convention discussion, the Wohlforth-Philips tendency made certain accusations of a most serious character, involving the party loyalty of the Robertson-Mage-White tendency. In a statement published in Discussion Bulletin Vol. 24, No. 27, they wrote:

"It became clear to us that a section of our tendency had simply written off the party as a whole without a serious struggle to reorient over a period of time the best working class cadres of the party. In addition they displayed no serious interest in the work of our party in the mass movement and instead sought to retreat into a comfortable 'study circle.' And finally their evolution seemed at that time to be propelling them rapidly in the direction of a split from the party." (page 4.)

As evidence that the Robertson-Mage-White tendency were moving toward a split, the Wohlforth-Philips tendency attached three documents as appendixes to this bulletin. In these, they cite the following to substantiate their charges:

(1) Hostile Attitude toward the Party.

Referring to a "Robertson-Ireland" document, the following is stated in Appendix II:

"These comrades, as they have no class analysis of the party, begin with a feeling of deep alienation from the party as a whole. This is expressed in a thousand little ways throughout the document. 'We have no intention of building centrism,' Robertson-Ireland state, and they caution us on having 'any mistaken concepts of loyalty to a diseased shell.' Along the same lines is their distinction between the discipline of the party and the discipline of the tendency. They claim to reject the former and adhere to the latter." (page 20.)

(2) Double recruiting.

On this violation of party discipline and elementary loyalty, it is asserted:

"Their activity, to the extent that it occurs at all, takes on a 'circle building' character. This is expressed in their concept of "'double' recruitment.' They urge our tendency to take young fresh elements, indoctrinate them with our views (in a careful

manner of course so as not to get 'caught') and then sneak them in-
to the party and into the tendency." (page 21.)

"While the comrades recognize that we cannot operate independ-
dently of the party they urge us to operate through the form of
the party as if we were in fact a separate organization. This is
the meaning of their urgings that we 'act as united blocs within
the party when approaching some outside activity as a strike, cam-
pus activity or the like.' Comrade Harper similarly urges us to
function where the majority isn't." (pages 21-22.)

"For us to consider opening up our tendency to non-party mem-
bers is simply to invite disciplinary action from the majority.
This is clearly an action in violation of the statutes in our
party." (page 22.)

(3) Split perspective.

Referring again to the "Robertson-Ireland" document, the
following is stated:

"The Robertson-Ireland orientation, taken as a whole, has an
internal logic to it that the authors may only be partially aware
of, or not aware at all. To state it openly and plainly theirs is
a split perspective. A tendency which rejects party discipline
(even if only partially) and party building, which seeks to sneak
people into the party, which functions in part as an independent
entity, which carries on an organizational faction war within the
party, which, in violation of party statutes includes non-party
members, which is so deeply alienated and isolated from the party
ranks that it has in fact already split in content if not yet in
form -- such a tendency is going down a road which must inevitably
lead to a split from the party." (pages 22-23.)

In connection with this, Albert Philips offered the following
in a letter attached as Appendix III:

"The history of the revolutionary movement is replete with
individuals and little groups of frustrated and rootless petty-
bourgeois, who under cover of revolutionary phraseology prepare
a desertion of the revolutionary movement.

"I hope I am wrong, but the Robertson-Ireland 'document,' tak-
en together with the Harper statement on the YSA to which he refers,
appears to be heading in just that direction, and at top speed."
(page 25.)

Making a comparison with the minority of 1939-40, Philips
states that the Petty-Bourgeois Opposition of that time "did not

start off with a split perspective anywhere near as clearly enunciated as that of Robertson ... " (page 26.)

In view of the grave charges contained in this material, Comrade Dobbs, acting in his capacity as National Secretary, wrote to James Robertson under date of July 5, formally requesting copies of the "Robertson-Ireland document" and the "Harper statement."

Robertson rejected this request, declaring in a letter dated July 9 that if "you still entertain any substantive doubt as to the self-serving falseness of Wohlforth's charges, the proper way to proceed is, of course, to cause a trial body or control commission inquiry to be convened."

From the floor of the July convention, Robertson made similar remarks concerning his rejection of any form of cooperation with the party leadership in ascertaining the facts unless a control commission were convened.

In face of Robertson's refusal to cooperate with the efforts of the National Secretary to clear up this question, Comrade Dobbs sent a formal request dated July 10 to Tim Wohlforth, requesting copies of the "Robertson-Ireland document" and the "Harper statement."

Apparently solidarizing himself with Robertson in this matter, Wohlforth rejected the request, alleging that the documents that had been cited and quoted from in Discussion Bulletin Vol. 24, No. 27, were "private political material."

In view of this obstructionist course being followed by both Robertson and Wohlforth in a matter of vital concern to the welfare and discipline of the party, the Political Committee now refers this question to the Control Commission, requesting that it conduct an investigation into possible violations of the statutes of the party, especially involving Robertson, Ireland and Harper.

Adopted by P.C., August 2, 1962.

* * *

October 24, 1963

To the Political Committee:

Report of Control Commission on Robertson Case

As requested by the Political Committee in its motion of August 2, 1963, we submit on behalf of the Control Commission the following findings in our investigation of the Robertson-Mage-White tendency:

I.

During our investigation we obtained the text of the Robertson-Ireland document, "I. The Centrism of the SWP (and) II. The Tasks of the Minority," which had previously been withheld from the party. A copy of the document is attached. (Appendix #1). We call your attention to the following statements contained therein:

"12. The majority rank and file ... contains many valuable elements who will more and more become disgusted ... One of our major tasks must be to recruit these comrades to our tendency. This in fact is our first line of recruitment ... But this process ... is but one of the ways in which we will increase our numbers; it is by no means the only one and we must seriously begin to consider the possibility that we will not gain a majority following within the party ...

"13. We seek to recruit to the tendency. All organization tasks must be undertaken with this concept in mind ... At present, largely because the SWP is the ostensible revolutionary party in the eyes of the radical public and the party membership, we work through the SWP. But we can have no intention of building centrism. We work within the party because it provides us with the best possible opportunity for building our tendency and not through any mistaken concepts of loyalty to a diseased shell.

"14. ... our discipline must be with the minority until that time when program and form are again united ... but ... it is likely that this will take some time. In the interim, we must not allow ourselves to drift back and forth confusing, now, discipline with the form of the SWP and, then, with the minority.

"15. Ours will be a problem of 'double' recruitment. As we seek to build the tendency, therefore, and as we have the perspective of working within the SWP in the coming period, recruitment of new cadres from outside the party will involve considerable effort. There can be no question of meekly handing this raw material over to the party for conversion into careerists or a probable speedy disillusionment ... this source of cadres for our tendency is second

only to recruitment within the party and is therefore of the utmost importance.

"16. As our tendency builds its ranks, the SWP will become more and more reluctant to accept members ... who are evidently supporters of the minority ... We cannot drop these comrades! On the contrary, we must keep them in as close a contact as possible with the functioning and activities of the Socialist movement. Under no conditions must this vigorous new material be allowed to wither up and drift away because of insufficient political and organizational contact with revolutionary Marxism. ..

"19. ... there is no reason why we cannot act as united blocs within the party when approaching some outside activity as a strike, campus activity or the like. This will always be a highly difficult proposition because of our position with the SWP, but we must attempt to utilize every opportunity possible for recruitment ...

"21. The situation facing our forces is qualitatively the same in the youth as in the party. But in the youth a more open and revealing process takes place, paralleling the course of the SWP ... at no time must we fall into the trap of lending other than critical or conditional support ... to the various proposals and activities ...

"24. ... a latent or explicit desire for minority comrades to shirk from mass contact and (centrist) party building concomitant with a preference to discuss revolutionary work as abstractly as possible ... One of the most noteworthy complaints of these comrades is not that they do not wish to do party work, but that they do not care to be reduced to cogs in an autocratically managed centrist party, that is, a party which limits the areas of political usefulness. Our comrades want to be active, but they want to be active as revolutionary Socialists. Therefore, one of our major tasks at this moment is to become a study circle!... The carrying out of these tasks necessarily presupposes study on all problems facing the proletariat as a class engaged in struggle as well as on all problems before its vanguard." (Emphasis in original.)

II.

The Robertson-Ireland document also states: "22. The document submitted by Comrade Harper (Orientation of the Party Minority in Youth Work [draft]) on 8 August 1962 to the New York Tendency contains our basic position in regard to youth work. This document should be supported, developed and implemented at every opportunity." The text of the Harper draft is attached. (Appendix #2.) It contains the following statement which we call to your attention:

"6. ... we should pick and choose, channeling our energies into that work which will be most fruitful for our purposes. Examples of this sort of fruitful activity would be work on campuses and in organizations where we are relatively free from the hindrance of large majority fractions and actions where we can independently bring in contacts, work with them, and offer them our views of whatever struggle we are engaged in."

III.

In these statements by the Robertson-Mage-White minority their hostile and disloyal attitude toward the party is clearly manifested.

(signed)

Anne Chester (CC member)

John Tabor (CC representative)

END

I. THE CENTRISM OF THE SWP

1. The Decisive Importance of the Nature of the Party

The American Minority has been nurtured in the SWP and is a tendency within the party. The SWP (and youth) continue to loom large as a shaping influence upon the minority. How the SWP is analysed and summed up determines a) the tasks of the minority which are carried out within and through the SWP, b) the nature, scope, and very existence of the minority groupings, flowing from our conclusions about the state and direction of development of the party. Thus the question of the nature of the SWP is of decisive and central importance to our perspective and tasks.

It would be an error to view the "nature of the party" as some kind of a priori or external label to be applied to the SWP. To know the nature of the SWP is to know how the party is moving and will move in response to events, opportunities and challenges in the class struggle and in relation to the aim of the Socialist Revolution.

It is possible to perceive the broad outlines of the party's political shape even under conditions of relative quiescence. It must be our continual responsibility to do this, checking our expectations against results, so as to properly orient our tasks. To do otherwise would render our entire role directionless and random, at the mercy of chance impressions and momentary situations.

2. Some Relevant Party History (A Sketch of Highlights Since 1940.)

a. The American Trotskyists took a stunning double blow in 1940. Over half of the movement broke away and a few months later Leon Trotsky was murdered. Among those breaking away from the movement (40% of the party and 80% of the youth) were most of the party's writers, theorists, as well as a whole political generation who had made up the youth leadership. The party lost nothing in the way of intransigence and solidity through these blows as was shown by its resolute role in the Smith Act trial and the upsurge in the working class trade-union struggles during 1943-47 out of which issued Cannon's affirmation, "The Coming American Revolution." However, a theoretical sterility and blunting of political alertness took place and was never made good. All these circumstances underline the recent statement of the British SLL that the SWP had made no political contribution to the world movement since 1940 (in "Trotskyism Betrayed" by SLL-NC, July 21, 1962).

b. The response of the SWP to the Tito-Stalin split marked the opening of a period in the party's existence which was concluded with

the end of the regroupment period. (The response to the Cuban revolution is on a new and different plane.) It was a period in which, when opportunities opened up somewhere, the party typically would initially respond in a revolutionary manner. Failing to get sufficient results, it would begin to water down its approach, enthruse over dubious elements and press hard against the limits of formal revolutionary doctrine. Then a halt would be called, cooling off took place, and its "historic opportunity" or "hero" of only yesterday, though perhaps unchanged, became completely passe.

The eulogistic and shameful scrabble after "comrade" Tito in 1949-50 was a reaction to disappointments in the reversal of the trade-union struggle, a sharp decline in the party's size and influence, all in the context of the growing witch-hunt, which started Cochran-Clarke's restlessness to break out of the revolutionary movement.

Similar reactions set in internationally in the Fourth International; but it was not until the Cochran group in the United States was ready to break overtly with Revolutionary Marxism that the then US majority recoiled and led a world split which arrested the rightward drift in the party for a time. Yet, the split was weak and defensive for the following reasons:

1. It placed organizational over political issues. The split of the FI was simply announced in the pages of the Militant as a reaction to the world center's support of the Cochran-Clarke group. It was not fought out to a culmination and rupture, thus catching the SWP's co-thinkers by surprise and unprepared and left the neutrals perplexed and inside the FI.
2. It placed national over international considerations, as was in addition shown by the SWP's endorsement of the expulsion of the French majority by the Pablo center in 1952. (See SWP International Bulletin of November 1952, "Documents on the Crisis of the PCI (French Section of the FI)".) This took place only a year prior to the SWP's own break with Pablo.

Immediately in 1954, at Weiss' instigation, the party was made to undergo the strange experience of the anti-McCarthy campaign in which McCarthy was dished up as a full-blown fascist who had to be fought in the streets by the trade-unions. This qualitative overstatement of McCarthy's role was accompanied by an agitational campaign in the very depth of a period of terrible isolation, reaction, and passivity, while the Militant, week after week, shredded and reduced to a parody the Trotskyist understanding of fascism.

Then in 1956-58 came the series of regroupment activities growing out of the Stalinist crisis which began with the adoption of the excellent SWP "Statement on Socialist Regroupment" and which correctly facilitated the SWP's involvement in open forum discussions. It also facilitated and encouraged the winning-over of a left-wing from the liquidating Shachtmanite YSL. Soon however the impatient attempt at a pay-off at any price led to flattery in the Militant of the Gatesites who were heading for the Democratic Party and to an adaptation to the National Guardian, as in the building of Guardian supporter clubs. Then came the treatment of the ISP with an approach of rubbery principles. Only the intransigence of anti-Trotskyist elements saved the SWP from being a partner to a common electoral New York state slate which would have placed the SWP in the compromising position of being in an electoral block for propaganda. The feverish assertion in the PC draft resolution of March 1959 that regroupment was bigger and better than ever, came just when the regroupment period had palpably come to an end. But then J.P. Cannon called a halt and that was that. The party was contained rather formally within nominally principled limits.

3. The Present Political Positions of the SWP (i.e. the "autocatalytic" or "chain-reaction" breakaway of the SWP from the programmatic fundamentals of Revolutionary Marxism.)

Revolutionary parties are not immune to errors (eg. the Bolshevik's "revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry"). However, the further and clearer the departure from the politics of a consistently class-struggle character, the stronger the restorative (correcting) force within the party.

But, after an incubation period of some years (see point 2) the party, unclearly over the youth, openly on the Cuban Revolution (i.e. the permanent revolution), and grossly over Pabloism and the Fourth International (i.e. internationalism) has not merely broken with Leninism, but has overtly replaced it with something else. What had been in recent years a tendency to give an opportunist twist in practice to attempts of the party to seize on opportunities, until a halt was called by restorative forces within the party (characteristically J.P. Cannon), has changed to an overt breakaway from Marxism with the party's response to the Cuban revolution, so that the accumulated opportunist forces and appetites within the party were not only unleashed but outright encouraged by Cannon's initiative in attacking the SLL. With the response to the Cuban revolution, the variance between words and deeds has become qualitative. The dominant motives and practice today are a clash of attempts to recruit dubious human material at the expense of revolutionary principles, opposed by the fear that any recruitment efforts might alienate the "friendly" leadership groupings of whatever organization the majority can locate (i.e. July 26, Local 1199, SNCC, etc.).

4. The Degenerative Process - The SWP as a Centrist Party.

Centrism is a catch-all word to describe any of those organizations which in Lenin's words are "revolutionary in words, opportunist in deeds."

The SWP in particular has fallen victim to degenerative processes similar to those which overtook the pre-World War I German Social Democracy and Lenin's Bolsheviks, so that the party stands today:

a. in opposition to the most essential aims of the Trotskyist movement for a major part of the globe in the declared dispensibility of a revolutionary proletarian party to lead the colonial masses to victory (victory as opposed to the stalemate of the deformed workers' states or the still more illusory "victories" that do not transcend the entanglements of capitalist imperialism);

b. internationally no longer for a world party, a Fourth International as the self-organized, international vanguard of the working class; instead the SWP seeks a limited unity of mutual amnesty with other centrists in order to form both an "international publicity agency for assorted 'leftward-moving' bureaucracies" and to retain an organizational fig leaf to cover their break with the essential substance of proletarian internationalism - the struggle to build a world party of the workers.

Given these profound differences with Revolutionary Marxism, it is to belabor the obvious to insist merely upon the centrist character of the SWP. On the contrary, it is critically important, in accepting the characterization of the SWP, not to be swept away and into a split perspective as though centrism equalled some kind of political leprosy. To quote a "Letter to Ed" of 18 October 1961 which deals with this question:

"In the past few years the party has begun to react to opportunities by turning each one into a cycle of opportunism until the given opening is exhausted. Each time a selection takes place, some -- notably the Weiss group -- get worse and move toward liquidationism, but others react and are impelled in a leftward direction. This process has just begun, if one stops to view the SWP historically. There are two roads open. Either each wave of oppositionals will let themselves get washed out of the party, making it even harder for succeeding left-wingers, or each opportunist venture into fresh fields will augment the revolutionary Marxists with additional forces."

5. The SWP as a Rightward-Moving Centrist Party.

Centrism is a phase which covers a multitude of sins. As Trotsky put it: ^{all} "Speaking formally and descriptively, centrism is composed of/those trends within the proletariat and on its periphery which are distributed between reformism and Marxism and which most often represent various stages of evolution from reformism to Marxism and vice versa."

The SWP falls short of being a left-centrist party, that is, one of those organizations or groupings (often moving left from the social democrats or out of the CP) which genuinely desires and seeks to work for the socialist revolution but suffers some internal limitation in the form of ideological or organizational baggage which it is unable to transcend in practice. (Eg. the Workers Party - USA, 1941-46; the Austrian Revolutionary Socialists, 1934-38; the left-wing of the POUM at various times.)

The SWP's practical excursions into activity bear not merely the stamp of being mistaken or inhibited in some way from a revolutionary standpoint, but in addition have become opportunist in intent. The theoretical or political "explanations" are just that, not guides to revolutionary action, rather "covers" - rationalizations to maintain a revolutionary rhetoric. Comrade Mage's recent "Critical Notes on the Political Committee Draft 'Problems of the Fourth International and the Next Steps'" is nothing but a political expose of a whole series of such rationalizations.

The disease of the SWP is degenerative in character and some insight and guidance can be gained for us by comparison with the CPUSA which was undergoing a degenerative process in the period 1924-34. However, it is important to keep in mind the quite different circumstances and mechanism in the case of the SWP.

The SWP in its leadership has become a very old party. From 1928 to the present - 34 years - it has been led by the same continuous and little changing body of personnel. Thus it is the most long-lived, ostensibly revolutionary, organization in history. Its current National Committee must have one of the highest average ages of any communist movement ever.

While the leadership is old, many of the leading rank and file party stalwarts at the local branch level are middle-aged and comfortably well off - skilled workers with many years seniority and homeowners to boot. Most extreme, but by no means unique in this respect, is one of the two largest party branches, Los Angeles.

6. General and Long-Term Conclusions re the SWP.

The divisions within the SWP are irreconcilable since they reflect differences which are and will ultimately be reducible to the difference of reform vs. revolution. It is a strong temptation in politics to succumb to impatience and seek to artificially accelerate what is deemed inevitable in the long run into an immediately posed issue. The break of the SWP with Marxism has taken place over "foreign" issues about which many subjectively revolutionary members are insensitive and unaroused.

The process of clarification within the SWP will not be complete until the party has to face up to major class struggles within the United States. From now until such a time the role of the revolutionary Marxists within the party must be that of an aggressive, political polarizing force.

The fundamental task of the minority must be to win unambiguously the mantle of Trotskyism, of recognition as the revolutionary Marxist party, within this country.

Jim Robertson

September 6, 1962

II. The Tasks of the Minority

The basic character, course and crisis of this undertaking are determined by the irreconcilable differences generated by the rightward-moving and degenerative process of the SWP and the resolute opposition to this process which must be undertaken by the minority. The heritage and unbroken tradition of Marxism in the United States must not be allowed to falter and be dragged through the slime of centrist politics which can have no other effect than of selling short the American revolution.

That the leadership of the SWP is well on this road can be seen not only in the positions taken by the party on such international questions as Cuba, Algeria and the Colonial revolutions in general, but in a more fundamental sense in the common denominator running throughout these and all other positions and actions taken by the party which run counter to or tend to sabotage the formation of revolutionary Marxist parties. The slighting of revolutionary parties is well illustrated in an absurd and criminal half-quote selected by the National Committee from Trotsky's Stalinism and Bolshevism: "...The party is not the only factor of development and on a larger historical scale is not the decisive one." Thus does the SWP signal its retreat from Marxism and here the battle for Marxism begins in the American Section of the Fourth International.

3. The battle for the preservation of Marxism in this country is not, however, one which has begun only in the past few months. On the contrary, the discussions on the reunification with Pable and the panegyrics of the party over the course of the Algerian revolution can be traced quite easily to those positions decided on in the course of the Cuban revolution. The failures to undertake a principled and critical defense of the Cuban revolution have, in turn, their roots far back in the history of the SWP.

Principally, however, the organizational and tactical battle has been going on since the organization of the minority evolved over the course of the discussion on Cuba. We have been struggled against not only politically, but organizationally as well since we began to raise a concerted voice concerning the new course followed by the SWP. The shape and nature of this battle have only recently come to be recognized as such a vicious and severe one simply because the minority has only recently realized the seriousness of this struggle and attempted a more vigorous resistance. In other words the party has been attacking us all along and primarily in the area which they have come to understand best -- the organizational area of bureaucratic manipulation.

9. It is time that we appraise not only the sources and nature of this fight within the party but further that we correctly evaluate the likely path of struggle in order to best prepare and implement the most determined, resolute and conscious opposition. Basically the speed with which this conflict is finally resolved will depend upon how swiftly events move on the national and inter-national arenas. It will also depend in large measure on the degree to which we are successful in swelling our membership, that is, comrades who adhere to our fundamental program. From most indications on the American scene, this is likely to take some time: a period of several years.

However, there are at least two areas of important and immediate unrest and conflict. By all criteria, the largest and most important of these is the civil-rights struggle in the United States and particularly in the American South. This clash contains the genuine seeds of pre-revolutionary conflict in this country. The other area lies in the direction of the peace movement which in many cases marks the attempts of youth to break away from the cul-de-sac of bohemianism and locate a base from which they can express their militant dissatisfaction with the cold and hot war policies of the Washington government.

There are many other potential areas of conflict as well, not the least of which is the trade union movement. It is, for example, highly interesting to note that many trade unions in this country have contributed funds to the SNCC which is at the moment the left-wing grouping of the civil rights movement in this country.

10. It will, therefore, be a period of years in which we are involved in this struggle for Marxism. We must not slight the serious, bitter and protracted nature of this struggle since each delay, every detour and all indecisive actions on our part can only contribute to the further strangulation of revolutionary opportunities in the United States. It is absolutely necessary that we utilize what Trotsky called "the superiority of foresight over 'astonishment'" and reject all forms of crass empiricism which have become so popular with the majority.

For instance, some majority comrades are currently assaying as the real item the "crisis view of history" which amounts to the proposition that the economy is headed for another severe slump which will (automatically) assure a mighty gain in membership and influence for the party. According to this view Fascist and other Bonapartist possibilities are severely discredited. The revolutionary party is reduced to a colossal container to catch the cast-offs of this process. Minority comrades are well able to discern the falsity of this approach. But we must beware all temptations to sit back and wait for a split in the majority ranks or a major social upheaval as a substitute for decisive actions now. That we will gain from these clashes is incontestable only if in the interim we have become a viable revolutionary grouping! As Leninists we seek no quack formulas for quick revolutionary victories.

11. Knowledge of the immediate and forthcoming struggle with revisionism can only serve to help prevent shock, disillusionment and "astonishment" over the high-handed techniques with which the majority bureaucracy are currently attempting to quash the minority. Throughout, of course, the party leadership will genuflect in the direction of "democratic" centralism. But none will be surprised at times when centralism elbows democracy aside.

Thus the party welcomes all minority comrades who wish to blindly do party work. But as the recent episode of Comrades Shirley and Steve strikingly portrays, we can expect the most vicious resistance when seeking to be placed in positions of genuine importance. The disgusting and unprincipled tactics utilized by the Carl Feingolds and LeRoy McRaes only serve to underscore the profound mistrust of the SWP towards all fresh, youthful, revolutionary currents. The majority with "good" reason does not trust us and will attempt to veto any attempts of ours to integrate ourselves into the party. Fighting by their rules, we will never raise ourselves above an errand boy (or girl!) position. Even those few comrades left of the tendency who hold responsible positions within the party are on their way out with the possible exception of one or two who will be permitted to remain if only to keep the majority au courant with the latest positions of the minority.

12. The majority rank and file, however, contains many valuable elements who will more and more become disgusted at this unprincipled behavior and find it increasingly difficult to reconcile this activity with their conceptions of democratic centralism. One of our major tasks must be to recruit these comrades to our tendency. This in fact is our first line of recruitment and is of vital importance. Those majority comrades who currently refuse to join us may well comprise groups who will join us at later times as the SWP continues its reckless course. It is important that we remain sensitive to the stirrings of the majority and give them as many openings as possible to reach us and exchange ideas, opinions, etc. On the other side, we must incessantly attempt to contact them and push their doubts about the party into the open. But this process, although one of the most important, is but one of the ways in which we will increase our numbers; it is by no means the only one and we must seriously begin to consider the possibility that we will not gain a majority following within the party.

13. We seek to recruit to the tendency. All organizational tasks must be undertaken with this concept in mind. Leninists seek everywhere to carry out the revolutionary program of the Fourth International and today that revolutionary program is embodied in the principles and program of the American minority. At present, largely because the SWP is the ostensible revolutionary party in the eyes of the radical public and the party membership, we work through the SWP. But we can have no intention of building centrism. We work within the party because it provides us with the best possible opportunity for building our tendency and not through any mistaken concepts of loyalty to a diseased shell.

14. Our discipline is with the ranks of the tendency as well. Discipline binds us to a program of action and functions through the form of a party. But in this period, when the program has become separated from the majority of the party, our discipline must be with the minority until that time when program and form are again united. It is imperative that this uniting take place as quickly as possible, but for the various reasons given above, it is likely that this will take some time. In the interim, we must not allow ourselves to drift back and forth, confusing, now, discipline with the form of the SWP and, then, with the minority.

15. Ours will be a problem of a "double" recruitment. As we seek to build the tendency, therefore, and as we have the perspective of working within the SWP in the coming period, recruitment of new cadres from outside the party will involve considerable effort. There can be no question of meekly handing this raw material over to the party for conversion into careerists or a probable speedy disillusionment. At the very least, we must exercise as complete communication and access as possible with these elements when they are first introduced to the party. But this source of cadres for

our tendency is second only to recruitment within the party and is therefore of the utmost importance.

16. As our tendency builds its ranks, the SWP will become more and more reluctant to accept members in its various branches who are evidently supporters of the minority. On one pretext or another the SWP leadership will refuse to take these comrades in, or suggest that they do not have "enough experience", etc. Thus M... was refused admittance to the party on the grounds that he was living /outside/ the United States. Requests to make him a member-at-large were considered out of the question by Carl Feingold.

We can not drop these comrades! On the contrary, we must keep them in as close a contact as possible with the functioning and activities of the Socialist movement. Under no conditions must this vigorous new material be allowed to wither up and drift away because of insufficient political and organizational contact with revolutionary Marxism.

17. Gathering all of our forces together, and acting in a cohesive fashion, we must press the struggle within the party on an organizational level as well as on a political one. But our primary battle is a political one and we must not allow ourselves to succumb to the majority disease of organizational manipulation in lieu of political struggle. We have, nevertheless, much to learn on the organizational plane, but we must learn these techniques while battling against them. In many meetings, it is possible to utilize tactics which will at the very least give us an opportunity of being "heard," that is, of carrying our arguments to the other comrades.

18. To repeat, our major battle is a political one and we must seek whenever possible to counterpose revolutionary arguments and programs to those of the SWP. The effect of this tactic will be a two-fold one. That is, it will help to bring over additional majority comrades to our ranks and at the same time it will help to crystallize the political thinking of the minority comrades who carry out these appeals. No item in the Militant or the ISR should be too small for us to fasten upon and expose its true nature. We must seek to open political discussions at all times if only during the coffee break at branch meetings. There are no shortages of areas on the American scene in which we can ask for discussion; the civil rights movement, etc.

19. In general we must pick and choose our battles in order to avoid defeats and losses which might weaken the fighting spirit of the minority. But there is no reason why we can not act as united blocs within the party when approaching some outside activity as a strike, campus activity or the like. This will always be a highly difficult proposition because of our position within the SWP, but we must attempt to utilize every opportunity possible for recruitment.

Planned and united actions within the party will exact a much greater reward than haphazard and self-contradictory actions. This places a tremendous burden upon the various minority comrades who are expected to carry out these actions, but they are therefore not the less needed.

20. The situations in the various branches are differentiated in degree from that in New York. Thus, there is an opportunity present in certain cities such as Berkeley-Oakland or New Haven of our winning organizational control. All comrades in these critical areas should be encouraged and aided as completely as possible. Visitations by groups or individuals, many letters, and material aid should be made available in order to make the most of any opportunities which may present themselves. Organizational control in a branch would render the task of recruitment much easier. Control would also make it much more possible to reach other majority comrades through the National Convention, etc. Therefore, in addition to the suggestions above, comrades should be encouraged to move to places where they can be most politically effective.

21. The situation facing our forces is qualitatively the same in the youth as in the party. But in the youth a more open and revealing process takes place, paralleling the course of the SWP. The process is the more open because those currently carrying out the majority line there are usually not as skilled as the SWP's Carl Feingold in manipulating organizationally. But that they are less skilled does not mean that they are less dangerous. Still, by virtue of their fluster and bluster they can often be temporarily beaten or side-tracked. Comrades operating in the youth can speedily detect those times when it can be most advantageous to attack with vigor and those when it will be best to maintain a silence. But at no time must we fall into the trap of lending other than critical or conditional support, depending upon the circumstances, to the various proposals and activities. At other times, we must resolutely offer, in the words of Comrade Harper, "a revolutionary alternative on the issues under discussion."

22. The document submitted by Comrade Harper (Orientation of the Party Minority in Youth Work (draft) on 8 August 1962 to the New York Tendency contains our basic position in regard to youth work. This document should be supported, developed and implemented at every opportunity.

23. The essential prerequisite for developing and implementing the minority program and tasks is a high caliber of political and theoretical training. Without this preparation and continued development of cadres, we can have no other option than to function on the basis of personalities and "facts" rather than on the basis of Marxist theory and dialectical processes. It makes absolutely no sense to demand that comrades be more "active", particularly in such

a danger-laden situation, as the one we are presently in, without also at the same time demanding a tendency program designed to continue the development of political awareness which forms the sine qua non of our existence as socialists.

24. One of the charges which has been made amongst the minority is that our tendency stands in danger of becoming a "study circle." Presumably, the reference attempts to characterize a latent or explicit desire for minority comrades to shirk from mass contact and (centrist) party building concomitant with a preference to discuss revolutionary work as abstractly as possible. But not a single member of the minority fills this bill of goods! Each has at the very least taken the significant step of joining what he or she took to be the revolutionary party in this country. In addition, the minority is primarily composed of comrades who have worked tirelessly in the party on a political and organizational level and who have made many of the most outstanding contacts with mass groupings. One of the most noteworthy complaints of these comrades is not that they do not wish to do party work, but that they do not care to be reduced to cogs in an autocratically managed centrist party, that is, a party which limits the areas of political usefulness. Our comrades want to be active, but they want to be active as revolutionary Socialists.

Therefore, one of our major tasks at this moment is to become a study circle! The ability to reason and develop our program, both individually and collectively, is absolutely necessary if we hope to win new elements while carrying on a sustained struggle. We are the vanguard precisely to the extent that we become capable of carrying out the tasks of a vanguard. The carrying out of these tasks necessarily presupposes study on all problems facing the proletariat as a class engaged in struggle as well as on all problems before its vanguard.

25. It is necessary to develop both formal and informal political discussion among ourselves. To this end we seek to have forums, educationals and the like in the SWP and youth given by members of the minority. In addition, we must supplement this pattern of education by a full range of programs within our local tendency units. More, we must see to it that minority comrades are provided with the fullest and widest possible knowledge of national and international developments. There can be no meaningful development and application of Marxism without the greatest practicable exchange of information concerning the various moods, trends and events in the world Trotskyist movement. It must be an unquestioned obligation for all comrades to see that others are furnished copies of relevant correspondence whenever possible. At the very least full and continued access to these documents must be the right of all minority comrades. Any inclination to build personal prestige or status by the arrogation and withholding of reports must be checked.

26. Fundamental to the tasks of our tendency which can only be successfully carried out by means of raising the caliber of the minority as Marxists is the resolute shattering of the petty-bourgeois and reactionary division between Marxist "thinkers" and Marxist "doers". Any notions along this line in our ranks can only, if encouraged, bring a most pernicious outcome to our struggle. All comrades should be included in the happenings and encouraged in every imaginable way to take part. This is particularly important at a time when we are so few in numbers. And since we are so few there can be no excuse for failing to carry out this proposal. Failure to include comrades in discussions, consult with them, and heed their proposals indicates an attitude of contempt for the very idea of a Leninist party.

27. Yet even our short-term perspective is not that of becoming a "permanent discussion group" or a Marxist coterie. But we must realize that lacking a clearly thought out -- and discussed! -- set of tactics, strategies and programs we will only function to see ourselves drowned by the Charybdis of sectarianism or rent by the Scylla of opportunism and petty-bourgeois accommodationism. "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary action" is an absolutely correct maxim. Nowhere today is the need for the correct application of this maxim more necessary than in the struggle ahead.

28. Let us take the motto of Karl Liebknecht for ours in the coming period: "Studieren, propagandieren, organisieren" -- Study, propagandize, organize. The success of our struggle to seize the mantle of Trotskyism depends upon it.

Larry Ireland
6 September 1962

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ORIENTATION OF THE PARTY MINORITY IN YOUTH WORK

(Draft)

1) More than half of the revolutionary Marxist tendency remains involved in the youth organization where we function on both a national and a local basis. Our work in this area has not been as effective as it could have been due to our failure to define our orientation, objectives, and perspectives in regards to this work. These must be formulated within the framework of our primary perspective as a minority tendency within the SWP. The kind of struggle we can carry on in the youth is circumscribed by this, and is differentiated from party work by several factors: we comprise a significantly larger percentage in the youth organization than in the party; we are in more frequent contact with and have greater opportunity to work with new and politically unaligned people; the party, contrary to Leninist principle, prohibits free discussion from taking place with non-party youth.

2) Our major goal in the youth is to build the revolutionary Marxist tendency by recruiting party-youth members of the youth to that tendency, by young members of the tendency gaining political and organizational experience, and by making those locals in which we may have a majority into exemplary organizations of revolutionary youth functioning. We cannot seek to gain political and organizational control of the youth movement independent of similar developments within the party, for the party as it is now has arrayed the whole weight of its authority against this; nor can we, therefore, prevent the majority youth leadership from carrying out its program, no matter how rotten or detrimental it is to the real interests of a revolutionary youth movement. The party not only limits us in the discussion of our politics within the youth, but prohibits us from revealing this limitation. We are not even able to discuss openly the relation of the party to the youth organization. In our work in the youth we must act as disciplined SWP members at all times, even when SWP discipline is counterposed to Leninist principle. Our work and the nature and extent of our struggle within the youth is thus at all times necessarily conditioned and limited by the primary consideration of our work in the SWP.

3) These considerations, however, do not limit our role in the youth to merely that of a 'loyal opposition', and we help neither the youth nor ourselves by playing this role. The present youth leadership not only apes and even exaggerates the centrist politics of the party, but is consciously cooperating in the destruction of the organizational independence of the youth out of motives of personal opportunism. Our approach to a youth movement can have nothing in common with the approach of such a leadership. Our orientation should not be to give critical support to objectionable majority proposals or to formulate the majority's proposals in a more reasonable way. Rather our orientation should be to expose the rottenness and inability of the present youth leadership to the greatest extent we can without jeopardizing ourselves, and to offer for consideration of youth members, either through local debate or by statements and counter motions in NEC minutes, a revolutionary alternative on issues under discussion.

4) Our work in the youth has thus far been hampered by an incorrect orientation within the youth minority, which it is hoped will be corrected through this discussion. This approach is that in order to influence other youth we must above all appear to be 'responsible'. This concept of 'responsible' is elucidated by the following statement from Tim's document Proposed Statement on Orientation, in which he says, 'We must...train our own comrades today to learn to function in a responsible way so that they will be fit to play an important role in the future majority leadership of the revolutionary party in the U.S. (referring here to the SWP). Therefore, for the education of our own cadre, we must insist strongly on loyal, disciplined functioning in the party.' No matter what our analysis of the SWP and of our perspectives therein, this approach transferred to the youth, i.e., being loyal, disciplined members of the youth in order to prepare ourselves for the control of that organization, is incorrect, for we have already seen that this perspective for our youth work is out of the question. We do not seek to be 'responsible' members of the youth in the sense given above, but rather to be responsible, loyal, and disciplined members of the Marxist tendency working in the youth for the purpose of building that tendency. Of course, our ultimate orientation to youth work will be defined during the course of the tendency's forthcoming discussion on our perspectives within the SWP.

5) The effectiveness of our work thus far has also been limited by a certain organizational sloppiness. Minority youth comrades should regularly meet to discuss issues coming before the local, particularly in those locals where we have a significant force. NEC comrades should see to it that the majority carries out its responsibilities towards minority members. NEC comrades should meet prior to NEC meetings to discuss issues coming before that body, not to enforce any sort of discipline over these comrades but to make sure that the implication of various possible approaches to these issues are understood. To the extent that common agreement is arrived at, they should then plan the most effective sort of action to take in that body or formulate proper alternatives to the proposals of the majority. We should seek to get our views into the minutes whenever possible, through statements, counter-motions, etc., in order to bring these views before a wider audience, and should seek to avoid where possible the unconsidered splitting of our vote, which, if too frequent, can make the minority to appear non-serious or to have major internal differences or to have no overall alternative to the majority's approach to youth work. At all times, in both national and local work, we should refuse to do the dirty work of the majority for the majority, we should assume no responsibility for actions which we consider incorrect, and should always put forward correct proposals even when we know they will be overturned by the membership.

6) Because of the nature of a youth organization and because of the relatively favorable size of our youth fraction, many avenues of work are open to us in the youth. Yet, compared to the majority, our forces are limited. Therefore, we should pick and choose, channeling our energies into that work which will be most fruitful for our purposes. Examples of this sort of fruitful activity would be work on campuses and in organizations where we are relatively free from the hindrance of large majority fractions and actions where we can independently bring in contacts, work with them, and offer them our views of whatever struggle we are

engaged in. We should seek to further our own political development by giving forums and classes whenever we can. And at all times we should seek to deepen our understanding of revolutionary Marxism through study of the basic works and of the issues over which we are presently engaged in struggle.

Lynne Harper, 8/8/62

Excerpt from Constitution of S.W.P., as ratified by the
Convention of July 1963.

ARTICLE VI. CONTROL COMMISSION

Section 1. A Control Commission of five members shall be elected as follows: the Convention shall elect four members and the fifth member, who shall be a member of the National Committee, shall be designated by the National Committee. The Control Commission shall have full authority to investigate any individual or circumstance which it may deem necessary; and shall have power to delegate any of its authority to representatives.

Section 2. The Control Commission, on completion of its investigation in each case, shall present its findings and recommendations to the Political Committee for action. Action shall be taken by the Political Committee, or by the National Committee, in those cases referred to it by the Political Committee.

Section 3. In those cases where the Control Commission finds it necessary to intervene, its authority shall supersede any local investigation or trial.

Section 4. It shall be obligatory on every member of the Party to furnish the Control Commission or its authorized representatives with any information they may require.

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ARTICLE VIII. DISCIPLINE

Section 3. Charges against any member shall be made in writing and the accused member shall be furnished with a copy in advance of the trial. Charges shall be filed and heard in the branch to which the member belongs, or in a higher body which may decide to act directly in the case. Charges filed before the branch shall be considered by the Branch Executive Committee (or a subcommittee elected by it) at a meeting to which the accused member is summoned. The Branch Executive Committee shall submit a recommendation to be acted upon by the membership of the branch. Charges considered by higher bodies of the Party shall, however, be acted upon by said bodies.

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RESOLUTION OF THE MAY 1953 PLENUM OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE

ON THE ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF THE PARTY

(Unanimously Adopted)

I.

The Plenum of the National Committee reaffirms the resolution adopted by the 1938 Founding Convention of the Socialist Workers Party "On the Internal Situation and the Character of the Party," as follows (except that any reference indicating or implying affiliation with the Fourth International is no longer valid in view of the fact that the Socialist Workers Party formally disaffiliated from the Fourth International in 1940 because of the anti-democratic Voorhis Act):

"The Socialist Workers Party is a revolutionary Marxian party, based on a definite program, whose aim is the organization of the working class in the struggle for power and the transformation of the existing social order. All of its activities, its methods and its internal regime are subordinated to this aim and are designed to serve it.

"Only a self-acting and critical-minded membership is capable of forging and consolidating such a party and of solving its problems by collective thought, discussion and experience. From this follows the need of assuring the widest party democracy in the ranks of the organization.

"The struggle for power organized and led by the revolutionary party is the most ruthless and irreconcilable struggle in all history. A loosely-knit, heterogeneous, undisciplined, untrained organization is utterly incapable of accomplishing such world-historical tasks as the proletariat and the revolutionary party are confronted with in the present era. This is all the more emphatically true in the light of the singularly difficult position of our party and the extraordinary persecution to which it is subject. From this follows the party's unconditional demand upon all its members for complete discipline in all the public activities and actions of the organization.

"Leadership and centralized direction are indispensable prerequisites for any sustained and disciplined action, especially in the party that sets itself the aim of leading the collective efforts of the proletariat in its struggle against capitalism. Without a strong and firm Central Committee, having the power to act promptly and effectively in the name of the

party and to supervise, coordinate and direct all its activities without exception, the very idea of a revolutionary party is a meaningless jest.

"It is from these considerations, based upon the whole of the experience of working class struggle throughout the world in the last century, that we derive the Leninist principle of organization, namely, democratic centralism. The same experience has demonstrated that there are no absolute guarantees for the preservation of the principle of democratic centralism, and no rigid formula that can be set down in advance, a priori, for the application of it under any and all circumstances. Proceeding from certain fundamental conceptions, the problem of applying the principle of democratic centralism differently under different conditions and stages of development of the struggle, can be solved only in relation to the concrete situation, in the course of the tests and experience through which the movement passes, and on the basis of the most fruitful and healthy inter-relationship of the leading bodies of the party and its rank and file.

"The Responsibilities of Leadership"

"The leadership of the party must be under the control of the membership, its policies must always be open to criticism, discussion and rectification by the rank and file within properly established forms and limits, and the leading bodies themselves subject to formal recall or alteration. The membership of the party has the right to demand and expect the greatest responsibility from the leaders precisely because of the position they occupy in the movement. The selection of comrades to the positions of leadership means the conferring of an extraordinary responsibility. The warrant for this position must be proved, not once, but continuously by the leadership itself. It is under obligation to set the highest example of responsibility, devotion, sacrifice and complete identification with the party itself and its daily life and action. It must display the ability to defend its policies before the membership of the party, and to defend the line of the party and the party as a whole before the working class in general.

"Sustained party activity, not broken or disrupted by abrupt and disorienting changes, presupposes not only a continuity of tradition and a systematic development of party policy, but also the continuity of leadership. It is an important sign of a serious and firmly constituted party, of a party really engaged in productive work in the class struggle, that it throws up out of its ranks cadres of more or less able leading comrades,

tested for their qualities of endurance and trustworthiness, and that it thus insures a certain stability and continuity of leadership by such a cadre.

"Continuity of leadership does not, however, signify the automatic self-perpetuation of leadership. Constant renewal of its ranks by means of additions and, when necessary, replacements, is the only assurance that the party has, that its leadership will not succumb to the effects of dry-rot, that it will not be burdened with deadwood, that it will avoid the corrosion of conservatism and dilettantism, that it will not be the object of conflict between the older elements and the younger, that the old and basic cadre will be refreshed by new blood, that the leadership as a whole will not become purely bureaucratic 'committee men' with a life that is remote from the real life of the party and the activities of the rank and file.

"Responsibilities of Membership"

"Like leadership, membership itself in the party implies certain definite rights. Party membership confers the fullest freedom of discussion, debate and criticism inside the ranks of the party, limited only by such decisions and provisions as are made by the party itself or by bodies to which it assigns this function. Affiliation to the party confers upon each member the right of being democratically represented at all policy-making assemblies of the party (from branch to national and international convention), and the right of the final and decisive vote in determining the program, policies and leadership of the party.

"With party rights, the membership has also certain definite obligations. The theoretical and political character of the party is determined by its program, which forms the lines delimiting the revolutionary party from all other parties, groups and tendencies in the working class. The first obligation of party membership is loyal acceptance of the program of the party and regular affiliation to one of the basic units of the party. The party requires of every member the acceptance of its discipline and the carrying on of his activity in accordance with the program of the party, with the decisions adopted by its conventions, and with the policies formulated and directed by the party leadership.

"Party membership implies the obligation of one hundred per cent loyalty to the organization, the rejection of all agents of other, hostile groups in its ranks and intolerance of divided loyalties in general. Membership in the party

necessitates a minimum of activity in the organization, as established by the proper unit, and under the direction of the party; it necessitates the fulfillment of all the tasks which the party assigns to each member. Party membership implies the obligation upon every member to contribute materially to the support of the organization in accordance with his means.

"A Party of Revolutionary Workers"

"From the foregoing it follows that the party seeks to include in its ranks all the revolutionary, class conscious and militant workers who stand on its program and are active in building the movement in a disciplined manner. The revolutionary Marxian party rejects, not only the arbitrariness and bureaucratism of the Communist Party, but also the spurious and deceptive 'all-inclusiveness' of the Thomas-Tyler-Hoan Socialist Party, which is a sham and a fraud. Experience has proved conclusively that this 'all-inclusiveness' paralyzes the party in general and the revolutionary left wing in particular, suppressing and bureaucratically hounding the latter while giving free rein to the right wing to commit the greatest crimes in the name of socialism and the party. The S.W.P. seeks to be inclusive only in this sense: that it accepts into its ranks those who accept its program and denies admission to those who reject its program.

"The rights of each individual member, as set forth above, do not imply that the membership as a whole, namely, the party itself, does not possess rights of its own. The party as a whole has the right to demand that its work be not disrupted and disorganized, and has the right to take all the measures which it finds necessary to assure its regular and normal functioning. The rights of any individual member are distinctly secondary to the rights of the party membership as a whole. Party democracy means not only the most scrupulous protection of the rights of a given minority, but also the protection of the rule of the majority. The party is therefore entitled to organize the discussion and to determine its forms and limits.

"All inner-party discussion must be organized from the point of view that the party is not a discussion club, which debates interminably on any and all questions at any and all times, without arriving at a binding decision that enables the organization to act, but from the point of view that we are a disciplined party of revolutionary action. The party in general not only has the right, therefore, to organize the discussion in accordance with the requirements of the situation,

but the lower units of the party must be given the right, in the interests of the struggle against the disruption and disorganization of the party's work, to call irresponsible individuals to order and, if need be, to eject them from the ranks.

"The decisions of the national party convention are binding on all party members without exception and they conclude the discussion on all these disputed questions upon which a decision has been taken. Any party member violating the decisions of the convention, or attempting to revive discussion in regard to them without formal authorization of the party, puts himself thereby in opposition to the party and forfeits his right to membership. All party organizations are authorized and instructed to take any measures necessary to enforce this rule."

II

The Plenum of the National Committee reaffirms the resolution adopted by the 1940 Convention of the SWP on "The Organizational Conclusions of the Present Discussion," as follows (except that any reference indicating or implying affiliation with the Fourth International is no longer valid in view of the fact that the Socialist Workers Party formally disaffiliated from the Fourth International in 1940 because of the anti-democratic Voorhis Act):

"The Bolshevik party of Lenin is the only party in history which successfully conquered and held state power. The S.W.P., as a combat organization, which aims at achieving power in this country, models its organization forms and methods after those of the Russian Bolshevik party, adapting them, naturally, to the experience of recent years and to concrete American conditions.

"The S.W.P. as a revolutionary workers' party is based on the doctrines of scientific socialism as embodied in the principal works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky and incorporated in the basic documents and resolutions of the first four congresses of the Communist International and of the conferences and congresses of the Fourth International.

"The S.W.P. rejects the contention of social democrats, skeptics and capitulators disillusioned in the Russian revolution, that there is an inevitable and organic connection between Bolshevism and Stalinism. This reactionary revision of Marxism is a capitulation to democratic imperialism. It is capable of producing only demoralization and defeat in the critical times of war and revolution.

"The rise of reaction on a world scale, accompanied and produced by the disastrous course of Stalinism in the working class movement, has catapulted all centrist groups and parties (Lovestoneites, Socialist Party, London Bureau) away from Bolshevism and in the direction of social democracy. In whole or in part, all of these groups attempt to identify Bolshevism with Stalinism. Without exception these groups are all in a state of collapse and passing over to the side of the class enemy.

"Petty Bourgeoisie Transmits Skepticism"

"This tendency (Souvarinism) has manifested itself in leading circles of our party (Burnham) and in certain sections of the membership. Their skeptical criticisms of Bolshevism express their petty-bourgeois composition and their dependence on bourgeois public opinion. The petty bourgeoisie is a natural transmission belt carrying the theories of reaction into the organizations of the working class.

"Those who seek to identify Bolshevism with Stalinism concern themselves with a search for guarantees against the Stalinist degeneration of the party and the future Soviet power. We reject this demand for insurance as completely undialectical and unrealistic. Our party, in the first instance, is concerned with the struggle for state power, and therefore with creating a party organization capable of leading the proletarian struggle to this goal. There are no constitutional guarantees which can prevent degeneration. Only the victorious revolution can provide the necessary preconditions for preventing the degeneration of the party and the future Soviet power. If the party fails to carry through and extend the revolution the degeneration of the party is inevitable.

"Insofar as any guarantees are possible against the degeneration of the proletarian party, these can be obtained only by educating the party in firm adherence to principles and by a merciless struggle against all personal and unprincipled clique combinations within the party. The outstanding example of this clique formation is the Abern group which is based solely on personal loyalties and on rewards of honor and place within the party for those whose primary loyalty is to the clique. The history of the Fourth International in this country amply reveals that such a clique, with its utter disregard for principles, can become the repository for alien class influences and agents of enemy organizations seeking to disrupt the Fourth International from within. The S.W.P. condemns the Abern clique as hostile to the spirit and methods of Bolshevik organization.

"REVOLUTIONARY CENTRALISM"

"To overthrow the most powerful capitalist ruling class in the world, the S.W.P. must be organized as a combat party on strong centralist lines. The resolution adopted at the founding convention gave a correct interpretation of the principle of democratic centralism. Its emphasis was placed on the democratic aspects of this principle. The party leadership has faithfully preserved the democratic rights of the membership since the founding convention. It has granted the widest latitude of discussion to all dissenting groups and individuals. The duty of the incoming National Committee is to execute the decisions of the convention, arrived at after the most thorough and democratic discussion, and to permit no infringement upon them.

"Conditions, both external and in the internal development of the party, demand that steps now be taken towards knitting the party together, towards tightening up its activities and centralizing its organization structure. For the work of penetrating into the workers' mass movement, for the heavy struggles to come against capitalism, for the onerous conditions of war, it is imperative that a maximum of loyalty be required of every leader and every member, that a maximum of activity be required, that a strict adherence to discipline be demanded and rigidly enforced.

"THE PRESS"

"The party press is the decisive public agitational and propagandist expression of the Bolshevik organization. The policies of the press are formulated on the basis of the fundamental resolutions of the congresses and conferences of the International, the conventions of the party, and decisions of the National Committee not in conflict with such resolutions. Control of the press is lodged directly in the hands of the National Committee by the convention of the party. The duty of the editors is loyally to interpret the decisions of the convention in the press.

"Control of Public Discussion"

"The opening of the party press to discussion of a point of view contrary to that of the official leadership of the party or of its programmatic convention decisions must be controlled by the National Committee which is obligated to regulate discussion of this character in such a way as to give decisive emphasis to the party line. It is the right and duty of the National Committee to veto any demand for public discussion if it deems such discussion harmful to the best interests of the party.

"The petty-bourgeois opposition in our party demonstrates its hostility to Bolshevik organization by its demand that the minority be granted the right to transform the press into a discussion organ for diametrically opposite programs. By that method it would take the control of the press out of the hands of the National Committee and subordinate it to any temporary, anarchistic combination which can make itself heard at the moment

"By the same token, the demand of the petty-bourgeois opposition for an independent public organ, expounding a program in opposition to that of the majority of the party, represents a complete abandonment of democratic centralism and a capitulation to the Norman Thomas type of 'all-inclusive' party which is inclusive of all tendencies except the Bolshevik. The granting of this demand for a separate organ would destroy the centralist character of the party, by creating dual central committees, dual editorial boards, dual treasuries, dual distribution agencies, divided loyalties and a complete breakdown of all discipline. Under such conditions the party would rapidly degenerate into a social democratic organization or disappear from the scene altogether. The convention categorically rejects the demand for a dual organ.

"LEADERSHIP"

"To build the combat organization capable of conquering state power, the party must have as its general staff a corps of professional revolutionists who devote their entire life to the direction and the building of the party and its influence in the mass movement. Membership in the leading staff of the party, the National Committee, must be ^{made} contingent on a complete subordination of the life of the candidate to the party. All members of the National Committee must devote full-time activities to party work, or be prepared to do so at the demand of the National Committee.

"In the struggle for power, the party demands the greatest sacrifices of its members. Only a leadership selected from among those who demonstrate in the struggle the qualities of singleness of purpose, unconditional loyalty to the party and revolutionary firmness of character, can inspire the membership with a spirit of unswerving devotion and lead the party in its struggle for power.

"The party leadership must, from time to time, be infused with new blood, primarily from its proletarian sections. Workers who show promise and ability through activity in the union movement and its strike struggle should be elevated to the leading committees of the party in order to establish a more

direct connection between the leading committee and the workers' movement, and in order to train the worker-Bolshevik for the tasks of party direction itself.

"The party must select from its younger members those qualified, talented and promising elements who can be trained for leadership. The road of the student youth to the party leadership must not and cannot be from the class room of the high school and college directly into the leading committee. They must first prove themselves. They must be sent without high-sounding titles into working class districts for day-to-day work among the proletariat. The young student must serve an apprenticeship in the workers' movement before he can be considered as candidate for the National Committee.

"PROLETARIANIZE THE PARTY"

"The working class is the only class in modern society that is progressive and truly revolutionary. Only the working class is capable of saving humanity from barbarism. Only a revolutionary party can lead the proletariat to the realization of this historic mission. To achieve power, the revolutionary party must be deeply rooted among the workers, it must be composed predominantly of workers and enjoy the respect and confidence of the workers.

"Without such a composition it is impossible to build a programmatically firm and disciplined organization which can accomplish these grandiose tasks. A party of non-workers is necessarily subject to all the reactionary influences of skepticism, cynicism, soul-sickness and capitulatory despair transmitted to it through its petty-bourgeois environment.

"To transform the S.W.P. into a proletarian party of action, particularly in the present period of reaction, it is not enough to continue propagandistic activities in the hope that by an automatic process workers will flock to the banner of the party. It is necessary, on the contrary, to make a concerted, determined and systematic effort, consciously directed by the leading committees of the party, to penetrate the workers' movement, establish the roots of the party in the trade unions, the mass labor organizations and in the workers' neighborhoods and recruit worker militants into the ranks of the party.

"Steps to Proletarianize the Party"

"To proletarianize the party, the following steps are imperative:

"1. The entire party membership must be directed towards rooting itself in the factories, mills, etc., and towards integrating itself in the unions and workers' mass organizations.

"2. Those members of the party who are not workers shall be assigned to work in labor organizations, in workers' neighborhoods and with the worker-fractions of the party -- to assist them and learn from them. All unemployed members must belong to and be active in organizations of the unemployed.

"Those party members who find it impossible after a reasonable period of time to work in a proletarian milieu and to attract to the party worker militants shall be transferred from party membership to the rank of sympathizers. Special organizations of sympathizers may be formed for this purpose.

"Above all the student and unemployed youth must be sent into industry and involved in the life and struggles of the workers. Systematic, exceptional and persistent efforts must be made to assist the integration of our unemployed youth into industry despite the restricted field of employment.

"Lacking connection with the workers' movement through failure or inability to get jobs in industry or membership in unions, the student and unemployed youth are subject to terrific pressure from the petty-bourgeois world. A large section of the youth membership of the S.W.P. and Y.P.S.L. adopted the program of the Fourth International, but brought with them the training and habits of the social democratic movement, which are far removed from the spirit of the proletarian revolution.

"These student elements can transform the program of the Fourth International from the pages of books and pamphlets into living reality for themselves and for the party only by integrating themselves in the workers' movement and breaking irrevocably from their previous environment. Unless they follow this road they are in constant danger of slipping back into their former social democratic habits or into complete apathy and pessimism and thus be lost for the revolutionary movement.

"3. To attract and to hold workers in the ranks of the party, it is necessary that the internal life of the party be drastically transformed. The party must be cleansed of the discussion club atmosphere, of an irresponsible attitude toward assignments, of a cynical and smart-aleck disrespect for the party.

"Organizing Real Campaigns"

"Party activity must be lifted out of dragging, daily routine and reorganized on the basis of campaigns which are realistically adjusted to the demands and direction of the workers' movement. These campaigns must not be sucked out of the thumb of some functionary in a party office, but must arise as a result of the connections of the party with the workers' movement and the indicated direction of the masses in specific situations.

"All party agitation campaigns, especially in the next period, must be directed primarily at those workers' groups and organizations in which we are attempting to gain a foothold and attract members. General agitation addressed to the working class as a whole or the public in general must be related to those specific aims.

"The press must gear its agitation into the activity conducted among specific workers' groups so as to transform the party paper from a literary organ into a workers' organizer. The integration of the party into workers' movement, and the transformation of the party into a proletarian organization, are indispensable for the progress of the party. Successful achievement of this internal transformation is a thousand times more important than any amount of empty phrases about 'preparation of the party for war.' This transformation is, in fact, the only real preparation of the party for war, combined of course with the necessary technical adjustments in organization forms.

"The S.W.P. must adhere to the principles and program of the Fourth International, transform itself into a democratically centralized Bolshevik organization, integrate itself into the workers' movement. On that basis, and on that basis alone, can the party meet the test of the war, survive the war and go forward to its great goal -- the establishment of a Workers' Republic in the United States."

III

The Plenum of the National Committee reaffirms as follows the organizational principles and procedures of the party:

As provided by the party constitution, the National Committee directs all the work of the party, decides all questions of policy in accord with the decisions of the national convention, appoints subordinate officers and sub-committees, including the Political Committee, and in general constitutes, between national conventions, the functioning central authority of the party.

The Political Committee, appointed by the plenum, functions as the central authority of the party between plenums of the National Committee and is authorized to speak and act in its name. It shall be optional with the Political Committee whether or not it will conduct a poll of the National Committee before acting on any question before it, except that such a poll shall be taken upon the request of any National Committee member for a plenary meeting of the National Committee. The Political Committee is obliged to comply with the decision of the majority of the full National Committee in such a poll.

All party organs, institutions and bodies, including the party locals and branches, shall be under the supervision of the Political Committee, acting for the National Committee. All party units and individual party members are required to comply with any directives of the Political Committee between plenums of the National Committee, pending appeal to the plenum.

As provided by the party constitution, Local Executive Committees shall direct the activities of the Locals and act with full power for the Locals between city conventions. Branch Executive Committees, on the other hand, as provided by the party constitution, shall be subordinate to the Branch membership.

In accordance with the principle of democratic centralism, the minority shall have the right to present its views in the internal party discussion. The plenum, and between its sessions the Political Committee, has the right and duty to lay down rules for the regulation of the discussion, to see that it is fairly conducted as has invariably been the case in the past, and to see that it does not disrupt party work and the orderly functioning of the party in all its activities.

The principle of majority rule shall apply with full force and effect in all party bodies and in all party activities.

Motion by Secretariat:

The basic organizational resolution, "On the Internal Situation and the Character of the Party," adopted by the 1938 Founding Convention of the Socialist Workers Party, contains the following provisions:

"The party requires of every member the acceptance of its discipline and the carrying on of his activity in accordance with the program of the party, with the decisions adopted by its conventions, and with the policies formulated and directed by the party leadership. Party membership implies the obligation of one hundred per cent loyalty to the organization, the rejection of all agents of other, hostile groups in its ranks, and intolerance of divided loyalties in general ... The party as a whole has the right to demand that its work be not disrupted and disorganized, and has the right to take all the measures which it finds necessary to assure its regular and normal functioning ... All inner-party discussion must be organized from the point of view that the party is not a discussion club, which debates interminably on any and all questions at any and all times, without arriving at a binding decision that enables the organization to act, but from the point of view that we are a disciplined party of revolutionary action ... The decisions of the national party convention are binding on all party members without exception and they conclude the discussion on all these disputed questions upon which a decision has been taken. Any party member violating the decisions of the convention, or attempting to revive discussion in regard to them without formal authorization of the party, puts himself thereby in opposition to the party and forfeits his right to membership. All party organizations are authorized and instructed to take any measures necessary to enforce this rule."

As indicated in the Control Commission's report of October 24, 1963, the foregoing provisions of the 1938 resolution are violated by the leadership practices of the Robertson-Mage-White group. Assuming the guise of a "study circle" the group leadership projects a discussion policy that disregards convention decisions to close discussion or disputed issues and goes ahead factionally on a business-as-usual basis. In external activity they purpose to function as "united blocs," seeking to work as free lancers in areas where they are unhindered by the presence of comrades loyal to the party. They undertake the recruitment of outside contacts into the group on the basis of the group's program, methods and practices. New people recruited into the group are considered ready to apply for party membership only after they have first been indoctrinated against the program, convention decisions and

organizational principles of the party.

Group discipline is put before party discipline. Group work within the party is cynically projected as "the best possible opportunity for building our tendency and not through any mistaken concepts of loyalty to a diseased shell."

Such are the concepts, methods and practices with which the Robertson-Mage-White group is indoctrinated by its central leaders and by the Harper-Ireland propagators of the leadership policy. Those concepts, methods and practices are alien to our party, wholly disloyal and utterly intolerable.

Because of their violations of party loyalty the Political Committee hereby suspends from party membership Comrades Robertson, Mage, White, Harper and Ireland. Although suspension from membership does not constitute outright expulsion from the party it has the same force and effect concerning the exercise of membership rights during the period of suspension. Those suspended are barred from internal party meetings. They are denied access to internal party material. They are excluded from participation in any and all forms of internal party life and activity.

The Political Committee refers to the plenum of the National Committee the question of further disciplinary action against the Robertson-Mage-White group.

Adopted by Political
Committee,
November 1, 1963

Excerpt from Minutes of Political Committee No. 4,
November 1, 1963.

1. Robertson Case

Motion by Myra: To reject the report of one elected member of the Control Commission and a "representative" as unfair, factionally motivated and a violation of the limited province of the Control Commission.

1. Comrades are elected to the Control Commission, not on the basis of their political maturity, to evaluate political positions and theories. They are elected as people who can be trusted to be fair, above temporary factional alignments, and scrupulously attentive to facts and their verification. This report presumes to examine and evaluate political documents, thoughts, opinions, and to characterize them as "loyal" or "disloyal." Such an undertaking is beyond the province of the Control Commission.

2. The "evidence" of "disloyalty" submitted in the report consists entirely of opinions and no one in the history of the Socialist Workers Party has ever been punished for thoughts that differ with those of the majority -- nor ever can be if we are to remain a revolutionary force.

3. It is impermissible for a ruling faction to use its majority power to pry into the written or oral work of an oppositional tendency. Any faction has the inalienable right to discuss freely and in private its point of view. Furthermore, the material presented by the report does not consist of faction decisions, but preliminary opinions expressed by individuals in the course of preparing for decisions.

To violate the right of a faction to its own internal life is to destroy the Leninist conception of organization. Democratic centralism not only places obligations on a minority to abide by the decisions of the majority, but it places obligations on the majority to protect the democratic right of organized dissent for minorities.

In an epoch which we have characterized as a crisis of leadership, in an era when socialism suffers from the monstrous tyranny of Stalinism, it is unthinkable for us to lower our own high standards of democratic procedures. The world revolution is united today in the struggle for socialist democracy. If we are not its champions in our own internal functioning, we have no right to occupy the revolutionary podium.

4. For two of the comrades cited for suspension by Comrade Dobbs, we are not even provided "disloyal" quotes, illegally obtained. Where is the evidence of their "disloyalty"? Association? Bourgeois law is at least formally more democratic.

5. Even with selected quotes of selected documents, the loyalty, not "disloyalty" of the minority tendency would be indicated. Surely these comrades know that the demand to see their internal faction discussion material is a violation of their democratic rights. Yet they show to a Commission member documents that member has no right to see. Will the repeated insistence of the minority comrades of their intention to abide by the discipline of the party avail it nothing? If the majority is so anxious for a split, why not have the patience to wait for "subversive" thoughts to be translated into deeds?

6. If the minority surrepticiously recruits youth to the Party on the basis of its factional line, what is there to fear? Are we not confident enough of our point of view, and with full control of the public expression of it, to be certain that we can win the best to the majority? Since when did revolutionary Trotskyists have to resort to organization means to protect its liberating ideas? Are we afraid they will recruit so many that we shall no longer be the majority? That is unfortunately not very realistic; but if it were, we can hope that we have set a good example of how a majority should rule.

7. I propose that we apologize to the minority for the unwarranted investigation and express our desire to collaborate in comradely fashion in the future for the building of the Socialist Workers Party.

Vote: Regular For: Myra.

Regular Against: Dobbs, Barry, Halstead, Chester,
Nat, Feingold, Kerry, Shaw, Ring.

Alternate Against: Graham, Leonard, Pete.

Advisory Against: Wood.

Defeated.

REPORT TO NEW YORK BRANCH ON SUSPENSIONS

by Farrell Dobbs

I. Presentation

Comrades, the purpose of my report tonight is to inform you of a disciplinary action taken by the Political Committee. On November 1, the Political Committee suspended from membership in the party comrades Robertson, Mage, White, Harper and Ireland. The action was taken after a report had been received from the Control Commission which the Political Committee had asked to conduct an investigation of the Robertson-Mage-White group. At the outset I want to remind you of the Constitutional provisions that specify the procedure to be followed in a matter of this kind. The Party Constitution invests the Control Commission with full authority to investigate any individual or circumstance within the Party as it may deem necessary. The Commission is authorized by the Constitution to designate representatives to participate in such matters if the Commission so chooses. The authority of the Control Commission supersedes any local investigation or trial. It applies even in strictly local branch matters where, in the judgment of the Control Commission, its investigation is needed.

In the case before us, we are dealing with a national problem and that is why action has been taken directly by the Control Commission rather than proceeding through a branch investigation. As the Constitution provides, the Control Commission presents its findings to the Political Committee for action. The decision of the Political Committee is binding upon the Party branch -- upon all Party branches -- and the branch has no authority in the matter. The comrades who have been suspended from membership by the Political Committee can appeal from that suspension to the plenum of the National Committee. Pending any action by the plenum on the matter, the decision of the Political Committee has full force and effect and the branch must by Constitutional mandate comply with the Political Committee directive on these suspensions. The report I am presenting tonight is therefore given for your information and not for any action by the branch.

As a further preface, I will undertake to present a brief sketch of the background factors involved in this case to help clear up some possible confusion concerning basic party procedures and principles and the enforcement of party discipline. For several years, as you're all generally aware, we have been having a continuous literary discussion in the party, involving

first the Chinese question, then later including the Negro struggle and then taking into its scope the question of the world movement. This process, as you know, culminated finally in a general pre-convention discussion that began last spring. Now this long period of literary discussion, on the questions I mentioned, was a special circumstance due to a series of unusual factors stemming from the peculiar nature of those three questions at that particular juncture. This circumstance could well have given newer members of the party an unclear picture of our basic procedure. It could seem from the nature of that discussion that internal discussion is always in order within the party. It could seem that party policy can be tossed up for grabs at any time by anybody who so chooses. That's not the case. The party is not a perpetual discussion circle. The party discusses in order to decide and it decides in order to act. It simply took longer than usual on the three questions involved. But firm decisions on those and other disputed questions were made at the convention of the party last July.

In addition to the circumstance of the long literary discussion, some confusion also resulted from the conduct of minority groups within the party in the course of the discussion. What had been authorized as a literary discussion was carried beyond the literary form. Not by chance, not by accident, not out of ignorance, but by deliberate act. Comrades, particularly young comrades, were invited into private seances for coffee and conversation to give them a one-sided view of the dispute within the party and warp their capacity for objective political judgment before they ever had a chance to participate in an open confrontation in the party in a formal way. Spokesmen for minorities on the branch floor resorted to one and another ruse to shoot angles on various points on the agenda to introduce their political line and do so with the aim of trying to make it appear that the party has no set policy on anything. Branch procedures were disrupted, you may recall; majority rule flaunted; tendencies toward paralysis inflicted upon the branch by points of order, points of personal privilege, points of procedure, challenging the rule of the chair. In short, the party was subjected to a demonstration of factional hooliganism.

Let me touch on some provocative acts on the part of the Robertson-Mage-White group. Last winter, you will recall, they set up a so-called study group here in New York. It was supposed to be for minority supporters and what they called "sympathizers" of the minority. It was led by Comrade Mage, who was going to present his views which, as everybody

in the branch knew, were in opposition to the majority views. And this so-called study group was organized behind the back of the party in violation of party procedures. The Robertson-Mage-White group was called to order by the Political Committee for this violation of procedure, after the correct procedure had been explained, as you will recall, when Comrade Tom Kerry, as National Organization Secretary, appeared before the New York branch on the question.

What you may not know is that not long thereafter comrades Robertson, Mage and White jointly submitted a statement to the National Committee in which they denounced the Political Committee for its intervention with respect to their so-called study group that was organized in violation of Party procedure. They said that they will abide by what they termed "the democratic centralist practices, discipline and responsibilities normal to the Trotskyist movement." They declared that they will not surrender what they term "the necessary and essential attributes and functions of an organized and internally democratic tendency." Now that's a slick piece of double talk but it leaves some questions. What do the leaders of the Robertson-Mage-White group consider "normal" in Party procedures? What "attributes and functions" do they consider "necessary and essential" to their group? That they didn't explain. But later on we were to get a plainer definition of what the leadership of the Robertson-Mage-White group considers "normal, necessary, and essential" practices.

You will recall that shortly before the convention serious charges were made concerning the conduct of the Robertson-Mage-White group by Comrade Wohlforth in an article that was published in Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 24, No. 27. The charges of Comrade Wohlforth involved the party loyalty of the Robertson-Mage-White group on three main counts: a hostile attitude toward the party, a practice of double recruiting -- recruiting people into the group and then seeking to bring them into the party -- and the projection of a split perspective. In his article Comrade Wohlforth quoted from a Robertson-Ireland document and a Harper statement. When the Wohlforth charges appeared, acting in my capacity as National Secretary, I asked Comrade Robertson for copies of the Robertson-Ireland and Harper documents. He rejected this request and said the proper procedure would be to convene a Control Commission inquiry. I then asked Comrade Wohlforth for copies of the documents he had quoted. He too rejected my request, saying the documents he quoted were "private political material." That's where matters stood shortly before the convention. The party leadership took no further action at that time and I want to touch briefly on the reasons why.

In a political dispute, particularly a serious political dispute of the kind we were engaged in before the convention, it is best generally to try to avoid organizational controversies. Warn those who are guilty of violations of correct procedures, explain correct procedures, explain the party principles, but try to avoid mixing up political and organizational issues. In general it is best first to resolve the political issues on a political basis and then deal with the organizational problems confronting the party. Another factor that should be kept in mind is that organizational violations, particularly when they assume an intensive character in the course of a deep political controversy, are very often simply an organizational form of expression of political differences, a form of expression that can involve very fundamental questions concerning the character of the party, as is true of the case now before us. It was for these reasons that the party leadership took no further action in the period prior to the convention. But the action on these organizational matters was only temporarily postponed; it was not cancelled, it was not relegated to the Greek kalends. In those circumstances, some comrades could get the mistaken impression that factionalists can get away with anything in the party. That's not the case. First we reach a decision on the political issues in dispute, and then we proceed to deal with indiscipline and disloyalty.

In that connection the convention marked a definitive stage in the development of the internal party dispute. The political issues were firmly decided at the convention by an overwhelming majority. In the argument leading up to those decisions the minorities had received a full opportunity to present their views. Recall the huge volume of discussion bulletins that were published and recall the fact that the bulk of the material in those bulletins was submitted by minorities. Recall the generous time allotments that were given to minority reporters and minority speakers in the branches and in the convention. There was no suppression of their right to express their views. All that happened was that they lost the political argument in the party.

While they were waging that political argument they raised a great hue and cry, a great clamor, about the democratic rights of minorities. They tried to create an impression that democracy is a possession only of a minority, and that if you're a majorityite, you're automatically an anti-democratic holligan who's got no rights, but who is just abusing the rights of poor, innocent, victimized minorities. Well that's not the case either. Party democracy involves more than the democratic rights of minorities, even though you wouldn't think so from

the attitude the minorities have manifested. They have claimed special license to defy majority rule. Why? Because, they argue, they constitute an organized group, because they've differentiated themselves in that organized way from the party as a whole. They act as though the majority had no authority whatever concerning their factional conduct in the party. They attempt to picture the majority of the party as simply a rival faction, and on that basis they claim equal factional rights with the majority of the party, contending that the majority can't interfere in their internal factional affairs.

That's a concept absolutely alien to the Socialist Workers Party. The minority has the right to present its views in internal discussion when issues are in dispute and a decision is being reached by the party. The majority has the right to enforce the party decisions, and the right and the duty to see that everybody in the party abides by the basic principles of the party. In the last analysis, comrades, the majority is the party. I'll tell you why. The role of the majority as the decisive force in the party flows right straight from the principle of majority rule. The right of the majority to decide is just as fundamental as the democratic right of a minority to present its views. In fact it's vital to the health and functioning of a revolutionary socialist combat party which we are working to organize.

The party has the right by majority decision to supervise the public activities of its members and to regulate all internal party affairs. For example: Minorities have the right to express their views internally when discussion has been formally authorized on an issue in dispute within the party. The party has the right by majority decision to regulate that internal discussion. Or again, minorities have the right within our party to form an organized group and nobody is challenging that right, nobody is seeking to impair that right. All that's happening is that, because the party through its majority insists upon the organized groups of minorities within the party living up to the principles and policies of the party, a phoney hue and cry has been raised that we're trying to suppress factions. That's not true at all. All that the majority of the party is insisting on is that organized minorities within the party live by, and within, the principles of the party and that they be loyal to the party. And the party has the right by majority decision to enforce disciplined and loyal conduct by organized minorities within its ranks.

Now the reality of a party majority does not necessarily infer the existence of a majority faction. Basically it means

party action by majority decision. There may or may not be a majority faction, but the party majority has the right to organize itself as a faction, just as minorities are granted that right. The existence of organized minority groups within the party does not, as the minorities try to make it appear, automatically make the party majority simply a rival factional group. The fact is there is not a majority faction in the party today. The majority of the comrades in this party act simply as members who relate themselves to the party as a whole. A majority of the comrades in this party today function only through formally constituted party bodies. They do not differentiate themselves in perpetuity from the rest of the party on a special group basis. Their's is a correct attitude.

It's a big mistake, comrades, to think of the Socialist Workers Party as though it were simply a loose federation of factions. The party is not an all-inclusive political jungle that allows itself to be perpetually torn by factional warfare. That is not the nature of our party. Historically our party has striven to constitute itself as a politically homogeneous body. Membership in this party presupposes basic agreement on program and on party principles. It is that basic component in the party that cements us and permits political compatibility, even though we have differences of opinion from time to time over one or another issue. It is those basic factors that permit us to maintain objective conduct internally and to keep an equilibrium and a dynamism and a stability in the party with respect to carrying forward the work of the party, even though we may be having differences of opinion about one or another point. Now, the fact that historically we have striven to be a basically homogeneous party does not at all mean that we are a monolithic party. Not at all, not at all. The record is crystal clear. All down through the years of the existence of our party -- and it certainly has been proven to the hilt in the most recent times -- there has been ample room within the party for political differences, even major differences of serious import. The record is crystal clear that organized tendencies and factions are permitted to exist in our party, but there is something else that wants to be kept crystal clear as well. These organized tendencies and factions must abide by party principles and they must be wholly loyal to the party.

Some of these basic concepts got lost from view to a certain extent during the pre-convention period. But now the convention is over and these principles have to be emphasized and practiced and enforced. In that sense the democratic rights of the party majority come to the fore now with full force and effect. The political decisions have been made by the convention; the line for the party work has been set; the discussion

is ended until it is again officially authorized. We proceed now to party-building work on the basis of the convention decisions and on no other basis. No minority will be permitted to run wild inside the party. No internal disruption will be allowed. Flaunting of party principles, violations of party loyalty will not be tolerated.

Now, at the convention, Comrade Robertson repeated his assertion that no information would be given concerning the Wohlforth charges unless a Control Commission inquiry was convened. Shortly after the convention, the Political Committee referred the matter to the Control Commission for investigation. Hearings were held by the Control Commission across a period of several weeks and a report was submitted under date of October 24, 1963, to the Political Committee. In its report the Control Commission Stated: (See text of C.C. report elsewhere in this bulletin).

The report of the Control Commission makes clear that the leadership of the Robertson-Mage-White group characterizes our party as a centrist party upon which they declare open season. It makes clear that they put group discipline before party discipline. It makes clear that they're loyal only to the group and that they have no loyalty to the party. It's a hostile attack on the party from within and illustrates what they consider "normal, necessary and essential" practices within our party. The party has the right to tell the engineers of that scheme, you'll have to try it from outside the party, you can't get away with it from within our ranks. And it's the duty of the leadership of the party, before all others, to defend the integrity of the party against this attack. Otherwise the leadership would deserve to be tossed out of office and replaced by leaders who will meet their responsibilities to the party, and it's with that consciousness that the Political Committee has acted in this matter.

I now want to read to you the full text of the Political Committee decision on this case: (See text of P.C. Motion of November 1 elsewhere in this bulletin).

A plenum has been scheduled for the last week-end in December. The National Committee at that time will make its own decisions concerning the question of further disciplinary action. But it is reasonable for the comrades to assume that the Plenum of the National Committee will affirm the following basic obligations as conditions for party membership: Members of the party must comply with convention decisions; members of the party must adhere to party principles; members of the party must have unconditional loyalty to the party. And no one will be allowed to stand immune from these basic obligations.

II. Summary

Comrades, as I have listened to the minority spokesmen in the discussion here tonight, I've been reminded more and more of summer TV schedules. The whole thing was a re-run. They don't have any more sense of proportion on a fundamental question of this kind than they had in earlier times when they were maneuvering to get the floor to talk about a subject that wasn't properly before the branch in the first place. They've got no sense of proportion at all in any way, shape or form.

We hear the same old argument: all the suspensions can mean is that the party is confronted with a crisis and why don't you sneaky bureaucrats who are running the party with an iron hand tell what the crisis is, instead of trying to fog the comrades up with organizational measures. That's the theme. There is a crisis, they say. Comrade Wohlforth adds to Comrade Steve's remarks on that count that the crisis is one of growing minorities and the majority doesn't know what to do about it except to take organizational action. Well I'll let you in on a little secret. You're going to find out there isn't any crisis in the party. You're going to find out just the opposite. This party is solid. This party knows the score. The party means business and it intends to enforce its principles. That was the meaning of the party convention. The convention not only decided on the political issues in dispute, the convention made itself crystal clear on its attitude toward the question of loyalty and discipline within the party, and that was a mandate from the democratically-elected delegates at the democratically-conducted convention of this party to the leadership. The leadership is duty bound to carry out that mandate.

Now all kinds of Philadelphia lawyer's arguments, or sea lawyer's arguments, or whatever you want to call them, are brought in here. Did the Control Commission question Comrade White in connection with the suspension action? No. Comrade White was not here in New York, so he was not called before the Control Commission. It wasn't necessary. Comrade White is a leader of record in the Robertson-Mage-White group, and when leaders stand up and proclaim themselves as leaders and take responsibility for a line, they've got to accept the consequences of that line. Comrade White falls in that category.

Why do we suspend now? Why don't we wait for the plenum? Those questions are just an indirect way of asking why we are doing anything at all about disloyalty. We didn't have any trial proceedings, one spokesman for the minority says.

Another one complains that the Control Commission dragged their hearings out for weeks and weeks and weeks. They argue up one-side of a question or down the other depending on what little axe they want to grind at the moment.

Why does the Political Committee suspend now? Because it's confronted with a fact of disloyalty to the party. It's the duty of the Political Committee to act and it acted. The Political Committee has referred the question of further disciplinary action to the plenum, not because there's any doubt in the Political Committee's mind about what's got to be done, but because we're confronted with so important a question of disloyalty and indiscipline that it must be brought to the attention of the plenum, and the plenum should bring it to the attention of the whole party.

Tim says the Control Commission report mentions not one single action by the Robertson-Mage-White minority, all it shows is that they stated a point of view. He says that point of view was stated over a year ago. Well, about a year ago, Tim Wohlforth disavowed that point of view. But not a single one of the leaders of the Robertson-Mage-White group has done so, and not a single person speaking in the name of that group here tonight did so. They wiggle like greased pigs and raise all kinds of diverting, distorting, vulgar arguments -- from the point of view of "Bolshevik political concepts and organizational principles" if you please. They do everything but disavow their hostility to the party. They do everything but disavow their practices of double recruiting. They do everything but disavow their split perspective in the party. They do everything but disavow their intentions to conduct a raiding operation and a wrecking operation from inside the party. The whole intent, aim, line and practice of the group, as it is promulgated and taught by its leadership and carried out, is set forth in those documents, and that's a declaration of war upon the party. If this party doesn't know how to meet that kind of a declaration of war, we just as well all put on our hats and coats, go out, lock the door, throw the key away and let the landlord worry about where he's going to get next month's rent because we'll be out of business as a party.

Steve argues that we only brought up the question of a study group; that the comrades who were suspended were suspended for their political opinions. He says this is going to paralyze thought inside the party. All these arguments he raised in his best judicial manner, that is, before he got back to his seat and started to heckle other speakers like a hooligan. He leaves out, among other things, one little point --

the matter of loyalty to the party. How can a person who takes this party seriously be neutral, Steve, when a question of loyalty to the party is involved?

Henry G. gets up here and calls the Control Commission professional cops, if you please. What a piece of uncomradely insolence that was. How do you feel about the question of loyalty to the party? Do you take it seriously or don't you? You'll find a big majority of this party does.

Doug makes reference to the Smith Act on the question of advocacy not acts -- dragging in something that's got nothing whatever to do with the case before us. Our fight against the Smith Act has to do with the right of the people of this country to organize politically on the basis of any program they choose, without governmental interference or reprisals, and having organized politically into a party, to express themselves freely, fight for their program. We defend these rights for our party and every other party. But we don't invite opponent parties to enter the Socialist Workers Party to conduct an inside operation calculated to destroy the party. We say, no, if you want to be an opponent of our party, if you want to be disloyal to our party, if you want to combat our party, do it from the outside, don't try to do it on the inside. The same thing goes for those suspended by the Political Committee. They haven't got a right to conduct a wrecking operation inside this party, but we'll defend their democratic right to act as an opponent party apart from us and opposing us in the public arena. There's a world of difference, Doug, and it's got something to do with fundamental Bolshevik principles that you ought to refresh your recollection about.

Steve argues that the suspension of the leaders of the Robertson-Mage-White group means in practice the outlawing of factions in this party. He drags in, completely out of context, in a very learned, professorial way, of course, an action of the Bolsheviks under revolutionary conditions in temporarily suspending factions. He says now our party is expelling a faction and that means we will allow no more factions inside the party. Nothing could be further from the truth and you know it, or you ought to know it. You said you've been 25 years in the party. That would be since 1938. There's been quite a few factions, quite a few tendencies, there's been quite a rich body of internal party experience in that time. What is being done now by the Political Committee, in these circumstances, is in direct accordance with what the policy of the party has been all down through the whole 25 years you've been in it. If you don't remember it, go back and refresh your recollection.

Somebody argued we didn't suspend the Marcyites. No, they walked out. They beat us to the draw. The Cochranites didn't do that. They got suspended. And they, too, said that's Stalinism, that's the end of the right of factions inside the Socialist Workers Party. And do you know, we've had some factions since. And we've tolerated them, we've tolerated them. It's a phoney argument that we're suppressing the right of organized dissent in the party, it's a fake and a fraud from beginning to end. They're not really arguing for the simple right to have a faction, they're arguing for the right to do as they damn please as a faction, without the party being able to do anything about it. And that they can't have, that they can't have.

Harry T. says the minority has the right to fight for its ideas. Nobody denies that, and they sure were given a good chance, and they sure exercised the opportunity to the best of their ability, and nobody stopped them. They lost the argument as far as the political issues were concerned. Now they've got to face the question of their responsibility to the party in a very fundamental sense, the members of the Robertson-Mage-White group. Are you going to be loyal to the party? Are you going to be disciplined? Are you going to abide by the basic party principles? Or are you going to continue as the faction has been acting, and screaming, as you did tonight, that this party is descending into Stalinist monolithism. That can only be viewed by the party as an attempt to conceal the fact that the group intends to continue acting in an indisciplined and disloyal manner. That's something to think about and think about very seriously.

Arthur Phelps says we're getting into the habit of dealing with political questions organizationally. Well you know, I think there's quite a good many comrades in the party, who are fed up with the acts of indiscipline and disloyal conduct on the part of this group and who would say the opposite is true. We've let them get away with so much that some comrades are afraid we're getting rusty organizationally. Comrade Phelps says the PC should present a political analysis of the Robertson-Mage-White group. Well -- after all! -- we've gone through several years discussion on an ascending scale, with the dispute reaching from one question to another to another, and finally culminating in a very intensive pre-convention discussion in which all questions were open for consideration. Still Comrade Phelps says we ought to present a political analysis of the minority! The Robertsonites have had a chance to pop off for a long time and everybody that knows the time of day knows what their line is and why they stand for. We're not a perpetual talk shop and we're not about to do a retake on that scene.

There's another small factor involved. We're dealing now with the question of basic principles of the party. We're dealing with a question of protecting the integrity of this party, it's inner vitality, its good and welfare, its whole future. And it so happens that this party has some well-defined principles that are to be enforced. It's not a matter of starting a debate now as to whether or not we've got some principles and if so what we should do about them. The principles are established. They're the fundamental concepts on which this party has been constructed and they're going to be enforced.

Now, some sneering reference was made by one of the speakers, I forget who, to the fact that the Political Committee motion quotes the 1938 resolution. Well that 1938 resolution quoted in the P.C. motion just happens to be a basic organizational document, adopted at the founding convention of the party, and it sets forth the basic concepts and principles upon which the party is organized. Let me tell you something else that's in that resolution. It describes the task before our party in this country as involving what can be expected to be one of the most ruthless and irreconcilable struggles for power in all of history. It states that an organization that is loosely knit, heterogeneous and undisciplined would be utterly incapable of accomplishing the revolutionary socialist tasks that the party sets for itself. That resolution states that the party must make an unconditional demand upon its membership for complete discipline and 100 percent loyalty. Those are basic premises that are fundamental to the very existence of this party, and the party leadership is charged with the responsibility of scrupulously protecting not only the rights of minorities, but also the principle of majority rule in keeping with the concepts of democratic centralism. The party cannot tolerate indiscipline. The party cannot, and it will not, tolerate disloyalty. It is the duty of the leadership of this party to see that its principles are enforced and this leadership is going to see to it.

I come finally to the motion by Comrade Harry T. to demand that the Political Committee lift the suspensions; the statement by Comrade Edie that the members control this party and that the members have the right to reverse the Political Committee; and the ringing pronouncement by Comrade Al S. that the Dobbs regime is not the party. They turn everything upside down. They try to make the comrades forget how this party is constructed. Why, you wouldn't think that this party just went through an actual experience in which there was a completely democratic discussion, during which the leadership bent over backwards to assure the fullest democratic rights to minority oppositions within the party. A discussion in which everyone who had a point of view on any question before the party had

an opportunity to express that view, had an opportunity to put it in writing and have it published in the bulletin just as written. Discussion after discussion, debate after debate, with time allotted for reporters for each viewpoint, were carried on in the branches. The convention was organized through a democratic election of delegates on the basis of the branch votes on the resolutions before the party. And that convention decided the issues in dispute.

The convention selected a Nominating Commission. The Nominating Commission brought in a slate for the National Committee. Its slate was debated on the convention floor, other nominations were made, a secret ballot vote was taken and through that vote a National Committee was elected. The National Committee in turn designated a Political Committee and designated national officers, including a National Secretary who happens to be me. Now, Comrade Al, speaking for the Robertson-Mage-White faction, tries to make that whole democratic process appear a piece of bureaucracy by simply stating the Dobbs regime is not the party.

No, of course the Dobbs regime is not the party. What you call the Dobbs regime is just myself as National Secretary, constituting only one component part of the leadership. The national leadership -- the regime -- includes the Secretariat, of the Political Committee, the members of the Political Committee and the members of the National Committee, all of whom were democratically elected by the party. To the best of its ability that national leadership is carrying out the program and principles on which this party was founded. It is insisting on the carrying out of the convention decisions. It is demanding disciplined conduct and loyalty from every member of the party. So long as the leadership does that there will be no crisis in the party. There would be a crisis only if the leadership defaulted on its responsibilities. The leadership is not going to default and the membership is going to back the leadership, because the action taken by the Political Committee to defend the fundamental integrity of this party is necessary to the good and welfare of the party and it will be welcomed by the party.

November 7, 1963.