

INTERNAL BULLETIN

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C O N T E N T S

LETTER FROM THE R.C.P.	Page 1
LETTER FROM THE S.W.P.	1
LETTER FROM THE R.C.P.	3
OPEN LETTER TO S.W.P. MEMBERS -- A Reply to the Report of Comrade Stuart	6
A LETTER FROM STUART	28

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116 University Place
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LETTER FROM THE R.C.P.

26th July 1944

To the Political Committee,
Socialist Workers' Party,
U.S.A.

Dear Comrades,

We have received the International Bulletin, Vol. 3, No. 1 containing an article "The Fusion of the British Trotskyists" (A Report).

We want to be informed whether this is (1) a personal opinion, or (2) formally endorsed by the P.C. of the S.W.P. If it is a personal opinion why was this not clearly indicated in the document itself? If it is formally endorsed, quite apart from the political opinions, should not an official document have been checked at least for questions of fact, on which the document has numerous glaring errors?

Furthermore, we seriously question the propriety of using other than published documents or official statements as a basis for political characterisations of one section of the international in a document broadly circulated within another section of the international. In this connection we wish to know whether copies of this document have gone to other sections, and if so, whether individually or in quantities.

Until we have heard from you we are not publishing this document in the R.C.P. Internal Bulletin but we wish to state immediately that we reserve the right, not only to do so, but to request that any reply we may find it necessary to make, be given at least the same publicity as was given the International Bulletin.

Since we are suspending action pending your reply, we would appreciate receipt of your reply with the minimum delay.

Yours fraternally,

M. Lee
Acting Secretary
Revolutionary Communist Party

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LETTER FROM THE S.W.P.

New York
August 21st 1944

To the Political Committee
Revolutionary Communist Party

Dear Comrades,

We have received your inquiry about the International Bulletin, Vol. III, No. 1, containing the report "The Fusion of the British Trotskyists."

Let us first try to clear up the character of the Bulletin.

1) It is "international" only in one sense, in the sense that the subject matter treated in it is international in character. It deals with the problems of a sister section in which our comrades are keenly interested. Otherwise it is entirely an internal bulletin of the Socialist Workers Party for the information of the party members.

In answer to your question we can inform you that it has not been sent to any other sections, except for the several copies we sent you.

2) The report does not represent official party policy or official party opinion. It is the report of a leading comrade, expressing his observations and views. You ask, "If it is a personal opinion why was this not clearly indicated in the document itself?" It has been our practice in issuing internal bulletins -- and we have issued many of them -- to print articles and reports in such bulletins with the understanding that they represent the point of view of the individual author, except when signed by the Political or National Committee. We have proceeded on the same basis in relation to this bulletin.

We learn with regret that you question the veracity of some of the statements in the bulletin and the soundness of judgment expressed in some sections of the bulletin. We can only say to this that the best method of procedure is for you to correct what you consider errors in the bulletin or to take issue with the judgment of the reporter. We will be only too glad to publish your material in a bulletin and to distribute it just as widely as the report itself was distributed.

We fail to see wherein our procedure in issuing the report in bulletin form was wrong. It seems to us that it is far better, even from your point of view, to have such a report black on white. This report was before us. Should we have confined it to the leading circle of the party? If it is your belief that the report misrepresents you and errs in its statements, how would you then be able to correct it? It seems to us that by the method we have pursued you have the full opportunity of correcting errors. This is the only method that makes possible an intelligent and comradely interchange of opinions. We assure you that the bulletin was issued in good faith.

Trusting that this answers adequately your questions,

Fraternally yours,

M. Stein
Acting National Secretary
Socialist Workers Party

LETTER FROM THE R.C.P.

4th October 1945

Secretary
Socialist Workers Party
U.S.A.

Dear Comrade,

We have studied your reply to our queries regarding the "International Bulletin" issued by the S.W.P., and after careful discussion and consideration, the Political Bureau has come to the conclusion that your reply is unsatisfactory to us in almost every respect. At best, the issuance of this Bulletin can only be seen as a measure of incredible thoughtlessness; at worst, it must be regarded as an attack against the leadership of the R.C.P. based upon misinformation and misrepresentation.

You state that the Bulletin was issued for the information of the S.W.P. membership. No one can take issue with an attempt to inform members of one section as to what is taking place in another. Such information can only help in the process of integrating the international. What concerns us here is the nature of the so-called "Report"; how it was arrived at; and what it sets out to do. More important in some respects, than the actual material selected, is the question of the method of selection, as well as the method of circulation.

The Bulletin is based upon a tissue of falsehoods and malicious misrepresentations. It also contains numerous factual inaccuracies (misinformation) which although important in themselves, are of much lesser consequence. All these are dealt with in our reply.

Assuming that everything stated in the Bulletin was correct, and the arguments and conclusions were sound; with the best will in the world, the publication of such a Bulletin -- its manner of publication could only serve to damage the work of international collaboration.

Surely the best method of informing the membership of the S.W.P. would be the publication of the internal political discussion bulletins and resolutions which were circulated preceding the formation of the R.C.P., and which formed the background of a united Party in Britain? All the ideas of the participants were there, and a selection would have shown the lines of political demarcation. Copies of these documents have been in your hands for many months. There is no apparent reason why they should not have been used as the basis for internal "information."

Traditionally, our movement has had a serious attitude towards the statement of facts. The Old Man has taught us to check and recheck in the most conscientious manner, material which had the important function of informing our people. How much more important to check on data and facts, when such are to

be used as the basis for the characterisation of one section for the information of another, and the characterisation of the factions within the section?

Instead of using this tested method, you chose to publish a document founded on chit chat and factional fireside gossip.

The document in question is issued as a "Report", yet there is no indication what the sources of the report are or how the conclusions are arrived at.

But it is undeniable that its function in fact, as well as by intention, is rather more than a "report."

The document is unsigned, and therefore, so far as the membership of the S.W.P. are concerned, is surely the responsibility of no one person, but of the P.C. Unsigned documents usually, at least in the British movement, have a semi-official or official character -- adding authority to the text and to the conclusions drawn. Whatever special knowledge the P.C. might have of the author, this knowledge is patently not shared by the membership. In any event, the fact that this same article, somewhat edited, appears in the "Fourth International" under the signature of the author, which is unsigned in the internal bulletin, gives added weight to the opinion that it can only be regarded as an official or semi-official document.

Our experience of S.W.P. bulletins is that they circulate freely in the international sections. It seems to us a probability that this one will likewise reach other sections -- thus misinforming the national sections as to the real situation in Britain, and undermining what confidence we may have built up in a period of painful struggle.

The Bulletin specifically introduces a discussion on the perspectives and tasks which face our Party here, and enters on one side of the discussion. No one can object to such a step, providing the partisan character of the document is made clear. This document is not only a report, therefore, even assuming that all the data were correct: it is the voice of a protagonist who is lending his weight in a discussion.

It is hard for us to understand why the P.C. did not veto this report, or cause it to be checked. The P.C. of the S.W.P. are fully aware of the difficult situation which exists in Britain -- or existed -- arising out of the protracted split in our movement here. The unification arrived at was the culmination of a very painful and delicate process, and in line with all other fusions, requires time to heal the "split scar." It is indeed, still only in the process of fructification. How is it possible to conceive that the "Report" which you circulated could be helpful to that process?

The P.C. of the S.W.P. is also aware of the attitude adopted towards the author of this "Report" by the overwhelming majority

of the leadership of the British section. This attitude, let us say at once, is the result of our experience of his unfortunate intervention in the pre-fusion discussions in Britain. On these grounds alone, we think more thought should have been given to the subject before rushing into print. A significant point is, that on hearing that Stuart was to write a report, mindful of our previous experiences at his hands, Comrade Grant, who is attacked in the text although not mentioned by name, requested that a copy be sent to us for checking before it was published in the States. Stuart agreed to do this, but did not see fit to do so.

You ask whether you should have confined this report, when it was before you to the leading circles of the Party? Yes, comrades --- at least until you had the opportunity to check it. We would recall to your memory official reports sent from this country, which were confined to leading circles of the Party in the past. The authoritative documents of the pre-conference discussions were also confined to the leading circles of the Party. These would have been immeasurably more valuable for the education of the rank and file of the S.W.P. than the present "Report." When the author of this "Report" participated (together with another S.W.P. comrade) in the pre-fusion discussion in which the authority of the S.W.P. leaders was invoked, it was suggested that such material be circulated just as freely in the S.W.P. as it was being circulated here. You decided then, to keep the discussion within the confines of the Party leadership. It is difficult to find reasons why you were in such a hurry to print this document. One thing we can state: before publishing in this country an attack upon the S.W.P. leadership, we would most certainly have checked the material and had discussions with the leadership first.

One question raised by the publication of this document which disturbs us very much and which, in our opinion, demands an answer from the I.S.: should not such reports and documents come through the official channels of the sections, or be checked by responsible bodies? Otherwise all kinds of friction and difficulties must inevitably and regularly arise. This seems to us to be the only responsible method of informing our comrades in other sections and maintaining the closest bonds between the sections. Certainly, it was the method of the C.I. under Lenin.

How can we be sure that reports of other sections now in our hands, are not equally distorted as this one? The very basis of international confidence must be destroyed if this method is pursued.

In concluding this letter, I must point out that its very necessity, is already in itself a criticism of the method you adopted. At best it has introduced a great deal of unnecessary labour and friction. We are informed that when our letter was discussed by members of the P.C., the author of the "Report" shrugged his shoulders nonchalantly, and said: "So what, I made a mistake", and "I am entitled to get my information from whom I please." It is precisely this lightminded attitude, which is characteristic of the "Report", to which we take strong objection, and which, if persisted in, can only harm our movement.

If, in our reply, we adopt a sharp tone, it is because we believe this to be a very serious matter which we cannot lightly dismiss.

We are pleased to know that our reply will be circulated. We are circulating both documents here and together with these, we propose to circulate the correspondence which has passed between us on the subject.

Yours fraternally,
J. Haston
General Secretary
Revolutionary Communist Party

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OPEN LETTER TO S.W.P. MEMBERS

A REPLY TO THE REPORT OF COMRADE STUART

Dear Comrades,

We address this letter to the leadership and members of the S.W.P., our brother party, on the contents of the International Bulletin issued by the S.W.P., with great reluctance and only after much hesitation. For this is not a spontaneous defensive reply to what we believe to be -- and will try to prove to be -- a slander upon our Party and its leadership here in Britain; it is a considered attempt to place before the American comrades the truth about the British situation.

We would prefer to be stating a simple factual case of the present stage of the class struggle in this country and of the work of our Party, together with a report of the pre-Fusion discussions and the formation of the united party -- the Revolutionary Communist Party. But our intervention in your discussions has primarily other, and in some respects, more important ends: the destruction of a fable and the exposure of a tendency which has made itself manifest on the part of certain leaders of the S.W.P. in their activity in the British movement.

The fable is the one which has been reported by Stuart and disseminated by the S.W.P. leadership in its "International Bulletin." The tendency is factional, anti-internationalist in spirit and activity on the part of leading S.W.P. members which acts as a blight on our movement; which distorts the facts and the relations within our parties; and which, unless destroyed completely in our movement (internationally and nationally), will do it irreparable damage.

Were we the most charitable people in the world, in dealing with this "International Bulletin", we would be compelled to say that this is a classic example of how an international report should not be compiled or written -- particularly if the purpose of such a report is to inform one section of our movement about another. But

we do not propose to be charitable on this occasion. The issues are too big; the tower of stupid misinformation too high; the inevitable damage to international understanding and collaboration in the work of building the Fourth International too far reaching for this material to be freely peddled without complete refutation.

CORRECTING MINOR ERRORS

Minor factual errors abound in Stuart's "report" from the first page to the last. We propose to touch on some of these errors, but only in passing. Our main task will be to tear down the distortions and factional misrepresentations.

It is erroneous, for instance, to state that "a mass demand for labour to break the coalition has swept the trade unions for the past two years." That stage has not yet been reached. It is fast coming but it certainly had not been reached when the report was written.

It is false to say that when Aneurin Bevan goes to the mining districts to conduct strike breaking "the miners wave him aside no less lustily than the Stalinist Horner or the old time bureaucrat Lawther." Bevan's popularity is not an "old popularity" -- it is new. Nor is it this illusory "discreditment among his constituents" that pushed Bevan into collision with the Labour Party heads. Bevan has never been so popular in the Ebbw Vale district, from which he was sent to parliament, as he is at the present time. He is today's popular idol in South Wales -- and for that matter in Britain as a whole among the Labour masses. He is riding on the crest of the wave in the popular reawakening of the Labour movement. It is this that brings him into collision with the Labour tops, and not at all because he wishes to regain lost credit.

Stuart writes:

"In the middle of March the Workers International League and the Revolutionary Socialist League held a joint convention at which these two organizations fused and took the name Revolutionary Communist Party.

"The groups had previously been divided by tactical differences. Originally, these differences centered around the question of entry into the Labour Party. Subsequently organizational differences superceded even the tactical. In 1938 a unification was attempted by the International on the basis of a compromise of the disputed questions, on which no clear majority had been evident. One group refused to accept this compromise and remained outside the formal framework of the then constituted British Section of the Fourth International. This group later became the WIL. The official section became known as the RSL."

The Fusion Conference convened by the International in 1938 was attended by four groups -- the RSL, RSP, Militant Group, and

WIL -- and not, as one would conclude from the above paragraph, by the RSL and WIL. The documents and discussions of this conference (which was dominated by American Party leaders) have unfortunately, never been published for the International.

The WIL was in existence prior to this Conference and did not "later become the WIL".

The original differences between the WIL and the Militant Group, from which the WIL arose, were of an organizational character. Later tactical and political differences arose, which maintained the separation. Thus, the facts are the reverse of those portrayed by Stuart.

It is incorrect to state that "a representative of each of the three former factions of the RSL are on the CC." Nor is it correct to say that "no representation was given to the former WIL minority." Conference representation was on a proportional basis. There are on the CC two members of the Militant Group, none from the Left -- since they refused representation on the grounds that they would take no responsibility for the organization or its policy. The TO and Minority of WIL claimed to have the same political and tactical position as the majority of WIL. They disagreed only on whether discussion on past organizational differences be closed for discussion or not in the new fused organization. The TO had requested that their representation be included in a joint panel. They were advised during the negotiations that the WIL caucus had not sufficient confidence in them as representatives of their political position for inclusion in a joint panel. It was therefore suggested by the WIL leadership that the TO should elect their own CC representative plus one alternate, which they did, jointly with the WIL minority. The WIL majority leadership vetoed their first nomination (a member of the WIL minority) for reasons which we can go into if necessary. Had they not done so, let it be stated, their nominee would not have got onto the joint WIL-TO panel.

It is true that the WIL Minority were refused special representation on the CC, the reason being that they had no organizational weight or political differences which would give them this right. Since when does a minority have special representation on the basis of a minor organizational difference, such as whether the WIL were correct or not in its attitude towards the fusion of 1938?!

At the fusion conference which formed the RCP the TO and former WIL minority made a verbal statement saying their faction was dissolved. Not only the Lefts, but also the Militant Group proclaimed itself as a faction and retain factional rights.

The Left does not have a "number of miners". Recently, one of its members entered the pits from the clothing industry. What can be said on this score is that an ex-miner who publishes the "Miners Militant" is in contact with a number of miners as a member of the Labour Party.

There are many other incorrect statements made about this faction which it is not necessary to comment on here.

THE REAL DISCUSSIONS AT CONFERENCE

Ostensibly, the "report" sets out to portray the "Fusion of the British Trotskyists," the capitalist attack against the new party, and the immediate perspectives and tasks ahead. Such a project can only be welcomed -- it is indeed laudible in the extreme -- if conscientious reporters do the job.

One thing we can say at once about the report penned by Stuart -- it is indeed conscientious. But not in explaining the ideas and discussions verbal and written, which preceded and formed the basis of the fused organization; nor in explaining the birth of the RCP as an objective event whose evolution was observed by the participants, and recorded in the form of resolutions, documents and minutes. Conscientiousness, according to Stuart, does not demand such exacting research and study! It demands from him only a rehash of chit-chat on the back stairs, or scraps of fire-side factional gossip! The least the British comrades expected is that a "reporter" would inquire from the source, as to the correctness of certain political opinions allegedly held by them.

One can peruse the "report" throughout without getting the slightest hint of the real discussions that took place at the fusion. Was there a discussion on perspectives; on the tactics arising out of these perspectives; the role of the Labour Party, Industrial work, etc., etc.? Not a word on these problems which formed the basis of the discussions and which for so long separated the British Trotskyists -- not a word!

The ideas of the participants were before Conference in the form of numerous documents and resolutions. There is ample material for a full elucidation of the different positions which could have informed the S.W.P. membership of the political differences and been a valuable source of education. Stuart was familiar with these documents, as were the leaders of the S.W.P. Instead of an analysis of these real differences, we are treated to a disgraceful "report" of alleged differences and alleged deviations, and to a so-called analysis of "weights, measures and directives" which are cock-eyed in any case.

At the Conference there were three factions which submitted resolutions and documents: the Militant Group, the "Left", and the WIL whose political position had the support of the TO. Sixty-nine delegates attended the Conference on the basis of proportional representation 1 to every 7 members. The delegation was as follows:

R.S.L.: 17 (Militant Group 7; TO 6; Left 4)
W.I.L.: 52

The TO and the WIL minority had a different position from the WIL only on an organizational issue. The latter (TO and WIL minority) presented no independent political or organizational documents. The only manifestation of their position as opposed to that of the WIL was their opposition to the section of the Fusion Resolution, which read as follows: "In the interests of the

fusion, this Conference, therefore, dissolves all past organizational conflicts and disputes, and closes discussion on these questions in the British Section."

The main differences at Conference centered on the four questions of policy and tactics: Military Policy, Labour Party tactic, Workers' Control and Industrial Tactics.

The Military Policy put forward by the WIL and TO was opposed by both the Lefts and the Militant Group and not as Stuart incorrectly reported, by the Lefts only. Both factions argued that it was chauvinist and opportunist. This resolution on the Military Policy was published in the "Fourth International" in May 1944. Both the Militant Group and the Left moved resolutions on "Revolutionary Defeatism".

The voting on this was as follows:

Left R.S.L. Resolution: 4 in favour
Militant Group Resolution: 11 in favour
WIL-TO Resolution: 57 in favour; 11 opposed;
1 abstention

The tactic of immediate entry into the Labour Party and the complete subordination of independent party work was put forward as against the tactic of building the Party at this stage on the basis of turning the face of the organization to the factory and trade union movement as an independent force, whilst maintaining at the same time factions in the LP and ILP, not closing the door to the possibility of future entry. The Militant group and the Lefts together voted against the independent orientation on this question.

The voting was as follows:

For the Entrist Tactic: 11
For the independent orientation: 58

The slogan of "Workers Control" and the question of Industrial Perspectives and tactics: The Militant Group and the Lefts held that it was incorrect to raise the slogan of workers' control as it was raised by the WIL in relation to production in war time. Both claimed that it was a concession to chauvinism and was opportunist.

The "Lefts" claimed that the slogan could only be put forward as arising out of a Third Labour Government and after such a government had come to power. The Militant Group said that it should only be raised during a period of revolutionary upsurge.

The WIL and the TO argued that the slogan had a propaganda potency at all stages of the struggle during imperialist war, and particularly when Joint Production Committees were being set up and a large scale propaganda was being conducted by the capitalists

and their agents in the Labour movement. Our task was to counterpose proletarian control in every phase of "civil" and military life, consciously raising the idea of factory committees and similar organizations as organs of workers' control and as organs of power; linking the slogans of control constantly to the slogan of Labour to Power.

On Industrial Tactics the WIL resolution had the support of all factions except the "Left." This resolution urged support for the Militant Workers' Federation as a stage in the crystallization of a militant factory leadership on a national scale which would coordinate and direct militant industrial activity in the unions, as well as in the plants.

It was held that the MWF had the possibility of becoming the focal point around which the workers would organize on a local and national scale, when the industrial storms broke.

The "Lefts" argued that the MWF was a paper organization and should be disbanded. Our task was to operate inside the Stalinist controlled unofficial movement, and if expelled, set up an expelled opposition. The sooner we were expelled from the Stalinist controlled organization, once we had entered, the better -- for our real work will not commence until we are expelled. This will enable us to start an agitation against Stalinist methods in the factories.

It may be said by some of the participants that the above is an over-simplification of the positions taken at Conference. But without extensive quotations it is impossible to deal adequately with these differences.

Conference concentrated on the main outstanding questions which had separated the British movement over a period of years and several resolutions from the "Left" were not included on the agenda -- e.g. on "Sabotage" in relation to the Soviet Union, the National Question and China, the Italian revolution, and others, because of lack of time.

On the Fusion Resolution (published in The Militant) the "Lefts" abstained. The TO and WIL minority opposed the section ending past organizational conflicts and closing the discussion on these questions. They wished to leave the question open for further discussion.

Briefly, these were the main questions discussed at the Fusion Conference and which should have been elaborated by Stuart on the basis of the documents if he had wished to give the SWP members a real view of the British movement and the fusion. But he failed to do so.

But if Stuart failed to give a political appreciation of the real discussions and differences, he gave plenty of space to organizational evaluations combined with imaginary political discussions and speeches.

POLITICAL CHARACTERIZATION BASED ON GOSSIP

In "indicating" a "deviation of national coloration" Stuart alleges:

"In defense of the resolution on military policy, a leader of the majority in the new CC (Comrade Ted Grant is being hit at here) made some remarks that called forth astonishment and protest, particularly among those in agreement with the resolution, which is by and large a correct statement of the international policy. Characteristic of these remarks was a reference to Montgomery's Eighth Army as "OUR Eighth Army". The protests only brought reiteration from the speaker with a stronger emphasis than before: he spoke with pride of "our Eighth Army." (The emphasis is Stuart's.)

Monstrous falsification! That Stuart should accuse leading British Trotskyists of chauvinism is bad enough. To tear a phrase out of its context for the purpose of demonstrating a "deviation", is nothing short of a scandal in the ranks of the Fourth International. And that such stuff should be circulated by the PC of the SWP without a check is not easy to understand.

This "scene" is supposed to have taken place at the Fusion Conference. This is false. The incident, distorted above, took place at the WIL Conference in 1943 during a discussion not on Military Policy, but on European and British perspectives. The Resolution to which Comrade Grant was speaking is published in a pamphlet "The World Revolution and the Tasks of the British Working Class" drafted by him and accepted as a basic document by the Fusion Conference. The speech referred to is apparently that made by Comrade Grant published in Workers International News January 1944, and the section reads as follows:

"The moment the Labour Party comes to power will be already its period of decline, of splitting and breaking up. There is more socialist consciousness, a more radical attitude on the part of the masses than at any other period in history. The armed forces are more revolutionary, look more to the working class and socialism than even the ranks of the working class themselves. This class consciousness is expressed in the fact that in relation to the Negro and Indian questions we see solidarity between the army and the working class.

"We have a victorious army in North Africa and Italy -- and I say yes, Long Live the Eighth Army because that is our army. One of our comrades has spoken to a number of people who have had letters from the Eighth Army soldiers, showing their complete dissatisfaction. We know of incidents in the army, navy and other forces that have never been reported, and that it is impossible for us to report. It is our Eighth Army that is being hammered and tested and being organized for the purpose of changing the face of the world. This applies equally to all the forces."

This speech was edited for publication and several illustrations of minor mutinies and struggles among the ranks of the forces which led to this statement were omitted because of government censorship.

The background to this speech can be seen when one takes into consideration that the Tories received 14 seats out of 600 in the elections to the mock Forces' Parliament in Cairo; Labour received the overwhelming votes of the soldiers, Common Wealth next, and then the Stalinists. So great was the radicalization that the authorities dissolved this "Parliament." A Trotskyist was elected Prime Minister of the Benghazi "Forces Parliament" which was also disbanded.

Another indication of the radicalization of the Eighth Army: during the tremendous campaign which accompanied the arrests of our party members for "inciting to strike", the Eighth Army News published a full-page article under the headline: "THE RIGHT TO STRIKE IS ONE OF THE FREEDOMS FOR WHICH WE STRIKE".

One would have imagined that the revolutionary content of this speech was clear.

Comrade Grant had pointed to the fact that the capitalists were making a great to-do about the Eighth Army, shouting "Long Live the Eighth Army", etc. He cited the incidents to show the class antagonisms and said, "Yes, I say long live the Eighth Army for it is our army that is being hammered and being beaten into shape."

Obviously, what was being spoken about here was not the victorious bourgeois army, but certain revolutionary characteristics which had already manifested themselves, and would grow as the war went on -- THE VERY OPPOSITE TO WHAT THE BOURGEOISIE WERE SHOUTING ABOUT!

The formulation could have been better. But what is being discussed here is the ideas. Comrades who fail to grasp the revolutionary perspective and essence which was being driven home are pedants, or wilfully blind. The least one expects from a responsible member of our international movement when allegations of chauvinism are made against a responsible leading member of a section, is to check the allegation at its source before repeating it in writing, or even in gossip.

Not satisfied with this distortion, Stuart must needs go further. He states that Comrade Grant "spoke with pride of OUR Eighth Army" (his emphasis), which, whatever misconceptions may have arisen over the statement of Comrade Grant, is nothing less than a malicious lie.

If one looks for "deviations" in the SWP press and speeches with Stuart's method, one could find plenty. One is used to such distortions from Shachtman (and it is no accident that he wilfully distorted this point, as he did Cannon's Military Policy speeches),

but one expects an objective polemic from comrades in the international.

Let us give an example of how we, too, could find such "deviations" in the SWP leadership, using Stuart's method. From the speech on the Military Policy at the SWP 1940 Conference:

"WE are sending unlimited supplies of military materials to Europe. In my opinion the only reason why we are not sending troops is that there isn't any place to land them. (Our emphasis a la Stuart).

Could one infer from the above that Cannon means "our" troops?

Another example:

"WE are willing to fight Hitler. No worker wants to see that gang of Fascist barbarians overrun this country or any country ..."

"WE will join the war as long as the workers do..."

No one can doubt that these formulations could have been better, but one would have to entirely distort the whole content of Cannon's speech to arrive at a "deviation of national coloration." In the same way one has to distort the entire revolutionary essence of Comrade Grant's speech to arrive at Stuart's conclusions.

Let it be remembered that this discussion was taking place among Trotskyists -- not a bunch of Young Imperialists or Boy Scouts. In dealing with perspectives wouldn't Stuart consider and even justifiable to refer to "our Eighth Army" in view of the significant revolutionary developments taking place?

But not content with building this false picture, Stuart wants to make sure that it is firmly implanted in the minds of the American Party members. Just in case they didn't get the "drift", the "deviation" is traced in another disguise:

"Another view that aroused similar controversy was expressed by the same leader; namely that the liberation of the Euro-pean peoples from fascism was to be accomplished (not inspired, aided or furthered) by a socialist Britain in arms", and "this view even crept into an earlier draft of the resolution, but was corrected after a heated discussion."

Fortunately, by accident, we have in our files the "original draft" to which Stuart refers, with the pencilled alterations. It should not be necessary to have to enter into a discussion on this plane, the allegations are so fantastic. For the purpose of pinning this downright lie, however, and indicating the method by which it is peddled, we will deal with it in detail, reproducing the original "deviation" and its evolution.

THE HISTORY OF THE "DEVIATION"

The actual passage in the original draft which is apparently that characterized as a "national deviation" reads as follows: (incidentally, it was not written by the "same leader" of the WIL but by another):

"Only the working class, by taking power into its own hands can destroy fascism abroad and at home, ushering in a period of peace and plenty for all mankind."

This is marked by the TO and redrafted as follows:

"The only way in which the British working class can assist the German workers in the struggle against Fascism is by waging a resolute struggle for power against their own ruling class at home. Once in power the working class will not hesitate to defend itself by military means against all attacks from hostile capitalism."

It is further marked by Comrade Haston, who originally drafted the resolution, as follows:

"Only the working class, by taking power into its own hands, can destroy fascism abroad and at home and assist the German and European working class to destroy fascism by waging a revolutionary war."

And the final draft published, also by Comrade Haston, reads as follows:

"Only by overthrowing the capitalist state and taking power into its own hands under the leadership of the Fourth International can the British working class wage a truly revolutionary war and aid the German and European working class to destroy fascism and capitalist reaction."

If Stuart, or his informants, say that the discussion over this formulation arose on the basis of the idea that WIL members on the drafting Committee held "that the liberation of the European peoples from fascism was to be accomplished (not inspired, aided or furthered) by a socialist BRITAIN in arms" -- they are falsifying the facts in a most disgraceful manner.

Let it be noted that the draft under discussion was the first outline, and was just off the typewriter. It had not even been discussed by the WIL Political Bureau or Drafting Committee. But in order to achieve the most comradely atmosphere and close collaboration between the WIL and the TO, it had been agreed by the WIL to work as closely with the TO as possible in the first formulation stages of the rough draft.

It is perfectly clear from the evolution of the draft resolution that no "heated" discussion took place or could have taken

place on this basis. The question is too elementary -- even for the untheoretical and activist WILI

Not only this. The final draft was unanimously accepted. How does it come then, that an original admittedly rough and unfinished draft, which has been altered with unanimous agreement, should be used in this way? Only for the most disgraceful factional reasons, Comrade Stuart.

Let us repeat. Stuart did not consult the leading comrades who were alleged to have expressed verbally and in written form, these false ideas. When he informed the comrades here that he intended to write a report, Comrade Grant specifically requested that the leadership in Britain should be shown the results of his effort before publication because of our previous experience of Stuart's activities. Apparently, he did not think it worthwhile to attempt to correct these comrades who had chauvinistic tendencies.

What kind of "reporting" is this, can we ask, that throws into the arena scraps of factional gossip as a serious characterization of a tendency; when the author is forced to admit that nowhere is there evidence to establish his facts?

"Thus far", Stuart is forced to concede, "no other manifestations are recorded. (1) It is quite possible that what MAY be involved is merely careless thinking, unthought-out ideas, mistakes of the moment. AS YET NOT A FRAGMENT OF A SINGLE DOCUMENT HAS CRYSTALLIZED SUCH A POINT OF VIEW" (!!!).

Let us repeat: no other manifestations are recorded! Not a fragment of a single document has crystallized such a point of view! But there are dozens and dozens of documents giving the lie to the "deviation of a national character," which Stuart tries to foist upon the comrades whom he so disgracefully slanders.

And this irresponsible stuff is peddled by the SWP leadership as a serious contribution to international education!

GREAT AMERICANISM

This gossip writing is accompanied by a theoretical haughtiness on the part of Stuart. Referring to our resolution on the Military Policy (which has been published in the Fourth International without comment), he says it "is by and large a correct statement of our international policy." (our emphasis) In its critical content, what he is really saying is that "by and small" there are errors and ambiguities; that the British comrades responsible for the drafting of this resolution were not theoretically and politically so well equipped as... Stuart: that we have borrowed the idea, but didn't get it quite right. We know this is Stuart's angle from being continually told by him and his associates that we borrow our ideas from the SWP leaders and simply repeat them in our press! Here, if we might say so, is precisely a "deviation of national coloration" -- but not on our part. What might be termed "Great Americanism" on the part of Stuart.

Let us admit at once that we borrow from the S.W.P. But isn't this precisely internationalism? Our "common experience"? We hope to be able to borrow from other sections and that they in turn will borrow from us. We know that the American comrades "borrowed" from Comrade Trotsky -- a function of our international is to assist in borrowing from each other. What is important is whether we understand the ideas we borrow.

Either our Military Policy Resolution was a correct application of the ideas worked out by Comrade Trotsky, and should have been stated as such, without qualification -- or it was not so good and should have been the subject for advice and discussion. Such discussion on the basis of a resolution -- not factional gossip -- could have performed a good educational task in the USA as well as in Britain. Since Stuart is so rash and open in his criticisms of small organizational detail and offers his advice, why evade the important political responsibility?

The fact of the matter is that the resolution on Military Policy stands four square on the policy of the Fourth International. The "by and large" was mere effect, the factional barb.

PERSPECTIVES, PLAN AND THE I.L.P.

According to our critic the RCP has no perspective for future work in relation to the I.L.P. At best "the RCP has carried out only haphazard work in the ILP, mainly literary... leading forces have from time to time been withdrawn... What is needed is a perspective and a plan of work."

Let us examine this problem a little closer. In the first place, Stuart divorces the ILP from the political situation as a whole, in particular with the perspectives of the Labour Party and the relationship of the ILP to the Labour Party. The Conference resolution turning the face of the RCP to independent work, had this to say about the ILP:

"The past perspective (pre-war) was for the complete collapse of the centrist party -- the ILP. In fact, the ILP has grown in numerical strength and influence among the workers and is attracting fresh support from growing sections of the left labour and socialist conscious workers, and therefore, offers an important field for factional work on the part of the Fourth International.

"Whereas the ILP will most likely apply for affiliation and be accepted when the Labour Party breaks the coalition and achieves its independence, it follows that the ILP will become the main left wing organizational base for the leftward moving workers and that the 'Socialist Left' and similar paper organizations set up by the Trotskyist entrists will play no role in the Labour Party during the period of mass swing, but on the contrary will be a hindrance to our penetration of the Labour Party and must therefore be abandoned in favor of our factional entry into an affiliated ILP;

"Whereas the perspective of a mass left swing to the Labour Party may at a later stage necessitate the total entry of our forces into the Labour Party, such a perspective is most unlikely, but if this situation arises our forces will probably enter the Labour Party through the affiliated ILP."

At this particular stage it is in the factories and the unions that the main forces of Trotskyism are being recruited. But we have not neglected the ILP. We have a complete picture of the ILP as a whole and of its active sections continually before us.

On the basis of the general perspectives quoted above, which are constantly tested and concretized by detailed knowledge, we devote a certain amount of time and forces to the ILP. Until recently it has not been necessary, nor, what is more, has it been possible to have a detailed plan of work.

We can fully agree with Stuart that it is possible to set a formal perspective of winning the majority of the ILP. Indeed, such a formal perspective has long been discussed in our ranks. But what we are directly guided by on this tactical issue are the general relationships in the movement, and the concrete possibilities of the material at hand. These in turn, are determined by the actual forces at our disposal inside and outside the ILP.

In explaining the situation in the ILP our critic gives a very distorted picture of the groupings and the possibilities from faction work at this stage.

"At the Easter Conference" (1944) we are told, "the rank and file clashed with the leadership on both these issues (affiliation to the LP and opportunist blocs with the Middle class Common Wealth) and in the vote defeated them decisively on both..."

What follows this statement implies that the RCP had no influence on these issues. The size of the Left wing is grossly exaggerated.

Incidentally, there is no "Sara-Dewar" group in the ILP -- there is, or since this Bulletin commenced, was a small group headed by Wicks and Dewar. Sara is in the Labour Party and has been for many years a full time paid lecturer for the National Council of Labour Colleges.

Nor is there in the ILP a "still larger indigenous Left Wing, containing a good many former C.P. members -- particularly in the mine areas -- works with the Trotskyists in close harmony at Conference."

Not a single word of this is correct. There are numbers of errors of this character, but it is not necessary to deal with all here.

The resolution on Common Wealth was moved by Trotskyists "in close relation to the RCP", and was an indication of a plan of work. All the credit can go to the RCP. But far from the voting on affiliation being a decisive defeat for the ILP leadership, it was on the contrary, an important victory for them. Their position was overwhelmingly carried. The resolution to convene a special conference to discuss affiliation to the Labour Party in the event of it breaking the coalition, was their resolution. The opponents of affiliation were largely pacifists and a small number of confused lefts. True, among these latter were some very good rank and file elements -- most of whom have been convinced of the correctness of our position since.

Developing his case, Stuart states that "the programme is not at issue. With minor concessions the basic position of the Fourth International is already acceptable to the native left wing." If by "native left wing" Stuart means ILPers moving to the left and at loggerheads with the leadership (and not the few renegades from Trotskyism) he is very much mistaken in the belief that there is programmatic agreement. The "native left wing" are largely left reformists, still very far from the position of the Fourth International. Here it is not a question of minor concessions on questions of tactics, but an education in revolutionary policy which must guide our actions. If it is the ex-Trotskyists who are being discussed, Stuart is entirely incorrect.

However, in this document, so full of detail, we are not informed what these "concessions" might be, but it is fairly easy to guess.

Inside the ILP the main tactical question which separated us from the Wicks-Dewar faction (which is not the "native" left wing", was the question of affiliation to the Labour Party. We are for affiliation -- Wicks and Dewar are against. The perspective of the latter is to split (!) the ILP on the question of affiliation. Hopeless, stupid, utopian sectarianism! A split -- even if it could be engineered at this stage and on the basis of the anti-affiliation bloc, would set up a miniature edition of the ILP. The bulk of the splitters would be petit-bourgeois, semi-anarchists and pacifists, and a handful of Trotskyists, doomed to splinter into pieces at the first meeting after the split.

But it is apparently this split perspective which intrigues Stuart. His first perspective is the formal one: to win the majority of the ILP. The second is a concrete one: to split the ILP on the affiliation issue.

Speaking of this type of tactic, one of the leading American comrades said that what was important was to strike while the iron was hot. But Stuart wants to strike while the iron is not yet in the fire. To be successful, such a tactic, even in the most favorable circumstances, must take up a great deal of

time and energy of the Party whose forces should be concentrated at the point of attack. But as we estimate it, the situation in the ILP is very different from that portrayed by Stuart. There has not yet grown the left wing or the ferment, thus the time is not yet ripe. And even if it were ripe, it would not be worth diverting the efforts of our members from more favorable fields of activity at the present stage of the struggle.

The anti-affiliationist policy is a sectarian trend. And it is precisely to this trend that Stuart wants to make concessions. If a split on this issue were successful it would have the opposite effect to what Comrade Stuart seems to think. It would isolate the revolutionary wing who would be outside the ILP at the period of its entry into the Labour Party -- just at that period when it would begin to offer a real milieu of work.

Throughout the working class movement there is a growing desire for unity on the part of the workers. The opportunist leadership of the ILP, tired of the wilderness and hoping to avoid responsibility of leadership in the great battles ahead, want to climb back into the Labour Party and a safe milieu of work. Their attitude toward affiliation is an opportunist one. But to combat them we have to counterpose a revolutionary attitude. Affiliation is entirely correct and in line with the historical trend and tasks. From every point of view affiliation would be advantageous to us. It would clarify the position of the ILP leadership as out and out reformist, not to be distinguished from the "left" Labour bureaucrats; it would intensify the differentiation within the ILP and help to crystallize the revolutionary wing; the ILP would act as a medium for organizing the leftward movement of labour workers who can be won to Trotskyism through our faction. The Labour leaders and the ILP leaders understand the position well: they would like nothing better than that the Trotskyists break from the ILP at this stage.

What weight has this so-called broader, non-Party Trotskyist faction, to whom we must make such "concessions"? The Wicks-Dewar faction had 9 members when Stuart penned his work, and no influence outside London. Since then, the best members -- the younger elements are now in the party, Wicks and Dewar remaining outside and officially dissolving their faction.

This advice on the ILP work is particularly irritating when it is taken into account that this is the first that we have heard from Stuart or any other American comrade on the subject. An elementary understanding of international work would indicate that the normal and obvious course for an IS or SWP delegate would have been to thoroughly discuss the question with the party leadership, before giving advice -- (advice obviously not intended for the leadership, since he had plenty of opportunity to offer this in discussion). Not even Trotsky would have deemed it proper to do this.

In any event, even if Stuart's information on the incidental questions had been correct, at the very least it was lightminded and irresponsible to give a "directive" on a secondary question such as this, without taking the trouble to familiarize himself with the whole of the party work, the balance of forces, etc., etc., of which he is entirely ignorant even today.

His presumption is particularly glaring in the case he instanced of Roy Tearse. For months before his withdrawal, Comrade Tearse was purely a nominal member of the ILP. His retention in fact, would have damaged us, as events have shown. It was far more important for Comrade Tearse to conduct the open activity of the party in the industrial field, which has shown such good results for the party. Had Stuart taken the trouble to discuss the question, he could not have doubted this for one moment. But isn't it rather fantastic that we have to write to the American comrades and discuss an organizational detail such as this? What would the comrades think if we had to intervene in a similar fashion in the organizational work of the American Party, on the basis of some careless gossip that we had heard in private from some comrade, without a knowledge of the facts? What would the American comrades think if we demanded to know why so-and-so had been withdrawn from the Michigan Commonwealth Federation, and sent to do open work in Minneapolis?

This "example" (the withdrawal of Comrade Tearse) is given to "prove" that the "policy of sporadic withdrawal must be replaced by a policy of building the left wing". What withdrawals, comrade? Name them. As a matter of fact in some years of factional work we have taken only two or three people out of the ILP -- and then only for good reasons. On the other hand, we have placed and retained in the ILP several comrades that we could ill spare from other important work -- not from the point of view of immediate gains -- but entirely from the point of view of long term perspective. Far from sporadic withdrawals all the people we gain in the ILP, remain there. This is an elementary question which is part of our whole organizational practice.

The example of Comrade Tearse's withdrawal is introduced to show that we have only conducted "haphazard work" in the ILP. Here is the evidence that we lack a "perspective", a "plan of work". What does Stuart think our comrades in the ILP have been doing over the past few years -- playing hop-scotch?

It is significant that Stuart, who is supposed to be giving a directive on "perspectives" if you please ... precisely fails to raise the question of perspectives! Since 1938 we have predicted the inevitable gravitation of the ILP to its reformist home -- the Labour Party. We have based our perspective inside and outside the ILP on this prognosis. It is an astonishing thing that not once in his treatise, is this all important issue -- precisely in relation to perspective -- mentioned, i.e., affiliation to the Labour Party. One cannot even begin to talk about "Perspective" without dealing with this question.

To say that our work was "mainly literary" is just ridiculous. In fact this side of our work has not been sufficiently developed. Not because we did not have any perspectives, Comrade Stuart, but because many factors, including paucity of forces.

After years of patient work with young, inexperienced comrades, our work in the ILP is taking shape. All the pseudo-Trotskyist groupings are united now -- but in the party. We are penetrating into new districts where we formerly had no members or influence. But even now this work is in its early stages. Our perspective in the ILP is not one of "Get rich quick", but of patient accumulation.

More recently, some of the SWP comrades have posed the orientation of the Party towards the ILP from the standpoint of a campaign for fusion. No doubt we shall shortly be hearing from their friends in the British Party posing these original ideas. It is our conception that fusion is posed in revolutionary politics when there is a substantial measure of agreement on the fundamental programme, and a fair measure of agreement on the secondary tactical issues; or it is posed as a tactical maneuver to sharpen out a dispute already in existence, with the purpose of securing a consolidation of the left centrist minority with the revolutionary party, and a split.

Whatever perspective is set, the struggle for fusion must be the center of the Party's orientation and activity -- if it is to achieve the desired effect. The whole weight of the Party must be thrown into the breach, at the point of attack. But an elementary acquaintance with the evolution of the ILP in the past ten years, would rule out the first perspective at this stage of the struggle. Later, it may pose itself in the midst of a revolutionary upheaval.

The ILP, which evolved to the left from 1931 to 1934, has made a steady progression to the right since that date. In the last three years, particularly, that process has been speeded up. As a "principled" turn, fusion could only exaggerate the revolutionary potential of the ILP, would run counter to its present evolution, it would conflict with our general perspective and confuse our sympathizers on a national scale. As a tactical maneuver it also runs contrary to our general perspective. After discussion over a period of months by our Political Bureau, it was rejected, because it would not compensate for the withdrawal from other more favorable fields of work -- even if successful.

The present phase of the struggle in Britain and the relation of forces makes it impossible to effectively shatter the ILP and remove it as an obstacle in our path at this stage. Were we to split the left wing away, as we explained before, we would only isolate them in the next phase of the struggle. The Labour Party leaders are seeking a left cover and they are finding

it in the ILP. Bereft of the Trotskyists and its own left wing, the ILP will still be an attractive force for the leftward moving Labour workers when it is inside the Labour Party. Inside the Labour Party, when fresh forces, moving to the left, seek expression through the ILP, the whole problem of fusion and split will be posed on a different plane. But that is the music of the future and not at all of today.

A SORE THUMB

A consistent theme which runs through Stuart's Bulletin like a "sore thumb", to use one of his own phrases, is that the leadership of the ex-WIL was and is theoretically weak and is especially characterized by "infectious activism." To balance this, we are told that the former RSL was more strongly inclined to "pay serious attention to theory". This is accompanied by allegations that WIL had a "somewhat sectarian spirit" and a mechanical approach towards other groups. Proof? There is not a shadow! Let us pose a question to Comrade Stuart: show us a single document dealing with questions of theory or policy to back up your assertions?

"Naturally," says Stuart, the leadership carries over into the RCP all positive as well as the negative characteristics that attached to it in the WIL."

This is emphasized by the statements -- not proved, merely asserted -- that the leadership had previously approached work with other organizations in a "mechanical, somewhat sectarian spirit." Such material can only have value for our movement if backed by examples -- concrete examples of alleged failures. In the absence of such examples we can only ask the SWP membership to conclude that this criticism has no validity.

Let Stuart explain the evolution of the British movement for the past six or seven years on the basis of this assertion. He will find it very difficult. For our part, we are not prepared to open up old wounds and go over sterile discussions of the past which can have value only for the archive rat or the historian of the future, but which would only introduce the antagonisms of the past into the fused party, and therefore be a godsend to the professional faction fighter.

The statement that "we will have to learn how to learn from the membership, as well as how to teach it" can only mean that we did not do so in the past, and therefore as a leadership, lacked the most elementary understanding of the role of leadership.

We know that some of our American comrades pride themselves on their work in the organizational sphere. We are not exactly strangers to the work of the American party. We followed the discussion with the Burnham-Shachtman-Abern faction,

and all the factions before that, and we were not unimpressed. But pardon us if we feel annoyed at such utter drivel being put into circulation in all seriousness -- particularly when this stuff comes from a self-styled theoretician of the "organizational" school. Under far more difficult conditions than those faced by our American comrades, and without the personal guidance and authority of Comrade Trotsky we have slowly and painfully overcome the liabilities of a bad start, and we have built something here of which we are by no means ashamed. Maybe Comrade Stuart should learn a little from the British Party.

Stuart states that the two sections underwent a unique development. The official section, the RSL, he says developed a strong sectarian current while the WIL apparently developed the transitional programme correctly. How this evolution is explained -- in face of the low political level of the WIL -- we are not told. Nor could he explain it. For if the facts about the unique development as stated by Stuart are correct, his conclusions are entirely contrary to the materialist interpretation of events. For purely factional ends, materialist interpretation is replaced by idealistic invention -- and not so idealistic at that! It is not necessary to go into a lengthy refutation of this nonsense. We can only say to our American comrades who are students of this question: read the respective documents, read the respective publications which should be procurable at SWP headquarters.

"The fusion" says Stuart, "coming at the end of a bitter internal struggle in both organizations, has of course, left some wound scars." This is intended to create a false impression of the real situation as it existed before the fusion. If Stuart did not like the truth, he should at least have remained silent instead of deliberately falsifying by implication. As everyone in Britain knows, and as the leaders of the SWP know: the RSL before the fusion was divided into three separate and distinct organizations. The RSL was dissolved by the IS and had to be specially reconstituted a few weeks prior to the fusion with the WIL, a politically united organization. The impression is given that the WIL Minority was a substantial factor. It had no political differences and at the last WIL conference it received one vote. To say that there was a "bitter internal struggle" on a par with that in the RSL is to create an entirely false picture.

THE MOTIVE

The historical outline of the pro-fusion period is false in one particular after another and is entirely confusing. It is not proposed here to go into the political and tactical differences -- alleged and real -- which are the headaches of the future historian! But when Stuart concluded this prelude with the statement:

"The minority of the RSL which held the position of the FI, correctly saw a solution only in the fusion of the two organizations. Neither the sectarian majority of the RSL or the WIL would at first countenance such a solution..." it creates a very incorrect impression. There is not one single document Stuart can produce to prove such an assertion or indicate the truth of the above statement; but there are many documents in the archives of the IS which tell a different story. We do not think it necessary to produce these documents here. Sufficient to say that neither faction was in existence when the negotiations commenced between the WIL and RSL for fusion.

Late in the fusion discussions, Stuart worked in close conjunction with the TO and the Minority of the WIL when it arose. The thesis worked out by Stuart in writing was that the TO-WIL minority were the loyal Fourth Internationalists. That is to say, they agreed with Stuart and his immediate friends -- that the WIL and the other factions of the RSL were lacking in internationalism; and that it was necessary to keep the loyal faction in being at all costs. There is a whole literature on this question in the archives of the SWP leadership. We published in this country a letter from an American comrade together with our reply, as well as a factional letter from Stuart to the TO (not intended for publication.) We suggested that the SWP membership be let into these discussions as well -- but they were not.

Before the fusion took place, Stuart wrote a closed letter to the TO urging the retention of the loyal faction even in the event of fusion. "The TO's programme presages a long term perspective, however, and it should prepare to maintain itself on this programme for a considerable time to come, no matter what organizational turns the situation may take." It was part of this considered policy of keeping this faction -- with no political differences, in being, that Stuart's "report" was penned.

Since the fusion all negotiations and arrangements with the comrades inside the Party and with European comrades in Britain are made through the faction or one of its members. The leadership of the British Party are not informed of these arrangements and discussions and learn of them only by accident or not at all. Most of the time of Stuart and his friends are spent with the faction who do not inform the party of what discussions take place.

Why this faction, or clique, lacking political differences, is to be kept in being, we do not know. It is for reasons best known only to Stuart and his friends. For our part, we can only chart the fact.

Comrades of the SWP! Consider Stuart's "report" again. A polemic from beginning to end against the ex-WIL and RSL leaderships, and statements only of their alleged incapacity. All the organizational nonsense and detail can have no real value for the SWP. The purpose of the Bulletin? A sort of honorable mention for the loyal friends of Stuart.

It may be that the leadership of the RCP is backward, incompetent, and should be replaced by more capable and more loyal comrades. But if Stuart wants to aid this process he will have to lift his polemic from the plane of gossip and man to a political level.

Comrade Stuart was unlucky. He was badly informed! But so is every peddler of gossip who orients himself on gossip. There was no need for him to make these blunders -- he was asked to check them. But he was not interested in checking them.

A capable leadership, nationally and internationally, can only be created as part of a genuine international and national collaboration and through honest political discussion and education. It will never be created by an organisational sleight of hand. In Britain, we republish important political discussion material we receive from America. This we do as part of our international education. Despite meagre technical resources we are glad to do so, because this gives a real political bond with the American party. But we would never, under any circumstances, publish the gossip that we hear from American comrades of all tendencies. In particular, we would never publish a criticism of the official leadership which came to us from factional sources (unless it was a public document in circulation in the SWP) without prior consultation with the leadership for verification or refutation.

Maybe we have a naive, or incorrect, or formalistic attitude towards international collaboration and work. But we believe that the leaderships of the national sections have a certain duty and loyalty to each other. Trotsky taught us to be loyal, and he taught us to be careful with gossip. In the Comintern in the best days, reports of national sections were official reports. Of course, the minority has always the right to add its piece. This method of Lenin is the only way that loyal international collaboration can be conducted. Stuart's method is harmful and can only lead to conflict and disruption. Let us hope that this kind of "reporting" will now be discontinued and we will not be involved in a discussion such as this in the future.

In concluding this letter, let us say that we have had no pleasure in penning it. It is with the greatest reluctance that we have taken time off from more pressing political tasks. If the tone appears sharper than some comrades might think necessary in the circumstances, let us say we have deliberately toned down. We wish to minimise and not exaggerate the situation. The responsibility for the conflict rests entirely on the shoulders of Stuart and his immediate friends. We want a loyal international collaboration with the SWP and its leadership with whom we have political agreement on all outstanding questions. We object, however, to the American leadership, or a faction of it, having organisational faction or clique irons in the British fire. That is the international method of Zinoviev and not of Trotsky.

We have entered an epoch which is our epoch. The great tasks that face us and the struggles that lie ahead will demand the fullest fraternal collaboration and assistance in the spirit of Bolshevism. The SWP and the RCP have been fortunate in that we have not suffered the ravages of the reaction, which have been suffered by our European comrades. A loyal collaboration between us will have important repercussions in Europe; will be a tremendous step towards solidifying all sections of the Trotskyist movement. Such a loyal collaboration, however, must be based upon political clarity, agreement and honesty and not upon petty gossip mongering and organisational manoeuvre.

Political Bureau,

January 1945.

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A LETTER FROM STUART

Dear Comrades:

As I am about to leave for a rather long trip, a copy of the British comrades' reply to the Stuart "Report", recently arrived, comes to my attention. Naturally, I shall not be able -- in the short time before my departure -- to study it thoroughly, let alone answer it. That will have to be done after I return. However, I should like to make a few remarks about it, even though I have only been able to persue it hastily.

The "Report" and the "Reply" have served one important purpose, if no other: They have raised from a veritable maze of almost intangible frictions, evidenced in the course of rather haphazard personal contact, a number of differences of opinion which can be discussed on a political plane. That is, we have made considerable progress in the direction of an objective discussion, in which the issues can be clearly understood and judged. As a matter of fact, my "Report" quite obviously aimed in this direction. The "Reply" is, therefore, not unexpected as far as its result is concerned, although the vituperative form in which it is cast is to be deplored as a still heavy hangover of subjectivism.

For my part, I intend to concentrate my answer on the political issues (interpretation of military policy; I.L.P. policy; the problem of fusions). On these issues the "Reply" has only confirmed my previous views.

As to the personal recriminations, I do not intend to enter into a long polemic in this respect. That would, indeed, be a fruitless business and hardly enlightening to anyone. I mentioned to someone that, in view of the very difficult circumstances surrounding my rather brief contacts with the British comrades, it is quite possible that I made some mistakes in the "Report", that it was inevitable. I notice that this remark, reaching them, has been blown up into one of the "crimes" attributed to me in the "Reply". Undoubtedly the same method of deduction is used here by which the British comrades, noting that I characterized one of their resolutions as "by and large" (and not in every jot and tittle) correct, conclude therefrom . . . that I am a "Great American" nationalist. At this kind of polemic I can only shrug my shoulders.

The question touching upon relations between the S.W.P. and the R.C.P. like the whole international organizational question, raised in the "Reply", goes beyond the framework of the "Report". Undoubtedly others will take it up in greater detail. In my answer I will try to review only briefly my own activity in this respect, as related to the charge of "Zinovievism". The "Report" itself, by the way, consists of about 90 per cent praise of the R.C.P. leadership, 5 per cent criticism and 5 per cent suggestions for improvement, based on the criticism. "By and large" -- support. However, we already know how ominous anything short of uncritical 100 per cent support can appear to the R.C.P. comrades, But if that be "Zinovievism", I plead guilty, and can only say: Make the most of it. "Live and let live" was the motto of the parties of the Social

democratic international. Its day is long past. For Bolsheviks, mutual interest, aid, criticism, discussion between the parties is the very essence of internationalism. Only thus can the Fourth International -- the World Party of the Socialist Revolution -- be hammered into shape to meet its great historic task. I believe we have followed this precept. And I am certain we will continue to.

Comradely yours,

J. B. Stuart

March 21, 1945

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