

INTERNAL BULLETIN

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

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DISCUSSION OF THE PRESENT STAGE OF UNITY NEGOTIATIONS
BETWEEN THE SWP AND THE WP

Remarks by M. Stein (Political Committee meeting, May 6, 1947)

We must now review the unity proposal as it was presented to the Plenum in the light of what has transpired since that time. This applies especially to the motivation we originally gave for the unity proposal. Our motivation at the Plenum, and prior to the Plenum in the Martin letter, was based on the premise that Shachtman and the WP had changed their attitude toward the Movement.

Once we accepted this premise, we concluded that we must give the Shachtmanites every possible chance to reintegrate themselves in the movement. Even when we spoke of their "capitulation," we interpreted this in the best sense, that is, as a turn toward the Movement from which they split seven years ago. When they decided to accept the terms for participation in the Extraordinary Party Convention we interpreted this as an important step in our direction and were prepared to greet this development and extend to them a helping hand. That was the motivation for the Plenum resolution.

Since then the Shachtmanites have done their best to convince us that we acted on the basis of a misunderstanding. We judged the WP leaders and their attitude toward unity by their signed statement and by impressions gained in conversations or reported conversations. This served to obscure our knowledge of these men and their politics, based on long experience. We then read into their statement of February 10 a change of line, which was not there in reality.

We must now purge ourselves, so to speak, of the illusion we had about the Shachtmanites changing for the better. Such illusions can lead only to bitter disillusionment when the truth becomes known, as it has become known. There is a lot of disillusionment in the party today with the unity proposal, and a strong opposition is rising up against it. There is a realization that the motivation we gave for the unity proposal has not been proved correct. Everything the WP has done since the appearance of the joint public statement has served to sober up the party on this score.

Had we broached the question of unity with the WP correctly, we would have oriented ourselves upon the following factors: The failure of the WP to emerge as a viable force after seven years of struggle against us as party against party; the isolation of the WP, its stagnation, its lack of perspective, and the internal conflict of irreconcilable tendencies within it. Then we would have posed the question as to whether this situation warranted on our part an offer of unity to the WP.

They tried a unity maneuver against us which lasted for some time but which came to smash against the firmness of our party. They tried this through the disloyal minority inside our own party and the fraudulent "unity" campaign in their public press. Their

object was to create either a split in our party or to effect a "unification" which would lead to a bitter factional fight and a bigger split. There was not a trace of good faith in their approach to the question. This is equally true, it is now clear, of their present attitude to the new unity proposal.

Once their original "unity" maneuver was smashed, the question was posed whether or not it is advantageous for us to accept unity with them, with the object of removing them as a rival party and in this way facilitating the building of the revolutionary party. Had we posed the question in this way, I am not sure what the answer of the Plenum would have been. But I know that I for one would have favored such a move. I would not of course have proposed concentrating the party's activities on such a unity effort. In reality, there would be no need for it, since we can easily take it in our stride.

But it is profitless now to speculate on this aspect of the question. The task now is to reorient ourselves along practical and political lines. We must acknowledge openly before the party that we made a mistake in attributing to the WP a political change in the direction of the Movement which they did not really make. The Shachtmanites remain Shachtmanites. The WP remains essentially what it had been. Shachtman's demagogic agitation about the Martin letter, the hostility with which he met it, only serves to demonstrate this all the clearer. Shachtman is now out to demonstrate that he did not "capitulate," that he remains true to his revisionist program, to his Menshevik concept of an all-inclusive party. If anything, he has revealed himself as in no way different from the right-wing in his party. As far as I am able to judge, he is now heading the right wing.

After we acknowledge our mistaken appraisal, we should orient the party along the lines of a correct approach to the question of unity. What do I mean specifically? Proceeding from the general proposition that we are committed to unity by the Plenum resolution and that we do not in the least retract from it, we proceed to present this problem of unity to the party and the outside world as it really stacks up. We have to purge the whole unity proposition of all false concepts and illusions.

First, we have to go back to the split of 1940. That split revealed a revolt of the petty-bourgeois opposition inside the SWP against our program and against our organization methods. The petty-bourgeois minority could not submit to the discipline of the proletarian majority of the party. That was the meaning of the split. We must recapitulate this once more.

Then followed the seven years war of party against party. During that time the WP tried to demonstrate that, once they had liberated themselves from what they called the "conservative bureaucracy of the Cannon clique" in the SWP, they would build a party by their own "dynamic" methods. What have they accomplished? They ended up with a smaller group than they started with. Even though they started out with forces numerically almost equal to

ours, they quickly demonstrated that they could not build a party either with their politics or organization methods, or with their "dynamism."

Then they, together with Goldman and Morrow, made a "unity" proposal. This proposal was falsely motivated from the beginning. They said that once we had relegated the defense of the Soviet Union to the background, a unity proposal became realistic. We have never answered this point publicly but we should do it now. This was a completely false premise from the beginning. The defense of the Soviet Union was placed in the background by objective circumstances and can be placed in the foreground by other objective circumstances. Our alleged change of position on the Russian question is no basis for unification of the two parties. This is a false motivation, and we must say so.

We posed the question correctly two years ago. We said that the only firm basis for unification is political agreement, and failing that, the subordination of the minority to the majority. They have advanced the theory that through collaboration of the two parties in practical day to day work the ability of the members to get along with each other will be tested, and that this will establish a firm basis for lasting unity. This is another false concept we must reject.

The only firm basis for unity is programmatic agreement, and not the personal compatibility or incompatibility of individuals with each other. The Bolshevik party is based on program; agreement on program is the cement that holds it together. Failing that, there must be subordination of the minority to the majority; not formal, hypocritical subordination, but the real thing in the Bolshevik meaning of party discipline. Because of the peculiar nature of this proposed unification, there must be all the more emphasis on this point.

We must open up a clarifying discussion along these lines. We must also discuss their Menshevik concept of the all-inclusive party and counterpose to it our own concept of a party. We are for the homogeneous party, a party based on one -- and only one -- program. Our unity resolution is not meant as a concession to the concept of the all-inclusive party, as they have mistakenly represented it, but as a part of our irreconcilable struggle against it. Our unity proposal does not signify the slightest conciliationism toward Shachtmanism on the question of organization, or on any other question.

Their jitteriness and nervousness; the present campaign they have undertaken to solidify their ranks -- that is, to harden them for a faction fight in the event of unification; the polemical articles they write in such hostile tones; the open forums and classes they hold against our views -- indicate that they are afraid of the prospect of living in a proletarian party and subordinating themselves to the proletarian majority of the party. We must explain that too.

They are now engaged in an "enlightenment" campaign to poison and prejudice their members against us. While they are speaking of collaboration to wipe out hostility, they are actually creating a wall of hostility between the membership of the WP and ourselves. They are attempting to poison their membership against our political line, our organizational concepts and our leadership.

We must expose the whole fraud that is part and parcel of Shachtman's approach to unity, while we purge ourselves of illusions on this question. What will we accomplish by this? I don't attempt to predict the end result. But the very least we can do is speak the truth, to speak it boldly and pose the question as it really presents itself. We will thus arm our own party, and that is the most important thing. If, after a period of this kind of clarification, the WP should decide that they still wish to go through with the unification, there will be no illusions or misunderstandings, either on their part or ours, as to the basis on which this unification is taking place.

We will thus be writing down in advance the precise terms of the unification and preparing our party to carry out these terms to the letter. It is possible that the right-wing in that party, when confronted with the realization of what unification with us really means, may recoil from it. If they do, that is their business. In any case, if they do so, that will only demonstrate and confirm their fear of living in a proletarian party which imposes a real discipline on its opportunist minority.

On the question of collaboration: We must take just as firm an attitude on this question. We will collaborate, but only on our basis, i.e., wherever they are willing to accept our line. Between now and a possible unification we must have the same kind of approach as if they were already inside the party. The SWP is the party because we have the majority. The WP acknowledges this, and this should be the basis for collaboration.

Our members should not hesitate to discuss this whole question with the WP members, especially their newer people. If these are interested in a genuine unification they must start out by a reexamination of their whole course, the split of 1940 and the seven years since then. The WP leadership is not doing this and we should do it for them. If we do this it will also educate the new members in our own party.

* * *

Remarks by Cannon:

I am in agreement with the remarks of Stein and wish only to emphasize a few points. It isn't very pleasant to have to admit a mistake. It is doubly unpleasant to have to admit a mistake that helped to mislead others, especially the Plenum of the National Committee. That, however, is the rather disagreeable position we find ourselves in, myself in particular.

Reviewing the whole fight from the beginning more than seven years ago, I think we were fundamentally correct all the way through, up to and including the last party convention, in our fight against the Shachtmanites, in principle as well as in our strategy and tactics. The line was absolutely right. And none of us had the slightest idea of changing the line that we had carried through, including the line of the convention.

I consider what happened since the convention as a chain of comical errors, which I am sure we can correct without damage to our cause. First came the unexpected decision of the WP to accept the conditions laid down by the Movement for participation in the EPC. We interpreted this action of theirs as a turn in the direction of the Movement, as a capitulation to its terms which they had previously rejected. That is the way we accepted it. That was the basis of our decision at the Plenum. And when in the letter of Martin, which was sent out with the agreement of other comrades, we spoke of their capitulation, we didn't do it in a derogatory sense, but in an entirely different one.

As we saw it, they had come to the turning point where they would have to go one way or the other, and at the last moment they made a turn to the Movement, accepted its conditions and thereby capitulated to it. And we decided to give them credit for that move, to give them a helping hand. That was the basis of our recommendations to the Plenum, where the unity resolution was adopted.

By that we demonstrated that we are communist politicians and not gang-fighters. In spite of all that had happened, all the personal animosity, all the slander, etc. -- at the moment they took a political turn in the direction of the Movement we were prepared to give them a helping hand, to open the door for them to come into the party and to give them liberal terms. The second thing we demonstrated -- which I am not so proud of -- is that after all our experience with these people, we showed a certain naivete. It is somewhat embarrassing to be obliged to acknowledge that, in this case at least, experience did not bring wisdom; that good nature and good will obscured political judgment. That is a very sticky feeling. I really didn't think that even the Shachtmanites would be stupid enough to think they could play a maneuverist double-game with the EPC.

Everybody at the Plenum had plenty of ground for animosities against these people, whose mistakes have often amounted to crimes against the movement. But the moment the Plenum members saw -- or, rather, thought they saw -- that the Shachtmanites were turning

toward the Movement, they were willing to have them come into the party and give them good terms. Why, we even gave them better terms than these they agreed to in their meetings with Smith. We gave them credit in advance for carrying out their decision in good faith, and offered to expedite the unity even before the EPC, provided the discussion was finished beforehand.

We followed that up with our meetings with them and the Joint Statement on unity, in which we rounded a few corners to make it easier for them, without, however, violating the instructions of the Plenum. We agreed to present their return to the party in public as a merger of the two organizations, for example, accepting their verbal declarations that they know this means their coming into the SWP, etc.

Then things began to happen. First through an inadvertence, when the Martin letter to the NC members came into their hands. Long experience has taught me that inadvertences never change a fundamental course -- but they often show its real direction. The Martin letter was utilized by them to reveal what their real purposes are, and this has served a useful purpose for us.

Shachtman has made it perfectly clear, in his letter to the membership of the WP and in subsequent actions, that there was a comical misunderstanding on both sides. As he represents the matter, they understood that we had changed our position; that we had sharply reversed the line of the convention, and under the pressure of the Movement had changed our whole approach to the question and accepted their formula for the unification. In other words, that it was we who had "capitulated."

Shachtman makes it clear that our interpretation of their action in sending the letter to Smith was a misunderstanding on our part, that they meant no capitulation to the Movement. When they deny heatedly, not to say hysterically, that they have "capitulated" -- as though they consider it dishonorable to bow to the rules and discipline of the Movement -- they only reveal that they haven't changed a bit, that they stand exactly where they were before.

The series of events which followed are known to you. At the time they were signing the Joint Agreement that they wouldn't take Weber into their party, they had Weber's article against us in their hands and were preparing to publish it in Labor Action and solidarize themselves with him -- without even notifying us, without mentioning the matter in the Joint Committee. That revealing incident only shows their disposition to abide by the form of an agreement while violating it in spirit and essence. This way of acting is just a little bit too clever to be clever. We will have to bear it in mind and rely more on guarantees than promises in the future.

As you know, we did not publish our Plenum resolution. This was done deliberately, as we explained to them, to give them an opportunity to present the new unity agreement to the public in a

Joint Statement with us. We observed the spirit of the agreement by publishing the Joint Statement without comment. They, however, published it with an introduction attempting to justify their "unity" maneuvers in the past. By that they reopened the whole question of the past for discussion. There were two or three other incidents of the same kind. The publication of the Ruth Fischer letter, without notification or consultation, was a crass violation of all normal procedures when two parties are seriously meeting in negotiation for a unification and loyally cooperating to bring it about.

The campaign now raging in the WP against Johnson -- who sincerely stands for unity -- is conducted in a real Burnhamite spirit. The obvious purpose of their campaign against Johnson is to discredit those who take unity seriously and to solidify and harden their people to come into our party fighting, with the perspective of another split. That is their idea. Outside of the single thing we noted --- their acceptance of the conditions of the Movement, which we took too seriously at face value -- there is nothing whatever to show any change of attitude on their part, either politically or organizationally. And even that letter has since been repudiated in essence by Shachtman. In his circular letter to the WP membership he refers to their disciplinary pledge to the EPC as a "formality" and said that unless "unity is achieved", they would regard their commitment "as a mere scrap of paper."

So, in a political sense we are right back where we were at the time of the convention. We have not changed our position. They have not changed. Goldman writes an article in the latest issue of their magazine with his usual compound of misrepresentation, greasy hypocrisy and double-talk designed to trick and trap the unwary. As for "unity" he blandly explains that by coming into the SWP they will change the character of our party. He doesn't know how wrong he is. They continue all the old denunciations of our party in the old tone. Their object, obviously, is to poison and harden their people to formally accept the conditions of discipline until they get set in the SWP. Then would follow the next stage: the fight to break up the party as we have built it, and convert it into a Shachtmanite party, a windbag's paradise, with permanent discussion, driving out the workers and diverting us from our basic task of recruiting new workers and training them for the Bolshevik struggle against capitalism.

Such is the reality from which we must proceed. I agree with Stein that we should begin a political offensive against the Shachtmanites within the formula of the unity proposal. We don't need to withdraw our unity proposal. What we need to do is interpret it and apply it in the light of the new developments. We are still willing for them to come in and accept our line. But we must explain what we mean by that, so that there can be no more misunderstandings on either side. We do not withdraw our unity resolution, but just simply slow the tempo of its application. We should forget about this good-will offer we made to them of a quick unification to do them a favor. Take our time. The members are discussing it. Let them take their time and discuss it

thoroughly. Discuss it in the press.

I personally am quite sure now that there can be no unification before the Extraordinary Party Convention. Our Plenum resolution distinctly specified that their disciplinary obligation to the EPC must be "carried out in good faith." Let us wait and see what they do with the "scrap of paper" they signed. After that, if they still want unification -- I personally am pretty sure they will revolt against the decisions of the Extraordinary Party Convention despite their signed pledge -- we should have a special convention to decide the question. No more joint statements; from now on decisions to be made by our conventions and plenums, precisely formulated and closing the door on any double interpretations, and telling them: take it or leave it. That is the form, I think, for the further developments on the unification proposal.

We have the inestimable advantage of a homogeneous party which has been built and unified in struggle. We have a leadership united in its entirety on the fundamental questions, and in its attitude toward Shachtmanism from a political point of view. So we don't need to have any great fears about big differences of opinion. What differences of opinion we had prior to the Plenum were not fundamental at all. It was the question of how best we were going to serve our program. These differences are not like those we had with Goldman and Morrow. That is why the opposition to the unity in the first place didn't impress us as a hostile opposition. Nothing more was involved than the question of whether our method or theirs was best calculated to serve the program to which we all subscribe. I don't doubt that even these tactical differences will easily be eliminated in the further course of developments -- if we avoid any more unnecessary "misunderstandings" and dispense with excessive good nature in scrutinizing any more "scraps of paper" which the Shachtmanites may sign.

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

April 17, 1947

TO ALL LOCALS AND BRANCHES:

Dear Comrades:

REPORT ON UNITY NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE WP

Since the Resolution on Unification with the Workers Party adopted by the National Committee Plenum in New York was sent you on February 18th, we have written three communications giving information and directives on this question. This report is designed to bring the branches up to date on the main developments which have occurred in the past period concerning relations with the Workers Party.

In accordance with the Plenum resolution a series of meetings were held between sub-committees of the respective parties. Although agreement was not reached on several minor questions, such as the withdrawal of candidates in the Chicago mayoralty election, there appeared to be substantial agreement on the main steps needed to clear the way for unification. These discussions resulted in agreement on a number of steps for practical collaboration and the drafting of a joint unification statement. This statement was published simultaneously in the March 22nd Militant and the March 24th Labor Action.

We took it for granted that the position set forth in the Joint Statement and signed by the representatives of both parties would serve as the guiding line for presenting this question to the public. That is why we printed it without interpretation or comment. Labor Action, however, printed the Joint Statement with a preface which gave a misleading version of the events preceding the unity negotiations, thus vitiating, and in effect, repudiating the Joint Statement.

Meanwhile the Workers Party circulated among its members a communication by Shachtman on the WP's conception of the unification proposal and procedures, together with copies of a letter written by Comrade Cannon prior to our February Plenum for private consideration by our National Committee. (Published in Internal Bulletin, Vol. IX, No. 2, May 1947).

The Ruth Fischer Incident

Early in March our party initiated the publicity campaign around Budenz's disclosures regarding Stalin's guilt in Trotsky's assassination. This campaign met with considerable success. At the same time, several sympathizers of the WP, apparently acting in league with the WP leadership, seized upon some wrong formulations in a Militant editorial on Ruth Fischer to launch a venomous

attack on our party. The March 17th Labor Action printed a letter written by Jack Weber, accusing us of aiding and abetting the Stalinists and the GPU.

From the date of Weber's letter it is clear that the WP negotiating committee had it in their possession during their discussions with us in which the question of the status of such ex-members of the SWP as Weber and Morrow were specifically discussed. Shachtman wanted to be able to admit them into the WP. We maintained that Weber and Morrow and any other expelled or former members could re-enter the movement only through the SWP or the united party, and not through the back door of the WP. After some demurring, the WP committee accepted the proposition included in the Joint Statement that such individuals would not be re-admitted to either party except by agreement.

The publication in Labor Action of Weber's defamatory attack on our party, coupled with the failure of the WP to notify our committee of this contemplated action, could only be considered a violation of the spirit of this agreement and an indication that the commitments they made were not taken very seriously by the WP representatives.

The following week Labor Action again without notifying or consulting us, published Ruth Fischer's letter of protest addressed to Comrade Cannon and solidarized themselves with both Ruth Fischer and Jack Weber against us.

Upon receipt of Ruth Fischer's letter the Political Committee authorized Comrade Cannon to write an answer correcting the editorial characterization of Ruth Fischer as "an informer" because of her appearance before the House Committee on un-American Activities and clarifying our attitude on the use of capitalist agencies in the fight against the GPU murder machine.

This first editorial was to clear the ground for a political offensive against the Stalinophobes who had utilized the editorial to attack the Trotskyist position on Stalinism and the Soviet Union. Comrade Cannon has written a series of articles for The Militant developing our views on these decisive political questions against the capitulationist positions of the vulgar anti-Stalinists and "Truman Socialists." These articles should be regarded as a contribution to the discussion on the fundamental political questions in dispute between us and the WP.

Ruth Fischer has since written Comrade Cannon that his corrections and explanations are satisfactory and she "would like to see the matter closed finally and amicably." The April 7th Labor Action reprinted most of Comrade Cannon's article, stating that he "puts the question properly and gives it the answer it requires." At the same time, Labor Action declared that its own views had already been substantially set forth in the Weber letter and in their previous remarks on Ruth Fischer's letter.

The Russian Question

In the midst of this controversy around the Ruth Fischer incident the March New International appeared with an article by Shachtman on the nature of the Stalinist parties, the first of several such articles on the WP's differences with the program of the Fourth International. It is well known that our respective positions on the Russian question and our attitude towards the Stalinist parties are deeply divergent in theory and antagonistic in practice. This is re-emphasized by Shachtman himself throughout his article and especially by his assertion that "Let us say at the very outset that it is still possible to reconcile the differences in the form of practical agreements in the struggle against Stalinism in one field or another. But it is no longer possible to reconcile the divergent evaluations of the Stalinist parties. If this is true, it follows that the area in which even practical agreements in the struggle against Stalinism can be made will continue to narrow as the divergences on the fundamental evaluations grow deeper. No attempt should be made to reconcile these evaluations! Every Marxist must choose between the fundamental line developed by the SWP and the fundamental line developed by us." We recommend that the comrades read this and Shachtman's subsequent polemical articles in the New International. Especially significant, it seems to us, in view of the contemplated unification, is the statement that "the area in which even practical agreements in the struggle against Stalinism can be made will continue to narrow", since we have no intention of changing our basic evaluation of Stalinism.

In early discussions with the WP committee we offered to effect unification in three months or so, provided the party membership approved, as was stated in our letter of February 27th. Shortly thereafter, however, the WP representatives indicated that they preferred to prolong the experiments with joint work as a test of the feasibility of unification, of the ability of the members of the two organizations to work together. We, for our part, in view of the actions previously described, came to the conclusion that it is necessary to concentrate upon clarification of the theoretical and political questions involved in the unification of the two parties. The split did not occur in the first place, and did not last now for seven years, because of personal incompatibilities, but because of conflicts of program and principle.

Discussion on all aspects of the unity question has begun in the branches. All those comrades who differ with the National Committee's recommendations will have the chance to express their views and bring them to the attention of the entire party. We will publish a special Internal Bulletin for the purpose of facilitating this discussion.

No votes will be taken before the unification question has been thoroughly clarified. Formal unification cannot take place unless and until such action has been approved by the membership of both parties.

You have already received the International Bulletin containing material on the Russian question and directives for organizing this discussion. The Fourth International will publish in its forthcoming issues a number of articles on the political questions in dispute.

You have also received directives dated March 26, on practical collaboration with the Workers Party. Our aim is to work together in those fields where agreement can be arrived at and collaboration made fruitful. By that we mean, in those cases where the SWP program and policy is acceptable to the WP.

The Workers Party leadership appears to have a different conception than ours of the kind of measures which can serve to smooth the way for eventual unification. This is indicated by the actions of the Workers Party cited above, the two courses of public lectures setting forth their differences with our party announced by the WP School in New York, and the attached letter sent out by the Newark WP branch. For our part, we wish to avoid any action which might tend to increase personal friction and sharpen conflicts between the membership of the two organizations.

In conclusion we wish to remind the comrades that the question of unification with the WP must be viewed in its proper framework. The resolution adopted by the 12th National Convention declared that the party's main task was to penetrate deeper into the mass movement in order to transform itself from a propaganda group into an organization of mass action. This must continue to be the principal guiding line in our activities.

Fraternally yours,

Wm. F. Warde,
For the Secretariat

Labor Action Hall
248 Market St.
Newark 2, N. J.

April 9, 1947

Friends of the Workers Party:

The March 24th, 1947 issue of Labor Action carried an announcement of unity negotiations in progress between the Socialist Workers Party and the Workers Party. We of the Workers Party look toward the unity of the two Trotskyist organizations in the United States with great hope. We propose that you participate with us in a series of Forums whose purpose will be to elucidate our attitude toward this unification and also to express our disagreements as well as agreement with the Socialist Workers Party.

It has always been the practice of the Workers Party to have the most open and free discussion of all problems confronting us, both of an organization and political nature. We have sought, and continue to seek, the fullest collaboration between the sympathizers of the party and the party members.

Our party is engaged in a discussion within its own ranks concerning the whole question of unification of the two organizations. Our branch has decided to conduct these discussions at our Friday night Forums, a schedule of which follows.

- APRIL 11 "Unity Between the Socialist Workers Party & The Workers Party". (A balance sheet of the negotiations which have been in progress for over a year. By a national speaker).
- APRIL 18 Unity Discussion meeting. All points of view within the WP will present and discuss their position and attitude on Unity.
- APRIL 25 "Nature of The Russian State". The question which caused the split in the United States Trotskyist movement in 1940, and around which the Workers Party has developed a new position. Speaker will be Robert Shaw.

We are planning a bang-up May Day meeting to follow the last mentioned meeting, to be followed by discussion forums on these topics:

"The Role of Stalinist Parties", by Harry Sachs.

"The National Question in Eastern Europe", by Saul Berg.

"Revolutionary Perspectives in Western Europe"

"China in the World War and Today"

"Nature and Structure of the Revolutionary Party"

"Labor and Negro Problems in America Today"

These are the crucial problems of International Revolutionary politics that the Workers Party has analyzed in the past period and in so doing has come up against the program and politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

You will receive more detailed announcements of each of these meetings as they come up, as we complete our plans.

THE FIRST MEETING IS:

"Unity Between the Socialist Workers Party and the Workers Party" by a national speaker.

LABOR ACTION HALL

Friday, April 11, 1947

Discussion

248 Market St.

8:30 PM Adm. 10¢

Refreshments

Fraternally yours,

Newark Branch of the
Workers Party

COPY

WORKERS PARTY
4 Court Square
Long Island City, New York

April 30, 1947

James P. Cannon, Nat'l Secretary
Socialist Workers Party
116 University Place
New York, N. Y.

Dear Comrade:

In the communication to all locals and branches of the Socialist Workers Party sent out by Comrade Warde in the name of the Secretariat on April 17, 1947, he writes: "Labor Action, however, printed the Joint Statement with a preface attached herewith which gave a misleading version of the events preceding the unity negotiations, thus vitiating, and in effect, repudiating the Joint Statement."

As we told you at the last meeting of the two sub-committees, we did not consider that the publication of the Joint Statement precluded the publication of any introductory comment by each organization, or that the comment we made and to which you take exception was in any conflict either with the Statement or with the facts. In view of the fact that the communication of Comrade Warde speaks of Labor Action's preface as "vitiating, and in effect, repudiating the Joint Statement" -- a point of view which we in no way share -- a clarification of your view on the matter seems to be necessary.

I would therefore like to know from you whether or not the statement in Comrade Warde's communication is held literally as the opinion of the SWP Committee, that is, whether or not it considers that the Joint Statement has been repudiated and that the signatories are no longer governed by it. Our party continues to adhere to the Statement, its commitments, and propositions. If that is no longer the case with the SWP, what effect does your Committee consider that the invalidation of the Joint Statement has upon the decision in favor of unity between the two parties?

I await an early reply from you so that I may communicate it to our Committee.

Fraternally yours,

(Signed) Max Shachtman

C O P Y

-- 16 --

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

May 15, 1947

Max Shachtman, National Chairman
Workers Party
4 Court Square
Long Island City 1, N. Y.

Dear Comrade:

In your letter of April 30, 1947 you refer to the circular sent out to the branches of the SWP by the party Secretariat under date of April 17, and request a "clarification" of our point of view. In reply we wish to inform you that this circular letter is and was designed to be self-explanatory -- a recital of facts for the information of our membership in its consideration of the question of unification.

That part of the circular to which you refer dealt exclusively with actions taken by the Workers Party which we deem to be violations of the spirit of the Joint Statement. It neither stated nor implied any change of position on our part and could not do so. Your question as to our present attitude therefore seems to us to be superfluous.

Our position on the question of unification has been precisely laid down in the resolution of the February Plenum of the National Committee of the SWP, a copy of which was sent to you. All our subsequent actions, including the signing of the Joint Statement, have been consistent with this resolution and must continue to be so, unless or until the position is changed by another Plenum of the National Committee -- which up to the present time has not been scheduled -- or by a decision of the party membership, which now has the whole question under discussion. The Political Committee has not proposed the withdrawal of the Plenum resolution or the repudiation of any action we have taken consistent with it.

We take note of your assertion that the WP "continues to adhere to the Statement, its commitments and propositions."

Yours fraternally,

James P. Cannon,
National Secretary