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Secret Factionalism--A Threat to the Unity of the Fourth International

World Movement Report Adopted by the August 1973
Convention of the Socialist Workers Party

By Jack Barnes

[The following report by Jack Barnes, on behalf of the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party, was presented to the SWP national convention on August 9, 1973. Livio Maitan was the reporter for the minority. The Political Committee report was adopted by a vote of 72 to 3.

This speech was approved for publication in the *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*. The transcript of this speech was prepared for publication in the fall of 1973, but it was decided to defer publication at that time in order to help focus attention on the disputed political questions that had been placed on the agenda of the upcoming world congress: Argentina, Bolivia, Europe, and the World Political Situation.]

* * *

Comrades, prior to beginning my report, I would like to bring something to your attention. Comrade Livio sent a statement to the Presiding Committee of the convention concerning the extension of time that he was granted under the point on Europe. I'd like to read it to you:

"To Presiding Committee of the SWP Convention:

"I want to protest against the decision not to allow me to speak 20 minutes more. I remind you that on Latin America I spoke for 30 minutes and on Vietnam only for 10.

"On the European document I had spoken 20 minutes, but in practice 10 because of the translation. To ask for 20 minutes more (in practice 10) was a sober request—all the more because I had to defend the former Ligue Communiste, unable to send representatives for obvious reasons.

"I was astonished that no member of the Presiding Committee took a stand on this question and I regret very much your silence.

"I remind you, furthermore, that the Argentinian guest spoke longer than I did on Latin America, and that two

members of the IMG minority were given the floor while a leading member of the Mexican section was not permitted to speak.

"I call your attention to the gravity of what happened.

"s/Livio

"7/8/1973"

After we got Livio's note, we asked the comrades operating the tape recorder to do a little research concerning the first three points on the agenda of the convention: the debates on Latin America, Vietnam, and Europe. Here are some of the statistics they discovered.

During the discussion on Latin America, Comrade Livio, speaking in English, without translation, used 32 minutes and 28 seconds. Comrade Lorenzo spoke *with translation* for 41 minutes and 52 seconds.

There were 63 interventions from the floor on these three points. Only 49 percent of them were by the elected delegates to the convention. There were 52 different individuals who spoke; only 54 percent of these were elected delegates. Of all the elected delegates, only 37 percent have spoken even once. Only two people in the entire convention spoke under all three points: Comrade Livio and Comrade Petersen. Of all the comrades with voice, 5 percent were IEC majority supporters, but they have given 26 percent of the interventions from the floor. Of all the elected delegates, 4 percent are supporters of the IEC majority; they have made 19 percent of all the interventions by the elected delegates.

It seems to us that Livio's protest is not merited on the face of it.

The International Majority Tendency Supporters Caucus has had the option of assigning Comrade Livio to be their reporter or to give their summary on any point, including Europe. Comrade Livio could have given their report on Europe for the allotted one hour and fifteen minutes, and he could also have given the one-half hour summary. Instead, the caucus chose a different reporter, and Comrade Livio had the option of speaking from the floor like any other delegate, with the same amount of time as any other delegate—ten minutes.

When Comrade Livio took the floor, instead of beginning by saying what he had to say about the Communist League, he began by speaking on another topic. He spoke for 20 minutes with translation. Then he asked for an extension, and he was granted a ten-minute extension. That was not adequate in his view. He refused it and walked off the platform.

Perhaps this attitude reflects different traditions. At our conventions the leaders of our party are the delegates elected after discussion, and they make all the decisions and try to run the convention to the best of their ability. Our goal, therefore, is to maximize the speaking time for the elected delegates.

Or there may be a confusion between privileges and rights. Every time a fraternal delegate speaks, it's a privilege, not a right, and it's a privilege that has been granted by you, the delegates, by motion.

The bare statistics show that, in proportion to their strength, the supporters of the IEC Majority received an inordinate amount of the time under all three of the previously debated international points. The privileges you granted were beyond the call of duty and were more extensive than they had to be by any reasonable criterion.

A Grave Crisis

Now we're at a different stage of the debate. We discussed and then decided by majority vote our views on Latin America, Vietnam and European perspectives, and the political resolution and perspectives for our work in the United States during the coming period. The convention will use the rest of its time to begin implementing these decisions.

The subject I am going to discuss, that of building the world Trotskyist movement, is extremely important. No subject has been given more consideration by the Political Committee in the last ten years, and the proposals we bring to you result from these long deliberations.

We think the Fourth International faces its gravest crisis since the 1963 reunification. This crisis is rooted in the erroneous political turn made at the last world congress. At the time we felt that this error, if persisted in, could only lead to disaster.

What happened at the last world congress, the Third World Congress Since Reunification, was basically quite simple. The majority made a political adaptation to Guevarism, to guerrillism. At that congress, there was basic agreement on the broad analyses of the economic, social, and political trends in Latin America—on the weakness of capitalism, on the perspective of an intensifying class struggle, on the prospects for revolutionary upsurges. But the majority went further and singled out one *tactical form* of struggle, the tactic of guerrilla warfare, and said that it was applicable throughout Latin America for an extended period of time, and that our movement should begin the technical preparations to carry it out. And, in that context, guerrilla warfare ceased being a tactic that could be useful if it grew out of specific upsurges in the class struggle, and instead became a universal strategy in Latin America mechanically derived from a broad historical analysis, and not from concrete tactical considerations.

This error coincided with pressures emanating from

ultraleft sources that bore down on the young cadres who came into the Fourth International following the 1968 events in France. The ultraleft pressures in the European student movement and the pressure to adapt to Guevarism reinforced each other. The fact that these pressures existed was no fault of the new cadres; but their incomplete political development made them susceptible to these pressures. The leadership of the International had the responsibility to combat these ultraleft pressures. Instead, the majority adapted to them.

We said four things would happen if this error was persisted in: 1. It would be extended beyond the countries in which it first appeared, or the single country, Bolivia, that many comrades had initially thought it would be confined to. 2. As this error was extended geographically, a rationalization for it would have to be found as disasters piled up. There began a "rediscovery" of Lenin as a guerrillaist. 3. If not corrected, this error would necessarily begin affecting the program of the Fourth International. It would have to affect the bedrock of principle without which our small, but historically crucial, cadre organization is nothing. 4. Ultimately, to justify and rationalize the error, the results of the test of practice would have to be perverted into confirmations of the course followed. Instead of being the ultimate judge for Marxists, the test of practice would be disregarded.

Following the May-June 1968 events in France, we had the greatest opportunities for building the Fourth International. But, far from educating the thousands of newly recruited militants and assimilating them as Trotskyist cadres, this error of adaptation to Guevarism in Latin America reinforced the weaknesses that these new comrades brought with them to the Trotskyist movement. This kind of adaptation can breed Frankensteins—political gamblers and plungers, who take the erroneous line and run with it beyond the intentions, and eventually out of the control, of those who originated it. This is what has happened.

In our opinion, the qualitative change was registered at the December 1972 meeting of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International. Bolivia and Argentina were the main items on the agenda. A balance sheet was to be drawn up and the Fourth International was to move forward. In our opinion, it was still not too late for a whole section of the current leadership to rectify the error that had been made. If the terrible toll in political and human cadre of the mistaken line on Bolivia and Argentina had been thoroughly grasped, the other mistakes would have become correctable and a process of rehomogenization of the international and political collaboration among its leaders could have begun. But drawing an accurate balance sheet on Bolivia and Argentina was obviously the political precondition for this.

The comrades even had an advantage that Leninists don't often have in evaluating the test of practice. Besides the disasters that flowed from the error, they had a positive example; that is, the growth and development of the PST rooted in the class struggle of the Argentine proletariat. But ironically enough, this positive example, instead of being an aid to majority comrades in reevaluating their position, became another factor inducing them to draw the wrong conclusions about Argentina. This was because of their extreme bias against the PST—a dreadful

subjective error. Their hatred of the devil Moreno blinded them to the accomplishments of the PST comrades. Instead of seeing the gains, they sought to dig up every possible error in Moreno's past, and they played up every real or imagined minor error ascribable to Moreno today as justifications to buttress their own erroneous line. And so the guerrillaist line was reaffirmed.

Making an error is not always fatal, comrades. If it were I wouldn't be here, and you wouldn't be here. But clinging to an error can be fatal, because everything then begins to unwind. You are condemned to repeat the error. You are condemned to extend it. And ultimately you must debase theory and twist reality to rationalize it.

The December 1972 IEC meeting was an opportunity that the current leadership of the IEC majority could have seized to rectify their error. Instead, the opportunity was missed. The fundamental error in method was reaffirmed and extended. It was extended to Europe.

They began with an incontestable fact: there has been a mighty rise of proletarian class struggle in Europe. But then, as in their analysis of Latin America, they drew from this fact some far-reaching and unwarranted conclusions. In Latin America they talked of an extended period of continental civil war. In Europe they talk of a period of 4 to 5 years before the decisive battles are fought. And from these assertions, they proceeded to adopt *tactical* formulas on a continental scale.

If I had been asked in one of these debates whether I agreed on the "nature of the period," I'd say, "I don't think you know what the hell you're talking about!" I think this talk of the nature of the period is a fake, a rationalization for deriving immediate tactics from broad historical trends, for obliterating the vital necessity of tactical flexibility in party building and for imposing mechanical schemas on our sections, as was done to our cadres in Latin America.

This methodological error opens the door to *both* adventurism and opportunism. This has already occurred in Latin America, and it is beginning in Europe.

We saw a further debasement of program. In the discussion over Vietnam, the IEC Majority has opened the door a crack—just a crack so far—to adaptation to Stalinism. In Comrade Mitten's contribution here, we have seen the crack widen a bit more.

Not only is adherence to the program being undermined by this mistake, but the analysis of reality begins to take a beating. The IEC Majority Tendency comrades, in their anxiety to justify their erroneous line, are becoming incapable of correctly analyzing the evolution of the world class struggle. They are tending to belittle some of the most momentous political events since the end of World War II—the political events around the betrayal in Vietnam and the meaning of the Nixon-Brezhnev détente for all sectors of the world revolution.

They consider emphasis on the negative effects of the détente as a pessimistic estimate of the prospects for the class struggle. This is wrong. Our realistic estimate assesses the class struggle in the light of the real political obstacles the working people have to face. In their desire to cling to the idea of a continental civil war in Latin America and a 4-to-5 year timetable for revolution in Europe, their analysis of the world situation has gone awry.

Time for Discussion

It is clear that there is a tremendous need for political discussion within the Fourth International—in both the leadership bodies and within the entire membership. It has become clear, as Comrade Livio himself said at the IEC meeting and repeated to us here—and I believe he means it—that we must unwind what are clearly basic methodological and party-building differences in the Fourth International. The differences have deepened to the point that these questions are now on the agenda for discussion. We must probe to see where all of us stand on these fundamental questions.

It is our view that everything should be subordinated to this need for political clarification, because without that, all else will come to naught. With the wrong political line, the cadres will get dispersed, defeated, and demoralized; the program cannot be implemented; it cannot be passed on; it is in danger of being lost. No organizational step can solve this political problem. Only discussion that clarifies the issues can do this.

The IEC Majority comrades have shown an opposite inclination, an inclination to drive ahead quickly to a world congress without the full and complete political discussion the situation demands. There's an urgency, according to these comrades. We can't wait, they tell us.

This approach risks repeating the fundamental blunder of 1953, when there was also the projection of extreme urgency—the advent of world war-revolution. On the basis of analyzing the "nature of the period" as one of approaching "war-revolution," the disastrous "tactic" of *entryism sui generis* was projected. Tendencies towards adaptation to Stalinism were encouraged. And bureaucratic organizational maneuvers were utilized against dissenters. This led to a ten-year split in the Fourth International, an unnecessary split. It meant that the fundamental discussion on the most basic theoretical and political questions—the Chinese revolution, which was the biggest theoretical problem of that entire period; the Cuban revolution; Stalinism—these discussions were held separately in two divided factions of the world movement. We're still paying the price for having held those discussions separately. This has become obvious during the discussions on China and Vietnam.

Anyone who approaches this discussion in a light-minded way, or who tries to solve the political problems by organizational means, undermines the goal of constructing the Fourth International. Nevertheless, at the IEC we saw the almost irrational refusal of the majority to postpone the world congress and put a top priority on carrying through the debate, regardless of where it might lead. That is what should have been done by the IEC—as a leadership, in a collective way, for the sake of the entire world movement.

An Undeclared Faction

Ideological tendencies were declared at the IEC—a step which we had been able to avoid until that time. But we all agreed on the necessity of this step at the IEC meeting. We have since discovered that another course had been chosen by the majority leadership, a course guaranteed to destroy political clarification and maximize ob-

fuscation, a destructive course that threatens to disperse the cadres of the world Trotskyist movement. We came across the organization of a secret faction, an undeclared faction. Furthermore, this secret faction is a combination that includes a significant wing who view themselves as the "real" International, who are conducting the "real" discussion among themselves, and who aim at driving forward to a split. [See Appendix Three, Material Pertaining to the Barzman Letter Affair.]

The Barzman letter showed us that elected leaders of the United Secretariat were organizing this secret faction. We had suspected as much, but we had been willing to defer discussion on this matter time after time upon receiving assurances that it was not true.

There was an American component of the secret faction. The American component is a combination whose political basis remains a mystery, whose main job thus far has been "furnishing ammunition" against the SWP while "improvising" program. In my opinion, though, we've come a long way since the disclosure of the Barzman letter. We now have much clearer programmatic statements from these comrades indicating deepening differences.

There's been a startling evolution just at this convention. Comrade Petersen's statement of support—on behalf of the IEC Majority leadership—for the political resolution of the American minority is a big new step in the debate within the Fourth International. It throws the American question into the international discussion. Comrades Maitan and Petersen assured us that Comrade Massey speaks with full authority for the IEC Majority in this country. This should be well noted by the comrades.

But this means that there is more to discuss. The cadres of the SWP, including the leaders in the SWP of the two major contending formations in the world movement, are deeply divided over the American question—certainly one of the key questions in the world. Is this to be a further argument to *stop* discussion and settle the problem by "democratic centralism"?

For objective people, it is another reason to say, no. Another key question, the American question, is on the agenda for the whole world movement to discuss. Should this question be treated in a shotgun fashion? Or shoved under the table for a "real" discussion in the secret faction?

But the decision at the United Secretariat last month by the leaders of the IEC Majority was to reject any postponement of the world congress. They did so, not only in the face of these political considerations, but also in face of the banning of the Communist League in France, which for a period of time will further hinder the capacity of our French comrades to translate, circulate, study, and discuss the resolutions and contributions. The Santa Clause present for us from the irresponsible and split-minded comrades is a quick Christmas world congress that will not be prepared adequately or democratically, and that cannot resolve the political crisis facing the international.

What's the meaning of the Barzman letter? It is not really important whether Barzman's transmitting of gossip is "scandalous" or whether the remarks about Comrade Livio in the letter were indiscreet. I think the author himself would rewrite the letter differently today, especially if he knew other people were going to see it.

We don't challenge the right of comrades to engage in

private political correspondence. Nor do we dispute their right to discuss among themselves. What we're concerned about is the *content* of the letter. This letter, discovered accidentally, disclosed to us the existence, perspectives, character, and composition of a secret faction in the Fourth International. That is what is important.

In truth, if he were an objective politician, Comrade Barzman would be grateful for the exposure of the letter. Because as a politician, he shouldn't give a damn about whether people think it's scandalous or not. But our bringing his letter to light and our explanation of what it means gives him, along with the other leaders of the American minority, a chance to reconsider objectively whether or not it indicates something that they didn't see the first time they mailed it around. Take another look at it. Forget about the hot news from Paris concerning who's going on the steering committee, and things like that, and think about the broader implications.

What do the facts show? The facts show that the majority of the United Secretariat has been operating as a secret faction for some time. They have internal discipline—a requirement of membership in this secret faction. Comrade Petersen, meeting with the Political Committee, said that this was "light" discipline, not "heavy" discipline. We accept his clarification. It changes nothing.

It's not a tendency. Unlike a tendency, it is not sufficient to declare agreement with the platform to join; adherence must be screened. This is understandable. (It's understandable in an open declared faction too, by the way, but for different reasons.) In a secret faction such screening is necessary because the adherents, especially those in the inside circle (the steering committee, the presiding committee, the political committee, the bureau, whatever they call it), have to operate in a clandestine way. They have to be able to conduct secret fund drives, apply secret discipline—all without informing the elected leaderships of the sections in which they function and without informing the leadership of the Fourth International as a whole. They also must be able to secretly circulate in their sections material that, if discovered, would give the section the right to expel them. That's why you can't join simply by stating that you agree with the platform. That's why applicants must be screened.

Third, the leadership itself is partially secret, hidden from the elected leaders of the Fourth International and hidden from the elected leaders of the sections of the Fourth International from whence they come. The leaders of the Internationalist Tendency in the United States were placed on the steering committee of the secret faction without the Secretariat being informed, and without the SWP National Committee or Political Committee being informed.

In fact, our discovery of this was quite interesting. Once again, it was by accident. The Political Committee had a meeting with Comrade Petersen before his "quickie" pre-convention tour. When he came to the door of the Political Committee meeting, he was accompanied by Comrade Massey, who also wanted to attend the meeting. We told Massey, "Thank you for the offer, but we don't choose to have you at the meeting. We're meeting with Comrade Petersen."

Comrade Massey then said, "But I'm a member of the steering committee of the IEC Majority Tendency."

We said, "Well, that's quite interesting to learn. But we're still meeting just with Comrade Petersen."

Comrade Petersen had trouble with his memory. He couldn't remember which members of the IT, other than Massey, were on the IEC Majority steering committee. Farrell Dobbs kept asking, "Comrade Petersen, you remembered Comrade Massey so well. Are you sure you can't remember the other two who were elected? It was only two months ago." But memory failed him. He couldn't handle it.

However, four hours later, in a smaller meeting that included Comrade Massey, Massey supplied the additional names. So I'm able to announce to you that Comrades Massey, Shaffer and Smith, of the original "immature" tendency and later of the "mature" tendency, are elected members of the steering committee of the IEC Majority. They have only fraternal vote since the SWP is prevented by reactionary legislation from affiliating to the Fourth International.

The platform and goals of this faction are also partially secret. This has been at the heart of its development.

Secret factions destroy cadres and destroy the possibility for clear and objective political discussion. In the struggle with the petty-bourgeois opposition in 1939-40, Burnham slipped his real political positions in and out of his briefcase—to the injury of the movement at that time. Today the secret faction operates in much the same way. That is why at this convention we declare war on the unprincipled politics of this secret faction.

How the PRT(C) was Recognized

How did this situation develop?

It began with the debate over recognition of the Argentine section at the last world congress. Like the American suckers we are, we took the word of the majority leaders of the Fourth International that the anti-Trotskyist pamphlet "The Only Road to Workers Power and Socialism" [International Information Bulletin No. 4 in 1972] did not represent the political views of the PRT (Combatiente). We took their word as to the non-factional character of Comrade Livio's visit to Argentina just prior to the split of the Argentine section. I made a considerable political mistake. I supported recognition of the PRT (Combatiente) as the section. But much worse than my mistake was the mistake that the majority comrades made.

We can no longer uphold the validity of the decision taken by the world congress because the delegates were misinformed about the program of the PRT (Combatiente). They were misled into believing that the PRT (Combatiente) was a Trotskyist organization, and that therefore the question of recognition boiled down to deciding which group was larger, the PRT (Combatiente) or the PRT (Verdad). And with this false information, they recognized the non-Trotskyist PRT (Combatiente) and did not recognize the Trotskyist PRT (Verdad) as the section. If the truth had been told, that could not have happened.

At the time of the Third World Congress Since Reunification (Ninth World Congress) another secret decision had been made by the majority comrades. (We found out about this only at the time of the Sallustro affair.) That was a decision to proceed at a snail's pace regarding any political criticism of the PRT (Combatiente). This was not merely wrong procedurally. It was a great disservice to the international and to the PRT (Combatiente).

There were some very fine revolutionary-minded fighters in that organization. But this secret decision doomed these comrades politically. It was a decision to avoid doing the one thing that the Fourth International could offer these comrades of the PRT (C)—political clarification and a critique of their non-Trotskyist program. This decision was made behind the backs of the elected leadership of the IEC and the United Secretariat. Surely, if anything should have been done collectively, even if divided votes had to be taken to settle policy, it was that.

You've all read Comrade Germain's document, "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International" [IIDB, Vol. X, No. 4, April, 1973]. Among the misstatements of fact in that document is the assertion that the United Secretariat as a whole had made a mistake in not opening up a discussion with the PRT (Combatiente). The failure to criticize the PRT(C) was a grave mistake, and it cost us those cadres. But it was not a mistake of the United Secretariat as a whole. The minority of the United Secretariat fought for four years to open up this debate in any way possible.

The Domingo Letter

A secret campaign against the PRT (Verdad) organization was begun. I think they sensed the progress the old devil Moreno might make. We first learned about this campaign when we discovered the Domingo letter, which contained a factional attack against Moreno. We were told that, like the Barzman letter, the Domingo epistle was a normal private letter. [See Appendix One, Material Pertaining to The Domingo Letter Affair].

But even if it was a private letter, I don't think it's the kind of letter that an international leader should write, because it is inimical to collaboration. To see why, just consider an analogy. Suppose one member of the SWP Political Committee corresponded privately, without informing the Political Committee, with certain leaders in one of the branches, attacking other leaders in that branch. What do you think that would do to collaborative relations in the Political Committee? Would it help the party leadership's ability to function as a team, or hinder it? And what do you think it would do to relations between the Political Committee and the branch leadership, and to leadership relations within that branch? The answer is obvious. That is why responsible leaders do not function that way.

But the Domingo letter was much worse, because it wasn't even a private letter. It was mimeographed and circulated around Latin America! That's how we found it. Here was a mimeographed letter containing a factional attack on Moreno circulating in Latin America, a letter signed by one "Domingo," who gave the impression that he was speaking in the name of the United Secretariat, even though the United Secretariat had no prior knowledge that such a letter had been written, much less approved of it.

When we discovered this Domingo letter, we wrote to the United Secretariat for clarification. Only then did we learn who Domingo was. What surprised us was not the identity of the author, but the fact that the majority of the United Secretariat condoned his action in writing the letter. They saw nothing wrong in it. This, of course, opened the door to its being repeated.

Another thing in this letter aroused our apprehensions.

That was the concept of "progressive assimilation" of the Moreno group, a concept that calls into question the attitude to the 1963 reunification held by Comrade Livio and the others who agree with his letter.

In one of our letters from the Political Committee of the SWP to the United Secretariat, we said about "progressive assimilation":

"We observe in particular Comrade Maitan's use of the phrases 'entry of the Argentinian organization into the International' and 'we relied on a process of progressive assimilation.'

"In his 'Reply to the Political Committee of the SWP,' Comrade Maitan uses similar phrases: '. . . we maintained that, in principle, even Healy and Lambert could enter the International. . . .' (Emphasis added.) He repeats the formula again in relation to Argentina: 'We were, with all the more reason, for the entry of the Argentine organization. . . .' (Emphasis added.)

"We conclude from this that Comrade Maitan and the other comrades whom he includes in his 'we,' took the view in 1963 — and have held it ever since — that the reunification consisted of the 'entry' of the International Committee into the Fourth International, to be subjected to 'a process of progressive assimilation' thereafter.

"This was not the viewpoint of the majority of the International Committee, which agreed to engage in the reunification. The viewpoint of the majority of the International Committee was that in 1953-54 a split had occurred *within* the Fourth International involving two factions, both of which belonged to the Fourth International. The main political differences that had led to the split were superseded as early as 1957, in the opinion of the majority of the International Committee, and this opened the possibility for a principled reunification of the two sides, which — if handled correctly — could lead to the eventual liquidation of the former lines of cleavage, a complete fusion of forces, and the construction of a genuinely collective leadership.

"It was in accordance with this concept that the majority of the International Committee conducted itself following the reunification that took place in 1963 on the basis of a statement of the principles of Trotskyism. The majority of the International Committee proceeded quite consciously to attempt to erase the previous lines of division, which had been superseded, and to genuinely dissolve the factions, beginning with its own forces. It consciously rejected any concept of 'a process of progressive assimilation' of the other side.

"Comrade Maitan's formulations indicate that he had a different concept of the reunification, and followed — and is still following — a different policy from that adopted by the majority of the International Committee."

As time went on, the attacks on Moreno intensified and became more and more a substitute for facing up to the lack of positive results from the line adopted at the last world congress.

The 'Letter of the Six'

Next was the secret circulation of the "letter of the six" to the PRT (Combatiente). [See Appendix Two, Material Pertaining to the 'Letter of the Six' Affair]. This letter is an important document in the international discussion. Although it was written on October 31, 1972, we did

not learn of its existence until more than four months later. Like the Domingo letter it was kept from the United Secretariat and the IEC of the Fourth International. And again, like the Domingo letter, a Spanish version of this new letter was circulated in mimeographed form throughout Latin America.

That's how we got it. We had heard rumors about the existence of this document before, but we had never seen it. Then, when a few of us were in Santiago, Chile, we came across it: it was being circulated in mimeographed form to "new mass vanguard" types there. Later, when we arrived back in New York, we found a letter from Ernest Mandel waiting for us, dated March 1, 1973, with a copy of the "letter of the six," asking that it be translated and published in the International Internal Discussion Bulletin.

So the Political Committee of the SWP wrote another letter to the United Secretariat. We pointed out that the secret circulation of the "letter of the six" was an abuse of authority. It was incorrect to operate in that manner behind the back of the United Secretariat and the IEC. It could only encourage the formation of cliques and similar unhealthy groupings, put together in secret by individual members of the United Secretariat.

The procedure followed by the six is exactly the opposite of the one we have followed with regard to important political letters. We entered into no private correspondence on such matters, but collaborated openly and honestly with the entire United Secretariat.

For example, there was our letter to the Uruguayan comrades in which we criticized them for what we considered to be errors in their election campaign. When that letter was mailed, a copy was sent the same day to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. There was the letter we sent a few months ago to the Political Bureau of the Communist League in France, criticizing the errors we felt they had made in relation to the Union of the Left. A copy of that letter was sent the same day to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

Once again, we do not challenge the right of comrades to send personal letters. We challenged the procedure by which United Secretariat members tell us that they are functioning openly and collaboratively, deny that they are an organized factional grouping, and then go ahead and privately circulate major political documents dealing with questions relevant to the entire world movement.

We also pointed out in our letter to the United Secretariat that we do not challenge the right of a faction, formally declared on a clear platform, to circulate drafts of resolutions within its own leadership. What we oppose is the destructive character of a *secret* faction, operating behind the backs of the movement.

We were stunned to learn that the "letter of the six" was circulated behind the back of the United Secretariat at the very time that a discussion had been opened in the United Secretariat to clarify the differences on Argentina so that the most responsible leadership presentation could be made to the IEC. Don't forget, this letter was written one month prior to the IEC meeting, where Bolivia and Argentina were debated for four days by the elected leadership of the Fourth International. It was written at a time when all IEC members had the unquestionable right to know the fundamental political views of everyone in the leadership of the Fourth International on this question.

The existence of the "letter of the six" was never mentioned, or even alluded to at the IEC meeting. We pointed out that this silence amounted to disloyalty to the IEC of the Fourth International.

We were also astounded when we first read Comrade Germain's article, "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International," where he made reference to the letter, although most of the members of the United Secretariat who are not in the secret faction did not yet know of its existence. I remember reading the Germain document in my living room. When I got to the point about the "letter of the six," I began looking through my bulletins to see what I'd missed. Maybe some of you had the same experience.

Finally, in our letter to the United Secretariat we concluded:

"In our opinion, the foregoing facts show that six members of the United Secretariat have operated as a secret faction for at least five months behind the back of the United Secretariat and the International Executive Committee—the elected leadership bodies of the International."

We were still naive, though. We thought it was only those six.

Authoritative Congress Endangered

We then pointed out some of the implications of their action in regard to conducting a democratic discussion and organizing an authoritative world congress.

"This development raises grave doubts about the ability of the elected leadership bodies to organize a fully democratic discussion leading to an authoritative world congress, for it is now revealed that the majority of the United Secretariat had circulated at least one very important document to part of the membership of the Fourth International while keeping another part of the membership in ignorance of its existence."

The obvious question was raised: was this the only document circulated in such a clandestine way?

As SWP comrades, all of you know the norms of proper procedure. Partial circulation of documents and secret bulletins leads not to political clarification, where everything is laid out before every member; instead it leads to lining up those comrades who are privy to the secret documents prior to the beginning of any discussion in the ranks as a whole.

This accelerates centrifugal trends of dead-end factionalism instead of promoting political clarification. The letter from the Political Committee states: "There can be no democratic discussion when documents are circulated to some members and not to others; when a secret, undeclared faction gives an arbitrarily selected group access to documents which it refrains from making available to others—until the time is ripe, or the existence of the document is accidentally revealed as in the case of the Domingo Letter.

"Serious doubt has even been placed on the capacity of the United Secretariat to continue functioning in any normal way. For the question inevitably arises: are other documents of the importance of the Letter of the Six now being circulated by the secret faction in the same surreptitious way to a privileged sector of the membership of the Fourth International? If the six deny that other similar documents are being circulated surreptitiously,

what basis exists for believing them? Their probity can no longer be taken for granted."

Probity—that's Joe Hansen's way of saying we no longer believe they always speak the truth.

"They have succeeded in bringing into question their ability, or their willingness, to abide by the norms of democratic centralism. They have placed the interests of a secret faction above those of the movement as a whole. A most damaging blow has been dealt to the confidence in the United Secretariat as a collective body."

We concluded the letter by saying, "We ask that this letter be submitted to the International Internal Discussion Bulletin so the rank and file of the International can be informed of this extremely grave development."

Our letter to the United Secretariat was written on March 30, 1973. You haven't seen the letter yet. That's because we were convinced at the April United Secretariat meeting not to put it into the discussion bulletin. That was another naive mistake. We were told: "No. No. It's all a big misunderstanding. There is no faction. No secret platform. No discipline. No secret leadership. No private decisions. Absolutely nothing is being done behind the backs of the Secretariat or the sections." In fact, I remember quite well an impassioned speech by Ernest Mandel about how this was the way Pablo operated, and this was one of the lessons we had collectively learned. He knows we're sensitive on this point.

There were no secret bodies acting behind the backs of the elected bodies—that's what he told us.

Further, it was agreed at that April 1973 meeting of the United Secretariat to postpone the world congress for a few months. With that postponement, we were assured that the IEC Majority comrades intended to get the translations rolling; to get the discussion really under way in the Ligue Communiste and in other sections and sympathizing groups where it had not really begun. They told us that they would prove in practice that the grave charges we had made were false. And they agreed to join us in drafting a unanimous statement on the conditions for a democratic and authoritative world congress. [The statement is published in IIDB, Vol. X, No. 15, October 1973.]

Under these conditions, they told us that our publishing of the SWP Political Committee letter to the United Secretariat could only get in the way of this discussion.

We said, "Okay, we'll test these assurances. We'll keep the letter confined to leadership circles for the time being. We'll see whether the discussion really gets rolling in French and the other languages, and whether things like this happen again."

A Secret Faction with a Split-Wing

But, we discovered that the assurances were hollow. Further confirmation of the existence and character of this secret faction was revealed to us only a few months later in the Barzman letter. Moreover, our worst fear was confirmed—the fact that at least a part of this secret faction held a clear split perspective. They already held the view that their secret faction was the "real" International that holds the "real" discussion and makes the "real" decisions. What need did they have for consultation with those pain-in-the-neck, albatross, "archeo" Trotskyists with their "holy principles" elected to the leadership bodies of

the Fourth International? Don't discuss with us; just poison the atmosphere against our ideas—that is the method of the secret faction. And for this type of guerrilla war, Barzman and Company were assigned to serve as ammunition carriers.

It means that the entire character of the world congress is now thrown into question. The real discussion, and for all we know, maybe the real translation, is taking place outside the official discussion bulletin and the elected bodies of the Fourth International. It means that the United Secretariat has been left with only the form and no content at all. It means that we now have to reexamine our evaluation of the splits in Argentina, Peru, Australia, Spain, and Canada. We no longer take it for granted that these splits were not organized by decision of the secret faction. To the contrary, it has to be our assumption, until proven otherwise, that they were.

The existence of a secret faction with a split-minded wing has set a dangerous logic into motion. Supporters of the IEC Majority line who are minorities in their own sections or sympathizing groups will feel increasingly constrained about acting responsibly and remaining as loyal minorities. They can get the feeling that if they split from their organization or provoke an expulsion they no longer face an automatic reprimand from their mentors. To the contrary, they may feel that their action will be winked at and condoned, as they split and drive ahead for the franchise from the international.

Conversely, in those sections or sympathizing organizations where the leadership supports the secret faction, some may no longer feel bound to act as responsible leaders. Dissidents and supporters of the Leninist-Trotskyist line may now find themselves the victims of abuses of authority, resulting from renewed attempts to drive them out.

That is the split logic set into motion by secret factions; that is what happens when some comrades consider their own secret faction to be the "real" International, as Barzman so candidly quotes a member of the United Secretariat.

The purpose of this secret faction is the same as that of every secret faction that has ever existed: to prevent a minority—what they hope is a minority—from winning a majority at a congress. They hope to achieve this by using undemocratic means, by delaying the translation of the documents for the internal bulletin, by the selective circulation of secret factional material in whatever languages they see fit, by consistent whispering campaigns and public attacks against the Moreno group. All this can only lead to a severe new crisis in the Fourth International.

The Translation Problem

Comrades should understand the depth of the problem of the translations.

We can grasp the difficulty with the French-language bulletins. In SWP Discussion Bulletin No. 27, we have printed a list of the contributions to the international discussion that to our knowledge are not available in French as of July 24, 1973. There are 62 documents on the list! This compares with English, where every single contribution submitted so far has been translated, printed, kept in print and is currently available. What is more, these

documents have been available in English for a long time—since they have been submitted. Comrades have had the opportunity to study the documents at leisure, and to make up their minds on the basis of the issues, without feeling under the gun of a time pressure. This is a prerequisite for a democratic discussion. But can the same be said for comrades who read French?

You heard a report here from a guest from Germany. She gave you a report on the congress of the German section, and she told you that they had a good discussion on the international questions, especially on Europe, and that they adopted the European resolution of the IEC Majority after a discussion. That may have sounded OK to you. But do you know what documents were available in German at the time of that congress according to other German comrades? The Germain-Knoeller article, Livio's article on "Defense of An Orientation and a Method," and a three-or-four-page *synopsis* of one of the earlier Joe Hansen documents (a *synopsis* not prepared by Hansen)!

This doesn't mean the German comrades should not have gone forward and held their congress. It doesn't mean that they shouldn't have done the best they could. But it does mean that the comrades in Germany have not yet held an adequate discussion.

What if you had been asked at this convention to vote on Latin America, Vietnam, and Europe and you did not have access to the documents of the IEC Majority on those questions? Such a procedure is completely alien to our tradition; and you would have rejected the proposal out of hand.

Comrade Petersen Rejects a Debate

We were rather stunned by a decision that Comrade Petersen made. Since the December IEC meeting, we had been hoping some leaders of the IEC Majority Tendency would come over here to visit the SWP branches. We did not know that we would very soon be honored with having three of their leaders in our own ranks. We were not privy to this information and we would never have guessed it. So we were looking forward to their coming to this country to present their views. We were looking forward because even with written material, there are always a certain number of questions, rumors, and different interpretations that arise and that can be clarified only through a face-to-face discussion. So, when Comrade Petersen came, it was a magnificent opportunity, even though his trip was very belated, coming at the tailend of the debate, as the branches were about to elect delegates. We had the opportunity for a face-to-face confrontation of views. We proposed that Comrade Petersen, a leader of the IEC Majority Tendency, and Comrade Camejo, a leader of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency, go together to our branches, present their views before the comrades, and have the comrades take part in the debate.

The comrades in the branches wanted such a discussion and they wanted it to be a face-to-face debate, as is our tradition. If you question something Comrade Camejo has been saying, if you think there's a warped interpretation, then put the question to him. And do it right in front of Comrade Petersen to see how Camejo replies when he knows that Petersen can answer him then and there. This is a lot better than having Comrade Peter-

sen come through on Thursday to tell you something, then having Comrade Camejo come through on Saturday to tell you what's wrong with that point, but you being unable to hear Comrade Petersen's rejoinder. The same holds if you have a question for Comrade Petersen. Let them say what they have to say in front of each other so the membership can have both sides presented at the same time and can make their own judgments under the best possible conditions.

This procedure was rejected by Comrade Petersen. He preferred to speak all by himself. He refused to accept a debate. I don't know the reasons. I wasn't involved in the negotiations. Whatever they were, he was dead wrong.

Tendencies, Factions, and Secret Factions

I would like to say a few words about the difference between a tendency and a faction.

A tendency is an ideological formation, organized to advance one or more political or theoretical points. A tendency is involved in no power fight. A tendency has no need for an involved organizational structure. A tendency writes its views in the bulletin. Comrades who agree with it say, "I agree with it. I'm part of that tendency." It has no organizational consequences whatsoever. They inform the comrades of their views. They say so in the bulletin. They say so in the debates. The platform of the tendency is openly declared. Anyone who agrees with it can join by simply stating agreement with the platform and informing the party of this. There is no screening of applicants for membership. There is no discipline of any kind. There are no binding decisions of any kind. There cannot be in such a loose and episodic grouping.

Comrades have probably noticed that leaders of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency have submitted several documents to the bulletin since the tendency was formed at the Santiago conference. You've noticed an interesting thing. None of these documents have been submitted in the name of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency. How could they be? The tendency had not previously taken a position on these documents. A subcommittee of leaders cannot present political positions for an entire tendency.

A tendency depends solely on the internal bulletins of the party and the international to circulate its views to the membership, and on oral presentations in discussions organized by the party. A tendency by definition holds confidence in the leadership of either its party or the international. It is confident in the capacity of the leadership to change its course if the tendency views are adopted.

A faction is quite different—and here I am talking about a faction organized along principled Leninist lines, a faction organized in accordance with the principles of the Socialist Workers Party and the statutes of the Fourth International. A faction openly states its platform; it is not based on a secret platform. A faction has lost confidence in the existing leadership. This is one of the defining characteristics of a faction. A faction says that if the faction platform is adopted, it requires a majority on the incoming leadership to have any confidence that its line will be applied. The success of a faction places the former majority automatically in a minority of the leadership. Thus, a faction is more than an ideological formation. It involves an open contest for leadership. Accordingly, it organizes along military lines, for the most serious kind of internal struggle in our party or international.

Comrades cannot adhere to a faction by simply announcing that they agree with its platform. A faction has the right to select who will be admitted. This is because of the seriousness of the task it sets for itself, and the responsibility its members share for the actions of one another. A tendency has no such responsibility.

Members are subject to faction discipline. Votes in faction bodies are binding on different questions. Those who do not wish to accept this can leave the faction. Of course, faction discipline does not transcend the discipline of the party or of the international. It is only within the framework of the faction platform that votes on subordinate political positions and tactics are binding.

A faction is structured, of course, with an elected leadership. And this leadership is openly named.

With the permission of the party, a faction may even circulate its own internal bulletin for a time. I think Trotsky suggested permitting this at a certain point in the Burnham-Shachtman fight. But of course, any such faction bulletin must be made available to the party or international.

In our movement open factions, although very serious, are considered proper. They are part of the functioning of internal democracy. In fact, at a certain stage in the struggle, they can be the most stabilizing factor. When a struggle reaches a certain depth, it is only the formation of factions that can bring the greatest discipline and restraint on hotheads on every side so that the discussion can be continued in an organized political way.

But secret factions are not in our tradition. They're the most destructive kind of formation in our movement. They are qualitatively different from open factions. They have secret membership, secret leaders, secret documents, and selective circulation of even the most important political documents. They accelerate everything that is alien to the proletarian party, whatever the conscious intentions of their members. They violate internal democracy. They accelerate the formation of unprincipled blocs. They accelerate the formation of cliques. They accelerate the formation of power caucuses. They accelerate the substitution of gossip for politics. They accelerate dead-end factionalism. They accelerate premature splits. They block the normal democratic-centralist functioning of the sections and the international. They make secret decisions, have secret goals, secret mobilizations, circulation of material not subject to any answer whatsoever. They act behind the backs of the elected leaderships.

Worst of all, secret factions tremendously heighten the danger that differences will end in splits. Secret factions set forces in motion that can no longer be controlled by their instigators. Because of its character, a secret faction brings to the fore those most eager for a split, those that are driving the hardest for it. These are the ones who become the de facto leaders, because their *faits accomplis* can not be corrected or rejected or denounced by the secret faction for fear of exposure.

What Should Be Done?

What do we propose should be done to counter this very dangerous new development in the Fourth International? We think that the IEC Majority Tendency should openly state that it is operating as a faction, make known its platform, list its leaders, explain its structure, and the purpose of its discipline. And we think that the Leninist-

Trotskyist Tendency should consider converting itself from a tendency to a faction, an open faction based on a platform openly declared to the entire Fourth International. The supporters of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency in our National Committee have proposed to our cothinkers in the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency internationally that they hold a collective discussion and come to a decision on this.

In addition, as a party, the SWP will do everything it can to prevent a split in the International. We want to pledge all the party's forces and resources to go on a war footing against the danger of a split in the Fourth International.

What would this mean? It would mean that those of us in the SWP, and other sympathizing groups and sections who support the LTT, would continue doing what we're doing now to clarify the issues, since that is ultimately the way we can reach people in the movement with our ideas. We'll continue to write discussion articles and propose resolutions to the best of our ability. The SWPers participating in a fraternal way in the leadership of the faction would help to coordinate the struggle internationally, as part of a disciplined international faction. We would help to centralize the struggle, elect a leadership body with the right to act for the faction. We will bring to bear every pressure we can, and regardless of any other differences we will bloc with any member of the Fourth International who wants to slow down the drive to a split congress, to an undemocratic congress that can have no authority whatsoever.

As a party, the SWP will do everything it can to move forward with the translation of documents. If the French comrades can't do it, we'll do everything we can to find other ways to start getting material into French. Any means necessary.

We'll continue to deepen our efforts with the Spanish-speaking comrades, to move ahead on Spanish bulletins.

We will fight for time to discuss new important issues like China, women's liberation, the Arab East, the world political situation; and—if anyone would like it—the American question. Discussions on these questions have not yet opened in the United Secretariat, and the world congress is scheduled for the end of the year.

On the need for time, maybe we can make a bloc with John Barzman. He made quite an eloquent plea here for time on the Vietnam question. He said, in effect, "This question of the Vietnamese Communist Party is important. It's complicated. What exactly is the character of the Vietnamese state? The Vietnamese government? What does it mean for our theory? What does it say about the nature of Stalinism? These are important questions. These should not be discussed in a heated factional way. Don't put the gun to my head. Don't force me to give you an answer right now. Let's have a discussion. Let's deepen the discussion. Let's get rid of some of the heat. Let's not jump into warring factional positions on these questions. Let's treat it seriously like Vietnam should be treated."

Comrade Barzman, do you think Vietnam is the only question? What about the Chinese question? What about the Latin American question? What about the American question? What about the most fundamental questions before the world movement? Let's have time to discuss all of them.

Because you're right, John. The greatest disservice that

Leninists can do is to ram through crucial discussions like that in a faction fight.

This will surely be one of the goals of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction. We'll even bloc with Comrade Barzman on this. And I don't mean this figuratively. For all we know, he may have a vote on the secret IEC Majority steering committee.

We will fight to implement the April 19 unanimous statement of the United Secretariat, outlining the conditions for an authoritative world congress. The alternative is a congress that will not be able to resolve the present crisis of leadership in the Fourth International, but will gravely deepen it. We will fight to rein in the splitters.

And, I can assure you, we won't be so naive anymore. Comrades Livio and Petersen can take the message back to the others in their secret faction. From here on in we can't automatically believe what they say. Their word alone is no longer good. It is actions that will count.

The American Minority

I'd like to take the remainder of my reporting time and some of my summary time to say a few words about the American minority. They have the full democratic right to join any openly declared international tendency or faction that they want to. But we consider the fact that they became a component of a *secret faction* to be a disloyal act—disloyal to the Socialist Workers Party and disloyal to the Fourth International. They are copartners in promoting a split perspective, whether they want to say so or not. The facts are unassailable, they are explained by Barzman.

The evolution of this grouping (I use the neutral word "grouping") has been most revealing. We've had long experience in these things. Even without knowing anything about the issues, all you have to do is note the tone of their language to get a feel for the stage of thinking of this grouping. The vituperative words they use in speaking about the party mean only one thing. To them, this party is no longer their party. It's a cage. It's an albatross. It's a disgrace. It's a wretched instrument. It's revolutionary in name only. And, worst of all, of course, is the attitude of you, the delegates. You've been told you're in a stupor. A real stupor.

What does it mean when they weep and wail about the renegades who have walked out of the Socialist Workers Party or those whom we've had to toss out in the past and who have now set up their tables outside our convention? Their new concern for these renegades is a sure sign. The party's mean, they say. The party drives out people. These people should be in the party. They have things to contribute. And now we even learn that Mike Bartell was driven out in 1953. Oh yes, every renegade's "democratic rights" now have to be defended—retrospectively.

Whenever factionalism reaches a certain pitch, everybody else who has deserted the party is looked at with new eyes, and there is a feeling of sadness because these renegades are outside the party, rather than being inside to help build the opposition combination a little bigger.

The JT [June 10 Tendency] and the IT [Internationalist Tendency]—two separate tendencies with no expressed political differences—come before us in a common bloc

to obtain delegates. All this remains unexplained to the party.

They complain about our big party "bureaucracy" and our "bloated apparatus." But their real complaint is not that we don't have a 20-percent turnover to cut down the bloated bureaucracy in the printshop and places like that. (Actually there is more than a 20-percent turnover in the party departments.) Nor is their complaint that they are not working in the printshop or the paper or the publishing house. Their real complaint is that there's not enough turnover in the central political leadership.

But that's precisely where you run into a problem. Because ultimately at every convention, after democratic discussion, the delegates take up in one of their most important deliberations the choice of the leadership. And they don't usually decide on a 50-percent rotation. The delegates choose the leadership of the party that reflects the political views of the party and can lead the party in implementing that line. On that, nothing can be done to please the IT and JT.

The IEC Majority supporters in the SWP took the assignment of ammunition-gatherers for the secret faction, of smokescreen makers, flooding the mails with spurious complaints in attempting to build up a fake case "proving" that the SWP is undemocratic. The more privileges they were granted, the more they took them as rights, and still they were not satisfied.

Just look at one of their complaints—the one about the "undemocratic" nature of the 1:15 delegate representation formula—one delegate per 15 members. One thing should be pretty clear by now. There certainly hasn't been a shortage of delegates here wanting to speak. Many of you here have not yet had the chance to speak. But what if the delegations had been elected on a ratio of 1 delegate to every 5 comrades? How would you like to have three times as many delegates here? How many of you would get any chance at all to talk or to affect anything going on?

As one comrade from Houston told me, "I finally get it. They didn't care whether it was 1 to 15 or 1 to 25. They just wanted to have enough delegates here so they could demand half the time." Exactly.

Equal time is not a right. A 7.5 percent minority has no automatic right to equal reporting time. That's a privilege. A minority that doesn't have a counter line document on Vietnam has no right for equal time on that point either. That was also a privilege. A minority has no right whatsoever, nor has the majority, to have nondelegates as reporters. That was a privilege. A minority has no right to have their international cothinkers get most of the time taken by international speakers. That was a privilege, and a wise one granted by the convention. But the more privileges they received, the more they demanded, and the more they demanded them as rights.

But the more we gave to them, the less party building they did. We know that for a fact. In Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, Chicago, and Houston, the party leadership has kept an exact record on each one of these comrades. The facts are clear. This faction has sabotaged the party's finances, has boycotted party activity, and, in a new show of contempt for party norms, has treated us to the spectacle of wholesale last-minute transfers—allegedly for "party-building" purposes—in hope of pulling an extra delegate or two out of the hat.

We must assume now, in the light of the Barzman letter, that these moves were all consciously planned, decided, and executed by some center, some decision-making body of this grouping. I have no way of knowing whether every individual comrade in the JT or IT realized this or not, whether every individual comrade participated in these decisions or not. But these are disloyal methods of functioning.

They are also getting the strange idea that because they are a minority in the SWP, they have some special rights in the YSA. They have no special rights whatsoever in the YSA. They have the same responsibilities as every other party member vis-a-vis the YSA. Until the party makes an explicit decision, they are completely bound by all party decisions. Any double recruiting should stop—like the double recruiting in Minneapolis. And if they attempt unilaterally to carry out what they say is their right, they will be committing an indisciplined and disloyal act. Only a decision by the party can do this, and that decision has not been made here.

We have the assurances of Comrade Bruce Clark in Boston that the Barzman letter isn't even one of the best of the secret letters. And we have the word of the reporter on their political resolution, Comrade Hedda Garza: "If we knew you wanted a Barzman letter, we would have given you a really good one." Well, on that we do take their word. We figure there are more Barzman letters somewhere. And juicier ones. We don't need to see them, we take their word for it.

I issue a warning, a clear warning on behalf of this convention to these comrades. The authority of this convention is complete and it is mandatory on the incoming leadership to carry out its decisions. Contrary to some of the latest contributions by Comrade Massey, there are no higher bodies that can nullify that fact. On the local level the authority of the branches is complete. All complaints, requests, and decisions on a branch level will be taken through the elected bodies of the branches. This is the one and only warning that the minority will get about their pattern of behavior. Their deeds will prove decisive.

We need adopt no special measures. A clear warning from the party is enough. Our party has already adopted a very thorough set of organizational principles following the disloyal behavior of the Robertsonites, who also introduced a few new twists in dead-end factionalism. In light of that experience, the December 1963 plenum assigned Comrades Cannon, Novack, and Dobbs to draft the organizational principles of the party. This document was submitted to the 1965 convention and adopted. It should be read very carefully by all comrades. [See Appendix Four: The Organizational Principles of the SWP]

In the motion that we are putting before the convention, the convention is called upon to reaffirm the organizational principles of the party and instruct every party unit to apply them.

We are also asking you to vote that all transfers in the coming period must be approved by the National Committee until it decides otherwise. We're going to have transfers of comrades for party building. We're going to have planned moving around for party building. And since we have been told that all this previous moving around has been for party building, then we're going to have party building where people moved to.

Majority caucuses will be formed in the branches incorporating all those comrades who voted for the line of the SWP majority. They will exercise the right to meet in caucus at any time to discuss matters that they do not care to discuss in front of the minority. A caucus, of course, cannot be substituted for the elected branch bodies, and the caucus meetings will not be used to substitute for branch debate and branch decision. But any branch that needs these caucus meetings to guarantee the stable, democratic, and effective functioning of the branch in order to build the Socialist Workers Party has every right to do so.

We are all going to build the party. We are *all* going to loyally carry out the line that has been adopted, even though some of us disagree with it. We now go into a period where duties, and not privileges, come to the fore. Now the party's rights, and not just the minority's rights, come to the fore. And this will be enforced to the letter by the branches of the Socialist Workers Party.

Our Commitment to the World Movement

I hope I've managed to express a sense of the importance of the decisions that we are proposing to you and the depth of the commitment we are asking of you. We tried to prepare for this politically in the discussion bulletin, but because of the pace of events it could not all be prepared beforehand. We ourselves did not know until two weeks before this convention what we really faced in all its details.

The struggle for a Trotskyist international is decisive. The danger of programmatic erosion is the biggest danger. Our realistic goal at this stage is to build Leninist parties; that is our primary task if we are to succeed in making revolutions. The program, politics, leadership structure, and functioning of the international must have one goal: to maximize this party building everywhere.

Those of you who support the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency are now being asked to consider accepting the responsibilities and the burdens of a faction. Organizationally, politically, financially, and as cadres, you will have to conduct yourselves in the most responsible and disciplined way. That is how we can move forward, not to a split congress, but to a Trotskyist international.

Our commitments, those of us who support the LTT, to the cadres of the LTT must be stated. There will be no turning back from the political course we have set. There will be no dispersal of the cadres of the LTT under any circumstances. We will organize to help build the movement in Australia, in New Zealand, in China, in Japan, in India, in Ceylon, in Iran, in Greece, in Britain, and all of Europe from Scandinavia to Italy; we will help our courageous comrades in Spain, in Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, Brazil, Uruguay, Chile, Peru, and we will do this shoulder to shoulder with our comrades in Canada. The PST will be the acid test and the symbol. We believe that a decision has been made by the secret faction to expel the PST from the Fourth International, or at least not to recognize the political reality that they are the authentic representatives of the Fourth International in Argentina. But our entire faction will go into the world congress together and we will all come out together as Fourth Internationalists.

As a party, the SWP as a whole will fight against ex-

pulsions, against splits, against dispersals. We consider these to be crimes against the Fourth International and we will organize to fight them.

We're going to continue acting as a real internationalist party—something the secret faction wishes we wouldn't do. We're going to send more George Novacks and Evelyn Reeds to Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. We're going to release more Susan LaMonts to tour Europe and talk about women's liberation on invitations from women's groups. We're going to send more Ed Heislars to France to speak at trade-union conferences that our comrades organize—he went, by the way, on invitation from Comrade Krivine. We're going to send more Virginia Garzas and Fred Halsteads to cover events in Argentina. We'll send more Olga Rodriguezes and Dan Styrons to conferences of European sections where we've been invited. We'll send more Gerry Foleys to Ireland. We'll send more George Saunderses to discuss East European work. We'll send more Linda Jennesses and Ed Shaws to Latin America. We'll send more Gus Horowitzes to India. We'll send more Tony Thomases to the Caribbean. We'll send more Barry Sheppards to conventions of the Japanese section and to tour and meet the comrades.

We're going to help Pathfinder a lot more, too. We're going to put out more books by Trotsky, a viciously factional trick, to believe Barzman et al. We're going to put out more in the series of documents constituting source material for a history of the Fourth International. We're going to develop more translators and we're going to value them, not as bureaucrats in a bloated apparatus, but as comrades building the party. We're going to support the "Pathfinder International," as our minority calls it, every way we can. We're going to urge everyone to read Cannon's new book, which will tell you a lot about party building.

You know, in the history of the Fourth International, because we have always been small, there have been very few genuine combat leaders of the working masses in struggle. And in the recent period, two of these comrades, two central leaders of world Trotskyism who have been leaders of the oppressed masses in combat, have had books published by Pathfinder: Comrade Hugo Blanco and Comrade Farrell Dobbs. We are going to get those books around to teach people what kind of party we're trying to build. We're going to continue our efforts to try to get these books published in French.

The Militant is going to increase its staff so more reporters can cover events effectively—the way Caroline Lund was released to go to France immediately after the Communist League was banned. The educational department will be expanded so we can translate and circulate to the comrades more material like the documents of the fourth, fifth, sixth world congresses of the International Secretariat, with their positions on Stalinism, and their analyses of events. We're going to put out more discussion bulletins. We're going to keep translating them, publishing them as fast as anyone can write them. The "bloated bureaucracy" in the printshop—the team that has set an example for the entire party in the hard work load it has carried—is going to be increased if necessary.

We're going to continue our full and complete support to *Intercontinental Press* in every way we can.

And, just as we will continue to contribute, we're going

to continue to learn from our international cothinkers. We will deepen our internationalist education, and continue to train the party cadres as internationalist revolutionary politicians.

The class struggle has gone through a great historical detour. The period after World War II saw the defeat of the West European revolution and the great disappointment of the downturn in the United States; but it also saw the victories in China, Yugoslavia, and elsewhere. These victories, because of their peculiar character, did not bring with them a solution to the crisis of leadership on a world scale. This crisis deeply affected the Fourth International, and is at the root of the problems that it faces today.

The world situation, as we analyze it, is one that gives us great optimism. We see great opportunities and revolutionary explosions before us.

You know, our ideas aren't originally American ideas. Our ideas are basically Russian. That's what Comrade Cannon always emphasized. And if you look up at the banners of Lenin and Trotsky there, you'll see the two main Russians whose ideas they are.

They taught us that American imperialism, for all of its might, rests on the powderkegs of the world's class conflicts. As American imperialism expands, it sets off these powderkegs, and the explosive world situation tends to affect the American working class more and more. Vietnam was a preview. Because we know this, we will continue to fulfill our biggest internationalist duty of all. We will build the American party that can lead the workers to victory.

World Movement Report Summary

We have placed before the convention crystal-clear evidence that a secret faction exists in the Fourth International—not an openly declared faction, which as I have explained, would be a proper formation, but a secret faction. The difference between the two is not merely that one is openly declared and the other is secret. The two have completely different kinds of organizational structures. I have tried to explain some of the differences between a tendency and a faction and especially a secret faction. I know all this is unfamiliar ground to some of the newer comrades.

For all I know, it may be news to some of the leaders of the international too. I do know that in some sections the leaderships that I've worked with function with one another in a way that does not conform to the norms of the SWP. What we consider to be proper leadership relationships in this party are not the norm in some other sections. A certain amount of cliquism, a certain amount of secret factionalism may be accepted in some sections of the international. That is understandable if they are new sections.

But we're not interested in a moral judgment. We see the gravest danger to the Fourth International in years. An obstacle has been set in the only path that can prevent a split: a thorough discussion of the political questions. At this stage the political differences in written form do not preclude collaboration in a common international movement. Livio and we agree on that at this stage. The written political positions—which are all that we can go on if we are serious and principled—do not preclude

collaboration in the same international. In other words, a split is not politically justified. That's Livio's opinion. That's the opinion of the entire leadership of the Socialist Workers Party.

If that is true, it means that the overwhelming responsibility of the leadership of the Fourth International is to develop this political discussion, a discussion that is unfolding very rapidly, extremely rapidly. We still have not completely absorbed the full meaning of its rapid unfolding in just the last four days, comrades. It's too big.

But, in the face of that responsibility, it is our sober judgment after several years' experience—not just because of the Barzman letter; that letter simply put the icing on the cake—that willy-nilly, intentionally or unintentionally, perhaps with no malice aforethought by many of the leaders of the IEC Majority, an instrumentality has been set up that is an obstacle to this discussion: a secret faction, an instrumentality that breeds centrifugal forces, that views itself as the "real" International within the International, that makes secret decisions that affect the International.

Livio pooh-poohs this. He says everyone makes private decisions all the time. Don't make a mockery out of the debate, Livio. That's not what we're talking about. We are talking about decisions being made behind the backs of elected leaderships of sections and behind the backs of the elected international leadership that affect the functioning and political line of the sections and the international. That is what sets these centrifugal forces in motion.

The fact is that to some comrades there is a "real" international where the "real" discussion takes place, and it's not the official international with its elected leadership. In the "real" international there is a secret selection of the "real" leaders; there is circulation of documents and correspondence on the leadership level to selected leaders and rank-and-filers and not to others. For instance, comrades of the caucus of the IEC Majority supporters got the Germain document, "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International," before we did and circulated it selectively in mimeographed form. I know this was also true in Canada. All sides at the Canadian convention agreed on this. But it's wrong for a section of the membership to get special private access to information, to begin discussing it with select other people who also have access to it. That is the way that a process of factional lineup begins, outside the organized discussion.

We must look very carefully now at the splits that have taken place and the dangerous, increasing tendency toward splits. The split in Canada is a grave danger sign. The minority here has complained that the LSA/LSO is refusing to fuse with the RMG. If the Canadian leadership were making a blunder and not taking in some young people from some other groups, that could be discussed. If it is a blunder, it is not nearly as bad a blunder as the aborted Lutte Ouvrière-Ligue Communiste fusion negotiations. That would have been a good step to have consummated in France. It would have been a qualitative leap against the Lambertists.

But the danger sign in Canada is not some missed fusion. The danger sign is the planned split in Canada, the "inside-outside" job now taking place with the com-

plicity of the secret faction.

Another sign of irresponsibility generated by the secret faction is the free and easy manner in which they toss out accusations without bothering to check on the facts.

Comrade Livio, who was not present at the last United Secretariat meeting, told you that the United Secretariat minority document on China was published without the knowledge or consent of the United Secretariat. But at the last Secretariat meeting, Comrade Ernest Germain made a motion that it should be printed as a resolution submitted by seven Secretariat members because he preferred not discussing it at that meeting. It's in the minutes. Why didn't you bother to check before tossing out your accusation, Comrade Livio? It's a small point, but it's typical.

Now we face the deadline of the quickie world congress. The decision to go ahead was made at the secretariat meeting. The decision was made despite the problem of translations. Despite the fact that the discussion hasn't even started in many places. Despite the fact that the French comrades face new difficulties because of the banning of the Ligue Communiste by the Pompidou regime. And, most important of all, despite the fact that the world Trotskyist movement is deeply divided politically and that clarification of all the issues has not yet been achieved. Under these conditions, a quickly held world congress cannot be authoritative and democratic.

Discussion on the China documents, the women's liberation documents, the Arab East document, and, if it's ready, a document on the international political situation, will be *initiated* at the September Secretariat. How many of these discussions will be finished then? How much discussion will be carried over to October? Then corrected drafts will have to be prepared and afterwards sent for translation.

In light of all this, the comrades of the IEC Majority rejected a postponement of the world congress. There's going to be a world congress at the end of the year, Livio, and if that's true, it's planned as a congress that cannot even make a pretense of living up to the April unanimously agreed conditions for an authoritative world congress. Such a congress can have no authority. The organizational decisions such a congress takes can have no authority. So what is the purpose in having it? All it does is heighten enormously the danger of a split.

So, we are faced with a big decision: is there anything we can do, anyway we can organize to stop this process before it leads to a disaster? We want to do everything we can to prevent a split, because we've got a lot of discussion ahead on the biggest political questions.

At this convention, new questions have been added to the discussion in the world movement. On the national question there has been a significant deepening of differences. The reporters for the minority here indicated this rather clearly. There has been a wholesale rejection of what we think is the most fundamental theoretical conquest of world Trotskyism since the death of Trotsky — the theory of the East European, Chinese, Yugoslavian, and Cuban revolutions after the end of World War II. The IT comrades think they're correct. They have some ideas on that. Fine. But you can't just play around with these questions. They are fundamental theoretical conquests we think we've made, and up to quite recently we thought they were conquests held in common in the

movement internationally.

Then there is the American question. This question was not on the agenda for the international discussion and no one proposed it for the agenda. But a very interesting thing has happened. A position on the American question was adopted by the SWP representatives of the IEC Majority Tendency, and supported by the United Secretariat Majority members here at this convention as the correct general line. This is opposed not just to our political resolution, but also to the line of one of the documents on which their bloc was formed — the Germain document. This is not so surprising. As Comrade Massey is wont to say, they "matured." And I don't make that as a joke. They have evolved politically.

Of course, this points out the unfortunate limits of the method of debate followed by the IEC Majority. The Germain document was written to mean all things to all people. It was a hodge-podge of different positions intended to cover up some of the real positions of the secret faction, which they weren't ready yet to state. In my opinion, at the time he wrote that document Germain was one of the few persons in the whole leadership of the IEC Majority who agreed with us basically on the American question. I think that what the IT comrades have presented here is much closer to what many other comrades of the IEC Majority think. And that judgment is confirmed by Comrade Barzman's explanation of his discussions in France.

The importance, depth, and scope of the political differences indicate that we are discussing questions that are decisive for the future of the world Trotskyist movement. These questions must be debated out to decide what our banner will be, what our program will be. There can be no question now that the differences are affecting program, are touching on program. No question at all.

Comrade Montes suggested that we look from 1973 forward and not from 1973 backward to 1969. But, no, we can't do that either. That's good advice at a normal convention — but not now. Now we have to look backward also. We must look more deeply into the character of the error made in 1969. We must examine its methodological roots, as Joe Hansen has done in his new article. ["The Underlying Differences in Method," IIDB, Vol. X, No. 12, July 1973]

We will have to publish the documentary material so that we can better see the evolution of the Fourth International from 1938 on, as Farrell suggested here.

But this cannot be done if the "real" international within the international has its way, and keeps on bringing the hotheads and splitters to the fore, driving ahead without concern or responsibility.

Livio tells us we shouldn't jump to "conspiracy" theories. There's a problem with translations, he agrees, but he blames it all on sloppy organizational habits.

Beware of that theory. One notices a pattern in the actions of the sloppy individual. While the sloppy individual can get certain things done, the sloppy individual never seems to be able to get translations done. While the sloppy individual can remember to bring certain papers to the United Secretariat meetings, the sloppy individual can never remember to bring a document we have not yet seen. The sloppy individual always seems to forget to bring all the mail, which all Secretariat members are entitled to see.

While the sloppy individual will manage to publish a document in their newspaper if he or she agrees with it, often something they don't agree with will be forgotten and left out.

For nine months we have demanded that the statement by the United Secretariat in solidarity with the Chinese Trotskyists in prison in China be printed in the official organs of the Fourth International. It was never printed in the Spanish-language organ, *Cuarta Internacional*, published in Paris. We passed formal motions. We threatened scandals. We did everything we could. It was just never printed. Mandel's answer was, "The editor's sloppy. He's really sloppy. You go down to Paris and take care of it. They won't even listen to me any more."

But they weren't too sloppy to publish the magazine every month. And so we began suspecting that the reason this statement wasn't printed was that there were certain Spanish-language groups in the Fourth International that weren't too much in solidarity with the Trotskyists in prison in China—like the PRT (Combatiente), some of whose leaders think Trotskyists *should* be in prison in China.

So we brush aside this sloppiness excuse. We've heard much about the strength of the former Communist League—2,000 to 2,500 cadres, many of them university-educated and multilingual. The resources are available to knock out the translations. Certainly more so than in the SWP. What's missing is not the organization but the political will. We get the feeling that the leadership over there just doesn't give a damn about having a political discussion.

If they had the political will, they could organize the translations. If they assumed their leadership responsibilities, they could do it. Comrade Livio, Comrade Ernest, Comrade Pierre could set an example. They could do as Joe Hansen has done, even though he, too, has other things to contribute. When it had to be done, he put other things aside and began knocking out those translations. It's a political question. It depends on how important you think it is.

Comrade Livio, if you can sit down, take time off from other things, and write a book on China, you can translate a few internal discussion articles for the ranks of the Fourth International. Ernest Mandel—he can sit down and knock out four long essays a day. He's a very productive, capable man. Pierre Frank's a fine writer, an excellent judge of how to say it correctly in French. They can translate. Set an example! Lead! Put everything aside for three weeks. Default on your other responsibilities. Let your home life go to hell. Set an example for the young cadres. Show the young leaders it must be done, it's a political responsibility. Tell them, "If you won't do it or are too goddamned incompetent, we'll show you how. We'll lead. We'll act like leaders." That's the problem.

The international is being driven toward a split. What can we do to stop it? We must find an instrumentality to fight the drive toward split. The history of our movement gives only one answer when you reach a stage like this. That is to organize a faction, a faction to try to slow this process down and prevent the split, a faction whose main goal is to get a democratic discussion and an authoritative world congress. To get you, Livio, and anyone else who may possibly listen to reason and act responsibly, to rein in some of these split-minded factionalists. If nothing

else, maybe our forming a faction will shock you just enough to make you act responsibly. You should even do it out of personal interest. Read a little bit of the writing on the wall. Rein them in.

We say to you, don't dissolve your faction. That's not our demand. We say, convert your group into an open declared faction, in accordance with Trotskyist norms. Tell the world movement who is on the steering committee of your faction. Conduct your "real" political discussions in the internal bulletin. Make your decisions known to the elected leadership bodies of the sections and the international. Exercise discipline and screen your members according to openly declared criteria. Publish your complete platform and take collective responsibility for your actions. That may be the only hope now. The formation of two factions that have a way of meeting at the leadership level, that take responsibility for their actions, can offer hope of slowing down the centrifugal forces.

Since Livio objects so strongly to our offering advice to the IEC Majority Tendency, we will not include that suggestion in our formal motion. But our proposal could not be more serious.

Meanwhile we must think of something else, comrades. We must consider the possibility of our failure, the possibility that we may not succeed in slowing down the split process. Perhaps we are wrong either about the capacities, the integrity, or the intentions of some of the IEC Majority comrades; perhaps we don't yet realize how far they have gone politically. I hope not.

We are willing to come to an accommodation in order to organize a democratic world congress. We will compromise wherever we can. But the entire world movement needs time. Comrade Livio says it's different from 1953 because we had fewer cadres then. It sure is different. It is the existence of those cadres that makes a thorough discussion so important. Look at what happened to the cadres in Argentina in the PRT-ERP. It shows exactly why political clarity, programmatic clarity is so important.

What will be the goal of our faction? How will it function? It will write. It will coordinate and openly organize the struggle internationally to get out our ideas. It will centralize itself. It will have elected leaders empowered to make decisions. It will maximize every pressure it can on people to slow this split process down. It will bloc with comrades who don't agree with us on everything but who want to prevent a split. It will fight for translations. It will fight for time to discuss. It will fight for everyone to loyally implement the April 9 United Secretariat statement that we all voted for.

But we will do this in such a way that we will guarantee to our comrades throughout the world that they will not be dispersed. They will not be victimized. They will not be nailed if this secret faction doesn't unwind. And we will be in fighting trim. We must be honest. You never organize a faction unless the danger of a split exists. But the purpose of the open faction is not to prepare a split. The purpose is to stop it.

Livio says he doesn't like the word "war." Well, there is no better word. The purpose of this faction will be to declare war on the entire split pattern that is evolving willy-nilly. We won't put our heads in the sand while the world movement is being driven by wild horses to a split congress, a congress that can't solve any of the big ques-

tions at issue. A split would be worse than a tragedy. It would be a crime. And history would brand as criminals those who unnecessarily speed it along and those who flinch from doing whatever is necessary to stop it.

We in the leadership who support it will organize the supporters of the faction in the SWP. They will be organized to help finance this faction in the SWP. They will be asked to give contributions out of the ordinary—over and above their normal sustainer pledges to the party, which they must not lower. They will be organized to write for the faction. They will be organized to meet and discuss the questions that come up. They'll be organized to bear the responsibility demanded by their capacities. And they will do this together with our comrades around the world.

Yes, of course, we will continue collaboration with the IEC Majority comrades in the United Secretariat. But we can no longer be confident in the integrity of the majority leadership of the Secretariat.

The key thing we can do to prevent a split is to organize ourselves to the maximum. Only that pressure can slow down the secret faction.

Comrade Livio, you talked about winners and losers in 1953. You say you "won." That's a hell of an assessment! What do you mean, "winners" and "losers"? There were mostly losers in 1953, mostly losers. Not too many winners. We lost the chance to have the political discussion we needed. The only "winner" was Pablo, and his victory proved to be unstable and temporary. There weren't any other winners.

But I'll tell you something we think we accomplished. We think the pressure of the Open Letter did slow down the adaptation to Stalinism. It gave you more help than you thought.

There's quite a lot to learn from the events of 1953.

First we said: replace Pablo as general secretary—he does not have to leave the Bureau, nor leave the Secretariat. Just have him step aside as general secretary. Because the statutes of those days gave the general secretary more power than god and Pablo began to think the dominion came with the office. He invoked what Comrade Mitten would call real "democratic centralist" statutes.

Our second request in 1953 was for the world congress to be postponed for a brief period of time so the big new discussion on Stalinism—which had not begun—could be held.

Those two modest requests were rejected as "federalist." And so they drove ahead to the split congress and its expulsions. That was your great "victory," Comrade Livio.

One final word. There should be no misunderstanding about what we say to the comrades of the SWP minority. We sense a danger with these comrades. Because of their newly acquired fondness for international democratic centralism, Bolshevism, and so on, they may be getting the idea that they can do what a normal member can't do. This was our impression from observing some of the things they did in the SWP preconvention discussion. What they did was not rational on the surface. No member would ordinarily think they could get away with it.

We want to make crystal clear that anyone in the SWP has a full right to be a supporter of the IEC Majority Tendency and form a faction or tendency together with comrades internationally. But that right confers upon them

no special privileges. You have the same rights and the same duties as any other SWP members. That's all. Nothing more, nothing less.

We should be clear on another thing. I said that this convention's authority for the functioning of the SWP cannot be set aside by any higher body after this convention. And you are wrong, Comrade Livio, when you say that this is not true. Read the statutes. The world congress can vote, if it wishes, to sever relations with us if it feels this convention wasn't democratic. But between now and that world congress, I repeat, there is no higher body that has any authority to supersede the decisions of the convention and their implementation by the incoming leadership. This convention is fully authoritative and all SWP members will abide by and carry out the line of the convention.

There is another thing that had better be crystal clear, too. The duties of party members with respect to the YSA will remain as they have always been. The YSA will decide when to open its preconvention discussion. It will decide its agenda and the items it will discuss. Following this decision, it will consult with the elected leadership of the Socialist Workers Party, and we will come to a mutual decision on whether or not there is going to be any waiving of duties of party members in the YSA in this discussion. Until that time, and until such decision is made, every party member is bound by the resolution we passed in 1961—every party member without exception.

Be a little patient. Let the YSA think about how it will organize its own discussion. Let them set a date. Let them set an agenda. We will then see what happens.

I will conclude by placing the following motion before you for a vote:

To approve the general line of the Political Committee report, including the following:

1. a) To reaffirm the organizational principles of the SWP as adopted at its 1965 convention and their application to every single member without exception.
- b) To instruct every party unit to apply these principles.
- c) All transfers in the post-convention period must be approved by the National Committee until it decides otherwise.
2. To end the literary and branch discussion and refer any reopening to the National Committee to be decided in light of the implementation of the unanimous April United Secretariat statement defining the conditions for a democratic and authoritative world congress.
3. To continue in an uninterrupted way all international responsibilities including translating and publishing the English-language International Internal Discussion Bulletin for the information of SWP and YSA members as a fraternal courtesy to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.
4. The convention proposes to the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency that in the light of the new developments it discuss converting itself from a tendency to a faction.
5. The convention instructs and empowers the incoming National Committee to use all the forces and resources at its command to struggle for a democratic world congress and a Trotskyist Fourth International.

APPENDIX I: MATERIAL PERTAINING TO THE DOMINGO LETTER AFFAIR

Letter from the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party to the United Secretariat, May 11, 1971

New York, N. Y. 10014
May 12, 1971

Political Bureau
La Verdad

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed for your information is a copy of a letter from the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party to the United Secretariat.

The decision to send the letter, and to provide you with a copy for your information, was made at a meeting of the Political Committee held yesterday.

Comradely yours,
s/Jack Barnes
Organization Secretary

New York, N. Y. 10014
May 11, 1971

Dear Ernest,

Enclosed is a letter to the United Secretariat that the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party voted to send at its May 11, 1971, meeting. The letter is self-explanatory.

The Political Committee also voted to send a copy of the letter to the Political Bureau of the *La Verdad* grouping for its information. A copy of that letter is likewise enclosed.

Comradely yours,
s/Jack Barnes
Organization Secretary

New York, N. Y.
May 11, 1971

To the United Secretariat
of the Fourth International

Dear Comrades,

At the March 20-21 meeting of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, Comrade Pedro reported on a recent trip he had made to Latin America. Among other things, he reported that a mimeographed bulletin containing a lengthy letter signed by "Domingo" was being circulated among the sections there.

The bulletin appeared to have official sponsorship. It was called *INFORMACION INTERNACIONAL* (International Information) and the body publishing it listed itself as the "Comite uruguayo (IV Internacional)" [Uruguayan Committee (Fourth International)]. The letter, dated November 24, 1970, and entitled "La crisis del movimiento trotskista en Argentina" ("The Crisis of

the Trotskyist Movement in Argentina"), purported to be a balance sheet of the tendencies in our movement in that country as of that date.

Upon returning from Europe, Comrade Pedro reported to us that at the meeting of the United Secretariat Comrade Livio Maitan said that he had written the letter, using "Domingo" as a pen name. The other members of the United Secretariat, according to Comrade Pedro, disclaimed any knowledge of the existence of such a letter.

The minutes of the March 20-21 meeting of the United Secretariat did not include anything about this—neither Comrade Pedro's report on this point and his questions about it, nor Comrade Maitan's statement as to the authorship of the letter, nor any indication as to the comments of the others present.

All of this was so surprising to us that we asked Comrade Hansen to place it on the agenda at the next meeting of the United Secretariat on April 17-18.

According to Comrade Hansen, at that meeting Comrade Maitan again acknowledged being the author of the letter.

The other members of the United Secretariat said that they had no knowledge of the letter before Comrade Pedro's report, and that they still had not seen it. None of them knew what the "Comite uruguayo (IV Internacional)" was or whom it represented. Comrade Maitan insisted that the letter he had written was "private," that it had been circulated without his consent or knowledge, and that to circulate a private letter without the permission of the author was a mistake. He did not volunteer any information as to the identity of the recipient of his letter.

Other members of the United Secretariat, without yet knowing the content of the letter, defended the right of leaders of the world Trotskyist movement to engage in private correspondence and to have that privacy respected.

The only action taken by the United Secretariat was to pass the following motion: "That copies of that letter be made available to the United Secretariat."

After discussing this entire development, we reached the following conclusions:

1. We do not question the right of any leader, or for that matter, any member of the world Trotskyist movement to engage in private correspondence. However, in our opinion, that issue is not involved in this instance.

2. Comrade Maitan, we understand, is the head of the Latin American Commission and therefore intimately involved in all the relations between the United Secretariat and the sections and sympathizing groups of the Fourth International in Latin America. Copies of all of his correspondence written in that official capacity with the sections and sympathizing groups in that area, along with their replies, should therefore be available to members of the United Secretariat whenever they wish to read them.

3. The letter in question is not—in the proper meaning

of the term — a private letter, as can be seen at once upon reading it. The signer of the letter uses the term "we" throughout and speaks as if he were expressing the collective and considered opinion of the Latin American Commission, if not the United Secretariat as a whole.

For example, the author writes: "For our part, we consider the situation extremely grave and judge that a discussion on this problem must be developed between now and the world congress . . . By means of this letter we are attempting to suggest the lines of this discussion, at the same time putting forward some opinions. We may make some errors . . . But we cannot accept the alternative of letting things slide any longer."

Another example: ". . . the *La Verdad* group, disregarding the responsible attitude the congress took in striving to keep the discussion on a political level and adopting a solution that permitted the dissident minority to remain within the framework of the international Trotskyist movement, has indulged in unacceptable factional maneuvers, provoking a deterioration in its relations with the International."

The evidence cited for this condemnation — which purports to express the judgment of no less than the "International" — carries the same implication of emanating from the Latin American Commission, if not the United Secretariat as a whole: "The *La Verdad* group held its national congress without giving advance notice to the International, without sending the documents adopted, or information on the debates. What is worse: a representative of the International minority was invited to attend the congress and in fact participated in it."

The alleged "representative of the International minority" was in actuality a member of the Socialist Workers Party who was in Argentina by coincidence at the time the underground congress was held. He reported the entire matter to the United Secretariat at its meeting of September 19-20, 1970, a meeting attended by Comrade Maitan. This was two months before Comrade Maitan wrote his letter.

4. The fact that the United Secretariat was not consulted in either the decision to draw up and send such a letter or in formulating it has implications that will surely not escape experienced comrades in the International. Either the United Secretariat was not carrying out its responsibilities in overseeing the work of the Latin American Commission, or Comrade Maitan operated behind the back of the United Secretariat, without informing it of a most important action on his part that could gravely affect the internal situation not only in Latin America but in the world Trotskyist movement as a whole.

5. The fact that even a month after this matter was reported, the United Secretariat continued to remain ignorant of the content of a letter that had been mimeographed and widely circulated in Latin America makes matters still worse. Was Comrade Maitan deliberately trying to keep the United Secretariat from knowing the content of the letter even at this late date? Or was the United Secretariat uninterested in pursuing the matter further, even after its attention had been called to the existence of the letter at its previous session?

6. The chief target of Comrade Maitan's letter is Comrade Nahuel Moreno of the *La Verdad* group. In attacking him, Comrade Maitan goes back to 1951; that is, eleven years before the Reunification Congress; and he also raises doubts concerning the relation of the Argentinian comrades with the International Committee before the reunification and at the time of the reunification. This

is a very serious matter, in our opinion, for Comrade Maitan has thereby injected differences into the international pre-congress discussion that were considered superseded at the time of the reunification. By doing this, he indicates that he holds doubts about the reunification itself.

7. The main objective of the letter is transparent. It seeks to advance political grounds for maintaining the recognition of the *El Combatiente* group as the Argentinian section in place of the numerical grounds used at the last world congress. The author thereby fans factional fires to the injury of the discussion preparatory to the next world congress, not the least injury being the one done to his own contributions to that discussion by the revelation that they are accompanied by narrow factional objectives of his own.

8. The attitude displayed by the author of the letter toward the *La Verdad* grouping and Comrade Moreno is not of recent origin, as is shown by the content of the letter itself. "The question arises," says the author, "why we have not discussed the problems of the Argentinian section in the past. . . . We note . . . that it was difficult for us to intervene in the period immediately following the entry of the Argentinian organization into the International in the aftermath of the reunification and that we relied on a process of progressive assimilation."

A declaration of that nature indicates that Comrade Maitan (and whoever else he is referring to when he says "us" and "we") held reservations about the reunification in 1963 and that he (in agreement with those he refers to by "we") has acted since then in accordance with these reservations. It is impossible not to wonder about the role played by Comrade Maitan in the split that occurred in the Argentinian section prior to the last world congress. The circulation of this particular letter — which only came to our attention by accident — inevitably suggests that perhaps other similar actions have been undertaken in the same *sub rosa* way.

9. In view of these considerations, we suggest that it would be in order for the majority of the United Secretariat to issue a statement: (a) making it absolutely clear that the impression created by the content of the letter that the author was speaking in behalf of the Latin American Commission and the United Secretariat has no correspondence with the truth; (b) specifically dissociating the United Secretariat in its majority from the views expressed in the letter, particularly the factional attack on the *La Verdad* group and Comrade Moreno; (c) informing the movement what the "Comite uruguayo (IV Internacional)" actually represents, and — if this still remains unknown to the members of the United Secretariat — indicating that an investigation will be undertaken to ascertain the facts.

10. We suggest further that the letter written by Comrade Maitan, which has already been circulated among the sections in Latin America, be made available to the membership of the world Trotskyist movement as a whole by publishing it in the Internal Bulletin of the Fourth International, together with the suggested clarifying statement by the majority of the United Secretariat and this letter expressing our opinion.

Comradely yours,
Political Committee
Socialist Workers Party

Statement of the United Secretariat Concerning the May 11, 1971, Letter of the Political Committee of the SWP

After considering the May 11, 1971, letter addressed to it by the Political Committee of the SWP, the United Secretariat makes the following statement:

1. The letter signed Domingo is a private letter sent by a member of the US in his own name, and not in the name of a body of the International. The author will reply to the criticisms which the letter of the Political Committee of the SWP addresses to him.

2. The US holds that the content of the letter signed Domingo does not go beyond the normal limits of a personal letter devoted to differences under wide discussion within our movement.

3. The US cites the procedure followed at the Ninth World Congress concerning the recognition of the Argentine section. The organization today called the PRT represents the Argentine section recognized in consequence

of the unification that occurred at the Reunification Congress (Seventh World Congress). Within that organization, a split occurred between the eighth and ninth world congresses, the "La Verdad" group, as a minority within the PRT not agreeing to submit to the decisions of a congress of the section that was convoked in a normal way. Under these conditions, no justification whatsoever in correspondence with the statutes could be submitted to the Ninth World Congress to disaffiliate the PRT as the Argentine section without thereby sanctioning a gross violation of democratic centralism.

Carried: 7 for
2 against
1 abstention

Reply to the Political Committee of the SWP, by Livio Maitan, May 28, 1971

The letter of the PC of the SWP poses some grave problems and merits a very clear reply. Here are the points that I want to underline:

1. The letter written by Domingo does not involve the responsibility of either the US or the Latin American Commission (the comrades who read my articles know that I often utilize the expression "nous"—in Italian "noi"—which the translators of the IP normally and correctly translate as "I"). I consider that in the International every comrade has the right to write such documents without their necessarily being circulated in the whole movement.

As to the content of the letter, the comrades will find there both the ideas that I advanced in my September 1970 discussion document and, to a large degree, some ideas that I expressed at the last Plenum of the IEC. It is thus ridiculous to insinuate that I may have acted behind the back of the Secretariat or of the International.

I have no objection to the letter signed Domingo being circulated for the international discussion (with some explanatory lines on my part).

2. The gravest and most scandalous accusation in the SWP letter concerns my possible reservations on the reunification. I could limit myself to quite simply rejecting that accusation which smacks of factional sophistry. But, above all to those comrades who were not in the International at the time and who, altogether, represent the crushing majority of our movement, I will recall that, the same as the other members of the majority I was favorable to a reunification with all those who accepted the basic conditions on which the agreement was realized. That is why—against the minority led by Pablo—we maintained that, in principle, even Healy and Lambert could enter the International if they accepted the reunification platform. We were, with all the more reason, for the entry of the Argentine organization and on this terrain, too, we polemicized against Pablo. After the 1963 congress, it was I personally who was given the charge of traveling to Latin America to complete the reunification and who reached an agreement with the Argentine organization led at the time by Moreno, even if this had as a consequence the estrangement—with hardly an exception

—of the comrades who had collaborated with us after the split with the Posadists.

Did I have reservations as to the line of this organization? Obviously yes. If I did not advance them at the time, this was precisely because what was essential was to assure the reunification and not open up debates that would have inevitably aroused misunderstandings. But I had and I have the right to hold reservations or to make criticisms—the reunification, as a matter of fact, involved both the right of organizations and comrades who did not agree with the political documents adopted by the congresses to enter the International (that is why the minority led by Pablo was accepted) and the right of everyone to criticize the orientation of this or that section. The comrades of the present minority have, moreover, exercised this right, for example, with regard to the English comrades, of whom some were with the International Secretariat before the reunification, without anyone accusing them because of that of bringing the reunification into question.

I will add that criticism of the positions of Moreno is not at all a peculiarity of Livio Maitan. The comrades of the SWP, at least part of them, have expressed not a few criticisms in the past and at times exactly on the same subjects. At the time of my first trip to Latin America after 1963, it was above all against the objections advanced by comrades of organizations that had belonged to the International Committee that I had to defend the right of the Argentine organization to enter into the reunited organization. Even now the most severe proposals emanate from that side. Finally the split of 1968 occurred among Argentine comrades who had *all* belonged to the International Committee before 1963. That is why neither the reunification nor, a fortiori, the split of 1953 have anything at all to do with the current situation in our Argentine movement.

As to the insinuation that I possibly played a role in the split of 1968, this is quite simply inadmissible. If the comrades of the PC of the SWP have any items, it is their duty to so inform the International; if it is only an insinuation, they must understand that by such procedures

they can only do harm to the fruitful development of the political discussion that must represent the fundamental requisite for everyone.

3. The La Verdad group has no right to complain about my attitude toward them. It was not I who chose to split the party; it was I, on the contrary, who suggested a solution—accepted at the world congress by the Argentine delegate—that assured La Verdad the status of a sympathizing section. In addition, I always sought to avoid having the discussion shift from the political terrain to the terrain of personal accusations and quarrels over rules of good conduct—I am prepared to give every useful explanation in the matter, both at the world congress and in other bodies of the International.

As to the political appreciations, it is not at all a question of searching for scapegoats. It is a question of understanding the genesis of certain ideas that have circulated in Argentina and above all of avoiding arbitrarily picturing so-called orthodox Trotskyists as opposed to camouflaged "Maoists" or "Castroists." Already at the world congress, when Moreno was beating the drums about the "Red Book" signed by three Argentina comrades, by claiming that the pages that he was reading from explained the split, I replied that for more than a year Moreno had offered radically different explanations for the same split and that certain of the appreciations of Maoism contained in the Red Book had been shared by him. On this terrain, too, there was nothing new in the Domingo letter.

It goes without saying that if the comrades of the minority want a political discussion on all the problems of our movement in Argentina as of right now, I am ready to accept it for my part. Nevertheless, I consider that at this stage it is preferable to place the axis of the discussion on the problems that are posed more generally in Latin America.

4. The comrades of the PC, who engage in the most distasteful insinuations with regard to me, claim that they should be taken at their word when they affirm that a member of the minority found himself in Argentina by chance at the time of a congress of La Verdad. Let us admit that things actually happened that way—this does not thereby diminish the responsibility of the La Verdad group which did not send any communique to the US either before or after this congress. The facts are sufficiently clear and there is no need for me to insist on them.

Nevertheless, one point merits being brought out. A comrade representing the minority can certainly make trips; and I think that above all before the world congress it would be very positive if the comrades of both the majority and the minority participated at the congresses of the sections that are discussing the proposed documents and electing delegations. But all of this must be organized under the responsibility of the international leadership—the particular initiatives of a section or of a comrade could be suspected of being factional enterprises. That is why the discussion on trips such as the trips already made by Comrade P. should be held *before* and not *after*—this is moreover the rule for any important trip of no matter what member of the international leadership, which assures the minority the possibility of expressing its point of view and of asking for all the

information it wishes.

5. I cannot know, naturally, at this moment in what form the Argentine question will be posed at the world congress—no decision has been taken up to now. But a clarification is called for with regard to method, since the letter of the SWP raises the question.

At the last world congress, the question was to ascertain who represented the majority in Argentina at the time of the split in 1968—it was only on that basis that the continuity of the section could be established and assured. If, in dealing with a split, the International should decide the statutory question by basing itself on the political orientations, this would involve an obvious danger of doing violence to the rights of national majorities that might be in disagreement with the majority of the International.

This did not prevent anyone even at the congress, after the recognition of the majority as representing the section (this did not at all involve the recognition of a new section), from presenting the view that the said majority had advanced concepts incompatible with Trotskyism. He would have had the right and the duty to propose its expulsion and possible replacement by another tendency or organization. In this case, the discussion would have taken place, it is obvious, on an essentially political level.

No one posed such a question at the Ninth Congress. In principle, every delegate has the right to do so at the coming congress, by demanding the expulsion of the section and its possible replacement. To utilize the technique of understatement, I will say that it is not I who would do that (if my section elects me at the time of its national congress).

May 28, 1971

Livio Maitan

P.S. Two supplementary questions: (a) I do not know for what reasons and under what circumstances—I suppose it was a question of security measures—the document signed Domingo was circulated under the sponsorship of the Uruguayan Committee of the Fourth International. But, so far as the substance is concerned, I recall that a group of comrades have operated in Uruguay for a certain number of years, which should not be a surprise to anyone, since a comrade attended in their name—as a fraternal delegate—at the Ninth World Congress. If my memory is correct, they at times utilized the name Uruguayan Committee of the Fourth International. Several months ago, the PRT(U), politically linked to La Verdad, asked to establish relations with the International. No official section exists in Uruguay.

(b) The decision of the PC of the SWP to send La Verdad, which is not a section, a letter of a very delicate nature is in itself debatable. But what is inadmissible is that the comrades took the initiative to spread even outside the statutory framework of the International that I utilized the pseudonym of Domingo. Here is another example of the cavalier manner in which questions of security are treated in our movement—and I want to make very clear that this remark is not addressed solely to the comrades of the PC of the SWP.

**Letter from the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party
to the United Secretariat, July 7, 1971**

14 Charles Lane
New York, N. Y. 10014

July 8, 1971

Dear Ernest,

Enclosed is a letter to the United Secretariat that the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party voted to send at its July 7, 1971, meeting. The letter is self-explanatory.

Comradely,
s/ Jack Barnes
Organization Secretary

cc: Members United Secretariat

New York, N. Y.
July 7, 1971

To the United Secretariat
of the Fourth International

Dear Comrades,

We have studied attentively your statement concerning our letter of May 11, 1971, in which we voiced our concern over the "Domingo" letter. We have also weighed the arguments advanced by Comrade Maitan in his "Introductory Note to the Letter Signed Domingo," his note correcting the English translation of the "Domingo" letter, and his "Reply to the Political Committee of the SWP." The apprehensions we expressed over the "Domingo" letter have not been allayed. They have, instead, been increased.

In our letter of May 11, we suggested that the majority of the United Secretariat issue a statement on the "Domingo" letter along the following lines: ". . . (a) making it absolutely clear that the impression created by the content of the letter that the author was speaking in behalf of the Latin American Commission and the United Secretariat has no correspondence with the truth; (b) specifically dissociating the United Secretariat in its majority from the views expressed in the letter, particularly the factional attack on the *La Verdad* group and Comrade Moreno; (c) informing the movement what the 'Comite uruguayo (IV Internacional)' actually represents, and— if this still remains unknown to the members of the United Secretariat— indicating that an investigation will be undertaken to ascertain the facts."

We suggested further that the "Domingo" letter be published in the Internal Bulletin, together with the clarifying statement by the majority of the United Secretariat and our letter of May 11.

We were pleased that you agreed to publish the "Domingo" letter in the Internal Bulletin together with our letter of May 11. On the other points, however, we feel that your response failed to measure up to the requirements of the situation, and represented a default in leadership responsibility.

For example, you did not inform the movement what the "Comité uruguayo (IV Internacional)" represents. From

Comrade Maitan's "Reply to the Political Committee of the SWP," we gather that he, too, does not know what it represents. He refers merely to a group which "if my memory is correct" utilized the name at times.

Thus you ignored our suggestion that if you did not know the identity of the "Comite uruguayo (IV Internacional)" an investigation was in order. The ranks of the world Trotskyist movement are still in the dark as to who it was that received, translated, mimeographed, and distributed the letter signed "Domingo." Was it done by a section? A sympathizing organization? Or an isolated individual who happens to be on Comrade Maitan's private mailing list? Do not the cadres of the Fourth International have a right to such information?

We suggested that you specifically dissociate the United Secretariat from the views expressed in the "Domingo" letter, particularly the factional attack on the *La Verdad* and Comrade Moreno. You did not do this. Consequently we have no choice but to conclude that you share Comrade Maitan's views in this respect.

Finally, we suggested that you make it absolutely clear that Comrade Maitan was not speaking in behalf of either the Latin American Commission or the United Secretariat.

You did this; but in such a way as to deepen our concern. You stated that the "letter signed Domingo is a private letter sent by a member of the US in his own name, and not in the name of a body of the International." You then justified this as being perfectly legitimate: "The US holds that the content of the letter signed Domingo does not go beyond the normal limits of a personal letter devoted to differences under wide discussion within our movement."

We maintain that the content of the letter, with its sub-headings and footnotes, shows on the face of it that it is not a personal letter but a factional document aimed at lining up comrades in a secret way.

The fact that the majority of the United Secretariat could consider that the writing of such a document by one of its members is a perfectly normal private matter raises a number of questions in our minds as to the concepts and procedures regulating the functioning of the body entrusted with leadership of the Fourth International between meetings of the International Executive Committee.

1. It signified that any member of the United Secretariat is free to act on his own as a private individual in handling situations of a grave nature that require mutual discussion, evaluation, and decision. Such a practice reduces the United Secretariat to a federation of heads of commissions, who consider it normal not even to inform each other at times of important decisions they have made and processes they have set in motion.

2. It opens the way to abuses of a most serious nature, such as operating behind the back of the United Secretariat and behind the back of the leaderships of sections.

3. It fosters the formation of personal cliques and similar unhealthy groupings put together in secret by this or that individual member of the United Secretariat.

4. If it is considered normal for Comrade Maitan to operate in such a fashion it must be considered likewise normal for other members of the United Secretariat to operate in a similar way. The question follows automat-

ically: Who else in the United Secretariat is sending out comparable factional letters to his own private mailing list? The position taken by the majority of the United Secretariat on the question of personal privilege in such matters places the entire committee under a cloud. A serious blow has thus been dealt to its authority and to its claim to be serving as a collective leadership.

Comrade Maitan's attempted defense of his letter does nothing toward counteracting these conclusions.

First of all, we will take up some small matters. In the "P. S." to his "Reply to the Political Committee of the SWP," Comrade Maitan suggests that a security question was involved in revealing that he used the pen name of "Domingo." If the rules of security were violated, the first infraction occurred when the author appended the name "Domingo" to a document that does not contain a single item involving any real security matter.

Of course, if he has organized a secret private faction, then a security problem would be involved—for the faction. To avoid that security problem a simple procedure was open: submission of his document in his own name for publication in the Internal Bulletin.

We should like to point out that so far as the Fourth International as a whole is concerned, we were the ones to call the attention of the United Secretariat to the existence of this document and its circulation in Latin America, something the author had not seen fit to do. Was this a violation of security rules on our part? We acted in a responsible way by bringing the document to the attention of the United Secretariat. Unfortunately the majority of the United Secretariat did not seem to welcome what we did.

Comrade Maitan protests our sending the *La Verdad* group a copy of our letter to the United Secretariat. The *La Verdad* group is both a sympathizing organization and directly involved as one of the subjects of the "Domingo" letter. What about the "Comité uruguayo (IV Internacional)"? By what statutory right is it to be placed in the favored category of being on Comrade Maitan's private mailing list while the *La Verdad* organization—not to mention the United Secretariat—is excluded?

On the alleged mistranslation of "we" and "I," Comrade Maitan refers to his habit of using the Italian "noi" or French "nous" which, he says, "the translators of the IP normally and correctly translate as 'I.'" The translators of IP inform us that they only stumbled upon this quirk after some years of mistranslating Comrade Maitan's "noi" or "nous" as "we." However, what does this have to do with the "Domingo" letter? That document was circulated in Latin America as a Spanish translation in which the "noi" or "nous" was translated as "nosotros" and not "yo." To grasp the impact and import of the document as it was circulated among our Latin American cothinkers, it is necessary to know that the pronoun "nosotros" was used throughout. The correct translation of "nosotros" is "we."

If a translating error was made, it was committed by those who translated the "Domingo" letter into Spanish. Obviously they were under the impression that Comrade Maitan was speaking in some official capacity for the International and not as a private individual. This impression was strengthened by such authoritative-sounding declarations as the following: "Since that time the *La Verdad* group, disregarding the responsible attitude the congress took . . . has indulged in unacceptable factional maneuvers, provoking a deterioration in its relations with

the International."

A more important issue than the translation of "noi," "nous," or "nosotros" is the innuendo made by Comrade Maitan that Comrade Pedro took a special secret trip to Argentina on the invitation of the *La Verdad* group to attend an underground congress they had organized. The United Secretariat knew in *advance* that Comrade Pedro was making this trip to Latin America. It was undertaken in relation to defense work in behalf of the political prisoners in Peru and was timed in accordance with that task. So far as we know, Comrade Maitan was in favor of this work as was the rest of the United Secretariat. Certainly he registered no objections that came to our attention.

These points amount to little more than quibbling. A truly serious item is Comrade Maitan's view of the reunification in 1963, to which we called attention in our letter of May 11. In the "Domingo" letter, Comrade Maitan stated: "The question arises why we have not discussed the problems of the Argentinian section in the past. By hindsight we can conclude that we should have stimulated a discussion and complete clarification long before now. We note, however, that it was difficult for us to intervene in the period immediately following the entry of the Argentinian organization into the International in the aftermath of the reunification and that we relied on a process of progressive assimilation."

It is to be observed that in correcting the "mistranslation," Comrade Maitan specified that the "we" in this passage is correct. Consequently it is absolutely clear that he is expressing what he considers to have been, and to still be, the joint views of the comrades formerly with the International Secretariat.

We observe in particular Comrade Maitan's use of the phrases "entry of the Argentinian organization into the International" and "we relied on a process of progressive assimilation."

In his "Reply to the Political Committee of the SWP," Comrade Maitan uses similar phrases: ". . . we maintained that, in principle, even Healy and Lambert could *enter the International*. . ." (Emphasis added.) He repeats the formula again in relation to Argentina: "We were, with all the more reason, for the *entry* of the Argentine organization. . ." (Emphasis added.)

We conclude from this that Comrade Maitan and the other comrades whom he includes in his "we," took the view in 1963—and have held it ever since—that the reunification consisted of the "entry" of the International Committee into the Fourth International, to be subjected to "a process of progressive assimilation" thereafter.

This was not the viewpoint of the majority of the International Committee, which agreed to engage in the reunification. The viewpoint of the majority of the International Committee was that in 1953-54 a split had occurred *within* the Fourth International involving two factions, both of which belonged to the Fourth International. The main political differences that had led to this split were superseded as early as 1957, in the opinion of the majority of the International Committee, and this opened the possibility for a principled reunification of the two sides, which—if handled correctly—could lead to the eventual liquidation of the former lines of cleavage, a complete fusion of forces, and the construction of a genuinely collective leadership.

It was in accordance with this concept that the majority of the International Committee conducted itself following

the reunification that took place in 1963 on the basis of a statement of the principles of Trotskyism. The majority of the International Committee proceeded quite consciously to attempt to erase the previous lines of division, which had been superseded, and to genuinely dissolve the factions, beginning with its own forces. It consciously rejected any concept of "a process of progressive assimilation" of the other side.

Comrade Maitan's formulations indicate that he had a different concept of the reunification, and followed—and is still following—a different policy from that adopted by the majority of the International Committee. This is what we referred to in our letter of May 11 when we stated that these formulations—coupled with his excursion back in history to 1951 (in the case of the Argentinian section)—indicated that he "held reservations about the reunification in 1963 and that he [in agreement with those he refers to by 'we'] has acted since then in accordance with those reservations." Perhaps it would have been more accurate to say that he acted in accordance with a policy of trying to progressively assimilate the forces of the majority of the International Committee rather than reunify and fuse with them on the basis of the common statement of principles that both sides had adopted.

The policy of "progressive assimilation" has met with a certain success, it seems. Comrade Maitan observes in his "Reply to the Political Committee of the SWP" that the "most severe proposals" against *La Verdad* emanate from comrades who formerly belonged to the International Committee. He adds that "the split of 1968 occurred among Argentine comrades who had all belonged to the International Committee before 1963."

We note something else in Comrade Maitan's "Reply to the Political Committee of the SWP" that is disquieting to us. He uses the terms "majority" and "minority" throughout in a way that shows he is not referring to the voting at the last world congress on the resolutions dealing with Latin America, the "cultural revolution" in China, and the radicalization of the youth. He uses the terms "majority" and "minority" instead as referring to crystallized international factional formations. Thus he says, "If the comrades of the minority want a political discussion on all the problems of our movement in Argentina as of right now, I am ready to accept it for my part." Again, "The comrades of the PC . . . affirm that a member of the minority found himself in Argentina by chance. . . ." In another place: "A comrade representing the minority can certainly make trips . . . it would be very positive if the comrades of both the majority and minority participated in the congresses of the sections. . . ." Still another:

". . . discussion on trips . . . assures the minority the possibility of expressing its points of view and of asking for all the information it wishes."

Up to this point in the international discussion we have followed a policy of *opposing* the crystallization of international tendencies.

First of all, we were of the view that while some important differences had arisen and been expressed at the last world congress, no general division into two opposing sides had occurred there, whatever may have been the factional posturing of some comrades on certain questions. In addition, we assumed that the areas of common agreement outweighed the divisions in view of the virtually unanimous approval of the general political resolution which outlined the main tasks of the Fourth International for the immediate period ahead.

Upon the renewal of discussion in preparation for the coming congress, it appeared to us that a policy of opposing the crystallization of international tendencies would help ensure maximum freedom of debate. It was a policy, we thought, that would be most conducive to bringing out nuances of thought, would best permit the shifts and changes in views called for by the interchange of opinion, the weighing of arguments, and development of more thoroughly grounded judgments. Moreover, such a policy, we felt, would best foster efforts to broaden the areas of common agreement and bring them to the fore.

Judging from the circumstances surrounding the production of the "Domingo" letter, some of the statements made by Comrade Maitan in defense of it, and the assertion by the majority of the United Secretariat that it is perfectly "normal" to write such letters, it would appear that Comrade Maitan and those who agree with him have been proceeding in accordance with a different policy.

In view of this, it is now our opinion that the leaderships of sections and sympathizing organizations who feel concern about these developments would do well to begin consulting directly with each other, particularly in considering what relationship these developments may have to the political differences that have arisen, and what is the wisest course to pursue. This should include the leaderships of declared tendencies in national sections, where they may exist, inasmuch as this is a period of discussion preparatory to a world congress.

We ask that this letter be published in the Internal Bulletin as a statement of our opinion.

With comradely greetings,
Political Committee
Socialist Workers Party

The Domingo Letter, November 24, 1970

INTRODUCTORY NOTE TO THE LETTER SIGNED DOMINGO

I should like to make clear that the following letter was written by me at a time when I was still in ignorance of certain decisions made by the Argentine comrades. Particularly, I believed at the time that a document presented as a document of the Leninist Tendency represented the point of view of the majority of the PRT; I learned subsequently that it expressed some personal appreciations and that at no time had the organization voted for it. Furthermore,

the line applied by the PRT since October-November 1970 corresponds, in substance, to the suggestions that I expressed, as I was able to verify later. In this sense, a certain number of remarks in the letter must be considered to be outmoded. In addition, for my later political appreciations, I call attention to my article published some weeks ago in *Rouge, Intercontinental Press*, and other organs of our movement.

May 28, 1971

L. M.

Uruguayan Committee (Fourth International)

The Crisis of the Trotskyist Movement in Argentina

When a delegate from the leadership of the International visited Argentina in 1967, the situation seemed promising from several standpoints—the base that had been achieved in the major cities of the country, links with certain working-class and popular sectors, influence in some universities, the number of activists, the existence of a team of full-timers, a technical apparatus, and so forth. From the discussions that took place at the time, moreover, it seemed legitimate to conclude that there was substantial agreement between the International and the Argentinian comrades in evaluating the OLAS conference and the implications flowing from this. It is true that signs of a certain malaise had already appeared and that at the leadership level there were evident frictions. However, this was explained by the Argentinian comrades as the result on the one hand of an insufficient integration of elements coming from diverse origins and on the other of some personal habits and attitudes which would have to be overcome without giving rise to greater conflicts. In any case no one questioned the basic solidity of the organization. Unfortunately, the estimations made in 1967, as well as subsequent ones up until the world congress and the 1969 IEC plenum proved to be false. Shortly after the visit of the delegate from the International a struggle erupted in the leadership and in very rapid order a grave split developed. The world congress decided to recognize the majority tendency (*El Combatiente*) as the Argentinian section, granting the *La Verdad* minority tendency the status of a sympathizing organization. Since that time the *La Verdad* group, disregarding the responsible attitude the congress took in striving to keep the discussion on a political level and adopting a solution that permitted the dissident minority to remain within the framework of the international Trotskyist movement, has indulged in unacceptable factional maneuvers, provoking a deterioration in its relations with the International.¹ At the beginning of this year, the Argentinian section experienced additional serious splits after a deep-going differentiation into three opposing tendencies—the Tendencia Proletaria, the Tendencia Comunista, and the Tendencia Leninista. The tendency recognized by all as representing a clear majority held the Fifth Congress of the party and stated that it considered itself the Argentinian section of the International. But above and beyond the formal problems, which will be

resolved by the International in accordance with its statutory norms, the fact is that our forces remain seriously divided in Argentina—all the more so because the Tendencia Comunista and the Tendencia Leninista at least are far from homogenous politically and the majority that held the congress expressed conceptions and orientations which are going to provoke discussion in Argentina itself, and the International obviously will have something to say on this.

For our part we consider the situation extremely grave and judge that a discussion on this problem must be developed between now and the world congress in the context of the more general Latin-American discussion in progress in the International. By means of this letter we are attempting to suggest the lines of this discussion, at the same time putting forward some opinions. We may make some errors, among other things because we do not have all the facts. But we cannot accept the alternative of letting things slide any longer. Everyone must assume his responsibility and there must be a complete clarification of the situation. Some might think that in a situation like the one existing today in Argentina, action is required and not discussion. In principle this is correct. But in this given context, it is a dangerous illusion to think that the difficulties can be overcome solely through action. Unless there is a clarification on the revolutionary strategy needed in this stage, on the methods to be used, and on priorities, we will run the risk of suffering grave setbacks, or in the best of possibilities of building on sand.

The crisis of the organization that began in 1968 was so dramatic that it is an absolute necessity to analyze the causes. And this analysis requires going back into the past.

Wrong Conceptions

It must be remembered first of all that the group that played the preponderant role in building the PRT had a very peculiar role in the vicissitudes of the international Trotskyist movement since the war. The third World Congress in 1951 decided not to recognize it as a section of the International (this was a unanimous decision) fundamentally because of its sectarian attitude toward Peronism. After the 1953 split, this group lined up with the Interna-

tional Committee but without really integrating itself into it. As a result it developed rather independently of the principal currents in the Trotskyist movement (in the meantime it made a 180 degree turn on the question of Peronism, adopting an entry tactic toward this movement, which, moreover, took the form of tail-ending and complete opportunism). This was also reflected in the fact that it did not enter the International at the Reunification Congress, but later as the result of special negotiations within the framework of the general reunification agreements. One of the most important consequences of this situation was that the Argentinian comrades developed conceptions differing distinctly from those of the International on crucial questions.

At the last world congress, the representatives of the *La Verdad* tendency raised a commotion over certain chapters in the pamphlet *El único camino* [The Only Road] published by three comrades of the Argentinian majority. In these chapters there was an eclectic appreciation of the relationship between Trotskyism, Maoism, and Castroism. But ideas of the same type were put forward first in the documents of the united organization and by Moreno himself. As regards Maoism, it is sufficient to note here the features contained in the document of the Third Congress of *Palabra Obrera* (1963), as the organization was called at that time, and Nahuel Moreno's essay on the Chinese revolution published in the volume *50 Years of the World Revolution 1917-1967*.² Such positions would have been rejected in any other section of the International.

But Moreno and his group did not limit themselves to expressing their own false positions on Maoism. In his pamphlet *La Revolución Latinoamericana* (1962) Moreno went to the point of correcting the theory of the permanent revolution and even to claiming that the role of vanguard could be played in certain circumstances by the urban middle class.³ According to the same author, Trotskyism — like Marxism — had a "European character," had not studied the phenomena of the colonial revolution, had left out of its transitional program "agrarian and national tasks, as well as guerrilla warfare." From this flowed the task that Moreno proposed to carry out, that is to synthesize the correct general theory and program (Trotskyism) with the correct specific theory and program (Maoism or Castroism).

It is evident that such confusion could not continue without grave implications for the education of the activists and cadres, as well as for the political orientation of the organization. The pamphlet *El único camino* was proof that even those who broke politically with Moreno were not ready to seriously study the problems that arose and persisted in an eclectic position. Still today we see that the majority comrades hold an attitude toward Maoism which, at the least, gives rise to mistakes. We do not at all dispute the need for studying the lessons of the armed struggle in China and Mao's conceptions on the matter. But first of all we must be familiar also with the contributions of Leon Trotsky and of our movement. There is no need to use Mao to point up general principles which are by no means the property of Maoism. In the second place, and above all, we must be clear on what the Mao group represents in China and on the international scale. If the differences between us and Maoism are not clear, if we fail to understand why Maoism cannot develop a revo-

lutionary strategy valid for Latin America — as the Argentinian comrades admit — and why the Chinese hold a sectarian attitude toward other currents in the workers movement (the Argentinian comrades have gotten their own direct experience in this field), the movement will not be armed for the battles awaiting us and conditions will be created for new frictions and new ruptures.

We would add that these theories of our Argentinian movement go hand in hand with a weak methodology in which eclecticism, empiricism, and dogmatic schematism combine and alternate. Hence their spectacular oscillations, their complete turnabouts, their surprising opportunist adaptations, their continual preoccupation with discovering categories with very little scientific basis and at least dubious practical utility. This is the source also of quite peculiar terminology which in a certain sense is unique in our international movement.

Attitude Toward the International

The attitude of the Argentinian Trotskyists toward the International could not help but be marked by the specific vicissitudes we have already mentioned. In essence, the Argentinian movement has never been fully integrated into the International; it has not participated in working out common theoretical and political positions. Even after the unification, the organization remained ignorant of the fundamental positions of the International. A significant episode of this. The statements of the delegate who visited Argentina in 1967 were followed with surprise by the majority of the comrades because they had completely false information and impressions about the nature of the International, its line, and its leadership. (The leading group in the Argentinian party deliberately represented the leadership of the International as a team of abstract intellectuals, or still worse as tacticians interested primarily in maneuvering with the different sections and tendencies.)

In fact, even the material that was sent had been monopolized by the top circle and was known to only a few persons.

Later on, before and after the last world congress, communication with the section became more frequent. But the Argentinian party continued to have a poor knowledge of the conceptions and activity of the International. The leaders did not seem very interested in distributing our literature and they sent insufficient information to the center, which later turned out to be very unrealistic. Moreover, some sections of the organization had the tendency to see the International much more as a network of useful contacts than a revolutionary organization functioning as a world party.

Finally we would like to underline the fact that the Argentinian organization, in conformity with the traditions of the country, was much more solidly structured than other Latin-American organizations. However, in our opinion, the percentage of full timers, above all in certain periods, was excessive with respect to the total number of activists. A very weighty apparatus developed which was not justified by the real functions to be carried out and at the same time represented a crushing financial burden for the organization. Sound functioning of the party was impeded, moreover, by personal quarrels and accusations which were initiated and later withdrawn with

a surprising nonchalance, frequently in connection with factional struggles.

The question arises why we have not discussed the problems of the Argentinian section in the past. By hindsight we can conclude that we should have stimulated a discussion and complete clarification long before now. We note, however, that it was difficult for us to intervene in the period immediately following the entry of the Argentinian organization into the International in the aftermath of the reunification and that we relied on a process of progressive assimilation. Moreover, when the last world congress was held, we were faced with the necessity of making a choice. We reaffirmed some basic organizational principles. But on the more properly political plane, clarification could be achieved only within the framework of the general Latin-American discussion.

The 1970 Crisis

The year 1969 marked a serious effort on the part of the organization to create the minimum conditions for carrying out the policy adopted at the Fourth Congress, which corresponded to the overall conception approved by the world congress majority. But—as appears from the discussion documents of the PRT itself—the organizational achievements necessary for such a portentous undertaking were absolutely insufficient. On the other hand, the political development of the country, which moreover confirmed that the PRT's analysis had been far more correct than that of *La Verdad*, revealed potentialities and variants which the party did not comprehend in time and in all their implications. For this reason, in October 1969 the Central Committee voted a resolution setting an arbitrary and unrealistic schedule for unleashing the struggle, and projected tactics that failed to consider or minimized the changes that had taken place. It proved impossible to apply the decisions of the Central Committee. The repression that struck the organization at one of its strong points also contributed to this. And precisely this failure was the source of the new crisis which led a few months later to serious ruptures.

Unfortunately, we have only part of the elements necessary—we must repeat—to judge the positions of the different tendencies. We have only a partial knowledge of the positions adopted at the congress held by the majority tendency, which has defined itself as the Leninist tendency. Therefore, we do not presume to ask the International to arbitrate politically at this time. (From the organizational standpoint we must, obviously, apply our basic criteria which require recognizing the rights of a majority, if it places itself within the general framework of Trotskyism and the discipline of the world congresses.) But in view of the gravity of the situation, we consider it necessary to intervene in the discussion among the Argentinian Trotskyists, raising a certain number of questions and especially indicating the points on which clarification is essential in our Argentinian movement.

First, clarification is imperative with regard to Maoism and in general the Communist tendencies linked to Peking. When certain Argentinian comrades think that even the bureaucratic leaders of the Albanian party have their place in the mass revolutionary International, we have to draw the conclusion that they do not have the least notion of the bureaucratic structure in a whole series

of workers states or of the real role of certain leaderships. It is time our comrades undertook such a study, taking into consideration first of all what the International has produced on the question. For our part, we must recognize that we have not made the necessary effort to facilitate participation by the Latin-American comrades in working out common positions. In this sense, we are also responsible for some of the theoretical and political aberrations. But regardless of the responsibility, the problem remains, and it is an urgent one. All those who seek an all-inclusive solution combining Trotsky, Mao Tse-tung, Enver Hoxa, and Kim Il Sung are, at best, victims of an illusion and are preparing the way for other crises and other ruptures. The Trotskyist and Maoist currents stand in opposition on a world scale and it is absurd to try to base yourself on both at the same time.

Also on the international plane, it is imperative that the Argentinian section correct its estimation of the evolution in the developed capitalist countries. The Fourth International cannot be seriously accused of overlooking or minimizing the crucial portent of the revolution in the colonial or neocolonial countries. Both our documents and our actions stand as proof that we understood the historic role of this revolution in the context of the world revolution and that we saw the existence of an inexhaustible revolutionary potential in Asia, Latin America, and Africa. But at the same time our International stood out by rejecting all theories of the third-world type which more or less explicitly suggested that the role of the proletariat in the advanced countries—that is, of most of the industrial workers in the world—was exhausted. It was also distinguished by its rejection of any attitude implying that the activity of revolutionists in West Europe or North America should be limited to the task of supporting the struggles of other peoples. This moreover is why the Fourth International was able to understand better than any other current the significance of May 1968 in France and the new rise of the working class in Europe. This is why we were able, consequently, to intervene with spectacular results, giving an unprecedented impetus to our movement on a Europe-wide scale. We were surprised to hear Argentinian comrades express the opinion that our estimation of May 1968 was exaggerated and that it was a mistake to count too much on Europe. This is an old refrain which reflects nothing more than the intrinsic weaknesses of those who use it.

Coming to Argentinian questions, definitive clarification is needed on the character of this country's revolution. We are convinced that in order to facilitate mobilizing the broadest layers of the masses, the movement must formulate slogans corresponding to nationalist and anti-imperialist sentiments. But it must make no concession to the idea of an anti-imperialist or anti-oligarchical revolution. The Argentinian revolution will be anti-imperialist and anticapitalist simultaneously *from its earliest phases*.

As regards characterizing the mass movements, it is worthwhile to draw attention to the need for always avoiding two shoals. On the one hand, we must not give way to glorifying the mass movement during a revolutionary upsurge. On the other hand, we must avoid the sectarian error of judging a movement exclusively by the character of its leadership, or lack of leadership, coming to minimize

the importance of an upsurge because of the absence of a revolutionary party playing the leading role.

The Argentinian Situation Today

As we have written in a discussion document published in the *International Internal Bulletin*, it is our estimation that the Argentinian section made a serious adventurist error in adopting the Central Committee resolution of October 1969. The comrades of the Leninist Tendency—who can claim in the abstract to be the most consistent—wanted to establish a continuity between this resolution and the previous decisions of the party. They forgot, however, the context of the 1967 discussions in which a delegate from the *International* participated. They forgot as well the conditions on which the line formulated in this period was based. First of all, in Bolivia there was the guerrilla war led by Che Guevara. And this factor in itself was decisive, because we did not conceive of the struggle in a purely Argentinian context, although we rejected the opportunist position that would reduce the role of Argentinian revolutionists to political and logistical support of the Bolivian activists. In the second place, the situation in the North was explosive, that is, it was markedly more advanced than the country as a whole. Finally, the party had rather large forces and no serious competitors in the sphere of the revolutionary left. It is evident that at least two of these conditions do not exist now. Moreover, even as regards the situation in the North, it must not be forgotten that the political effects of economic and social decay are not all favorable to preparing the ground for a revolutionary struggle. For these reasons maintaining the 1967 outlook as a short-term perspective is an error that can bring very grave setbacks and actual breakup of the organization.

The orientation of the present majority seems all the more dubious in as much as these comrades—to judge from their tendency document—underestimate the scope of the Córdoba and Rosario movements. This underestimation is the basis of their perspective of rural guerrilla warfare in the near future.

We are perfectly aware that asserting the vital importance of the movements in the cities—above all, when the people who stress this are the same ones who in the 1968 polemic denied the possibility of an upsurge in the near future—may conceal a tendency to become mired in the routine of tail-ending work in the bureaucratized unions, or on the fringes of these unions. Neither do we share certain estimations of the Communist Tendency on the necessity of making the start of guerrilla warfare conditional on winning political hegemony over 20-30 percent of the industrial proletariat. This conception is obviously mechanical: its practical effect would be to put everything off indefinitely, and this precisely at a stage when armed struggle has already begun in various forms. This said, however, we consider that in the present phase work must be concentrated in the big industrial cities, developing an essentially urban armed struggle linked to the struggles of the masses, their needs, and their political understanding. All this implies the need for tactical slogans derived from the concrete situations and closely tied to transitional demands. It goes without saying that in their intervention revolutionists can never lose sight of the general political

context and fail to seize every proper occasion to promote an understanding in the most advanced working-class strata of the perspective of armed struggle and the need to begin right away making practical preparations for this eventuality. But this essential precondition for a revolutionary battle cannot be met by mere stereotyped repetition of general slogans. In a country like Argentina, a clear attitude toward the unions is a prerequisite of all mass work. The approach of the Moreno tendency is clear; it dovetails, moreover, with a tradition of opportunistic adaptation. For this group the struggle is waged primarily in the area of demands and situated within the framework of the existing unions. Its objective is essentially to give impetus to the leaderships by means of pressure from the rank and file. We do not deny that such a policy can have its justification. That is, at certain times it can be acceptable on tactical grounds. But what we consider radically wrong is making this the fundamental axis of activity for revolutionists. In this area, it is necessary to collaborate with trade-union tendencies and groups that have broken with the bureaucrats bought and paid for by the government—in the first place with the tendencies represented in the Ongaro CGT, even if they are very weak. On the other hand, the initiative must be taken in creating organizational forms that, in the event of mobilizations such as those in Córdoba and Rosario, could become effective instruments of struggle even at the level of armed actions. In any case, a detailed discussion is necessary on this series of problems. In fact, it is impossible to really link ourselves with the masses in preparing for and launching an armed struggle unless we are able to do something in the area of their most urgent needs, to defend those fighting in the front line against the bosses and the government. It is not enough to stage spectacular blows that arouse the sympathy of the people. The discussions in progress among the Brazilian revolutionists offer us an eloquent indication on this score.

We said that three years ago the PRT loomed as the largest organization on the far left. In this context, there was a tendency to underestimate the problem of relations with other revolutionary currents and what is worse to conceive of the relationship between the party, mass organizations, and revolutionary army in a rigid way. In this regard a discussion is all the more needed in as much as the PRT has experienced the vicissitudes we noted, other groups have taken the initiative in armed actions, and—at the same time as the above-mentioned tendencies—the PRT has not been exempt from failings of the opposite type. It has shown tendencies to blur its conceptions and organizational character with the aim of facilitating regroupment with other forces. This observation holds true especially for its relations with revolutionary organizations in other Latin-American countries. We are in favor of a revolutionary united front, which could even involve organizational links. But our sections must participate in fronts as Trotskyist organizations of the Fourth International, without any camouflage and without creating the slightest confusion between their relations with such organizations and with the *International*, which is a world party.

These are the problems that we would like to see submitted to the fullest and frankest discussion in our Argentinian movement. We hope that we ourselves will have the opportunity to participate in this discussion, stating our

criticisms and suggestions more precisely.

Domingo
November 24, 1970

FOOTNOTES

1. The *La Verdad* group held its national congress without giving advance notice to the International, without sending the documents adopted, or information on the

debates. What is worse: a representative of the International minority was invited to attend the congress and in fact participated in it.

2. The SWP comrades found themselves forced to explicitly dissociate themselves from the analyses in this essay.

3. In our report to the congress preceding the reunification, we explicitly criticized this formulation.

CORRECTION OF TRANSLATION

Throughout the above letter it is necessary to replace we by I (with the exception of page 5, beginning with

"The question arises . . ." etc., up to ". . . discussion").
June 5, 1971
L. M.

APPENDIX II: MATERIAL PERTAINING TO THE LETTER OF THE SIX AFFAIR

Letter from the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party to the United Secretariat, March 30, 1973

[Following is the exchange of correspondence between the SWP Political Committee and the United Secretariat pertaining to the "letter of the six." As explained by Jack Barnes in the world movement report to the August 1973 SWP convention, circulation of this exchange was previously confined to leadership circles in the world Trotskyist movement.

The "letter of the six" ("Letter to the PRT (Combatiente)," by Ernest, Livio, Pierre, Sandor, Tariq, Delphin, October 31, 1972) is published in *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. X, No. 7, June 1973.]

* * *

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
March 30, 1973

To the United Secretariat of the Fourth International

Dear Comrades,

On May 11, 1971, the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party sent a letter to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International voicing our concern over a lengthy letter dated November 24, 1970, written by Comrade Livio Maitan under the pen name of "Domingo." The letter came to our attention accidentally when it was circulated in Latin America in mimeographed form. The Domingo Letter had not been written in consultation with the United Secretariat; it had not been made available to United Secretariat members; it had been sent without the knowledge of the United Secretariat; yet it dealt with grave problems of the Fourth International, particularly the problems of the Argentine section, in a way calculated to crystallize opinion along factional lines.

In response to our protest, the majority of the United Secretariat held that the Domingo Letter was a private matter. Its content, according to this view, did not go beyond the normal limits of a personal communication.

In our opinion, which was expressed in a letter to the United Secretariat dated July 7, 1971, the fact that the majority of the United Secretariat could consider such a communication by one of its own members as a private matter raised a number of very grave questions. The position adopted by the majority of the United Secretariat opened the way to such abuses of authority as operating behind the back of the United Secretariat and behind the back of the leaderships of sections. It could only encourage the formation of cliques and similar unhealthy groupings put together in secret by individual members of the United Secretariat.

All this material was submitted to the International Information Bulletin in June and July of 1971 (No. 4 and No. 5.). (Reprinted in *International Internal Dis-*

ussion Bulletin, Discussion on Latin America, 1969-1972.)

We have now been apprised of a new and even more serious violation of the traditional procedures of our movement in this respect.

On March 6, 1973, our national office received from Comrade Ernest a copy of a lengthy political letter addressed to the comrades of the Argentine PRT (Combatiente). This letter, signed by six members of the United Secretariat—Alain, Ernest, Livio, Pierre, Sandor, and Tariq—was dated October 31, 1972. In an accompanying note dated March 1, 1973, Comrade Ernest asked that it be included in a forthcoming issue of the English-language edition of the *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*.

This Letter of the Six, which is now more than four months old, was never made available to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. It was sent to the PRT (Combatiente) without the knowledge of the United Secretariat. A Spanish version is at the moment being circulated in mimeographed form throughout Latin America without the knowledge of the United Secretariat as a whole. Members of the United Secretariat, who had never before seen the letter, received by accident copies of the Spanish version several days before seeing the copy in French mailed by Comrade Ernest. The Letter of the Six was also kept from the knowledge of the International Executive Committee, a point we will take up below.

The decision of the six authors to keep the United Secretariat in ignorance concerning this letter—whether for a short time or for four months—means one thing and one thing only: that a certain group of leading comrades is working behind the back of the elected leadership of the International, both the United Secretariat and the International Executive Committee.

We do not intend to deal with the content of the Letter of the Six at this time. Like the Domingo Letter it includes a tendentious factional attack on the comrades of the sympathizing section of the Fourth International in Argentina, the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST). The attack includes false assertions and distortions of the positions of the PST. The letter also contains a detailed political analysis of the course of the PRT (Combatiente) and firmly stated advice to the leadership of that party. We leave aside our disagreement with the political content of the letter in order to focus on the fundamental issue involving the norms of democratic centralism which is at stake.

The Letter of the Six was written more than one month prior to the meeting of the International Executive Committee, which took place the first week in December 1972. The central points on the agenda for that extremely important gathering of the elected leadership of the Fourth International were Bolivia and Argentina. The purpose

of the gathering was to prepare resolutions on these points in particular as part of the preparations for the next world congress. A document such as the Letter of the Six should obviously have been included as part of the material to be discussed at the IEC. It would certainly have had a bearing on the decisions reached there and could have influenced the votes of those present. Had the IEC members known of the existence of this letter we are confident they would have demanded to see it and to include it in the discussion. Thus by withholding their letter of October 31 from the IEC as well as the United Secretariat, the six members of the United Secretariat blocked the top leadership of the Fourth International from considering it and discussing it in the period when key resolutions and other documents were being drawn up.

This is all the more disturbing in light of the special declaration made by Comrade Sandor which was read into the IEC minutes.

"But the comrades who voted for the Latin American resolution at the Ninth World Congress," he said, "committed an error in not opening up a fraternal discussion sooner in our movement on the ideological positions of the Argentine section, in particular, on Maoism, the military intervention in Czechoslovakia, and the road toward building a mass revolutionary International, positions with which they are in complete disagreement. These comrades hereby make a self-criticism in this regard and promise to begin a discussion on these questions with the Argentine comrades and throughout the International, in the context of preparing for the Tenth World Congress."

In other words, Comrade Sandor, one of the authors of the Letter of the Six, did not see fit to inform the elected body to which he and the other authors are responsible that they had *already begun* such a discussion. The other five likewise remained silent. It is clear that this silence was the result of a common decision. In violation of the norms of a democratic international discussion preparatory to the coming world congress, both the United Secretariat and the International Executive Committee were kept in the dark about the existence of this document and its common authorship by six leaders of the International.

Comrade Ernest's letter of March 1 states, "Enclosed you'll find the text of the letter which a certain number of members of the United Secretariat sent to the PRT, prior to the last IEC. Please reproduce this letter in an International Internal Bulletin in English. This was formally decided at the January 1973 United Secretariat meeting."

The minutes for the January United Secretariat meeting, which Comrade Ernest himself drafted, do not list the Letter of the Six as having been submitted there.

The minutes read:

"5d) New articles submitted to the International Discussion: Germain article; Therese answer to European perspectives document; Pi-lan article in answer to Wang; Draft resolution by United Secretariat majority submitted to World Congress. Agreed to include these articles in the International Internal Bulletin."

Comrade Pedro who was the only member of our leadership able to attend that meeting (which coincided with the massive January 20 march on Washington against Nixon's new bombing escalation against the Vietnam-

ese) reported that the existence of a document called the "Letter of the Six" was mentioned at the Secretariat. It was not submitted to the International Internal Discussion Bulletin, however, nor were copies made available to members of the United Secretariat. That was already close to three months after the letter had been sent to Argentina.

The Letter of the Six was not mentioned at the February United Secretariat meeting nor was it submitted to the International Internal Discussion Bulletin at that meeting either.

The Letter of the Six was referred to by Comrade Ernest Germain in his article "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International." In the section dealing with his differences with the PRT (Combatiente) he says the following: "Nevertheless it must be said that the United Secretariat has made a serious mistake in not opening a frank discussion with the comrades of the Argentine section much earlier than on the eve of the last IEC. This discussion has now started with the letter signed by some members of the United Secretariat and sent to the leadership of the PRT before the last IEC." (Page 18 of the English-language edition.)

When we read Comrade Germain's article, after it reached us following the February United Secretariat meeting, this reference puzzled us. It was inaccurate to imply that the United Secretariat as a whole had made a mistake in not opening up a discussion with the PRT (Combatiente), inasmuch as some members of the United Secretariat had opposed adoption of the guerrilla line at the last world congress and in various documents had argued against it since then and against the guerrilla course followed by the PRT (Combatiente). On the other hand, if the United Secretariat as a whole decided to open a discussion with the leadership of the PRT (Combatiente) on the basis of a critical appraisal of their errors, why had only "some members of the United Secretariat" collaborated on a letter to them? Why didn't all of the members of the United Secretariat vote for it? Were there differences over the letter? What were the differences? Above all, what was the content of this letter, so important that Comrade Germain appeared to view it as one of the founding documents of his tendency?

The mystery is now cleared up. The Letter of the Six was kept from the knowledge of the United Secretariat and the International Executive Committee!

In our opinion, the foregoing facts show that six members of the United Secretariat have operated as a secret faction for at least five months behind the back of the United Secretariat and the International Executive Committee—the elected leadership bodies of the International.

This development raises grave doubts about the ability of the elected leadership bodies to organize a fully democratic discussion leading to an authoritative world congress, for it is now revealed that the majority of the United Secretariat had circulated at least one very important document to part of the membership of the Fourth International while keeping another part of the membership in ignorance of its existence. There can be no democratic discussion when documents are circulated to some members and not to others; when a secret, undeclared faction gives an arbitrarily selected group access to documents which it refrains from making available to others—until the time is ripe, or the existence of the document

is accidentally revealed as in the case of the Domingo Letter.

Serious doubt has even been placed on the capacity of the United Secretariat to continue functioning in a normal way, for the question inevitably arises: are other documents of the importance of the Letter of the Six now being circulated by the secret faction in the same surreptitious way to a privileged sector of the membership of the Fourth International? If the six deny that other similar documents are being circulated surreptitiously, what basis exists for believing them? Their probity can no longer be taken for granted. They have succeeded in bringing into question their ability, or their willingness, to abide by the norms of democratic centralism. They have placed the interests of a secret faction above those

of the movement as a whole. A most damaging blow has been dealt to confidence in the United Secretariat as a collective body.

We ask that this letter be submitted to the International Internal Discussion Bulletin so that the rank and file of the International can be informed of this extremely grave development.

Comradely,

Political Committee
Socialist Workers Party

cc: International Executive Committee members

Letter Adopted by a Majority of the United Secretariat, April 10, 1973, in Reply to the Political Committee of the SWP

To the Political Committee of the S.W.P. April 10, 1973

Dear Comrades,

On the eve of the April session of the United Secretariat, we, as well as all members of the IEC, received your letter dated March 30, 1973, which makes grave accusations against six members of our body. The subject of these accusations is a letter signed by these six comrades (Alain, Ernest, Livio, Pierre, Sandor, Tariq) and addressed to the Argentine section of the Fourth International, the P.R.T. (Combatiente). The United Secretariat decided that an answer to this letter should be sent in the name of that body. This is our answer.

As all comrades know, the Socialist Workers Party is prevented by reactionary legislation from organizational affiliation to the Fourth International. Thus the word "section" always refers to the relationship of fraternal solidarity that the SWP has with the Fourth International. The word "member" when applied to Socialist Workers Party leaders refers to the fraternal observer status and fraternal consultative vote expressing political opinion that is granted Socialist Workers Party leaders at world congresses, International Executive Committee plenums, and United Secretariat meetings of the Fourth International.

It is necessary first of all to set the record straight as to the actual facts. Although the letter addressed to the PRT is dated October 31, 1972, it could not be sent to the Argentine section because of lack of any address, owing to the repression of which that section is victim. The letter was actually transmitted only on December 15, 1972, to the PRT delegate to the IEC, at the time when he returned home.

At the January 20, 1973 meeting of the United Secretariat, that body was informed about the mailing of the letter, as your March 30 communication admits itself. The comrades of the minority were promised a copy of the letter the next day in Paris, because no copy was present at the place where the Secretariat meeting was held. The

next day it appeared that no copy was present in Paris either, and that it was necessary to request a copy from comrade Livio. This was received and transmitted to the minority comrades by mail, because for four months after the I.E.C., there has been no resident minority comrade at the Bureau.

From this simple statement of facts, it appears immediately that the only cause for "scandal" would be the one month—and not four months—delay between the actual transmission of the document to the PRT on December 15, and the information given to the United Secretariat on January 20.

What was the reason for this short delay?

Obviously, the letter transmitted to the PRT by six members of the United Secretariat, far from being a "secret" letter, was a political criticism of the line of the Argentine section by comrades who had, till that moment, not yet expressed such systematic criticism. Obviously, this letter *was intended to be published as widely as possible in the Internal Bulletins of the International*. For anybody who reads that letter, this purpose appears evident. Under these circumstances, the signatories of the letter considered it an act of elementary courtesy towards the leadership of the Argentine section, which they strongly criticized, to give it a normal interval of time in which it could read the letter and, if necessary, reply to it, before it was made public inside the world movement. We did not want to place these comrades before an accomplished fact in the IVth International, because we wanted to discuss with them, not to excommunicate them.

It so happened that the letter to the PRT was immediately translated into Spanish, mimeographed and widely distributed throughout the Latin-American movement, by an oppositional grouping inside the PRT, which had received it through the same comrade who had brought it back from the IEC session. This publication, which undid the very purpose of the delay desired by the signatories of the letter before it should be made public inside the world

movement, was evidently not caused or asked for or approved by the six authors of that letter. They have or had no interest whatsoever to "restrict" the circulation of such a document to a particular sector of the world movement.

Had the members of the Political Committee of the SWP wanted to learn what really happened, they could have easily acquired the necessary information from the authors of the document. No reason for complaint would have been found to exist. Even from a very formal point of view, the necessary information about the existence and the mailing of the letter, and its proposed inclusion in the I.I.B., occurred at the first United Secretariat meeting after the transmission of the letter to the PRT.

But instead of simply requesting (and receiving) the information relative to that letter, the Political Committee of the SWP saw fit to blow this trivial matter up into an "incident" and a "scandal" of "principled" magnitude, and to launch grave accusations, including "violation of democratic centralism", against leading members of the Fourth International, accusations even expressed in abusive language. This makes it unavoidable for the United Secretariat to strongly repudiate these unfounded accusations, and condemn the abusive terms used.

1.- The Political Committee of the SWP states:

"The decision of the six authors to keep the United Secretariat in ignorance concerning this letter—whether for a short time or for four months—means one thing and one thing only: that a certain group of leading comrades is working behind the back of the elected leadership of the International, both the United Secretariat and the International Executive Committee".

This statement, taken at face value, can mean one thing and one thing only: according to the P.C. of the SWP, any political communication going beyond two individuals, and undertaken by members of international leadership bodies outside the knowledge of others, has to be considered as proof that these members "are working behind the back of the elected leadership of the International".

This is certainly an innovation in the history of bolshevism. It has no basis in any official rule established by any document adopted till now by the world movement. The P.C. of the SWP has of course the right to propose such a new rule for future consideration of the movement. As for us, it appears unacceptable. There is no principled difference between consultation in writing, or by way of mouth, at informal gatherings, through the telephone etc. To admit the latter and not the former is unjustified discrimination. To exclude them all is a stifling of elementary democratic rights of members.

Indeed, the facts show clearly that members of the SWP who are participating in the international leadership, as well as comrades with whom they are now building an international tendency, have themselves been actively involved in the very same "crimes" which they now consider to be so grievous when they are being "committed" by other members of the international leadership.

Just to refresh the PC's memory, we shall recall a single example. When the Sallustro case occurred, a certain number of members of the international leadership, "working behind the back of the elected leadership of the International", adopted a statement in the PC of the SWP without previously informing or consulting their fellow members of the United Secretariat and the IEC. Many

of these fellow members saw the statement for the first time only when it appeared in print in "The Militant". None of them were allowed to participate in the discussion leading to the drafting and the publication of that declaration. They were "kept in ignorance concerning this declaration—whether for a short time or for four months".

In addition, the Canadian section adopted a similar declaration at the same time. There can be no doubt that the Canadian members of the United Secretariat and the IEC consulted on that matter with the SWP comrades, either in person, or through the telephone, or in writing, and that, according to the criterium used in the SWP's PC letter of March 30, they were thus guilty of the "conspiracy" to "act behind the back of the elected leadership of the International".

2.- The PC of the SWP writes:

"We should also like to add for the sake of clarity that we do not challenge the right of a faction, formed on a declared platform, to circulate documents within its own ranks. However, this is not what is involved in the Letter of the Six. The six members did not declare a faction on an open platform in accordance with the principles of our movement—they have not done so up to this moment. What they did instead was to reach agreement among themselves on the basis of undeclared platform, undeclared aims, and an undeclared course of action. The proof is that they wrote at least one joint document which they circulated to a sector of the membership without the knowledge of the United Secretariat or the International Executive Committee".

The last part of the last sentence is completely "unproven". As stated before, the Six did not and had no interest to "circulate a joint document to a sector of the membership without the knowledge of the United Secretariat or the International Executive Committee".

This sentence only takes on any meaning if by "circulating" is understood "consulting" a certain number of comrades before the document is communicated to the whole membership. We should then like to remind the members of the PC of the SWP that the drafting of their declaration and the declaration of the Canadian section on the Sallustro affair also implied obviously mutual consultation among some members of the United Secretariat and the IEC, from which other members of these leading bodies as well as the whole membership of the F.I., had been "arbitrarily excluded". This occurred at a time when the members of the PC of the SWP "did not declare a faction on an open platform", but apparently had "reached agreement among themselves on the basis of an undeclared platform, undeclared aims, and an undeclared course of action. The proof is that they wrote at least one joint document. . .".

Why didn't we raise that "accusation" at that time? Why didn't we accuse the members of the United Secretariat and of the IEC who are members of the PC of the SWP of having "constituted a secret faction" on an "undeclared platform"? Because the accusation would have been preposterous—as is the same accusation launched to-day by the PC of the SWP against comrades Alain, Ernest, Livio, Pierre, Sandor and Tariq.

What is involved here is the *process of formation of a tendency*, and not the operation of a "secret faction". Obviously, for a tendency to be in the process of being

formed, it is necessary that it does not already exist prior to this process. Therefore, no "open platform" and "declared aims" of such nonexistent tendency can yet be discovered. But growing political differences already manifest themselves. A certain number of comrades already vote repeatedly in the same way in leadership bodies, as against other comrades who vote in the opposite way. How if they refrained from having consultations among themselves? How could such a platform come into existence without some comrades starting to write it together — "with the exclusion of other comrades"? To call this process the "operation of a secret faction" is ridiculous, and starts to question the basic democratic right of members of the F.I. to create a political tendency on the basis of free consultation and political discussion among themselves.

As a matter of fact, less time elapsed between the drafting of the Letter to the PRT and the call for the constitution of a tendency by the signatories of that letter, in association with other comrades, at the December 1972 IEC session, than between the moment when comrades Joe, Peter, Moreno, Lorenzo and Hugo started to discuss and circulate among them ("behind the back of the leadership bodies of the F.I.") the first drafts of "Argentina and Bolivia—a balance sheet", which was finally submitted to the leading bodies of the International only 4-5 months later.

We do not challenge that procedure, because it is impossible to create tendencies otherwise. But what is an admitted right for some must be an admitted right for all. If the P.C. of the SWP does not think that its members have violated democratic centralism by the way in which they came to draft the resolution on the Sallustro affair or the document "Argentina and Bolivia—a balance-sheet", then it should cease and desist from accusing other members of the international leadership of having committed such "violations".

We are not ready to accept the argument that such procedure is permissible for members of the international leadership who are also members of leadership bodies of a *single* national section or sympathizing organization, but that it is impermissible procedure for those comrades who, while being members of the international leadership, happen to be members of leadership bodies of *various* national sections or sympathizing organizations. In the first place we reject any federalist concept of the International, and therefore consider that members of international leadership bodies have their prime responsibility towards these bodies. In the second place, such a distinction would introduce an impermissible element of discrimination among comrades, giving privileges to some which are denied to others, which is in contradiction with the fundamental equality of rights of all members of the F.I. and its sympathizing organizations.

3.- Let us add that in the process of building the tendency for which 19 members of the IEC launched an official call in December 1972, the letter to the PRT leadership was all the more called for, as it was necessary to establish first of all whether there existed basic political differences between the PRT leadership and the comrades engaged in the preparation of building that tendency. This could not be done without some form of consultation. Oral consultation was impossible for reasons of repression. Only written consultation was open to them.

It was therefore entirely within the rights of these comrades building a tendency to have such a consultation, prior to making that document known to the whole world movement.

Late September 1972 we received issue nr. 8/9 of "Revista de America". In this is published a letter of comrade Moreno to a Brazilian comrade, dated July 1, 1972. It was written and mailed nearly three months before we received it, — in publicly printed form! The letter is addressed to a comrade who seems to be the leader of a Brazilian group which has not yet even formally requested to be recognized as a sympathizing organization of the F.I. It deals with all kinds of political problems around Bolivia, implying strong criticism of the Bolivian section. It is not the only letter dealing with problems debated in the F.I. which comrade Moreno has exchanged with Brazilian comrades. No file of that correspondence has even been handed over to the United Secretariat of the F.I. Bilateral communications between comrade Moreno's group and this Brazilian group, a Uruguayan group, and certainly comrades in other Latin-American countries, have been going on *for years*, without the leading bodies of the International receiving a single scrap of paper, — till they saw the July 1, 1972 letter in public print. At that moment, comrade Moreno had not declared a public ideological tendency. Had he then been acting for many years as a "secret faction", "with an undeclared platform and undeclared aims"?

4.- The comrades of the PC of the SWP write:

"In our opinion, the foregoing facts show that six members of the United Secretariat have operated as a secret faction for at least six months behind the back of the United Secretariat. . . . This development raises grave doubts about the ability of the elected leadership bodies to organize a fully democratic discussion leading to an authoritative world congress. . . . Serious doubts have even been placed on the capacity of the United Secretariat to continue functioning in a normal way. . . . If the six deny that other similar documents are being circulated surreptitiously, what basis exists for believing them? Their probity can no longer be taken for granted. They have succeeded in bringing into question their ability, or their willingness, to abide by the norm of democratic centralism".

These wild and abusive accusations — even calling into question the "probity" of comrades, just because the copy of a letter obviously intended to be published in the widest possible way inside the International was mislaid in Paris at the end of January; raising "violations" of "norms" of democratic centralism not contained in any official document of the F.I. — can only have one consequence: to poison the minds of those who receive them and read them against the six comrades accused; to prevent the leading cadres of the SWP and their allies to seriously weigh the political arguments of comrades; to cast doubt, in advance, upon the "authoritativeness" of a world congress where they fear to be in minority, after the longest and most democratic discussion ever known in the world Trotskyist movement.

In sending such a letter, without the slightest material basis, without prior examination of facts which could easily have been ascertained, and in complete conflict with elementary logic (for what reason would the Six want to "keep secret" a political differentiation with the PRT which,

as the PC of the SWP itself notices, *was already publicly announced at the IEC?*), the comrades of the PC of the SWP have succeeded in striking a serious blow against a free, open and democratic pre-congress discussion, which can only take place on a political basis, around political documents and platforms, and not with the aid of manufactured "scandals", blown-up "incidents", and personal attacks on the probity of leading comrades, as those launched in the March 30 letter. We call upon all mem-

bers of the IEC and all members of the NC of the SWP not to follow this bad example, and to keep the discussion on a strictly political basis.

Adopted by a majority vote of the United Secretariat:

For: 9— Delfin, Ghulam, Livio, Pierre, Riel, Sandor, Stern, Vergeat, Walter.

Against: 6— Abel, Adair, Hans, Juan, Pedro, Therese.

APPENDIX III: MATERIAL PERTAINING TO THE BARZMAN LETTER AFFAIR

The New Situation in the Fourth International A Statement by the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction

The Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency was formed as part of an effort to stem and eventually overcome the current crisis in the Fourth International. To this end a seven-point platform, adopted at the founding conference of the tendency in Santiago, Chile, March 5-8, 1973, was proposed to the members of the world Trotskyist movement. (See "Declaration of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency," *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. X, No. 3, March 1973.)

New facts and developments in the past few months have shown that the crisis in the Fourth International is much graver than we estimated last March. Among other things, evidence has come to light that the IEC Majority Tendency has operated as a secret faction. Moreover, the faction includes a wing that is consciously pursuing a split course and that is driving toward holding an inadequately prepared world congress.

Against this threat to the unity of the Fourth International, the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency decided at a conference held August 13-16 in Toronto that it must convert itself from a tendency into a faction, thereby making it possible to meet the deteriorating situation in a disciplined way. In the discussion at the conference, the following reasons for this decision were advanced:

The Course of the IEC Majority Tendency

The letter written by Comrade John Barzman from Europe to other supporters of the IEC Majority Tendency in the Socialist Workers Party (see appendix) includes facts proving that the IEC Majority Tendency has been operating as a faction without declaring itself as such. Comrade Barzman reports, for instance, that at a meeting of the Steering Committee in Brussels in May, which he attended, it was decided that the supporters of the IEC Majority Tendency in the SWP would be granted three representatives on that body provided that they were "ready to accept *discipline*." (Emphasis in original.)

The decision to include these representatives, committed to acting under discipline, was kept secret from the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party, the United Secretariat, and the membership of the Fourth International as a whole. In fact the very existence of a "Steering Committee" was never announced to the ranks of the Fourth International and its composition still remains secret.

It is to be noted that the Steering Committee of the IEC Majority Tendency decided to take this action and to "look with favor upon the formation of our tendency" in the Socialist Workers Party only after a report by Comrade Barzman. To become a member of the IEC Majority Tendency it was not sufficient for Comrade Barzman and those of his view to declare ideological agree-

ment with the platform of the tendency. The final decision remained with the Steering Committee and it was contingent on acceptance of discipline. These requisites for membership—a top leadership decision and agreement to accept discipline—are among the distinguishing marks of a faction.

The same practice was followed in weighing the application of Alan Jones, a central leader of the IMG and co-opted participant in United Secretariat meetings.

It was likewise followed in the case of the Revolutionary Communist Tendency, a minority grouping in the Canadian section of the Fourth International, for membership in the IEC Majority Tendency.

As is clear from Comrade Barzman's letter, some of the leaders of the IEC Majority Tendency have developed such hostility toward those critical of the line adopted at the last world congress that they are prepared to split the Fourth International. Others are hesitant.

The lines of division in the IEC Majority Tendency on this question are indicated by Comrade Barzman: "Then a talk with Vergeat, who explained the unwillingness of Ernest, Pierre and Livio to be responsible or see another split of the International, because it would feed once again all the anti-Trotskyist gossip." "The French (Vergeat, Krivine, Stern) Pat Jordan, Ken Lewis want to start attacking SWP on its own ground. They want us to provide ammunition. Mandel realizes the SWP is not internationalist and would split over such interference, and he has a psychological block against a new split." "The French comrades strongly believe in full-scale offensive against SWP and have no illusions on the results of it."

Differences of varying depth exist within the IEC Majority Tendency. Those pressing for a split tend to disregard them, as Comrade Barzman reports: "Verla seemed to favor comrades going ahead to criticize Maitan without waiting for an official statement from the international majority. Krivine seemed to understand the possible risks of such a procedure. . . . Vergeat sees the international majority as the real place for discussion, the real international, is therefore not that concerned about homogeneity."

Vergeat, it appears, not only has no psychological block against a split; psychologically he has already carried out a split so that he views the secret faction of which he is a leader as the "real international" no matter what the differences between its components may be. This attitude indicates readiness to bury differences of a principled nature and to head toward an unprincipled split.

The facts disclosed by Comrade Barzman enable us to better appreciate the factionalism manifested in a series of recent actions undertaken by the IEC Majority Tendency.

In the IMG, for instance, their followers split into a

number of warring tendencies. The leaders of the IEC Majority Tendency decided to try to use the authority of the United Secretariat to intervene in this situation on the eve of a congress of the IMG. In a letter to members of his particular grouping in the IMG dated February 20, Comrade Peter Peterson disclosed that "a theses on the tasks of the IMG in the present crisis is to be elaborated by comrade Walter. *These will be on our line.* . . . The theses will also specifically criticise the line of the Eurifusion Conference Perspective Document [a document written by Alan Jones and Clarissa Howard], and the latter's political and theoretical positions will be blamed for the failure of the IMG to adequately relate to class struggle in Britain."

In accordance with this decision the leaders of the IEC Majority Tendency wrote a document that manifestly supported one of the groups against the others, brought this into the United Secretariat without advance notice, and demanded an emergency vote.

A minority of the United Secretariat opposed the procedure as improper and argued against throwing the influence of the United Secretariat behind one of the groups, since under the circumstances it would represent an abuse of authority. These arguments proved unavailing against the prior decision of the IEC Majority Tendency to intervene in the British section in this manner.

Again in the case of Spain, the IEC Majority Tendency utilized its majority in the United Secretariat to favor the En Marcha faction in the Spanish section, which was intent on carrying through a split. This support has continued since the split, going so far as public backing of the group in the pages of *Quatrième Internationale*, the official organ of the International Executive Committee (May-August 1973).

A recent case was the organization of a tour of Australia for Tariq Ali in July-August of this year in which the Socialist Workers League, the sympathizing organization of the Fourth International, was not consulted. The tour was conducted under sponsorship of the Communist League, whose walkout from the Socialist Workers League last year was condemned by the United Secretariat as an unprincipled split. The organization of a tour for Tariq Ali in such a crudely factional way was intended, of course, to help shore up the Communist League, which has been tending to disintegrate, and to give it assistance in its public struggle against the sympathizing organization of the Fourth International in Australia. The net effect, however, was to worsen relations between the two groups, injuring the Australian Trotskyist movement as a whole.

The factionalism evident in Tariq Ali's tour in Australia fits in with the perspective of an international split. The immediate objective of the tour was to strengthen the partisans of the IEC Majority Tendency in preparation for that outcome, otherwise the tour, which might well have been of considerable value, would have been organized in a normal way in consultation with the Socialist Workers League.

The attitude of the IEC Majority Tendency toward the Canadian section falls into the same pattern. The walkouts that began with the departure of Michel Mill (whose political positions are praised in the platform of the IEC Majority Tendency) have been soft-pedaled. Inordinate interest has been displayed in a small formation, the

Revolutionary Marxist Group, that has declared verbal support to the Fourth International but that has been maneuvering to win splitoffs from the section. The IEC Majority Tendency has put pressure on the Canadian section to fuse with this group regardless of the judgment of the leadership of the section as to the probable outcome of such a step. The factional interests of the IEC Majority Tendency, it appears, lie outside the Canadian section.

Another fact of considerable gravity, showing how the IEC Majority Tendency has operated, was the decision of its Steering Committee, revealed by Barzman, to "collaborate" in the production of documents to be submitted in the name of the "Internationalist Tendency" in the internal discussion in the Socialist Workers Party.

The Internationalist Tendency stands against positions held by the Socialist Workers Party that have met with approval in the past from the majority members of the United Secretariat. For example, the SWP analyses of the liberation movement of the Blacks and Chicanos were endorsed in the platform of the IEC Majority Tendency, "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International." To collaborate with the Internationalist Tendency in writing its documents signifies that the majority members of the United Secretariat have switched positions on these questions. Of course, the majority members of the United Secretariat have a right to change their minds. The correct procedure, however, would be to make known to the United Secretariat and to the leadership of the SWP their shift in view as well as their decision to collaborate with their new cothinkers in the SWP, stating their reasons for this about-face. Instead, acting the way an irresponsible faction acts, they bypassed both the United Secretariat and the leadership of the SWP, reaching agreement in secret on these points with the Internationalist Tendency. This greatly exacerbated relations when it became known, arousing grave doubts in the SWP as to the objectives of the IEC Majority Tendency and of the Internationalist Tendency.

As a consequence of the secret agreement on collaboration, Comrades Peterson and Maitan, who were present as the United Secretariat representatives of the IEC Majority Tendency, approved the minority report on Latin America made by Comrade Richard Mitten of Chicago at the August convention of the SWP.

For his report, Comrade Mitten read from his article "In Defense of the International Majority's Perspectives for Latin America," which was published in the *SWP Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 31, No. 35, July 1973. The article includes a far-reaching revision of the analysis adopted by the Fourth International on the overturns of capitalism going from Cuba clear back to Eastern Europe, including in passing the workers and peasants government that existed in Algeria from 1962 to 1965. (The pertinent points can be found on pages 2-3 and pages 8-9.)

In the same report, Comrade Mitten attacked the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST), the sympathizing section of the Fourth International in Argentina, as "reformist." He declared that the politics of the PST makes it "incompatible with membership in the Fourth International." (Page 16 in his article. Emphasis in the original.)

To make such a declaration is equivalent to demanding expulsion of the Argentine sympathizing section, echoing the demand made by the PRT (Combatiente), which recently walked out of the Fourth International. It is clear that psychologically Comrade Mitten has already expelled the PST. That both Comrade Peterson and Comrade Maitan explicitly supported the report on Latin America made by Comrade Mitten for their tendency at the SWP convention is an ominous indication that the IEC Majority Tendency has made a secret decision to recommend to the forthcoming world congress that the PST be excluded from the Fourth International. This would fit in with a course aimed at splitting the international.

Another grave fact should be noted. The United Secretariat has not discussed whether the internal debate in the Fourth International should be made public. Yet the European Tasks and Perspectives draft resolution has been issued to the public in various languages, including English, German, Swedish, and Italian. Who made the decision to do this? When? At what gathering? Plainly it was decided in secret by the IEC Majority Tendency. The move was a dangerous one. It established a precedent for the publication of internal documents by any group in the Fourth International. The logic of this is establishment of public factions in the Fourth International.

How Far Back Does It Go?

How long has the secret faction been in existence? As in the case of most such formations, this is difficult to determine from outside the grouping. In the secret letter sent out by Comrade Maitan under the pseudonym of "Domingo," attacking the sympathizing section of the Fourth International in Argentina, the author explains that at the time of the 1963 Reunification Congress the leading members of the former International Secretariat held the perspective of "progressive assimilation" of the Argentine component of the International Committee.

"The question arises," Comrade Maitan wrote, "why we have not discussed the problems of the Argentine section in the past. By hindsight we can conclude that we should have stimulated a discussion and complete clarification long before now. We note, however, that it was difficult for us to intervene in the period immediately following the entry of the Argentinian organization into the International in the aftermath of the reunification and that we relied on a process of progressive assimilation." ("International Information," Discussion on Latin America (1968-1972), *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, p. 169.)

The implication is that a similar attitude was held toward the International Committee as a whole. In contrast, the International Committee majority, which carried out the reunification in opposition to a minority led by Healy and Lambert, viewed the reunification as a genuine fusion between two public factions, both of which were part of the Fourth International. It did not view the reunification as the "integration" or "assimilation" of one group into the other. It followed that one of the prime tasks was to dissolve the former factions. The leaders of the International Committee who participated in the reunification in 1963 held that it would have been un-

principled to maintain the former lines of cleavage. In fact to have maintained the factions would have put in question the good faith of the two sides and the principled nature of the reunification. Therefore the leaders of the International Committee followed a policy of doing everything possible to break up the old formations and to reach genuine political homogeneity through a process of common action and discussion.

This view, as indicated by the Domingo letter, was not shared by the leaders of the International Secretariat. In secret they held the perspective of "progressive assimilation" of the other side. This meant in practice maintaining their former faction, or at least its core, without declaring its existence.

In view of the disclosure in Comrade Maitan's "Domingo" letter, we can now better appreciate the secret decision made by the majority at the Ninth World Congress with regard to recognizing the PRT (Combatiente) as the official section of the Fourth International in Argentina. Among themselves they recognized that the PRT was not a Trotskyist organization; but they hoped that by taking the "soft approach" of eulogizing the guerrillism of the PRT with which they were in agreement while remaining silent about its anti-Trotskyist politics they would be able to progressively assimilate the group. At the same time, by utilizing tactics of an opposite kind, they hoped to progressively cut down the PST and push it out of the Fourth International.

As we can see in retrospect, in the crucial question of relations with the Argentine section of the Fourth International, the majority leaders acted in the manner of a secret faction, not informing the delegates at the Ninth World Congress of their real views and calculations. This unprincipled way of proceeding helped pave the way for the subsequent disaster of the political and organizational disintegration of the official section of the Fourth International and the needless sacrifice of the lives of dedicated revolutionists. The outcome should serve as a severe object lesson on the evils of disregarding the norms of democracy in making crucial decisions.

On the more important questions that have arisen since 1969, they have continued to operate in the same way. We have cited the Domingo letter as one verifiable instance. Another was the "Letter to the PRT (Combatiente)" sent last October by six members of the United Secretariat. (See *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. X, No. 7, June 1973.) Neither the United Secretariat nor the International Executive Committee, which met shortly thereafter, was informed of this action. Meanwhile, the letter, as in the case of the Domingo missive, was given selective distribution to the rank and file in Latin America.

The "Letter to the PRT (Combatiente)," it should be pointed out, in contrast to previous extravagant buildups and praise of the PRT's guerrilla exploits contains accurate criticisms of some of the policies and views of the PRT (but not of their carrying on guerrilla war as prescribed by the majority line of the Ninth World Congress).

The belatedness of the criticisms is explainable by the fact that the authors of the letter had stubbornly maintained their "soft approach" until very late in the day. When they grasped that the PRT was leaving the Fourth

International, they faced the embarrassing problem of explaining the blow to the ranks of the Fourth International. The "Letter to the PRT (Combatiente)" was a hastily improvised face-saving operation. The ostensible reason for the letter was that it represented an effort to convince the PRT. However the decision to engage in this action was made behind the back of the United Secretariat and without informing the International Executive Committee at its plenary session in December where the Latin American question, Argentina included, was on the agenda. The secret faction was very short-sighted. It put its own immediate interests ahead of those of the world Trotskyist movement as a whole. Otherwise they would have done what was indicated—put the question of the PRT and what to do about its course on the agenda of the United Secretariat for joint consultation and decision.

Bit by bit the real views of the leaders of the IEC Majority Tendency appear to be coming to light. Their unavowed policy toward the La Verdad group following the 1963 reunification, as Comrade Maitan has revealed, was one of "progressive assimilation." Comrade Bill Massey, who was secretly co-opted onto the Steering Committee of the IEC Majority Tendency last May, recently disclosed the real attitude of the secret faction to the Socialist Workers Party. "The SWP," he said, "after ten years of reunification has failed the test to integrate itself into the world movement. . . ." ("The Barnes-Kerry School of Scandals, A Brief Reply to a Last Minute Horror Story," *SWP Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 31, No. 34, July 1973, p. 3.)

The SWP failed to "integrate itself"! Was that what the reunification was about? The formula of self-integration is but a variant of the "progressive assimilation" revealed in the Domingo letter as the real attitude of the former leaders of the International Secretariat toward the La Verdad group in Argentina. Bill Massey's disclosure indicates that they held the same attitude toward the Socialist Workers Party, a founding section of the International Left Opposition and of the Fourth International. It is further confirmation that their real attitude toward all the members of the International Committee who participated in the reunification was one of "progressive assimilation."

If this is the case, as is increasingly indicated, it would explain much about their course that has been difficult to fathom, such as their unilateral decision to demand votes on the tactic of entryism *sui generis*, practiced for seventeen years under their guidance.

Mounting Danger of a Split

As the situation now stands, it is evident that the danger of a split is very real. This has been pointed out by cadres on both sides.

The differences have been widening and deepening. The political issues in dispute range from what attitude to adopt toward the Labour Party in Britain and the Union de la Gauche in France to assessment of the nature of the Vietnamese Communist Party. The national question, ranging from Palestine to Quebec and the Black and Chicano movements in the U.S., has become involved. Tactical differences, which were sharp over the guerrilla orientation, became acute with the projection by the IEC

Majority Tendency of a line of "minority violence" in Europe, its adoption in practice in France and Spain, and its espousal by the IMG in relation to Ireland.

Comrade Mitten's report on Latin America at the August convention of the SWP brought into the debate a programmatic question as serious as the nature of the state.

While the minority at the 1969 World Congress characterized the guerrilla-war orientation as a concession to ultraleftism, the IEC Majority Tendency has characterized the politics of the PST as a whole as "reformist." The American members of the IEC Majority Tendency have not hesitated to say the same for the SWP. They have begun using the label "petty-bourgeois" as an epithet in characterizing the politics of the SWP. It is possible that the class roots of the positions of the two sides should be examined, but it should be done with scientific exactitude and not as an exercise in name-calling.

Some of the adherents of the IEC Majority Tendency (in Canada and Venezuela), losing all restraint, have characterized the politics of the LSA/LSO and the SWP as a "cancer." This frenzied factionalism is a subjective reflection of the political differences, which have deepened until they now involve questions of program.

There is an objective logic to this that cannot escape anyone concerned about maintaining the unity of the international. Of greatest importance in this connection are the political and tactical differences since they bear directly on day-to-day practice. Different estimates of methodological or sociological questions ought not to be nearly so explosive.

Forces of a centrifugal nature have become manifest in the form of splits in various areas. As early as 1968 the Argentine section split into the Combatiente and La Verdad groups. A split occurred in Peru in 1969. Last year there were splits in Australia, in Mexico, and in Spain. The split in Spain was particularly grievous, inflicting a serious setback to one of the most promising Trotskyist organizations in Europe. This year the Canadian section has been affected by walkouts of supporters of the IEC Majority Tendency.

Blame in these cases falls on the leaderships of the groups that split or on their backers who were either unable to restrain them or who gave them bad advice. Nevertheless, in general, the splits reflect the deepening differences in the Fourth International. It would be wisest to consider them as warning signs of what can occur on a more dramatic scale.

Decisive Action Required to Prevent a Split

In the first stage of the discussion following the Ninth World Congress, we who opposed the guerrilla orientation did not consider it necessary to organize an international tendency. We had confidence that the concrete experience of the class struggle would confirm the correctness of our position, that this would be recognized by the majority leaders, and that the error would be rectified at the next world congress.

The immediate problem, as we saw it, was to overcome one of the major defects of the Ninth World Congress—the inadequate preparatory discussion. It will be recalled that the documents became available at such a late date that many of the delegates had not read, still less discussed, them in their sections in advance of the congress.

They were not in position to grasp the implications of the "turn" toward guerrilla war. Thus the first job was to elucidate the conflicting views expressed at the congress. Concomitant with this, as time passed we noted the verification of events. As we then estimated the situation, we did not need to do more than utilize the *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*.

This estimate was altered when it became evident that the majority leaders refused to recognize the lesson of events in Argentina and Bolivia. In addition there were alarming indications that under guise of applying centralism they were considering attempting to settle the dispute over orientation by mechanical organizational measures at the next congress. There were growing indications, too, that the next congress might not be a democratic one—the delay in translating documents, particularly into French, was scandalous. Concomitantly, in various sections the internal discussion has yet to be initiated in a serious way.

In light of the attitude of the majority, it was clear that a struggle would be required to gain time for the translation of documents and a fair presentation to the ranks of the Fourth International of the case for changing the erroneous orientation, otherwise a democratic and authoritative world congress could not be assured. Consequently a call was issued for the formation of a tendency. This was implemented last March with the formation of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency.

Special attention is called to the fact that the name Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency accurately reflected the reality—only a tendency was formed. Any member of the Fourth International in good standing was free to join by simply declaring agreement with its platform and informing the leadership of the section of his or her decision. No group discipline was called for. The purpose of the tendency was to gain an adequate hearing for the points listed in its platform. No struggle to change the composition of the leadership of the Fourth International was projected.

It is true that confidence in the majority leadership had waned because of its resistance to recognizing the lesson of the events in Argentina and Bolivia, but it was felt generally by members of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency that the dialectics of the internal discussion could still convince the majority leaders of the need for a correction in orientation.

We have now decided to convert the tendency into a faction. The reason is the incontrovertible evidence that has come to light showing that the majority is operating as an undeclared faction. Applicants for membership in the IEC Majority Tendency are inspected as to their political credentials. They are obliged to accept discipline. Worst of all, the faction has concealed its true nature. Its obvious purpose is to use secret and undemocratic means to block the guerrilla, or "minority violence," orientation from being overturned at the next congress. To do that requires preventing a democratic discussion among the rank and file.

The statutes of the Fourth International provide for the formation of tendencies and factions. But this is on the basis of functioning openly. A *secret* tendency or faction is an unmitigated evil in a Bolshevik organization.

Operating behind the back of both the regularly elected leadership and the rank and file, it violates the most elementary norm of democratic centralism; that is, free and open access to information on the views, intentions, and actions of groupings within the organization. It lines up comrades without a hearing of opposing views. It invites the formation of counter secret factions. It fosters unprincipled blocs, power caucuses, and clique politics of the worst kind.

A secret faction disrupts the normal process of determining political orientations and of selecting the leadership. The atmosphere becomes charged with suspicion. Hypocrisy comes to the fore. Cynicism is cultivated. Principles are discounted in favor of personal ties. The possibility of unprincipled splits—or equally unprincipled unifications—becomes greatly increased.

The statutes of the Fourth International provide for the formation of open, declared tendencies and factions precisely in order to avoid the evils of secret tendencies and factions. We have heard that some comrades, who should know better, believe that the purpose of a faction is to prepare for a split. *That was not why the right to form factions was included in the statutes of the Fourth International.* Circumstances can arise in which the formation of a faction constitutes the best, if not the only, means to avoid a split.

In our opinion, this is the situation now faced by the Fourth International. The primary objective of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction is to try to contain the centrifugal forces that have been gathering headway and to overcome them through a democratic discussion and decision to bring the Fourth International back on the course charted by Leon Trotsky.

To forestall any confusion or misinterpretation on the point, we want to make clear that the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction is not a *public* faction. It does not project carrying its struggle to the public. It is an *internal* faction, formed in accordance with the statutes of the Fourth International.

We also want to make clear that we appreciate the individual abilities and collective contributions of the leaders of the IEC Majority Tendency despite the erroneousess of their present orientation. They have made valuable contributions in the past and we consider them capable of making new ones. If we win a majority at the next world congress, as we hope to do, we want that majority to be reflected in the composition of the incoming leadership so as to assure a change in orientation; but we are against excluding or demoting anyone. To the contrary, we will do our utmost to construct a strong center that includes them as integral components.

Need for Exceptional Measures

In our opinion, it is imperative to take exceptional measures to guarantee a democratic and authoritative world congress as outlined in the unanimous agreement passed by the United Secretariat last April.

The main requisite is to provide time for the translation of documents and their discussion in French, Spanish, and German in accordance with the responsibilities of the United Secretariat. In the case of French the situation

has been scandalous, as we noted above. Now a new complication has occurred. The French section has come under heavy attack from the class enemy and this makes it very difficult for the French comrades to catch up. Nevertheless, the fact remains that these tasks have not been accomplished. More time, it is clear, is required. Consequently, we again urge in the strongest way possible that the comrades of the IEC Majority Tendency postpone the next world congress until these basic requirements have been met. There is no other way to organize a democratic and authoritative world congress as outlined in the April statement of the United Secretariat.

We would also urge the comrades of the IEC Majority Tendency to regularize their situation by declaring their faction and making known its platform and the names of its leaders.

Agreement by the IEC Majority Tendency to postpone the congress and to form an open faction would help enormously, in our opinion, to relax the atmosphere and assure the unity of the Fourth International.

In connection with this, we announce our readiness to form a bloc with anyone, including members of the IEC Majority Tendency, on the single plank of doing everything possible to prevent a split. We propose specifically uniting in support of the United Secretariat's April declaration defining the requisites for a democratic and authoritative congress.

Platform of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction

First of all we reaffirm the declaration of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency which included the following platform:

1. For approval of the general line of the document "Argentina and Bolivia — the Balance Sheet."
2. For reversal of the Latin American guerrilla-war orientation adopted at the Third World Congress Since Reunification (Ninth World Congress).
3. For reversal of the projections of this turn in various fields as it became extended both geographically and programmatically following the congress.
4. For resumption by the leading bodies of the Fourth International of the method outlined in the Transitional Program to solve the problems we face in bidding for leadership of the proletariat in the class struggle.
5. For reaffirming the basic program, tradition, and practices of the Fourth International as they stood up to the time of the Third World Congress Since Reunification (Ninth World Congress), that is, specifically, of commitment to the Leninist strategy of building a combat party. The more revolutionary the situation, the more decisive becomes the role of such a party.
6. For democratic organization of the coming world congress. In addition to representation, this means specifically the translation and distribution of the documents in at least French, Spanish, German, and English well in advance of the congress so that the membership of the Fourth International can have adequate time to study, debate, and decide on them.
7. Against any moves that endanger the authority of the coming congress and the unity of the Fourth Inter-

national such as undemocratic selection of delegates, curtailment of discussion, or failure to issue, translate, and distribute resolutions and other documents on schedule.

On the above platform, we would now apply greater stress to point No. 3, that is, opposition to the extension of the guerrilla orientation. In the modified form of "minority violence," this orientation has been projected by the IEC Majority Tendency for Europe (and for other areas as well, to judge from some of the statements made by new adherents to this line in Canada and the United States).

It is also our opinion that the question of the Leninist method of party building, specified in point No. 5, is becoming more and more central in the debate.

To the above points, we now add three more:

8. For a change in the composition of the leadership of the Fourth International to assure a majority pledged to correct the guerrilla-war orientation and its derivatives such as "minority violence."

9. For observance of democratic centralism in the Fourth International as provided by the statutes.

10. For the general line of "The Underlying Differences in Method," by Joseph Hansen.

Structure of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction

1. The Leninist-Trotskyist Faction has an elected International Steering Committee consisting of the following:

Argentina: Arturo, Capa, Fierre, Lorenzo, Marcela, Mario

Australia: Jamie Doughney, Jim Percy

Brazil: Antenor

Britain: Alan Harris, Tony Roberts

Canada: Alain Beiner, Al Cappe, John Riddell, Art Young

Chile: Juan Perez

China: Pent Shu-tse

Denmark: Torben Hansen

Germany: Dieter

India: see statement by Central Secretariat of Communist League of India

Iran: Ahmad Heydari

New Zealand: Tony

Peru: Hugo Blanco, Tuco

Spain: Alberto, Arturo

Sweden: Anders Svedin

United States: Jack Barnes, Peter Camejo, Joseph Hansen, Gus Horowitz, Benny Johnson, Andrew Pulley, Ed Shaw, Barry Sheppard, Mary-Alice Waters

Uruguay: Juan

Venezuela: Miguel

2. The International Steering Committee is empowered to act in the name of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction.

3. Members are required to observe faction discipline within the framework of the 10-point platform listed above.

4. Faction discipline does not transcend the discipline of sections or sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International.

5. Members of the faction must conduct themselves in a completely loyal way in sections of the Fourth International or sympathizing organizations, maintaining their activities and financial obligations in an exemplary way.

How to Join the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction

1. Send a letter to the International Steering Committee indicating agreement with the program and goals of the faction. All communications should be addressed to C. Adams, 305 E. 21st St., New York, N.Y. 10010.

2. Specify differences, if any.

3. The International Steering Committee will decide on applications, notifying applicants whether they have been accepted or rejected.

4. If your application is accepted, you are required to notify the leadership of the section or sympathizing organization of this fact.

August 17, 1973

Statement by the Central Secretariat of the Communist League of India

The Central Secretariat of the Communist League, Indian section of the Fourth International, has been aware that two of its members, Comrades Mohan Gan and Kailas Chandra, have been associated with the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency within the FI, with which the Central Secretariat has been in general agreement. We note that the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency has decided to convert itself into a faction within the statutes of the FI with the aim of better organizing its fight for its political views with the object of preserving the unity and integrity of the International. While we endorse the general line of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction statement entitled "The New Situation in the Fourth International," the two members of the Central Secretariat have decided to defer a decision on their accepting a place on the steering committee of the faction till the forthcoming plenum of the Central Committee when the entire question of differences within the International leadership will be

considered and a decision taken.

The Central Secretariat welcomes the declaration adopted unanimously on Sept. 19, 1973, by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International reiterating the need to discuss the present differences within the FI without undermining the overall organizational unity and integrity of the FI. We appeal to all national sections of the FI to conduct their internal discussions on their political differences in the spirit of the USFI declaration and desist from taking any steps that would create mutual bitterness and hostility. We strongly believe that every possible step should be taken to ensure that a split in the FI is averted since any organizational rupture would have disastrous effects on the international Trotskyist movement.

Sept. 27, 1973

The Barzman Letter

Paris, May 15, 1973

Dear Comrades,

I'm sending this letter just in case I don't get a chance to write again or phone in a while. I am due to leave for Brussels tomorrow morning for the meeting of the steering committee of the international majority tendency. I am supposed to present a report on the American Tendency but things are rather vague. After that, I am supposed to take a tour of Sweden, Denmark, Germany and maybe England, with Walter Davis, to agitate against the SWP, and acquaint myself with the situation in these countries. Then back to France for a few days before returning on May [?].

I stayed the first night at Alain Krivine's, who briefly told me that they were in the process of forcing Livio to put his name on a very self-critical document on Latin America. Livio was resisting, taking it very personally (. . .)! Alain encouraged me to emphasize the damage done in the U.S. by Livio; unfortunately I will have to improvise, as our tendency has not really discussed in what way our criticisms differ from those of Jo Hansen and those of we heard from Krivine.

Then a talk with Vergeat, who explained the unwillingness of Ernest, Pierre and Livio to be responsible or see another split of the International, because it would feed once again all the anti-Trotskyist gossip. He wanted me to meet with a Basque comrade of the E. T. A. to discuss the national question.

Then I had a meeting with Verla, she is heading up women's work in France. The Ligue is in the leadership of the M. L. A. C. (Movement for Free Abortion and Contraception) a movement open to men and women and calling for free abortion on demand. She explained that thanks to their success in this field they were now ready to take on the SWP, with a comparison with the Ligue's experience:

— attack the revision of the Marxist opposition to feminism

— attack the "inter-class" approach of the SWP

— stress working-class issues but no centrist socialist women's groups.

Both Vergeat and Verla were sympathetic to a reevaluation of the SWP's position on Black nationalism. They favor stressing the class issues in this respect.

On the differences within the I. T., Verla seemed to favor comrades going ahead to criticize Maitan without waiting for an official statement from the international majority. Krivine seemed to understand the possible risks of such a procedure. They seem to consider the I. T. as a bonus from heaven that they did not work to create. Vergeat sees the international majority as the real place for discussion, the real international, is therefore not that concerned about homogeneity. Vergeat wanted to arrange careful preparation for an international majority team to come to the U. S. A.

I then had a long talk with a young Chinese comrade from Hong Kong who is the leader of the youth movement there, a member of the section, and a supporter of the international majority. As the Maoists are totally uninterested in fighting British colonialism, they have hegemony over the movement. There may be a similar development among Chinese students in the U. S. He was recruited by Wang, the person Chen Pi-lan attacks in her article, and believes that he can transform the section and align with the majority, given time. He doesn't characterize Maoism as Stalinist, but says China became a workers' state in 1949, and that political revolution was immediately necessary.

Right now, I am wasting time. I should prepare a report on U. S. A. and a clear list of criticisms on Latin America. I think I will focus on the following points:

— the incorrectness of banking on a "breakthrough" in one country

— the over-estimation of the strength of the sections in Bolivia and Argentina and the need for political clarification in the ranks

— that while various tactics of armed struggle are perfectly consistent with Trotskyism, to put them all together (self-defense of the party, expropriations for the party, self-defense of mass movement, guerrilla bands) and to add that they can create a crisis, is an illusion.

Thursday May 17, 1973, midnight

Two days of international majority steering committee meetings and the U. S. are not even yet fully discussed.

On Latin America:

4 documents will be written —

1) a re-reading of the IX W. C. resolution which is considered ambiguous, and which failed to warn against militarist deviation. The issue is seen as: should the party set up a *military wing* completely subordinate to the political work of the party in the masses, to initiate and participate in armed struggle when conditions call for it? SWP says no. Int'l majority says yes! Then specific actions must be reviewed country by country, according to needs of class struggle and abilities of section.

2) a perspectives document for Argentina as the current one is considered inadequate, as it fails to explain the dynamic of how the PRT actions became dominated by the need to make more military actions, and so on. PRT is almost out of F. I. Five tendencies adding up to about 150 people are seeking the franchise. Possibility of getting a tendency in the P. S. T. Will criticize Moreno's economism in unions, and electoral opportunism. Will project no support to Campora, but possible defense against army.

3) a balance sheet of Cuba—critical but not political revol. Dorticos invited to Argentina.

4) perspectives for Chile. The whole international majority is down on Livio, who seems to be brooding, but there are many organizational details I don't know about L. A. sections. Mexicans are split. Everybody sees need to emphasize transitional program and method of party-building but Mandel and Frank are hesitating on taking on the SWP leadership in its own country.

Pierre Frank is writing an answer to Mary-Alice on the European question and this naturally leads to a debate over method. Frank & Mandel did not want to add another one, more general, announcing Novack (they have illusions about him). The French (Vergeant, Krivine, Stern) Pat Jordan, Ken Lewis want to start attacking SWP on its own ground. They want us to provide the ammunition. Mandel realizes the SWP is not internationalist and would split over such interference, and he has a psychological block against a new split.

There is a possible "third force" developing in some European sections, especially Germany, of comrades who reject the L. A. line. Ross is applying for int'l majority, has been hesitating, but will be let in. India is in a mess.

So far we were promised a team made of X, a French woman comrade in charge of int'l work and the abortion campaign, has been to YSA Minneapolis convention, very orthodox, will attack feminism, sisterhood, minimalism and failure to stress issues relevant to working-class women; Y you know him, and Z. They all have agreed to consult with us first. We must raise about \$1,200 for the trips and organize a tour of branches for mid July.

The following was resolved for U. S. A.:

1) The I.M. will accept *three signers* from our tendency in U. S. A., provided should be ready to accept *discipline*.

2) They look with favor upon the formation of our tendency—will collaborate with us on writing document, defend our democratic rights, and probably, if we make an adequate showing, will use it for world congress and a world document.

P. F. was upset by no representation of P. O. on N. C. At the U. Sec. meeting, Barnes promised a special "conference" (?) for mid-November, which would follow an oral discussion. and send delegates to world congress on the basis of *membership votes for resolutions*.

The French comrades strongly believe in full-scale offensive against SWP and have no illusions on the results of it. Mandel pins his hopes on a working-class radicalization in U. S. A., which would change SWP. Vergeant pointed out, even if a crisis in the SWP did develop then, they could not spontaneously develop an analysis; the American tendency must be supported and built. Swedish, Canadians, British agree. Livio, Swiss and German are in the middle.

Right now Mandel is reading our outline and half-draft. We are scheduled to discuss it tomorrow. This may bring some good ideas but I expect pretty heavy discussion.

The following were the suggestions after I read our tendency declaration: Pat J. said to take out the call to "all revolutionaries" as it implies we are calling on people outside the SWP. Ernest said to remove all references to SWP ties to F. I. as this would lead to the impression that SWP was violating Voorhis Act, and as majority would attack us for security risk. He said we had too much emphasis on armed struggle, should reduce that, and stress transitional program. He thought our *style* was too violent on the organizational questions, but recognized that was the American way of doing things. He said he preferred the irony of Massey letter to Sheppard. I have made the corrections and am sending you the copy. We should leave all the names that agree with the call.

I was told, but am unable to check, that the addendum to declaration of 19 I. E. C. members only includes the *Bolivian* balance sheet, and not Argentina, or just the *general* line of Argentina. If there are comrades who do not agree with *Germain* document's formulations, then they have a serious problem as they are probably *Kautskyites*. We cannot continue to entertain our *vague* criticisms that the document was vague, or had a guerrilla warfare line (which in fact it did not on the whole) and that this is a cover-up, but must *express exactly* what we disagree with. I was very embarrassed at the absence of any elaboration of our criticisms by ourselves. But I think most comrades will agree with *Germain*, and with the need for a military wing of the party (in the Comintern tradition) (and not just a defense guard against ultra-lefts) which is as much as we need to say.

I am due to go to Switzerland and IMG. The European comrades desperately need ammunition against the SWP. IMG situation seems wild, but Ross is being handled basically correctly as far as I can see. It would be good if you discussed with Canadian comrades. We have to put together a credible counter-political line and develop a stable internationally-oriented leadership. This is the first priority and will enable us to face any eventuality.

Vietnam, so far, is not part of tendency declaration, but there is increasing desire by Sterne to launch offensive on

- that treaty was modest advance and left *dual power*.
- that solidarity with NLF is key task, and SWP fails to do it.
- that NLF-DRV are fighting for a socialist revolution, &
- that NLF-DRV are not Stalinists. He has a document under his own name coming out.

Comradely,
JB

APPENDIX IV: MATERIAL PERTAINING TO THE ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF THE SWP

The Organizational Character of the Socialist Workers Party, Resolution Adopted by the 21st National Convention of the Socialist Workers Party, September 1965

I. Preamble

Differences over our organizational principles and practices have arisen periodically in the development of our party. It has been our experience that in periods of sharp internal political dispute there often arises, as a corollary, a conflict over our basic concepts of democratic centralism, expressed either implicitly or explicitly. In such cases it becomes the responsibility of the party leadership to restate and reaffirm the concepts which govern our organizational forms and procedures.

At the founding convention of the SWP in 1938, after the split from the "all-inclusive" Socialist Party, cognizance was first taken of the need to codify the basic Leninist concepts of democratic centralism. This was done in the form of a resolution adopted by the convention. The action was intended to serve a double purpose: 1. To effect a codification of our organizational concepts to bring them into line with the revolutionary principles embodied in the program of the founding convention. 2. To cement the fusion of the left wing split-off from the SP with the Trotskyist cadres who comprised the most homogeneous Marxist tendency in the newly formed party by making available to the ranks a clarifying statement of our Leninist views on party organization.

The Leninist concept of democratic centralism was subsequently challenged, most notably in the struggle with the Burnham-Shachtman opposition in 1939-40 and in the Cochranite split of 1953. On each occasion, the party reaffirmed its basic organizational principles and amplified them to ward off and defeat the specific challenges to our concepts of democratic centralism.

In the recent political dispute which culminated in the expulsion by the National Committee plenum of the leaders of the Robertson faction for disloyalty we noted: 1. The existence of a considerable number of younger comrades who, because they joined our ranks after 1953, were relatively unfamiliar with the past disputes in the party over the "organization" question, did not have available the documents of those disputes and were only vaguely acquainted with our basic concept of democratic centralism. (This category does not include the disloyal Robertsonite leaders who consider themselves "experts" on this score.) 2. The existence of various individuals and tendencies who spoke as defenders of the Robertsonites against the disciplinary action taken by the plenary session of the party leadership for their blatant disloyalty to the party. It is contended that such disciplinary action constituted a "violation" of our concepts of democratic centralism. In the course of the discussion representatives and defenders of the Robertson group advanced views which the party leadership, in its over-

whelming majority, consider at variance with our basic concepts of party organization and procedure. It thus becomes imperative to clarify, once again, the Leninist concept of democratic centralism to remove whatever confusion has arisen on this score and to amplify, in the light of the current controversy, our basic ideas on party organization.

To this end, the December 1963 plenum of the National Committee designated a drafting commission composed of comrades Cannon, Warde, and Dobbs to submit a draft codifying our fundamental views on democratic centralism as they have evolved out of past controversies and introducing such amplifications as are indicated by the conflicting views manifested in the current discussion.

II. Record of Party Struggle for Its Organizational Principles

The organizational structure and practices of a Marxist party are not immutable. They are derived from the major tasks to be accomplished at a given stage of the class struggle. The need for an ideologically homogeneous and democratically centralized organization flows from the perspective and actuality of deepening social crisis and sharpening class conflict which makes imperative the revolutionary solution of basic social problems. The anticipation and active preparation of such revolutionary developments in the United States has determined the kind of party our movement has set out to build from its birth.

Its organization form is intended to serve the central aims set forth in our program of abolishing capitalism and reorganizing America on a socialist basis. Only a combat party of the Leninist type is capable of organizing and leading the working class and its allies to the conquest of power in the main fortress of world imperialism. Confronted as the people are by the most powerful and ruthless ruling class in the world, the party of the American revolution must be conceived and constructed as a cohesive and disciplined combat organization. That is why our party has sought to base itself on the tested and proven Leninist rules of organization, summed up in the concept of democratic centralism.

Democratic centralism is a dialectical concept which does not lend itself to rigid definition and application regardless of time, place, and circumstances. Our party has forged its own specific form of the Leninist concept in the heat of struggle under concrete American conditions. The party's organizational principles are an integral part of its living history. These clearly-defined and well-established principles are ready to be taught

to young revolutionaries coming into our ranks and to be defended against attempts to water them down and thereby corrode the revolutionary fabric of the party.

As a combat organization the party strives for political homogeneity in the sense that admission to its ranks requires fundamental agreement with its program and principles. For similar reasons unconditional loyalty and disciplined conduct are required as a condition of membership. To safeguard party unity in debating and deciding policy, a conscious effort is made to teach comrades to argue out problems on the basis of principles and to act always from the standpoint of principle. Along these lines the party has developed in a free and democratic internal atmosphere. All individuals and tendencies have a full chance to contribute to the development of the party and to the shaping of its leading cadres.

The party is guided by the concept of democratic centralism in regulating both its public activity and its internal affairs. Full rights are accorded to minorities as conditioned by the democratic principle of majority rule. Minority views may be presented in internal discussion at the proper time and in an appropriate manner as determined by the party. Once a decision has been made on disputed issues, the minority is subordinated to the majority. Between conventions authority becomes centralized and the party confronts the outside world with a single policy, that of the majority. All members are required to subordinate themselves to the policies and decisions of the party. Official party bodies determine what is correct procedure, and no individual or group can arrogate that right.

Through these democratic-centralist practices the party maintains its role as a revolutionary vanguard. Its character as a combat organization is safeguarded. Unity in action is preserved. Firmness of political line is assured and the party is enabled to maintain its principles unadulterated.

Relation of Organization to Politics

Building a Leninist-type party entails uncommon difficulties because of this country's position as the powerhouse of world capitalist reaction. Alien class pressures bear down upon the party with enormous force in a hostile political environment. At times these pressures generate centrifugal currents in our ranks. Ideas, moods, and motivations at odds with our program and traditions penetrate the party's internal life. Those affected tend to translate their own nervousness into exaggerated criticism of the party and begin to develop basic differences with the party line.

The seemingly abstract relation of organization to politics then becomes very real, because those who develop basic political differences also develop an urge to throw off restrictions imposed upon them by the party's organizational concepts. They become antagonistic to democratic centralism. Attempts are made to undermine the party's homogeneity and make it amorphous; to render it diffuse in class composition, identity and outlook; to revise its principles; to weaken its discipline and unity in action; and to debase the meaning of party membership.

Party building therefore involves a continuous process of cadre selection. While striving constantly to attract new

forces, we also find it necessary from time to time to part company with those in our ranks who become disoriented. In the struggle for our principles the party creates stable cadres educated against both opportunism and sectarianism. Through long experience the party has learned to be on the alert for signs of opportunist tendencies toward capitulation to alien class pressures and to mobilize for struggle against them. Similarly the party is schooled to oppose sectarian abstentionism and ultra-left adventures designed to leap over objective difficulties. While combating both opportunism and sectarianism, the party educates its cadres to shape their course along the basic lines of the Transitional Program adopted by the Trotskyist movement in 1938.

Transitional Program

Central to the Transitional Program is recognition that mankind's crisis in the struggle for socialism is primarily a crisis of revolutionary leadership. It is the aim of the Trotskyist movement to build a combat organization capable of filling the leadership void. To do so the party can countenance neither opportunist adaptation to the status quo nor sectarian abstention from living struggle at its prevailing level of development. The party intervenes in the daily struggle with transitional demands stemming from today's conditions and today's consciousness within sections of the mass movement. All these demands are aimed toward leading the masses to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the working class.

Only a tightly-knit combat party can meet these revolutionary tasks. In the struggle to build such a party, cadre selection goes on as a constant molecular process. New individuals are attracted to the movement and some already in our ranks drop away. The proportions between these two categories vary with the ups and downs of external political trends. At given conjunctures the process may pass beyond individual selection and involve organized groups. In a political upturn a leap in party growth may be accomplished through a principled unification with other forces who are moving toward Trotskyist positions. Or at another stage an organized group may split away from the party from either sectarian or opportunist motives. Thus unifications and splits are alike methods of building the party, each representing a concentrated form of expression of the continuous process of cadre selection.

The SWP had its origins in the break of the Trotskyist Left Opposition from the Communist Party when the latter succumbed to Stalinist degeneration in the Twenties. Starting with such cadres as could be salvaged from the CP, the pioneer Trotskyists reached out for new forces turning revolutionary in the labor radicalization of the Thirties. Some reinforcements were secured through individual recruitment, but the main gains were registered through unifications with the American Workers Party in 1934 and soon thereafter with the left wing of the Socialist Party. No less decisive in shaping the viable Trotskyist cadres of the Thirties was the 1935 split of the sectarians in our ranks who opposed the unifications.

Petty-bourgeois Opposition

The founding of the SWP in 1938 marked the completion of such unifications as were possible under the given

conditions. Adverse political trends were already developing as the labor radicalization subsided; and when World War II began in 1939 the party was plunged into a deep internal crisis. The petty-bourgeois wing of the party quickly capitulated to the pressures of bourgeois public opinion which bore down heavily upon the movement as the ruling class prepared for American entry into the war. An organized opposition, led by Burnham, Shachtman, and Abern, began a vicious fight to overthrow the party's program and principles.

Their first panicky impulse was to rush to the mimeograph machines and issue a call for the masses to rise in spontaneous opposition to war. Their next step was to renounce the Trotskyist position of unconditional defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack. Through Burnham they questioned many of the principles of Marxism. Through Shachtman they began to replace Trotsky's definition of the Soviet Union under Stalin as a degenerated workers' state with the false theory of bureaucratic collectivism.

In a frenzy to free themselves from party discipline the petty-bourgeois opposition opened an all-out attack on democratic centralism. They demanded the "right" to publish their own public organ. To grant their demand would have destroyed the centralist character of the party; it would have meant the creation of dual party structures and a complete breakdown of discipline. That, of course, was precisely what the petty-bourgeois opposition wanted, as they demonstrated when they split from the party upon being defeated at the 1940 convention.

The same convention reaffirmed the Leninist character of the party in its resolution on "The Organizational Conclusions of the Present Discussion." Dealing specifically with the opposition's demands, the resolution reaffirmed and made more explicit the party's unconditional right to control the public activity of all its members. After the split the party published a book by Comrade Cannon, "The Struggle for a Proletarian Party," in which the organizational lessons of the 1939-40 internal struggle are documented and analyzed. The book constitutes a valuable guide to young revolutionists eager to learn the Leninist principles of organization.

American Theses

Cleansed of the petty-bourgeois defectors from Trotskyism, the party stood firm throughout the war. In the 1944-46 labor upsurge it was able to win many new rebels to its ranks, thereby recouping the losses experienced in the 1940 split. With a confidence tempered in the fires of adversity, the party charted its post-war perspectives through the American Theses adopted at the 1946 convention.

With revolutionary advances abroad confronted by the military interventions of U.S. imperialism, the Theses assert, the role of America in the world is decisive. The showdown battles for the communist future of mankind will be fought in this country. A socialist victory here, merging with the world revolutionary forces, will put an end to the outlived capitalist system as a whole.

As against all petty-bourgeois skeptics, the Theses affirm the capacity of the American working class to fulfill its historic role as an organic part of the world revolutionary process. U.S. capitalism is heading toward a deep social

and political crisis that will precipitate an unparalleled mass radicalization. The working class will acquire political class consciousness and organization in a sweeping movement similar to the rise of the CIO. Given the decisive leadership of a revolutionary vanguard party, labor and its allies will move toward the conquest of political power.

It is to fill precisely that vanguard leadership role that the SWP has shaped its political course and organizational structure, following the example of the Bolshevik party of Lenin and Trotsky. The SWP has hammered out its revolutionary program in ideological battles and it defends that program against every kind of revisionist assault upon it. The party has assembled a strong core of professional leadership which it strives to expand in order to strengthen party work and maintain leadership continuity. It aims to train its cadres in the irreconcilable spirit of a combat party of revolution, a party aspiring to lead the workers to victory in a struggle for political power.

Pessimism and Impressionism

The party's capacity to uphold the perspectives of the American Theses was soon to be put to the test under worsening objective conditions. A reactionary atmosphere of cold war and witch-hunt replaced the favorable climate of the labor upsurge in the mid-Forties. A new minority opposition, born of petty-bourgeois pessimism and impressionism, developed within the party under the leadership of Cochran. It was an unprincipled combination, divided as to whether political hope should be placed in self-reform of the Soviet bureaucracy, or in the miracle of an American union bureaucracy turned militant. What held the combination together, until they split from the SWP, was their common loss of faith in the revolutionary capacity of the working class. They denied that anybody could build a party capable of smashing the bureaucratic obstacles within the labor movement and leading the masses toward the conquest of power.

As always happens when basic political differences arise, the Cochranites began a campaign to undermine the party's democratic-centralist principles. Their attack centered on an attempt to subvert the principle of majority rule by imposing a minority veto of majority decisions. At the May 1953 plenum, in the middle of the internal struggle, the National Committee responded with a resolution reaffirming the organizational principles laid down by the 1938 and 1940 party conventions. The resolution also contained a third section rejecting the Cochranite attempt to set up "dual power" in the leadership and specifically affirming the application of majority rule through official party bodies. Soon thereafter the Cochranites went on a sit-down strike against the party which led to their suspension in November 1953 and later to their formal expulsion. In the political conflict a big majority of the membership rebuffed the Cochranite attack on the Transitional Program and American Theses.

Leaving aside similar experiences of lesser degree, such are the landmarks of internal struggle through which the party has worked out and maintained its organizational cohesion. Despite extremely-prolonged objective adversities, all revisionist attacks have been fought off. The party remains firmly committed to its vanguard aim of leading

the American workers and their allies to the conquest of political power. Battle-tested cadres have been developed and a vital core of professional leadership created. The party's basic principles as a combat organization have been clearly established: firmness in political line; unity in action; disciplined conduct in all internal party affairs; unconditional loyalty to the party.

New Attack on Principles

Today the party faces yet another attack on its organizational principles which comes as a reflex to the appearance of new political differences. Toward the end of the Fifties an unusually protracted internal discussion began, centered on the Chinese question, Negro Struggle, Cuban question and reunification of the world movement. Minority groupings took form around one and another issue. A factional atmosphere was soon generated inside the party, especially by a minority combination made up of the Robertson-Mage-White and Wohlforth-Philips groups.

It was plain from the outset that the Robertson-Wohlforth combination had the idea that middle-class intellectuals must take over American Trotskyism and set it straight. They began with factional sorties in the youth around several issues. Later they linked themselves with the Healy faction of the Socialist Labor League in a declaration of war on the SWP policies and leadership. They opposed party policy on such key issues as world unification, Cuba, Algeria, the Negro Struggle. In the name of "proletarian" intervention in the mass movement they advanced a hodgepodge of sectarian abstentionism and harebrained adventurism. In general they showed the usual traits of the rootless petty-bourgeois radical caught up in frenzied self-delusion.

In the fall of 1962 the combination split into the Robertson-Mage-White and Wohlforth-Philips components, apparently in a dispute over tactics in their factional attempt to overturn the party's program and principles. They entered the 1963 pre-convention discussion as rival factions but without any significant differences in political line. As the discussion proceeded they took pot-shots at one another that helped to reveal the depth of their hostility toward the party majority; an outstanding example was the Wohlforth faction's revelations about anti-party documents secretly circulated by the Robertsonites. At the party convention both factions were defeated politically by an overwhelming majority, and both were excluded from representation on the incoming National Committee because their loyalty to the party was in question.

Expulsion of Robertsonites

After the convention the Political Committee requested a Control Commission investigation into the Wohlforthite charges concerning the anti-party attitude of the Robertson faction. The Commission obtained copies of documents by Robertson, Ireland, and Harper that had been circulated behind the back of the party. Its findings were reported to the Political Committee for action as provided by the party constitution.

These Robertsonite documents constituted a declaration of unending war on the party which was characterized as "right-centrist." Policies were outlined for what amounted

to a factional raid on the party. In practice it meant double recruitment, first to the tight faction, then formally to the party, on the basis of the faction's own program and methods; indoctrination of contacts against the party program, convention decisions, and organizational principles before they applied for party membership. They ridiculed the idea of party patriotism and sneered at the concept of party loyalty as a "religion." Faction discipline was put before the party discipline in their party-wrecking expedition.

Because of their disloyalty, in word and deed, the Political Committee suspended from membership Robertson, Mage, and White as leaders responsible for the factional disloyalty; also Harper and Ireland for their complicity in the secret documents. Further disciplinary action was referred to the National Committee. The December 1963 plenum approved the PC action and expelled the five from the party.

The disciplinary action against the Robertsonites has been assailed by all organized minorities within the party and by some individual members. It has been contended from one and another quarter that party loyalty is only an idea; that disciplinary measures can be taken only upon specific proof of overt acts of indiscipline; that the party leadership has introduced new organizational concepts in an effort to settle political differences by suppressing the right of organized dissent; that the leadership is trying to make the party monolithic in the Stalinist manner.

Party Loyalty

Not one of these assertions and accusations contains an iota of truth. To begin with, loyalty is far more than an abstract idea; it is a standard of political conduct. The party's whole democratic-centralist structure is founded on the rock of organizational loyalty. Without loyal members the party, as a voluntary organization, would have no basis upon which to maintain the necessary discipline in carrying out its revolutionary tasks. Disloyal people don't believe in the party, they won't pitch in selflessly to help build it, and they will resist and evade discipline. That is why the organizational resolution adopted at the SWP's founding convention specified that unconditional loyalty to the party is required of every member.

Brushing aside that specific provision of party law, an attempt is made to brand unconstitutional the disciplinary procedure against the Robertsonites which hinges on the issue of party loyalty. It is charged that the trial procedures under Article VIII of the party constitution have been violated. The charge is unfounded as it ignores the fact that Article VIII covers procedures in handling disciplinary matters originating at the branch level. When the National Control Commission acts, however, its procedures are governed entirely by Article VI of the party constitution, and the provisions of the latter article were followed to the letter in the Robertson case.

Another charge is directed at the Control Commission itself, which is alleged to have exceeded its authority in demanding and "presuming to evaluate" the Robertsonite secret documents. Again the charge is utterly without foundation. Article VI authorizes the Control Commission to

investigate "any individual or circumstance," and it obligates party members "to furnish the Control Commission or its authorized representatives with any information they may require." As to its alleged "presumption" in evaluating the Robertsonite documents, Article VI provides that the Control Commission "Shall present its findings and *recommendations* to the Political Committee for action." (Emphasis added.)

Acting strictly within its constitutional authority, the Control Commission obtained the documents in question. Upon examination it found that they manifested a hostile and disloyal attitude toward the party, and it said so in its report to the Political Committee. Taking the same view, the Political Committee suspended from membership those held primarily responsible for the documents. The plenum approved the Political Committee action, and it expelled from the party those the Political Committee had suspended.

An Anti-Party Faction

Although the action against the Robertsonites was unique in one respect: the form of the evidence involved, it had its precedent and justification in the loyalty issue over which they were expelled. Usually an anti-party faction tries to conceal its divisive aims until it is ready to split, and its disruptive course must be exposed through its disloyal acts. The Robertsonites seemed to think, however, that they could get away with their secret circulation of anti-party documents, using them in their factional raid on the party, until they themselves decided the time had come for an open split. Although given every opportunity to repudiate the documents and affirm their loyalty to the party, not one of them did so. They seemed to believe the party would have to submit to their wrecking operation until and unless specific acts of disloyalty could be proved against them.

The plenum transcript on the subject shows that disloyal acts were indeed committed by the Robertsonites, but that is beside the point. With or without proof of specific acts, the party had the right, and its leadership the duty, to stop the self-indicted factional raiders who were out to wreck our movement. Any doubts on that score should have been definitively resolved by their attitude and actions since the expulsions in peddling malicious gossip to the capitalist press as part of their attempt to smear the SWP publicly.

Some opponents of the disciplinary action have argued, however, that in principle anyone can advocate anything he pleases within the party; and the policy followed in the Robertsonite case has been likened to capitalist use of thought-control measures. The argument is false on both counts. The SWP is a voluntary organization which individuals or groups are free to join or leave as they agree or disagree with its program, aims and activities. But they are not free to accept or reject the imposition of governmental authority. If they resist the regulations governing society as laid down by the state power, they are not simply told they will have to depart and organize a rival party of their own; they are threatened with jail. That is why governmental attempts to proscribe views are anti-democratic; and it is idiotic to accuse the SWP of aping the capitalist government in the Robertson case.

Basis of Party's Existence

As a voluntary and revolutionary organization the SWP has the right to define the basis for its existence. The party exercises that prerogative by putting distinct limits on the right of advocacy within its ranks, as determined by majority decision through the official bodies, acting in compliance with the party's program, principles and convention decisions. Disloyal people not only cannot advocate anything they please within the party; they cannot be allowed to carry on their advocacy behind the back of the party. Those who don't want to comply with the party's democratically-decided definition of the basis for its existence have the right to withdraw from the organization and form one of their own.

It has also been claimed that the leadership, while acting in the name of striving for relative internal homogeneity, is actually trying to make the party monolithic. To lightly make so grave a charge is irresponsible, because it infers a Stalinist form of degeneration within the SWP; and the charge is baseless. Monolithism means the suppression of all political dissent and the imposition of rigid political conformity by a dictatorial bureaucracy. It is a Stalinist corruption of Leninism which our Trotskyist party rejects and combats. We are guided by the Leninist concept of relative internal homogeneity based on loyal adherence to the party's program and principles and voluntary acceptance of its discipline. These qualities enable the party to maintain internal stability and to function dynamically in its public activity, even though conjunctural political differences arise. Ample room is provided for the expression of dissident views, even major ones of serious import. The right to organize tendencies and factions is safeguarded. All the leadership demands is that every member be loyal to the party's program and principles and be disciplined.

Factionalism and Party Unity

A properly conducted discussion of internal political differences contributes to the good and welfare of the party. It facilitates the hammering out of a correct political line and it helps to educate the membership. These benefits derive from the discussion provided that every comrade hears all points of view and the whole party is drawn into the thinking about the questions in dispute. In that way the membership as a whole can intervene in disputes, settle them in an orderly way by majority decision, and get on with the party work. This method has been followed by American Trotskyism throughout its history and has resulted in an effective clarification of all controversial issues.

Concentration on private discussions of disputed issues, on the other hand, tends to give the comrades involved a one-sided view and warps their capacity for objective political judgment. Inexperienced comrades especially are made the target of such lopsided discussion methods. The aim is to line them up quickly in a closed caucus, and prejudice their thinking before they have heard an open party debate. When dissident views are introduced into the party in that manner groupings tend to form and harden, and the dissenting views tend to assert themselves in disruptive fashion, before the party as a whole has had a chance to face and act on the issues

in dispute.

A relatively homogeneous party should be able to resolve episodic differences without resort to factionalism. Even when comrades have differences of a serious nature over one or another particular aspect of party policy it does not follow that they should rush to form a faction. Objectivity requires that they do no more than form an ideological tendency which confines its activities to a principled collective effort to argue for a change in the given policy; and the tendency should present its views openly before the whole party in a responsible and disciplined manner.

A tight-knit faction, however, is qualitatively different from an ideological tendency. It tends to become in effect a party within the party, with its own program and its own discipline. Such a formation cannot be justified politically unless its organizers consider their differences so fundamental that they must conduct a showdown fight for control of the party. Factionalism means war inside the party, and it entails the possibility and danger of a split.

For these reasons internal party disputes should be conducted in an objective way, both to safeguard party unity and to educate the membership in principled politics. Comrades should not be hasty to organize internal groupings. When the party has made its decision on the issues in dispute, groupings formed during the polemical struggle should dissolve into the party as a whole.

Regulation of Internal Affairs

Temporary groupings that arise out of conjunctural political differences should not be perpetuated regardless of principled considerations indicating the need for their dissolution. If they are, it indicates that narrow group interests have been put ahead of basic party interests. A danger arises that such permanent formations may degenerate into unprincipled cliques bound together by personal associations; and their existence may drive others into counter-formations. An atmosphere of aimless, endless internal conflict is generated that could tear the party to pieces.

It is precisely to safeguard itself from such harmful consequences of factional anarchy that the party exercises the right to regulate its internal affairs. While a decision is being reached, comrades holding dissident views receive all normal minority rights, including the right of organized dissent. After a party decision has been made the democratic rights of the majority take precedence. All members are required to accept the majority decision and help to carry it out. Comrades holding minority opinions are not disqualified from serving the party in any capacity; nor are they asked to give up their dissident views. They must simply await a new opportunity to present their views when internal discussion is again formally authorized.

Comrades opposed to expulsion of the Robertsonites disregarded the significance of the expression of party opinion at the July 1963 convention. An exceedingly long preparatory discussion had been held. Minorities received most of the space in an unprecedented volume of internal bulletins. During pre-convention discussion in the branches, and at the convention itself, minority reporters

got generous time allotments. Democracy in action, as represented by the convention vote, showed a very strong majority, while the dissenting groups taken as a whole constituted only a weak minority. Through that decisive test of the relation of forces, the convention firmly decided the issues in dispute. The discussion was terminated for the time being; and all comrades were expected to pitch into party activity on the basis of the convention decisions.

Thought and Action

It shows disrespect for the opinions of the party membership when dissident comrades seek to proceed as though the convention vote meant nothing. To contend that differences have arisen in new forms, as has been said, is simply a pretext for continuing discussion of issues decided by the convention. Equally deceptive are the arguments that party comrades are thinking people who don't want to be reduced to simply doing organizational chores, and that polemical discussions will liven up an otherwise dull branch meeting.

Without critical political thinking and rethinking one could not be a revolutionist. But there must be alternative periods for emphasis upon thought and action. The party is not a perpetual discussion circle whose chief function is to provide a forum where free-thinkers can express themselves whenever and however they please. Ours is a disciplined party of action. We discuss in order to arrive at a policy to serve as a guide for collective action and we decide in order to act as a united body with a single purpose. Those who say they find it impossible to function in such a party really mean they don't want to do much except talk. They are not serious militants worthy of a workers' party.

Considering all the facts, it is ridiculous to charge the leadership with introducing new organizational concepts intended to suppress organized dissent. If new concepts have been introduced within the party, and they have, they don't come from the leadership; they come from those who challenge the elementary obligation of the party leadership to defend the integrity of the party against a wrecking operation. Although the present minorities have varying political differences with the majority and between themselves, they appear to hold a common wrong view on the question of internal party discipline.

The disloyal Robertsonites are defended on the grounds of alleged minority rights. It is claimed that an organized minority has the unconditional right to determine its own conduct inside the party. Discipline is held to apply only to public activity. Official party bodies are allegedly without right or power to regulate a minority's activities in organizing itself and presenting its political views.

To grant such demands for special license to organized minorities would strip the party of the right to regulate its internal affairs and would undermine its whole democratic-centralist structure. The democratic principle of majority rule would be overturned; discipline in public activity would be confounded; and all semblance of political homogeneity would be lost. The party would become converted into an all-inclusive federation of autonomous factions; it would degenerate into a political jungle where perpetual factional warfare prevailed.

Party of American Revolution

It is foolish to imagine that the coming American revolution can be led by a party honeycombed with political kibbitzers, professional "democrats" who disdain the rights of the majority, and factional hooligans. In this country the masses and their socialist spokesmen face the most vicious ruling class. At home its government deals with social protest through legal and extra-legal thugs armed with clubs, tear gas, fire hoses, cattle prods, dogs, guns, and bayonets. The ruling class made America the shame of the world as the first and only nation to use atomic weapons against other human beings. The rulers of this country unleash brutal military interventions against anti-capitalist rebels abroad; and they repeatedly go to the brink of nuclear war in their efforts to turn back the world revolutionary tide.

To go up against such a ruling class, labor and its allies need the leadership of a cohesive and disciplined combat party. If our party is to meet that need it must once again beat back disintegrating factors which threaten and undermine its revolutionary vitality. The membership must be educated and reeducated in principled Trotskyist politics and the Leninist principles of democratic centralism. The party must tighten up against internal disruption, demand responsible conduct from every member, enforce discipline and require unconditional loyalty to the organization. While scrupulously protecting the normal democratic rights of minorities, the democratic principle of majority rule must be no less rigorously enforced. Only in that way can we approach our revolutionary tasks as *one* party with *one* program.

Again, and once again, comrades must be taught that party patriotism is part of revolutionary consciousness. Disloyalty and indiscipline must be looked upon as crimes that bring punishment. A party that aims to lead the most decisive revolution of our time must have members who believe in it, who want to help build it, and who are quick to defend it. People of that calibre must in turn have the kind of a party to which they can confidently dedicate their life and their hope for the socialist future.

III. Codification of Organizational Principles

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

Basing itself on the specific experiences and needs of American Trotskyism up to that time, the 1938 founding convention of the Socialist Workers Party defined our or-

ganizational principles in a resolution "On the Internal Situation and the Character of the Party."

Soon thereafter a minority faction, led by Burnham, Shachtman, and Abern, demanded the right to publish a dual public organ which would have amounted to freeing them from party control over their public activities. In rejecting the minority demand the 1940 party convention reaffirmed the 1938 resolution and extended the definition of principles in a resolution on "The Organizational Conclusions of the Present Discussion." Later on a minority faction headed by Cochran demanded a dual leadership authority in the form of veto powers within official party bodies intended to obstruct the carrying out of majority decisions. The Cochranite demand was rejected by the May 1953 plenum of the National Committee. The plenum adopted a resolution, "On the Organizational Principles of the Party," which reaffirmed the 1938 and 1940 resolutions and further extended the definition of our democratic-centralist norms.

At present our organizational principles are again under attack, this time in the form of a demand for dual disciplinary standards under which organized minorities would have the unconditional right to set their own norms of conduct inside the party. The demand is rejected as in violation of the Leninist principles defined in the 1938, 1940, and 1953 resolution. In accordance with those resolutions which are hereby reaffirmed, and in view of the new problems that have arisen, the party's organizational principles are further defined and codified as follows:

Character of the Party

The Socialist Workers Party, as a revolutionary workers' party, is based on the doctrines of scientific socialism as embodied in the principle works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky and incorporated in the basic documents and resolutions of the first four congresses of the Communist International; and as embodied in the Transitional Program, the American Theses, and other programmatic documents of the Trotskyist movement. The party's aim is the organization of the working class in the struggle for power and the transformation of the existing social order. All of its activities, its methods, and its internal regime are subordinated to this aim and are designed to serve it.

The Bolshevik party of Lenin set an unparalleled example for the building of the vanguard party capable of leading the working class to the conquest of power. The SWP, as a combat organization, which aims at achieving power in this country, models its organization forms and methods after those of Russian Bolshevism, adapting them, naturally, to the experience of recent years and to concrete American conditions.

We reject the contention of social democrats, skeptics, and capitulators disillusioned in the Russian revolution and its aftermath, that there is an inevitable and organic connection between Bolshevism and Stalinism. This reactionary revision of Marxism is a capitulation to democratic imperialism. It is capable of producing only demoralization and defeat in the critical times of war and revolution. Tendencies which advance skeptical criticisms of Bolshevism express their petty-bourgeois composition and their dependence on bourgeois public opinion. The petty-bourgeois is a natural transmission belt carrying the theories

of reaction into the organizations of the working class.

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

Insofar as any guarantees are possible against the degeneration of the proletarian party, these can be obtained only by educating the party in firm adherence to principles and by a merciless struggle against any personal and unprincipled clique combinations within the party. The history of the movement in this country amply reveals that such a clique, with its utter disregard for principles, can become the repository for alien class influences and agents of enemy organizations seeking to disrupt the movement from within. The SWP condemns cliquism as hostile to the spirit and methods of Bolshevik organizations.

Revolutionary Centralism

From the foregoing it follows that the party seeks to include in its ranks all revolutionary and class conscious militants from the labor, civil rights, and student movements—all opponents of capitalism—who are prepared to stand on the Trotskyist program and to be active in building the movement in a disciplined manner. The revolutionary Marxian party rejects, not only the arbitrariness and bureaucratism of the Communist Party, but also the spurious and deceptive "all-inclusiveness" of the social-democratic variety, which is a sham and a fraud. Experience has proved conclusively that this "all-inclusiveness" paralyzes the party in general and the revolutionary left wing in particular, suppressing and bureaucratically hounding the latter while giving free rein to the right wing to commit the greatest crimes in the name of socialism and the party. The SWP seeks to be inclusive only in this sense: that it accepts into its ranks those who accept its program and principles; and that it denies admission to those who reject its program and principles.

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

Conditions, both external and in the internal develop-

ment of the party, demand that steps now be taken towards knitting the party together, towards tightening up its activities and centralizing its organization structure. For the work of penetrating into the mass movement, for the heavy struggles to come against capitalism, it is imperative that a maximum of loyalty be required of every leader and every member; that a maximum of activity be required commensurate with the given situation of each comrade; that a strict adherence to discipline be demanded and enforced.

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

Leadership and centralized direction are indispensable prerequisites for any sustained and disciplined action, especially in the party that sets itself the aim of leading the collective efforts of the proletariat in its struggle against capitalism. Without a strong and firm National Committee and its subordinate bodies, having the power to act promptly and effectively in the name of the party and to supervise, coordinate and direct all its activities without exception, the very idea of a revolutionary party is a meaningless jest.

Membership Rights and Obligations

Only a self-acting and critical-minded membership is capable of forging and consolidating such a party and of solving its problems by collective thought, discussion, and experience. From this follows the need of assuring the widest party democracy in the ranks of the organization. Party membership confers the fullest freedom of discussion, debate, and criticism inside the ranks of the party limited only by such decisions and provisions as are made by the party itself or by bodies to which it assigns this function. Affiliation to the party confers upon each member the right of being democratically represented at all policy-making assemblies of the party (from branch to national convention), and the right of the final and decisive vote in determining the program, policies, and leadership of the party.

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

Party membership implies the obligation of one hun-

dred percent loyalty to the organization, the rejection of all agents of other, hostile groups in its ranks and intolerance of divided loyalties in general. Membership in the party necessitates responsible activity in the organization, as established by the proper unit, and under the direction of the party; it necessitates the fulfillment of all the tasks which the party assigns to each member. Party membership implies the obligation upon every member to contribute materially to the support of the organization in accordance with his means.

Rights of Party as a Whole

The rights of each individual member, as set forth above, do not imply that the membership as a whole, namely, the party itself, does not possess rights of its own. The party as a whole has the right to demand that its work be not disrupted and disorganized, and has the right to take all the measures which it finds necessary to assure its regular and normal functioning. The rights of any individual member are distinctly secondary to the rights of the party membership as a whole. Party democracy means not only the most scrupulous protection of the rights of a given minority, but also the protection of the majority. A dissenting minority has the right to organize itself, but the conduct of organized minorities, just as that of every individual member, must be subject to regulation by official party bodies.

The party is therefore entitled to organize its internal discussion and to determine the forms and limits. All inner-party discussion must be organized from the point of view that the party is not a discussion club, which debates interminably on any and all questions at any and all times without arriving at a binding decision enabling the organization to act, but from the point of view that we are a disciplined party of revolutionary action.

The party must be cleansed of the discussion-club atmosphere, of an irresponsible attitude toward assignments, of a cynical, smart-aleck disrespect for the organization. To maintain party unity and make common political work possible, the majority must have the unconditional right to decide all issues in dispute; every member must accept the decisions unconditionally and help carry them out. Official party bodies must determine correct procedure, both in public activity and in the regulation of internal affairs, on the basis of the party's principles and statutes.

Discipline

The party in general not only has the right, therefore, to organize the discussion in accordance with the requirements of the situation, but the lower units of the party must be given the right in the interests of the struggle against the disruption and disorganization of the party's work, to call irresponsible individuals to order, and, if need be, to eject them from the ranks.

The decisions of the national party convention are binding on all party members without exception and they conclude the discussion on all disputed questions upon which a decision has been taken. Any party member violating the decisions of the convention, or attempting to revive discussion in regard to them without formal

authorization of the party, puts himself thereby in opposition to the party and forfeits his right to membership. All party organizations are authorized and instructed to take any measures necessary to enforce this rule.

Press

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

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

Proletarianizing the Party

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

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

To transform the SWP into a proletarian party of action, particularly in the present period of reaction, it is not enough to continue propagandistic activities in the hope that by an automatic process workers will flock to the banner of the party. It is necessary, on the contrary, to make a concerted, determined and systematic effort, consciously directed by the leading committees of the party, to spread out into all sectors of the mass movement—civil rights organizations which are becoming radicalized and in which workers predominate; labor organizations within industry and among the unemployed; campuses where an increasing number of students are turning toward socialist ideas.

Central to all mass work must be the sinking of party roots into mass organizations and the recruitment of workers and students, black and white, into the party. At the same time students must be taught that they can transform the Trotskyist program from the pages of books and pamphlets into living reality for themselves and for the party only by integrating themselves in the workers' movement and breaking irrevocably from alien class in-

fluences. They must wholly and selflessly identify themselves with the working class through its vanguard party. Unless they follow this road they are in constant danger of slipping back into apathy and pessimism and thus being lost for the revolutionary movement.

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

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

The press must gear its agitation into the activity conducted among specific sectors of the mass movement so as to transform the party paper from a literary organ into a political organizer. The integration of the party into the mass movement, and the transformation of the party into a proletarian organization, are indispensable for the progress of the party.

Responsibilities of Leadership

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

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

The party leadership must, from time to time, be infused with new blood, primarily from among the younger party activists. Comrades who show promise and ability through activity in the mass movement should be elevated to the leading committees of the party in order to establish a more direct connection between the leading committee and the mass movement, and in order to train those engaged in mass work for the tasks of party direction itself.

The leadership of the party must be under the control of the membership, its policies must always be open to criticism, discussion and rectification by the rank and file within properly established forms and limits, and the leading bodies themselves subject to formal recall or alteration. The membership of the party has the right to demand and expect the greatest responsibility from the leaders precisely because of the position they occupy in the movement. The selection of comrades to the po-

sitions of leadership means the conferring of an extraordinary responsibility. The warrant for this position must be proved, not once, but continuously by the leadership itself. It is under obligation to set the highest example of responsibility, devotion, sacrifice and complete identification with the party itself and its daily life and action. It must display the ability to defend its policies before the membership of the party, and to defend the line of the party and the party as a whole before the working class in general.

Sustained party activity, not broken or disrupted by abrupt and disorienting changes, presupposes not only a continuity of tradition and a systematic development of party policy, but also the continuity of leadership. It is an important sign of a serious and firmly constituted party, of a party really engaged in productive work in the class struggle, that it raises from its ranks cadres of more or less able leading comrades, tested for their qualities of endurance and trustworthiness, and that it thus insures a certain stability and continuity of leadership by such a cadre.

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

Role of Official Bodies

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

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

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

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

In accordance with the principle of democratic centralism, minorities shall have the right to present their views in all internal party discussions. The plenum, and be-

tween its sessions, the Political Committee, has the right and duty to lay down rules for the regulation of the discussion, to see that it is fairly conducted as has invariably been the case in the past, and to see that it does not disrupt the orderly functioning of the party in all its activities.

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

The Structure and Organizational Principles of the Party, by Farrell Dobbs, three lectures given in August 1970

LECTURE 1

Giving these talks is a stimulating assignment for me, because young people attracted to the Trotskyist program show a salutary interest in all aspects of the history of our movement. This quality enables young people to learn today from past class struggle experience. No less important, it helps to avoid repetition of old mistakes. In general, young rebels are able to stand on the shoulders of their predecessors in going forward to meet today's revolutionary tasks.

Interest in the history of the Socialist Workers Party has centered on the political side. The political line is the key to a correct revolutionary outlook, and literature on political history is more readily available. The connection between organizational methods and political outlook is not readily apparent. It takes time and experience to grasp the interrelationship between the two, and literature on the organizational question itself is less readily available.

For these reasons, the present talks should serve a general need, and I will undertake in these discussions, to summarize the main lines of the Socialist Workers Party's organizational history. I will undertake to sketch an overall picture and offer some guides to further study of the subject.

It's best to begin with the relationship of organizational conceptions to the political aims of the movement. The organizational structure must derive from the political objectives it is designed to serve. That is paramount. Given a correct program, then organizational strength becomes vital to success. But size alone is a false criterion for the strength of an organization. The question remains: can it meet the test of class struggle reality? History shows that the party program is the key to the answer. Without a correct program, an organization is built of political straw, and it will inevitably collapse in the winds of social conflict.

I would cite as a case in point the rise and decline of the so-called New Left of modern times. This was a get-rich-quick scheme. They were going to show the so-called "old left" how to do it. Their basic approach was first, to get organized, and then to develop a political program. "We'll figure out something," they said, "we'll get the show on the road." Toward this end, they evolved what they described as the method of "participatory democracy," that is, anybody who stepped up could pose as a leader. This method opened the way for angle merchants to become dominant in the leading circles of the New Left. These were comprised

mainly of factional sharpies and personally ambitious political ignoramuses with big mouths. This gang misled the young rebels who were attracted to the New Left into a variety of political escapades ranging from ultraleft adventurism to new forms of sorties into the old game of capitalist politics. The whole process resulted in the political discreditment of the New Left and its organizational disintegration.

The fate of the New Left was no surprise to experienced revolutionists. Its so-called "participatory democracy" was nothing more than a long-known concept that has gone by the name of political all-inclusiveness. It is an old concept, and it was long ago refuted by experience. Now I want to point out that the concept of political all-inclusiveness, as we are discussing it here, has nothing to do with the question of non-exclusion in uniting a broad formation around a single issue as, for instance, in the antiwar movement where people of differing political views come together on one common agreed-upon aim, in this case, mass action against the war. When you speak of political all-inclusiveness, as implied in the concept of "participatory democracy," you are not talking about organizing a united front around a single issue. You're talking about the question of building a political party. And that is altogether different.

I will return later to this subject of all-inclusiveness in describing to you some of the aspects of the history of the SWP on the organizational question. But as for the New Left experience, it proves once more that organizational forms cannot be devised independently of politics. To be viable, an organization must be based on defined political objectives. Politics then determines the kind of organization that is needed, and the specific form that organization must take.

The Socialist Workers Party's structure and its organizational principles derive from the party's political outlook. We perceive an objective trend towards deepening social crisis and sharpening class conflict. That is our political point of departure. As that process continues to unfold it will make imperative a revolutionary solution of the basic social problems afflicting the peoples of this country and of the world. In anticipation of such developments in the United States, and in active preparation for those developments, we have reached a determination as to the kind of a party our movement should set out to build.

The SWP's central aim is set forth in our program of abolishing capitalism and reorganizing the United States on a socialist basis. We recognize that in this endeavor, we are up against the most powerful and ruthless ruling class in the history of the world. From that, it follows that the revolutionary party must be constructed as a cohesive and disciplined combat organization. That is why the Socialist Workers Party has sought to base itself on the tested and proven Leninist rules of organization. These can be summed up in the concept of democratic centralism. Defined in a broad generalization, democratic centralism constitutes an interrelated process of democracy in deciding party policy, and centralized action in carrying it out.

While we're stating the basic aspects, let us turn to a second generalization that follows, concerning attacks on democratic centralism. Such attacks stem primarily from false definitions of democracy. Despite the claims of windbags, democracy does not imply endless talk; nor is it a license for undisciplined organizational conduct, as factional hooligans will try to tell you. Democracy is basically a method of reaching a decision. It requires that first all viewpoints be heard in debating a question, then a vote is taken, and then the time has come for action. That is where centralism takes over. Centralism is based on the democratic principle of majority rule. It stems from the concept of making a decision by majority vote. Basically, it is a method of exercising the right of the majority to see that its decision is carried out.

Under democratic centralist procedures, after a decision has been made in a dispute, those in the minority are bound by the party decision reached by majority vote. All party members are required to help carry out the party decision. Authority becomes centralized through the official party bodies, and the party confronts the outside world with a single policy, that of the majority. A dissident minority is not asked to give up its views. It must simply await an appropriate time to raise the disputed issues inside the party again. And comrades in a minority are given an unqualified opportunity to serve the party in every respect in the party's daily life.

In determining the interplay of democracy and centralism on a working basis, the party, as a whole, has rights based on the principle of majority rule. The party as a whole determines the form and limits of internal discussion in the organization at each juncture. This is done in order to ensure that party work is not disrupted and disorganized. Official bodies in the party may organize a discussion at any time, and in whatever form the situation requires.

Let me give you a recent example. Ordinarily, at a party convention, when a vote is taken on basic resolutions, that settles the line and ends the discussion for the next immediate period. But, at the party convention in 1969 the convention authorized a continuation of internal discussion of the political resolution. There were two reasons for this. First, it was not a conjunctural political resolution; it was a draft that undertook to review quite a substantial past period of the history of political evolution in this country, and to project our long-range perspectives for the period ahead. Second, just as we were nearing the convention, there was a sudden -- you could almost say qualitative -- advance in the development of the Chicano struggle and the women's liberation movement. Now in the resolution these questions had not had adequate attention commensurate with the obvious needs of the changing situation, so the convention authorized the continuation of a literary discussion on the political resolution for a few months afterwards. This was held, and then a final decision was made on the general line of the resolution at a plenum of the National Committee in the spring of 1970. That terminated the discussion for the present time. Now I might say that this is not ordinary, but it is a good way to illustrate that there is nothing rigid, mechanical, or dogmatic about the attempts of the party to work out in living experience the interplay between democracy and centralism, between discussion and action.

I mentioned that it was a literary discussion. That meant that the subject was open for comment by all party members in an internal discussion bulletin. But the party did not provide for oral discussion in the party branches. In this way party work proceeded on the basis of the general convention decisions, and those who had further thoughts to contribute on these particular aspects of the political resolution could do so in writing. Comrades then had a chance to think about these questions before the plenum where we made the final decision.

I will cite a second, very basic example concerning discussion that is explicitly provided in the constitution of the party. Prior to a national convention, which by direction of the constitution must be held at least every two years, a national discussion must be organized within the party. That discussion takes place in both literary form, in the bulletin, and in oral form, in discussion in the party branches, during the preconvention discussion period, which is set for two to four months, depending on the given situation. And during that preconvention discussion, any member of the party can raise any question for

consideration by the party. In this way, we attain another aspect of the equilibrium between democracy and centralism, discussion and action. People aren't allowed to talk all the time, no matter what season it is, just because they've got a lot of oil in the joints of their jaws; but at the same time, provision is made at reasonable frequency to enable anyone in the party to bring up any question in order to be sure we're keeping things on an even keel.

To see how democratic centralism is operative, we should look at it from another aspect as well. It requires political cohesiveness inside the party, which derives from relative political homogeneity in the party ranks. There is homogeneity in the sense of fundamental agreement with the party's program and principles; and this, in turn, lays the foundation for the application of discipline, which has to be a voluntary matter in the party; and discipline, in turn, permits united action with a common purpose. Within the framework of basic political homogeneity, the party provides ample room for political differences. There is a free and democratic internal atmosphere prevalent in the party. Full opportunity exists for the expression of dissident views. The right to organize tendencies and factions around one or another viewpoint inside the party is safeguarded. On this basis, given the necessary sense of party loyalty, comrades can argue out questions on the basis of principles, and they are able to act from the standpoint of principles. Through this approach, to the degree that it is attained, political differences can be resolved democratically, the party can maintain its internal stability, its policies can be carried out in a centralized manner, and it is able to correct mistakes it may make without disruption or internal convulsion.

Now, I have undertaken to state rather abstractly the essentials of the Leninist concept, but democratic centralism does not wholly lend itself to schematic definition. In the last analysis, it has to be worked out in life. The interplay between democracy in deciding policy and centralism in carrying it out comes to equilibrium inside a living movement in the course of the tests and experiences through which it passes. This consideration requires that we now pass from an abstract delineation of the Leninist concept to the SWP's development of its organizational principles as an integral part of the living history of the party. (Everything I have said up to now has been more or less a preamble to discussing the main lines of the actual historical development of our organizational principles.)

* * *

The party's first resolution on the organizational question, undertaking to

codify its principles, was adopted by the founding convention of the Socialist Workers Party in 1938. That convention culminated ten years' party building work. The effort had begun initially through the Trotskyist cadres that were expelled from the Communist Party in 1928. These cadres were reinforced during the radicalization of the 1930's through individual recruitment of worker and student militants. The first major new acquisition, in bloc, came in 1934 through the fusion of the Trotskyist organization (then known as the Communist League of America) with the American Workers Party, a body of militant young workers and students who were moving in the same basic political direction, but who had had a separate organizational form. These two movements fused in 1934 to form what was then known as the Workers Party. Then, in the spring of 1936, this fused movement entered the Socialist Party for the purpose of getting into direct contact with the Socialist Party's left wing, which was in many respects the counterpart of the radicalizing young militants that had gathered around the American Workers Party at an earlier period. This leftwing formation, now comprised of the previous leftwing SP militants and the Trotskyists who had entered the Socialist Party, was expelled from that organization in 1937. These, in brief, were the forces that came together at the beginning of 1938, constituting the founding cadres of the SWP.

The 1938 organizational resolution adopted at the founding convention had a dual purpose. One aim was to set down the party's organizational concepts in line with the revolutionary principles embodied in the program of the founding convention. The second aim was to cement the fusion with the leftwing splitoff from the Socialist Party by clarifying the Leninist views on party organization. In this respect, Leninist principles were counterposed to both Stalinist and social-democratic organizational methods.

The founding cadres of Trotskyism had their own firsthand experience with Stalinism in the process of being thrown out of the Communist Party. When the Stalin-Trotsky split developed, you did not have to declare for Trotsky as against Stalin to be thrown out. All you had to do was stand up and ask why Trotsky was thrown out in Russia and you were expelled from the Communist Party in this country. But you didn't have to do even that. If some other member of the party got thrown out on the grounds that he or she was a Trotskyist, and you took the floor to ask why he or she was thrown out, you, too, were out. Just like that. It was, to use the modern terminology -- it was instant expulsion. And this process on the part of the Stalinists epitomized the general character of Stalinist monolithism, which is the suppression of internal political dissent, the proscription

of the organization of tendencies and factions, and the imposition of rigid political conformity by a dictatorial official regime. The resolution adopted in 1938 carefully provided that there be no traces of these procedures in our party.

Our other experience was with the bureaucratic hacks in the Socialist Party. They pretended to practice political all-inclusiveness. (Now we have come back to that question from a slightly different point of view. This was the original critter.) As the Socialist Party formally projected it, all who considered themselves socialists should get together in one party, with equal rights for all. It turned out, however, that some inside the party were more equal than others. At a convention of the Socialist Party, they would allow discussion from the floor, members could come as delegates from their branches and get up and pop off as they wished. It might seem that everything was decided democratically. But it was not so at all. All the time the self-perpetuating leadership of top bureaucratic hacks were making horse trades and deals with one another behind the scenes to settle policy, to decide who would remain in office, who would get this post, who would get that post. It was a fake and a fraud. You have had a somewhat comparable experience in the antiwar movement today, with the types who oppose the holding of representative national antiwar conferences to decide policy democratically and instead want to have decisions made behind the scenes in starchamber commissions by self-appointed leaders. I don't think I need to name any names, you all know the types.

There was another aspect to the operation of so-called political all-inclusiveness in the social democratic form. The bureaucratic regime in the organization hounded the revolutionary militants, suppressed their rights, and took every opportunity to throw them out of the organization. And, at the same time, this regime allowed the rightwing scoundrels in the organization to commit the worst political crimes in the name of the party. The 1938 resolution of the SWP made sure that there would be no repetition of those procedures with respect to our party. The resolution specifically rejected so-called political all-inclusiveness as the sham and fraud that it was. It declared the SWP inclusive only in the sense that the party accepts into its ranks those who accept its program; admission is denied to those who reject its program -- politics first, politics only, being the criteria.

Now experience with the social democratic proclivities to make a mockery of the party led to another provision in the 1938 SWP document. That document stipulates that membership in the Socialist Workers Party implies the obligation

of 100% loyalty to the organization. No free lancers, no peddlers of their own quack political medicine are allowed to speak in the name of the SWP. And this demand of loyalty stressed in the resolution also means rejection from party ranks of all agents of hostile groups, and intolerance of divided loyalties. I want to emphasize this point, because in the next talk we're going to discuss an internal conflict within the SWP where this question was very much in the fore.

As a reflex against Stalinist and social democratic bureaucratism, the 1938 resolution put heavy emphasis on the rights of the party rank and file. It stressed the value to the party of a self-acting and critical-minded membership. The fundamental rights of the membership were explicitly stated. These included freedom of discussion, debate and criticism inside the party, in accordance with procedures decided by the party. Another explicit right is that of being democratically represented at policy-making assemblies of the party. Still another is the right of the membership to have a final and decisive vote in determining the program, policies and leadership of the party.

The resolution also gave attention to the problem of windbags, who seem to turn up in all seasons and from all quarters. The party, it stressed, is not a discussion club. It does not debate endlessly without reaching a binding decision that leads to action. The rights of individual members do not contravene the rights of the party as a whole. Party democracy means not only the protection of the rights of a minority, but also protection of the rule of the majority. Convention decisions are binding on all party members without exception, and any member who violates the decisions of the convention, the resolution asserted, or who attempts to revive discussion of decided questions without the formal authorization of the party, forfeits his or her right to membership in the organization.

The resolution also dealt with the futility of trying to carry out revolutionary activity with a heterogeneous, undisciplined, untrained organization. It stressed the need for centralized direction of party work, and affirmed this as a prerequisite for sustained and disciplined political action. Distinct powers were accorded to the party's National Committee. These include: authority to act in the name of the party between conventions, and to supervise, coordinate and direct all the party's activities.

On the leadership question, a lesson was drawn from an old mistake once made by the IWW, which at one time required that a leader holding an official post in the IWW had to return to the ranks after

a single term in office. A leader could not be reelected. This practice was conceived as a safeguard against bureaucratism. What it led to, in fact, was the disruption of stability and continuity in leadership. The resolution pointed out that sustained party activity presupposes continuity of leadership. This can be attained on a sound basis through cadres that have come up through the ranks because of demonstrated leadership ability; that is, in the eyes of the rank and file they have earned the votes to be elected as leaders. And their election to leadership affords a preliminary test of their endurance and trustworthiness. From this evolves a process of selection, through which leadership ability and continuity can be maintained. Continuity in leadership, it was stressed, does not signify a self-perpetuating leadership. The warrant for leadership trust must be continuously proven before the party ranks.

To illustrate this point, I will cite an experience back in 1942, in the very early stages of the dispute that developed with the Morrow-Goldman faction inside the party. Morrow came into the convention -- he was a member of the National Committee, the editor of the paper, a leader of some stature in the party at that time -- he came up with the proposition that members of the National Committee could be removed from the National Committee only for cause. The party reacted strongly against this idea and any notion of the kind was explicitly ruled out when the concepts for the functioning of the nominating commission were formally established by the 1944 party convention. Leaders are to remain on the National Committee only for cause. That basic concept is carried out to a much more precise degree in the present, very important function of selection of the National Committee by the party convention. Our practice is to have a nominating commission, selected from among the convention delegates by the delegates. It is a representative commission, representative of the party as a whole, sort of a microcosm of the convention itself. This commission considers the list of the members of the outgoing National Committee, and it also has before it nominations to the Committee which have been submitted by various delegates or delegations. It examines the

lists, discusses the names, and decides what kind of recommendations to make to the convention. These recommendations are then presented to the convention delegates who make the final decision by a democratic vote. Usually one of the very first actions of the nominating commission is to sit down and examine the names on the outgoing National Committee. They don't say, "Has somebody a reason why such-and-such a person can't stay on the National Committee?" That's not the way they start at all. For each name the question asked is, "Is there anybody who would like to discuss the question of this comrade remaining on the Committee before we make a decision?" If somebody wants to discuss it, then that name is held over. The commission first decides which of the outgoing members of the National Committee everybody seems to feel ought to remain, and then takes up the others. There's no self-perpetuation in the leadership at all.

Now, let's look at it from another point of view. A periodic appraisal is necessary in order to make readjustments, from time to time, in the leadership, and make it possible for the party to carry forward in the best possible way. This procedure safeguards the party against the development of dry rot in its official bodies; helps to keep it alive, dynamic, in touch with the times. Conflicts between the older and younger elements in the party are minimized by this carefully conducted process of adjustment and readjustment in the structure of the leadership. And bureaucratic remoteness from the real life of the party among the leaders is prevented.

These, as I have sought to review here, are some basic forms of the application of democratic centralism as they evolved out of the first ten years of the experience of the Trotskyist movement. They laid a foundation for carrying the movement forward in its work on the basis of Leninist principles. They represent both an application of the basic organizational concepts of Lenin and a rejection of the experience in the Communist Party and the Socialist Party, and set the stage for the Trotskyist party in this country to begin its own experience, which contains some very rich lessons. Tomorrow we will begin a review of the subsequent history of disputes within the SWP on the question of organizational principles.

LECTURE 2

Like all social formations, a revolutionary party is subject to external influences and internal change. Alien class pressures bear down upon the party in a hostile political environment. At times this generates dissident political moods in the ranks of the organization that lead to a challenge of some aspect of the party's program. When that happens, the relationship between organization and politics becomes very plain. The internal discussion that ensues reveals that a rift has developed in the party's political homogeneity. And from that, an attack usually follows on the principle of majority rule, taking the form of demands for special minority rights. Political dissidents tend to develop an urge to violate democratic centralism and to debase the party norms. As a consequence, organizational differences become a corollary of a sharp political dispute inside the party.

In the history of the Socialist Workers Party, such demands for special minority rights have fallen into three general categories: 1.) minority demands that it be allowed to carry out its own line publicly; 2.) minority attempts to veto the implementation of majority policy; 3.) opposition to majority control over minority conduct inside the party. Each of these general types of organizational demands by dissident minorities have arisen at different stages in the party's history.

The first came up in 1939-40 during an internal party crisis following the signing of the Stalin-Hitler pact in 1939, on the eve of Germany's invasion of Poland and the opening of the second World War. A petty bourgeois wing within the party, led by Burnham, Shachtman, and Abern capitulated in that situation to the pressures of bourgeois public opinion, particularly the scandalization of the Soviet Union that was being pressed vigorously by the bourgeois propaganda media after the signing of the Stalin-Hitler pact. What was so deadly serious about the internal party conflict was that this petty bourgeois opposition renounced the Trotskyist position of unconditional defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack. That was a mighty serious political matter as World War II was beginning. This shift in political line led the minority to demand that it be allowed to publish its own public organ in which it would promulgate its line to the world at large. A debate on the organization question ensued that lasted up to the convention in April, 1940 where the petty bourgeois opposition split from the party. The basic material dealing with the organizational side of this dispute in 1939 and 1940 is very well covered in a book by Comrade James P.

Cannon entitled The Struggle for a Proletarian Party. I recommend it for your careful attention and study.

In the aftermath of this fight at the convention in 1940 the party adopted a supplement to the 1938 resolution on the party's organizational principles. The new document reaffirmed the general line of the 1938 draft that we discussed yesterday. It also brought the party's statement of organizational principles up to date in the light of the experience with the Burnham-Shachtman-Abern opposition of 1939-40.

To give you the highlights of the additions made in the 1940 resolution, let me begin as follows. During the pre-convention discussion at that time, the Burnhamites within the petty bourgeois opposition echoed the social democratic line that Stalinism is the natural end product of Bolshevism. The 1940 resolution explicitly and categorically rejected this false thesis. It emphasized, rather, that the Socialist Workers Party models its organizational forms and methods after those of the Russian Bolsheviks, simply adapting them to concrete political conditions within this country.

On a second matter, the minority demands for an independent public organ were rejected by the convention and the resolution dealt with this matter as well. Such an organ, it was pointed out, would expound a program in opposition to that of the party majority. That would mean, in effect, freeing the minority from party control over its public activities, and such a step would represent a definitive abandonment of the Leninist principles of democratic centralism. The party press, the resolution stated, is the central medium for expression of the party line. Control of the press must be lodged directly in the hands of the National Committee of the party, as elected by a party convention. The editors of the press must loyally interpret the party line in its pages. It was pointed out that the party may decide to open the press to a public discussion on a given occasion, but that is a matter for the party to decide and not something that a minority can demand as a right.

Let me give you an example of such a public discussion. This occurred quite recently -- in the period prior to the 1969 convention. You will recall that the draft resolution setting forth a transitional program for the Black liberation struggle was published in The Militant, not just in an internal discussion bulletin. And discussion in the columns of The Militant was invited. There were two reasons for this decision. First, so far as the party itself was concerned, it was

clear that there was an essentially homogeneous view within the party on the subject matter of the resolution. Clearly there would be no fierce debate within the party. In such a discussion it was not a question of the paper projecting two different programs from within the party. Secondly, inviting public discussion of this program would help the party communicate its thinking on the developing stages of the Black liberation struggle to organizations in the Black movement. It would help to get them familiar with our ideas and improve our relations with them. It would enhance our influence among Black organizations and our potential for winning recruits to the party from among them. On these two bases, it was considered both advisable and possible that there be a public discussion of the question on that particular occasion. Now, I stress that this procedure is a matter for the party to decide. It is not a matter where a minority can purport to exercise any right it may fancy it has to a public discussion of disputed questions in the party. And in no case, the resolution made crystal clear, can the discussion be made one in which diametrically opposite programs emanate publicly from within the party.

Another category taken up in the 1940 resolution was the question of clique formations. The resolution specifically condemned the Abern clique, which was a part of the 1939-40 petty bourgeois opposition. The clique was characterized in the resolution as an unprincipled combination based on personal loyalties rather than political agreement. It was described as seeking rewards within the party for those whose primary loyalty was to the clique.

In our final session we will return to the question of cliques in a different context, in a later internal development within the party, but before I pass to the next point, I want to call to your attention two items that are worth study here. There is a specific section dealing with the Abern clique in Comrade Cannon's book, The Struggle for a Proletarian Party. If you want to learn about cliques, what kind of an animal a clique is, how it operates, what its feeding habits are, what its forms of entertainment are, and other basic zoological information you will get a good idea from this section of Comrade Cannon's book. There is a second valuable item that appeared in the 1940 fight. It was an article by Joe Hansen, entitled "The Abern Clique." It has not yet been republished, but it is in the files of the party's internal material. It is kind of a John Gunther type account, you know, "Inside the Abern Clique," and you will find it very informative and educational in a number of ways.

Coming now to other aspects of the 1940 resolution, note was taken of the emphasis in the 1938 resolution on the democratic aspects of democratic centralism, particularly the stress on the right of party membership as against arrogant leaders with a bureaucratic bent. Recall our discussion of that point yesterday. The resolution of 1940 affirmed that the democratic rights of the party membership are faithfully preserved, just as they were delineated in the previous resolution, and that the widest latitude of discussion is given to all dissenting groups and individuals in the party. Attention was also called, in the 1940 document, to the conditions of the pending entry of the United States into World War II, which confronted us with some very specific and difficult problems at that particular juncture in history. These circumstances made it necessary for the party to tighten up its activities. The organizational structure needed to be more firmly centralized. A maximum of membership activity was to be required, and there had to be a strict adherence to party discipline. Cognizance was taken of the way the petty bourgeois opposition had proven to be a transmission belt for alien class influence in the 1939-40 experience, and with the country heading toward war, this circumstance called for strong emphasis on efforts to proletarianize the party. A series of steps were outlined in the resolution calculated to root the party more deeply in the trade union and the working class neighborhoods. Major efforts were called for to recruit worker militants into the party as we headed toward World War II.

One of the objective premises for this emphasis in the 1940 resolution was the contrasting composition of the majority and the minority in the fight over unconditional defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack, which had been a central issue in the political conflict. The majority was a little over 50% and the minority was something over 40% -- it was a hairline split, a deep one. In composition, the overwhelming bulk of the members of the majority were workers, with a few students and intellectuals going along with them. The overwhelming bulk of the minority were petty bourgeois in composition -- primarily students and intellectuals of one or another type, with a random worker here and there who had gone along with them. So to all practical intents and purposes the split was essentially a parting of the two diverse categories of class composition within the party as we went into World War II.

The conduct of the petty bourgeois opposition took the form of a disdain for the party, a sneering, contemptuous attitude. I remember when Comrade Cannon was reporting on the organization question

at the 1940 convention, where the split came. He was trying to talk, and he was being heckled by the minority. And he turned to them -- they had segregated themselves over in one side of the convention hall -- and he said, "If the giggling caucus will just bear with me for this one last speech, I will be forever grateful." This characterized the whole attitude of the minority.

Perhaps I can define that minority attitude further by indicating some of the things that were explicitly stated in the 1940 resolution. It said that to cleanse the party from the attitudes manifested by the minority; the party must be rid of any discussion club atmosphere inside its ranks. There must not be an irresponsible attitude toward assignments given to comrades by the party. Cynical and smart aleck disrespect for the party had to be rooted out. In proscribing these attitudes within the party, the resolution was also describing exactly what the conduct of the petty bourgeois opposition had become.

The resolution called for efforts to bring more workers into leading party committees, and a provision was inserted proscribing student youth from going directly onto the National Committee of the party. It was stipulated that students must first serve an apprenticeship in the workers movement. That provision was later changed, as I will describe in our session tomorrow. I want to note it for your attention here to make clear to you one of the conjunctural steps that was taken by the party under the objective conditions of the country's pending entry into World War II, in the face of the experience we had had with this petty bourgeois opposition.

Some other general prerequisites for membership on the National Committee were also laid down in the resolution. These were designed to deal with attitudes that were manifested by National Committee members who were leaders of the petty bourgeois opposition.

Just let me cite one example. A very serious problem had arisen which made it necessary for some of the leading members on the National Committee out in the field to be called into the center for a special consultation. One of them was Ray Dunne, who had more than a few things to do in Minneapolis. Another was Al Goldman, who was busy in Chicago. I was the third one -- I was an organizer for the Teamsters at that time, and happened to be in the middle of a strike in Dallas, Texas. But we all dropped everything and went to New York for a special meeting with the Political Committee. And when we got there we had to sit and cool our heels for two hours while James Burnham finished a little bridge session that his wife had arranged for that afternoon. Well, this describes

an awful lot. I just happened to be visiting New York another time when there was a social, and I saw another one of them drop by on the evening of the party social dressed in tails and white tie. He was on his way to some swank affair, but he came by to slum for a few minutes with the comrades on his way. So the resolution had a little something to say about its attitude toward what was expected of National Committee members.

It stated that candidates for the National Committee had to be ready to subordinate their personal life to the needs of the party. That stands. They must be prepared to devote full time to the party, upon the demand of the National Committee. I remember that some of these leaders of that 1939-1940 opposition had their own angles or vocations, and the party was a kind of an avocation. They made adequate livings at their vocations. But if there was a financial crisis in the party, the first thing these jokers would think of was to hold up the party payroll. The party payroll was composed of a few comrades receiving just enough to get by, and these petty bourgeois types displayed an absolutely cavalier attitude toward them. The party full-timers were people giving everything they've got to the party on a day-by-day basis, asking no more than that the party be humane enough to help them keep alive while they do their work. So this stipulation in the 1940 resolution not only expected National Committee members to be sensitive to the needs of the comrades who are working full time for the party for peanuts, but required that they be prepared to do it themselves, if the party asked it of them. If they weren't prepared to do that, they weren't caliber enough to be considered a member of the National Committee of the party, they didn't quite measure up to some of the minimum expectations the party has the right to ask of its leaders.

A third provision of the resolution was that candidates for the National Committee must have demonstrated firmness of character and unconditional loyalty to the party. This harks back to the discussion we were having about the importance of leadership in the party and the stakes that the party puts in the leadership under a given set of combat conditions.

Now with these additions, which cover the main lines of change in the 1940 resolution as compared with 1938, the party's statement of its organizational principles remained unchanged until the 1950's.

We had some internal struggles in that period. There was the fight in the mid-1940's with the Goldman-Morrow opposition. There was the case of the Johnsonites who went out very shortly after the Korean war opened in the midst

of the developing witch hunt. The Johnsonites were a state capitalist tendency. In my opinion they just had so many differences with the party that they didn't see any percentage in remaining in a party that was going to be subject to all the harassments and persecutions of the witch hunt, and under conditions of war. So they walked out. They set a timetable and did it in a very well-organized way.

But in the cases of the Johnsonites and the Goldman-Morrow minority, nothing evolved that required any additions to the party's organizational principles. So I will pass over these and some other internal disputes that developed, because in going back over the history of internal struggles in the party, I am dealing only with those that resulted in written additions and modifications to the party's basic statement of its organizational principles.

The next of these struggles occurred in the 1950's. In 1952 a major internal party conflict that had been gestating for a period of about five years erupted in full blast. It stemmed from the reactionary political atmosphere of the time. Years of cold war and witch hunting had brought on a military intervention in Korea by US imperialists and the rise of McCarthyism here at home. And this adverse objective situation began to have repercussions inside the ranks of the SWP. A minority faction developed under the leadership of Bert Cochran. Politically, it was characterized by loss of faith in the working class. The minority saw no chance of building a revolutionary party strong enough to smash the bureaucratic obstacles within the labor movement and lead the masses to the conquest of power. And when I speak of the labor movement here, I'm referring to everything from the bureaucracies in the unions in the United States to the bureaucratic gang in Moscow. The Cochranites turned to opportunist adaptation, to the concept of self-reform of the bureaucracies. They began to look upon the party's program as an obstacle to their changed political course.

Organizationally, the Cochran faction sought to exercise veto powers within the official party bodies. They focused particularly on the Political Committee of the party. The Political Committee is an executive sub-body of the National Committee, elected by the National Committee. Just as the National Committee looks to the administering of party affairs between party conventions, the Political Committee looks to the administering of party affairs between plenums of the National Committee. This was the body in which the Cochranites put their focus.

In the Political Committee they would demand that a poll, a referendum vote be

taken of the National Committee when a decision was made in the Political Committee with which they had strong objection. Their intent was to impose dual leadership authority, and thereby obstruct the carrying out of official party policy. And this too was a direct attack on the principle of majority rule.

The dispute with the Cochranites led to adoption of a new organizational document by the May 1953 plenum of the National Committee. It reaffirmed the general line of the 1938 and 1940 resolutions, and at the same time added new provisions based on the experience with the Cochranites. In rejecting the minority demand for dual leadership authority, the 1953 resolution called attention to the authority invested in the National Committee by the party constitution. It states that the National Committee directs the party's work and decides questions of policy between conventions in accordance with the convention decisions. The National Committee appoints subordinate officers and subcommittees, including the Political Committee, and between conventions, the National Committee constitutes the central authority of the party.

The resolution also set forth the powers of the Political Committee. Between National Committee plenums, the resolution states, the Political Committee functions as the central political-administrative authority of the party, acting in the name of the National Committee. All party units and individual party members are required to comply with the directives of the Political Committee. They have the right to appeal such directives to a plenum of the National Committee, but an appeal can't be used as an interim veto of a Political Committee decision. If you allowed that, you'd be right back where you were with the Cochranites, who tried to paralyze the Political Committee with demands for referendum polls of the National Committee. The resolution made it optional with the Political Committee to decide whether or not it would poll the National Committee on a given question.

Sometimes the Political Committee might find it advisable to do so. Let me give you an example. When the 1968 presidential campaign was being prepared, and the question of recommending the presidential ticket was before the Political Committee, we wanted to have a pretty good tentative idea of the reaction of the party as a whole to the recommendations on the ticket. Since both the candidates we had in mind were very active in many important spheres of work, it required some organizational readjustments to free them for the activities of the presidential campaign. For these reasons, before it took more formal steps, the Political Committee felt it advisable

to take a consultative poll of the National Committee with its recommendations on the ticket to be proposed to the party. With the National Committee in complete agreement with the recommendation, we went on from there, and the party ratified the nomination of Halstead and Boutelle as the ticket. This is an example of how under certain circumstances it's in the best interests of the organization for the Political Committee to take such a step.

But the object of the 1953 provision was to make it clear that a PC minority can't force the PC to poll the NC as a method of putting a stop order on the carrying out of a PC decision. There is only one circumstance under which the resolution made a poll of the National Committee mandatory: a poll must be taken if any National Committee member requests the calling of a plenum. The PC is required to comply with the majority decision of the NC in such a poll. That latter provision helps to make clear how meticulously careful the party is in not throwing out of balance the interrelation between democracy and centralism, at the same time that it is paying scrupulous attention to the needs of carrying out centralized action after the party has made a decision. If the PC didn't have to take a poll of the NC under any circumstances, it is conceivable that a given PC, for whatever reasons, could tend to try to obstruct the holding of a National Committee plenum whereas, don't forget, the PC is subordinate to the NC. So this provision was put into the resolution to make crystal clear that, while nobody can be allowed to obstruct the PC in executing the duties assigned to it by the NC and by the party constitution, the PC at all times remains subordinate to the NC. If, at any time, from anywhere within the NC, there is a desire expressed for a plenum to take up some matter the PC is handling, and if a majority of the NC wants that plenum, it must be held, whether the PC likes it or not. Now, we haven't had occasion to use that provision, but it's a very good provision to have in the basic document.

Those were the essentials of the additions in the 1953 resolution. The next changes resulted from new party experiences subsequent to the Cochranite episode. These led to a recodification of the party's organizational principles in 1965, brought about by organizational reflexes to new political differences that developed inside the party. At the outset, these differences centered on the Chinese question, the Black struggle, the Cuban Revolution, and reunification of the world movement. Diverse minority groups arose, each focusing on one or another of these issues. They were led variously by Swabeck, Kirk and Kaye, Robertson, Wohlforth, and sundry others ranging in political stature from I'd say gnat size to nit size.

What was politically common to this diversity of minorities was that each put forward its own quack political remedy to overcome the long isolation from the mass movement that the party had experienced because of adverse objective conditions during the period where cold war, witch hunt and McCarthyism predominated. Each of these groupings decided that the trouble wasn't in the objective situation, but that there was something wrong inside the party. What it was, of course, was the leadership. And they came up with new proposals, and put themselves forward as candidates to emulate Moses in leading the children of the party out of the wilderness.

Well the party rejected their views. And this threw them into calamity howling. They predicted political disaster for the party, and all of them ganged up in a fight against majority rule. This time it came in the form of demands that minorities be allowed to set their own norms of conduct inside the party. Matters began coming to a head after the 1963 party convention. At that convention, all the political issues had come before the party and had been argued back and forth, with generous time allowances for minorities to make reports and summaries on each of their positions, and the party definitively rejected the quack political remedies put forward by each of these minorities. That's what had happened politically.

Just on the eve of the convention, the party leadership learned that the Robertsonite faction was distributing a secret set of documents inside the party. After the convention the PC directed the National Control Commission to investigate this report of the secret Robertsonite documents.

The National Control Commission is a body set up under the provisions of the party constitution by the party convention. It is a body of five. As the constitution stipulates, four members of the Control Commission are elected by the convention itself to serve until the next convention, and the fifth is an NC member appointed by the NC to serve in whatever particular case may be before the Control Commission at a given moment. The Control Commission has the dual functions, 1.) overlooking, safeguarding and seeing to the rights of the party membership, and 2.) overlooking, safeguarding and seeing to the good and welfare of the party as a whole.

The Control Commission was given the assignment by the PC of investigating these documents. It obtained them and they were found to constitute a declaration of war on the party. They were really something, or, as you say nowadays, something else. They set forth a perspective of first recruiting people into their faction, where they would be indoctrinated with the Robertsonite program, and then,

after sufficient boot camp training, getting them to join the party. But from the outset, they would be standing in opposition to the program of the party that they had just joined. That was one key prescription in these documents.

Another winged generalization in the Robertsonite documents was most descriptive of all. They inveighed against anybody getting any mistaken concepts of loyalty to a diseased shell, the diseased shell being the Socialist Workers Party.

Well, these documents were reported on to the PC, and the PC suspended the Robertsonite leaders from the party for disloyalty. And it also recommended that they be expelled by the NC. That was done at a plenum of the NC held in December, 1963. In the plenum debate on this question, Myra Weiss made a minority report in which she opposed the disciplinary action against the Robertsonites. She was given equal time with the majority reporter, which happened to be myself, and the whole matter was debated before the plenum.

All the minority leaders joined in this attack on majority rule that came in the form of opposition to the suspension of the Robertsonites for their disloyal conduct inside the party. Now this made it very plain that the Robertsonite caper was

only one aggravated form of a serious internal party conflict on the organization question, and the situation as a whole posed the basic question as to the kind of a party we would have. Would it remain a Leninist-type, combat formation, or would it degenerate into an all-inclusive political hodge-podge?

The position put forward by the minority meant that they were demanding special license that would assure them an opportunity to do what they pleased under any circumstance. If the party as a whole was to be stripped of the right to regulate its internal affairs, as the minority demanded, the whole democratic centralist structure of the party would be undermined. The democratic principle of majority rule would be made a mockery. Discipline in public activity would be impossible. And internally, the party would have degenerated into a jungle characterized by perpetual factional warfare. Now this was the issue that was posed point-blank to the party by this outburst of opposition from the diverse minorities to the action of the PC and the NC in disciplining the Robertsonite leaders for their disloyalty. In tomorrow's concluding session I want to go in some detail into how this question was debated, how it was handled in the 1965 resolution, and some other important matters in the 1965 resolution, bringing things up to date with the present situation.

LECTURE 3

In yesterday's session, we arrived at the point in 1963 where the leaders of the Robertsonite faction were expelled for secretly circulating anti-party documents. All of the diverse organized minorities of that time ganged up in opposition to the disciplinary action which was taken against the Robertsonites because of their disloyalty. These minorities accused the party leadership of trying to introduce Stalinist monolithism into the party. This took the form, they said, of settling political differences by suppressing organized dissent. It was alleged that discipline applies only to the public activities of party members, and that official party bodies have no right to regulate a minority's internal party activities. Loyalty to the party, they contended, is only an idea. It can't be legislated. And disciplinary action, they alleged, can be taken only on specific proof of overt acts.

In rebuttal of the minority argument, the majority pointed out that loyalty to the party is not at all an abstract idea. It is a standard of political conduct. Without loyalty, a voluntary organization like the party would be absolutely unable to maintain discipline. Only comrades who believe in the party and are loyal to it will accept discipline. No one can be compelled to be loyal to the party, but they can be thrown out of its ranks if they are not. The very first codification of the party's organizational principles in 1938 stipulated that there must be unconditional loyalty to the party. At the same time, official party bodies were empowered to take disciplinary action against violators on this count.

With or without specific proof of overt acts, the party has the right in its own self-defense to expel self-indicted factional raiders who are out to wreck the organization. What were we supposed to do, we asked, stand here and wait for proof of a specific overt act, until these jokers have honeycombed the party to the point that it would be merely a hollow shell of itself, as they allege it to be? Not at all. The majority pointed out that the charge of retrogression towards Stalinist monolithism was designed to cloud the issue. It was a fake and it was a fraud. The real question was the right of the party as a whole to deal with internal disruption. As a voluntary organization, one which people are free to join or not according to their own inclinations, the party sets limits on the right of advocacy within its ranks. You cannot be a member of the SWP and advocate support to imperialist war, nor can you advocate crossing class lines into capitalist politics, nor can you espouse racism, nor can you propagate strike-breaking, just to mention a few examples.

And, similarly, the party proscribes advocacy of wrecking expeditions inside its ranks. In general, a disciplined party must regulate the conduct of organized groups in its ranks, just as it regulated the conduct of individual members.

In the aftermath of this debate, the disciplinary actions taken against the disloyal Robertsonite minority by the National Committee were ratified by the 1965 party convention. The other minorities, however, persisted in their course as if nothing whatever had been decided. And by 1967, all of them were out of the party. This came about in one of three general ways: either through expulsion for indiscipline and disloyalty, or from splits carried out on the initiative of one or another minority itself, or by disintegration of a minority through individual dropouts from the party.

The evolution of these particular minorities that we have been discussing presents a graphic illustration of the consequences of blind factionalism. Blind factionalists start by working on individuals privately, instilling one-sided political views that warp their capacity for objective political judgement. They become prejudiced in their opinions before they have had a chance to hear an open party debate of the disputed issues. This gives rise to the development of a tightly-knit faction that tends to become a party within the party. It has an inner logic in its development that impels it towards shaping its own program and establishing its own discipline, as against the program and discipline of the party. As a result, factionalism means war inside the party, and it always entails the danger of a split.

A relatively homogeneous party, where there is essential agreement on all sides as to the basic aspects of the party's program and principles, can resolve episodic differences without resorting to factionalism. This applies even where there are serious political disagreements over a given question. To justify the formation of a faction, the differences should be considered so fundamental that a showdown fight is necessary for control of the party. Ordinarily, a minority should do no more than form an ideological tendency. In this way, the adherents of a minority position have the mechanism through which to argue collectively for a change in the given policy under dispute. Their views should be presented openly before the whole party in a responsible and a disciplined way. While temporary groupings may arise in the party as a result of conjunctural political differences, such groupings should not be artificially perpetuated after the given

question in dispute has been decided.

An artificially perpetuated grouping risks degenerating into an unprincipled clique. Such a grouping develops a tendency to act as a mutual advancement society inside the party: you rub my back, I'll rub yours; you push to enhance my prestige and position in the party, and I will reciprocate for you. This leads in turn to the substitution of relationships based on personal friendship for relationships based on political comradeship -- and there is a very important difference between the two. Comradeship implies political collaboration despite personal relations. The important thing is not whether you like this or that individual member of the party. The important thing is whether you both agree on the program, the aims, the perspectives, the principles of the party. That is the only way you can hold a party together, even if it is politically homogeneous. Personal relations, however, are often transient. Friendship is a relationship that by its very nature is limited because it must be based on personal compatibility. You can't build a party on the basis of friendship. When a formation begins to degenerate into a clique, substituting friendship for comradeship, then it begins to put clique interests before those of the party. Its members more and more lose their sense of political objectivity in every respect. This leads to a gradual alienation of the clique members from the party, and the resultant loss of political bearings causes them to drift away from the party in time. That, by and large, has been the ultimate result of the development of clique formations in the history of the organization. They are a thing to be avoided like the plague. There's nothing principled and nothing justifiable about a clique from any point of view.

In 1965, the party adopted a new organizational resolution. That resolution affirmed and recodified the basic line of the 1938, 1940, and 1953 resolutions that we have previously discussed. New provisions were added rejecting the minority demand for dual disciplinary standards inside the party. A dissenting minority has the right to organize itself, the resolution states -- this has always been the policy of our party. But its conduct is subject to regulation by official party bodies. These bodies must determine correct procedure both in public activity and in internal party affairs on the basis of the party's principles and its statutes. And in such matters, the resolution emphasized, the Political Committee may act on behalf of the National Committee in discharging these responsibilities of leadership, doing so under the control of the National Committee.

Taking cognizance of the present day objective conditions, and the specific

stage of party development in 1965, the document also made some changes from the organizational provisions of an earlier time. Circumstances of the split in 1940 and the country's imminent entry into World War II had given rise to the specific provisions in the 1940 resolution on proletarianization. Taking note of the changed specific circumstances, the 1965 resolution modified the exclusive focus in the 1940 resolution on penetrating the workers movement, while retaining the perspective set forth in the 1940 resolution of building a proletarian revolutionary party.

Our basic political orientation in 1940 stemmed from the perspective that it was entirely possible for proletarian revolution in advanced capitalist countries to erupt out of World War II, just as the Bolshevik Revolution had erupted out of World War I. History was to show, however, that the processes of world revolution were to take a different course. The objective premises were present for proletarian revolution in advanced countries, but due to the crisis of leadership in the working class, the possibilities were aborted and the course of world revolution did not take that immediate road. Instead, the revolutionary process showed its next emphasis in the area of the colonial and semi-colonial countries. The unfolding objective process from 1945 on brought about the specific set of objective conditions that are fundamental to the radicalization that is developing and gaining momentum in our country today.

Now, everything that is most essential to the changed objective conditions, as we perceive it today, was already, at least in its broad lines, perceptible in 1965. So modifications were made in the 1965 resolution. Conjunctural passages setting forth specific steps toward proletarianization of the party, as they had been delineated in 1940, were omitted from the 1965 recodification of our organizational principles. These passages had been applicable in those earlier circumstances, but a modified approach was obviously required in today's objective conditions. Instead of the one-sided emphasis on penetration of the organized labor movement and on reaching the proletariat in the working class neighborhoods, the 1965 recodification calls for efforts to penetrate all sectors of the mass movement: labor organizations within industry; the unemployed; the movements of oppressed nationalities -- Blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans and others -- that are becoming radicalized and in which workers, by the way, predominate; college campuses and high schools, where the students are showing more and more of a tendency to turn toward socialist ideas. These were the essential sectors of the mass movement listed in the resolution. But the general concept on which this list was based

automatically implies attention to new developments that could not be specifically anticipated in 1965, for example, the women's liberation movement that is unfolding today. The overall aim of the modified codification of this perspective in the resolution was to reach out to all opponents of the capitalist status quo and seek to bring the militants into our revolutionary party.

Note is also taken in the recodified resolution of 1965 concerning the assimilation of non-workers into the party. It is stressed that non-workers must consciously break from alien class influence. Your role in the revolutionary movement is not a question of what your class origins are, but of what you do after you get here. Do you come in 100%? -- in the last analysis it's got to be that. It's got to be 100% if you're really going to be a revolutionist and identify with the class through its vanguard revolutionary party. This is a very important thing to keep carefully in mind.

Our long term perspective remains the same. The working class is as yet lagging in the process of radicalization, but before there can be a revolution, the working class must come into the action massively, with all its basic historic power. If you stop and think for a minute, there is a little touch of historic irony. At the very moment when the organized labor movement, as such, is the most laggard in the process of radicalization, the vanguard revolutionary party, that based itself on the perspective of a revolution powered by the working class and led by a revolutionary proletarian party, is gaining more and more rapid headway in extending its influence inside the presently developing radicalization.

It is through the instrumentality of the party, that the non-worker today identifies with the working class in the deepest and most complete sense. All that is required is that you be a 100 per center. You don't have to be a genius. Not everybody can be a genius. I've seen some that thought they were, though they weren't quite as smart as some other geniuses that I have seen. All you have to be is for real. That's all. Just be for real. Do the best you can, be 100% and identify with the working class through its vanguard revolutionary party, and you're on the right track in the whole new historic process of radicalization, and moving toward potential revolution.

Concerning the infusion of new blood into the leadership of the party, the 1940 resolution put primary stress on young workers who show ability through their activity in the unions. The 1965 document broadens the field of candidates for the National Committee to include young party activists who show ability through their activity in one or another

sector of the mass movement. There were two reasons for this modification. One relates to the widened areas of potential penetration into the mass movement, under the distinct forms in which the developing radicalization is unfolding today. Another relates to the special problem of transition in party leadership. That is another matter that the party has been giving very conscious attention to ever since the first recruits out of the developing youth radicalization began to come toward our movement back in the beginning of the 1960's.

To give you an example of the tempo of this development I might say in passing that there are several comrades in leading national positions in the party today who were first attracted to the party in the 1960 presidential campaign and who attended their first party convention in 1961. Here it is nine years later, and you'll observe that we've come quite a distance in carrying out this transition in leadership. We are doing it with the greatest consciousness. It is not simply a matter of recognizing that the older comrades aren't going to live forever. That isn't the only thing. Revolutions are made by the young. Not only must the revolutionary masses have a vanguard party that knows what it's doing and is able to lead them to victory, but the party must also be staffed by young people who have both the dynamism of youth and the forced draft education in all aspects of the problems of revolution, that they get through a vanguard party such as ours. We have sought consciously to make these transitions as rapidly as we could, doing it in such a way that younger comrades are more and more able to take responsibility for central leadership roles in the party. We are also doing it in such a way that older comrades, who haven't got the juice and life expectancy they once had, are able to be present more and more as advisors to help the younger comrades learn by doing.

There are two aspects of the transition towards a younger leadership that are very basic. One is that the older of the central leaders are not arbitrarily choosing who among the younger comrades should be advanced to more responsible leadership positions in the party. On the contrary, they are watching very carefully to see how the younger comrades develop in their work in the party, to facilitate giving them as many opportunities as is possible to prove themselves as leaders in the eyes of the ranks of the party. Second, the question of who will become the young leaders is determined finally by the opinion that the party ranks arrive at concerning a given individual's capacity to lead and his or her trustworthiness as a leader.

I should add, also, that the 1965 resolution dropped the 1940 provision that

student youth must serve an apprenticeship in the workers movement before being a candidate for the National Committee. As I told you yesterday, that proviso stemmed from the specific negative experiences we had with a petty bourgeois opposition in the party at that time. But this is not applicable under today's conditions. So that proviso was just simply dropped from the basic organizational document, and it is not applied.

Another change in the 1965 resolution related to the references to the Fourth International in the 1940 document. The April 1940 resolution listed the programmatic documents on which SWP doctrine is officially based, including specific reference to the documents of the Fourth International, of which the SWP had been one of the founding sections. Later in 1940, the Voorhis law was passed, which made it impossible for the party to be organizationally affiliated with an international movement. So, in December 1940, at a special party convention after the passage of the Voorhis law, the SWP disaffiliated from the Fourth International and assumed the role of being a sympathizer of the world Trotskyist movement. In the light of the anti-democratic legislation in this country, that was the only relationship we could have. Now, in view of that changed situation, the 1965 recodification of our organizational principles again modified those earlier references to the Fourth International. Instead of the previous general reference to the documents of the Fourth International, it specifically listed the Transitional Program of 1938, which was adopted at the founding congress of the Fourth International, the American Theses of 1946, which were adopted at a convention of the SWP at that time, and other programmatic documents of the Trotskyist movement.

This now takes us back to the initial point of departure in our discussion, namely, the fundamental relationship between organization and politics. Our goal is to align the United States with the world march toward socialism. From that flows our fraternal interest in the development of the world Trotskyist movement. International exchanges of political thought help us to project policies within the United States in the light of world trends. We are better able to work in consonance with a world revolutionary strategy.

In our political work, we proceed through the essential conceptions of the system of transitional demands adopted by the founding convention of the Fourth International. These stem from today's conditions and the levels of political consciousness in the broad mass. They are aimed to meet urgent social needs of the time, and are pointed in an anti-

capitalist direction. The transitional demands as a whole meld into a program leading toward one final conclusion -- the conquest of power by the working class and its allies. All our mass work has clearly defined immediate political aims. We seek everywhere in the mass movement to build left wing formations founded on a class struggle program, and through these formations, we orient toward a fight for mass leadership on the basis of the program. We can expect our efforts to be facilitated by the developing processes of mass radicalization. Class issues will come into increasingly sharp focus in contemporary society. The need for opposition to capitalist rule will become plainer and plainer to the masses. Consequently the fight over program will grow increasingly acute, and the crisis of mass leadership will become more intense. As the American Theses of 1946 predict, this process will in time open the road to a revolutionary solution of the social crisis. The showdown battles for the communist future of mankind will be fought right here in this country, and we confidently predict that the working class will show its capacity to fulfill its historic role in that showdown.

All this will be possible provided there is a combat party capable of giving revolutionary leadership. To fulfill that role, the party must be politically cohesive and organizationally disciplined. Its structure and its practices must be rooted in the concepts of democratic centralism. From the very beginning the Trotskyist movement in this country has based itself on these Leninist concepts. The party has fought off every attack on its organizational principles and has preserved its organizational character. And the task now is to take it from there, particularly through younger hands, into the next phases of party-building work.

Toward that end, I will conclude with a recapitulation of some key features of democratic centralism as they derive from Lenin's theory and practice, and as they have been made more concrete through the experiences of the SWP.

Members join the party voluntarily. Therefore, the party has the right to define the conditions for membership in its ranks. It does so in terms of its program and its organizational principles which serve the program. As a combat formation, the party must have several basic attributes. These include firmness of political line, unity in action, and discipline in all internal party affairs, with all members unconditionally loyal to the party. Such qualities make it possible to go up against the ruling class as one party, with one program. Democratic centralist norms require a free and democratic internal party atmosphere. Room must be provided for the expression of

dissident views. The right to organize tendencies and factions must be protected. All individuals and all tendencies must be enabled to contribute to the development of the party, and to the shaping of its leading cadres. Minorities are entitled to present their views in internal party discussion, at the proper time and in an appropriate manner, as determined by the party. Once a decision has been made on disputed issues by majority vote, the minority must subordinate itself in action to the majority. The minority may retain its views, but it must help carry out the majority decision.

Between conventions, authority becomes centralized. The party confronts the outside world with a single policy:

that of the majority. Both external and internal activities are regulated by the official party bodies. Indiscipline and disloyalty are treated as crimes that bring punishment -- if you don't do that, you'll never in a thousand years build a combat party. In this way, the party maintains its role as a revolutionary vanguard. Its character as a combat organization is safeguarded, unity in action is preserved, firmness of political line is assured, and the party is able to maintain its principles.

Only along this general line of organizational structure and principles can the party fulfill its historical tasks in the revolutionary struggle for socialism.

Lecture 1

Question: The party is small now. When it becomes larger, is there a way to select or nominate a National Committee, other than through a nominating commission? From what I have heard it is really difficult for the nominating commission to go over all the different people who are proposed.

Answer: Let's abstract from the question of size, and look at it from the point of view of the basic concepts. The basic concept is to provide maximum safeguards, to see that the membership of the organization makes the decisions about who are going to be the leaders, and that a leadership, once in office, cannot by virtue of its own position in office artificially perpetuate itself, and become what Trotsky once referred to as irremovable senators. That is the basic idea. In this regard, there is a very useful work written by Comrade Cannon. It is available in an internal information bulletin that was published in advance of the last convention (April 1969) under the title, "Problems of Leadership Selection and Leadership Structure." It is also available in Comrade Cannon's Letters From Prison (pp. 201-205, 209-214). It was a letter that Comrade Cannon wrote when he and many other party leaders were in prison in 1944 and the party was for the first time in a complete sense beginning to develop the nominating commission method with respect to the party convention of that year. It is well worth your while to study the whole bulletin because it takes up, step by step, several key phases in the period from 1944 up to the latter part of the 1960's in which we were grappling with various aspects of the problem of leadership selection and structure.

You will find in that article by Comrade Cannon a review of diverse methods that were used to elect a leadership in radical organizations. He mentions, among other things, how the social democratic fakery used to operate behind the scenes in the Socialist Party. He describes an earlier stage in our movement, which represented an advance from that method, in which the leadership came in openly with a slate. It was then up to the membership to decide whether or not to ratify the slate. We were uneasy with that procedure, because, while it was subject to membership ratification, the very fact that the slate was compiled by the leadership put a certain pressure on the ranks. Comrade Cannon describes how we passed from that to the process of the nominating commission.

The nominating commission method had as a corollary another very careful policy on the part of the leadership.

You will find a discussion of this in the same bulletin. I gave a report to a plenum of the National Committee of the SWP in 1962 in which we were raising for consideration the category of advisory membership on the National Committee, and I took some care to describe the attitude of the central leaders of the party towards the work of the nominating commission. The central leaders did not mess in it. I pointed out that at the prior convention the leadership of the party had, for the first time since the development of the nominating commission back in 1944, gone before the nominating commission with some recommendations. The reason was that we were grappling with a problem of transition in leadership, and the nominating commission just didn't know how to proceed -- we had to find some way of breaking a logjam that had developed in the National Committee itself. So the leadership went to the nominating commission, explained the problem to them, and said, "All we can recommend is that you do the best you can at this time, and before the next convention, we'll try to have this logjam broken and you can operate in a better way." And that is the way it worked out. We developed the category of advisory membership, and that broke the logjam in the National Committee and opened the way to bringing some younger comrades in to the National Committee. It is worth your while to read that article too. I cite these articles again, from a basic point of view, that the ranks make the decision about leadership. While leaders must lead in everything, including the question of leadership, there is a big difference between trying, in an objective way, to give assistance to the ranks in resolving a leadership problem, and throwing weight around inhibiting the ranks from exercising their judgement, or obstructing the exercise of judgement in the ranks.

Now as to the size of the party affecting the selection of the leadership. As an organization grows, as the magnitude of its activities, the scope of its functions, the forms of organization develop, it seems to me that you will find repeated, at the regional levels, in a microcosm at first, a sort of reproduction of the general problem of picking a national leadership. Instead of a national leadership evolving directly out of branch leaderships or from comrades who are given specialized tasks which they discharge well in one or another department of the party's activity, there will be a certain preliminary testing of the leadership capacity of comrades on the basis of how they evolve in their leadership role on a regional basis. The forms will change, but the essence will remain the same. Now, I would not hazard any kind of a priori formula about the exact manner in which leadership selection would

be carried through as an organization grows. I will just stress these points: 1.) Whatever the specific form of operation, the ranks must decide the question of leadership. The leadership must not push the ranks around, maneuver with them, and perpetuate itself against the will of the ranks; 2.) I am confident that as the comrades study this question in more and more detail, it will be solved.

Question: How does democratic centralism apply to the international Trotskyist movement?

Answer: During the conflict with the Cochran faction that involved also a split in the International that took place in 1953, Comrade Cannon made a speech on this question to a meeting of the majority caucus in the party at that time, in which you will find some very rich material to give you food for thought. The speech is found in the educational bulletin entitled "Defending the Revolutionary Party and Its Perspectives." Comrade Cannon pointed out that there is a pronounced difference between the application of democratic centralism within a national party and within the International. It is not a question of whether or not there is validity to democratic centralism with respect to an International. It is a question of how far the International has progressed in its development.

The International, as such, is not as wholly definable as a completely crystallized organization, as is a party in a given country. As Comrade Cannon pointed out, if international leaders are too hasty in throwing their weight around with regard to the work in national sections, this can have the effect of obstructing the development of a leadership within a national section, rather than helping along the process. In the last analysis an International has to be based before everything else on the presence of strong national sections in the various countries. Strong national sections have to evolve on the basis of their own living experiences in seeking to put the basic Trotskyist program into practice in their particular country. In the course of that process, they develop basic cadres, they begin to develop and train a leadership. And an equilibrium evolves between membership and leadership that gives an internal stability to the organization. That can't be accomplished from anywhere except in that country.

Moreover, in respect to international relations there's a difference between problems in one or another country, and problems in one or another branch within a country. Between party branches there can be nuances, or even

significant differences with regard to how to apply a given policy in a given locality, but branch policy still falls within the framework of the same national framework. Branches are an integral part of a cohesive national political operation. But different countries are at different stages of development. There are three broad categories of countries in the world: some are advanced capitalist countries, some are now workers states, and some are colonial countries. Even within these basic areas, there are different conditions within each country. Therefore, there has to be a certain degree of fundamental party building that must take place within those countries on the basis of what can be developed within the country itself. In that process an international leadership can only help. So from this point of view, the relation of an international leadership to national sections of the International is altogether different from the relation of a national leadership to the branches of an organization within a country.

Question: Would you go into the problems of leadership selection during a period of extreme reaction, for example if the party were to go underground, and it was impossible to convene the party ranks on a national scale to oversee the selection of leadership.

Answer: That's what you call a loaded question. But I am going to yield a little to the temptation to answer it. First of all, just let me make this point in passing. While under certain circumstances it may be necessary for a revolutionary party to go underground, don't ever do it voluntarily. That is another one of the stupidities of these New Left geniuses. If a party is driven underground, if it has no alternative, it does not change its basic concepts. It just does the best it can in the light of the given situation. And even if a movement is underground, there can be various degrees of being underground. Sometimes, it might not mean much more than the fact that you cannot easily operate publicly without getting picked off by the political police. In a more severe case, it might necessitate extreme care in functioning even in an underground way, because of the dangers. But whatever the circumstance, the party tries to apply its basic concepts as best it can. If the party is forced underground -- Lenin set the example as well as anybody ever did -- well, you try to have an underground convention. You try to maintain all the basic forms of operation.

Let me add a second point. The combat situation that is involved in a revolutionary struggle against capitalism is one that always involves diverse dangers

in one or another form, at one or another stage. This simply emphasizes how very important the leadership question is. It underlines how vital it is that a party has leaders who have been schooled and tested in the life of the party, who genuinely have the support of the party ranks, who know what they are doing, who are dedicated to the party.

Sometimes it seems a little abstract to talk about what a leader's basic attitude should be toward the party. It is not abstract at all, because there is an awful lot riding on it. It is said that there is a certain honor that goes with leadership, but let me tell you this, that when you take on any kind of leadership role in a revolutionary party, then you have taken on a responsibility that adds considerable dimension to what is rightfully expected of you. A leader cannot wear two coats. You cannot wear one coat as a leader, then put on another and become a private citizen and do whatever you damn please! Anybody who does that is not yet a mature leader. And, in every respect, the vicissitudes of combat in a revolutionary struggle are such that at all junctures the most careful attention must be given to the problem of leadership selection. And, in that, no one is to be trusted more than the rank and file of an educated revolutionary organization. So long as you proceed on the basis that to be a leader in the party you have to get the votes, that means that that vote is going to be for real, and the party is going to come out pretty good on the question of leaders. If a mistake is made here and there in selection, it can always be corrected. In the history of the party there has been more than one occasion in which a comrade has been elected to the Committee and dropped later.

It is a matter of the most extreme importance that the party have, at all times, leaders who have earned the confidence of the rank and file, leaders in whom the rank and file can justly place their trust. If you have that, then you can ride out a rough period. We had an example in the early 1940s when a considerable section of the top leadership of the party was convicted under the Smith Act. When the Supreme Court refused to hear our appeal in the fall of 1943, we all had to go to the pokey. This took a big slice right off the top of the leadership, and tested the party's ability to make up for the temporary losses. But comrades who were part of the broad leadership team, including a number of comrades who had previously played a secondary role in the leadership, came forward, stepped in, filled the gap when several of the top leaders went to prison, and the party went right ahead.

This points out another aspect about the leadership question. The idea of

a leadership by stars is not worth a damn. A star is all right in Hollywood. But be mighty careful about them from the point of view of a revolutionary movement. Talented people, yes! Grandstanders, no! You need a team. And a team in the most complete sense, is a composite of comrades playing one and another leading role, at one and another level in the general leadership structure of the party, with one or another degree of experience, but all of whom try to act together in the best interest of the party, and who at all times are trying to help younger promising comrades develop as leaders. So there is a central primary leadership, a developing body of secondary leaders, and promising candidates for secondary leaders developing in the ranks. In that way problems such as we experienced in 1943-1944 do not create a crisis at all.

There is another example, taken from the 1934 Teamsters' strike in Minneapolis, showing how this works in a larger organization. One day the military raided the strike headquarters and picked up several of the top leaders. The governor had a little scheme cooked up. They grabbed off several of the top leaders and threw them in the military stockade. Then the governor sent some of his stoogies out to contact some of the strikers. These minor labor fakers from the AFL contacted some of the strikers, saying the governor wanted to meet a rank and file committee. Well he got a rank and file committee! Kelly Postal, Ray Rainbolt, and Jack Maloney. Now, the governor liked to make like he was a working stiff; he pulled out a pack of Yankee Girl chewing tobacco and handed it to them -- when he got it back there was no more tobacco. Then, he said, "I want to negotiate with you." They said, "Fine governor, we'll negotiate, there are just some things we want first: 1.) Let our leaders out of jail. 2.) Give us back our headquarters, and 3.) take your goddamned troops off the street. Then we'll negotiate." That's as far as the governor ever got.

This was the secondary strike leadership. But it was a secondary strike leadership that had been developed with the same consciousness that we build leadership formations in the revolutionary party. The central leaders of that strike were conscious Trotskyist revolutionists, men like Ray Dunne and Carl Skogland who played a key role in building the party itself. Here was an example in a mass struggle of how decisive the leadership question is. The whole strike could have been lost at a stroke if there had not been a strong secondary leadership. Just think of how many times the capitalists have won battles because the leadership was limited to a bunch of stars. It did not matter how intelligent they were, they were fatheaded in this sense -- they imagined they were entitled to some kind of corner on the leadership, and did not

want to help others develop as leaders for fear of developing rivals. The capitalist class can then step in and lop this leadership off in a fight, leave the movement leaderless, and it can go right down the drain.

Lecture 2

Question: What was the social composition of the Cochran faction?

Answer: In the case of the Cochran faction, you had a situation in which a key component was made up of trade unionists. When you think of this eventuality, one is reminded of Trotsky's pre-occupation with the question of relations between trade unionists and the party. Time and again he pointed out that the very nature of a trade union, an organization that fights for immediate demands in terms of the contemporary situation, has within itself the fundamental prerequisites for generating reformist attitudes. A revolutionist in the unions could get a little disoriented were it not for the relationship of the party to the individual member. Let me call your attention to the document, "Communism and Syndicalism," contained in the pamphlet Trotsky on the Trade Unions, published by Pathfinder Press. "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay," is another document by Trotsky. Also look up the trade union resolution adopted by the party at the 1954 convention, "Class Struggle Policy in the Unions." (SWP Internal Bulletin, Vol. XVI, No. 2).

This resolution was adopted in 1954, the year following the Cochranite split, which came to its culmination in November, 1953. It came just as the objective turn was beginning with respect to McCarthyism. The army-McCarthy hearings were unfolding, and there were a few signs of gestation toward action in the unions. This resolution really sought to recapitulate the trade union situation across the whole 14-year period from the adoption of a basic resolution on the trade union question at the 1940 convention. It tried to examine several aspects of the dynamic of the relationship between the party and the party man or woman in the trade unions. The latter part of that resolution calls attention to the fact that at the given juncture, there were a number of things that the trade union comrades might want to say in the unions, but weren't in a position to say them right then and there without risking victimization for no good reason. Therefore the party would speak for them, through articles by party members in The Militant.

If you read that resolution, you'll find that it's put expressly in terms of the party talking to and for its trade union members at that juncture. It also delineates the overwhelming importance of

the general relationship between the party and the party member in the union. The party is the means of helping the party member in the mass movement, where reformist impulses are generating, to be a revolutionist.

Now in the case of the Cochranite faction, what happened was that they lost faith in the party. In the Cochran faction there was an unprincipled combination. One section of this faction, manifested by Clarke, held the line espoused by Pablo in the International, the theory of the self-reform of the Soviet bureaucracy, and its bureaucratic counterparts in the workers' states in Eastern Europe. The trade union wing, manifested particularly by Cochran, was developing a line of adaptation to the expectation of self-reform of the American trade union bureaucracy. Each assumed the self-reform of bureaucracy, and each had lost faith in the possibility of building a revolutionary combat party, as ours is, that would in due course be able to challenge these bureaucrats. This is what they had in common, and they made an unprincipled bloc, although they were looking in two different directions. One gang was becoming a little soft on Stalinism. The other was becoming soft on the trade union bureaucrats.

When you have a minority that is coming in with a line that is calculated to change some important aspect of the party program, you'll often find that they try to smuggle it in, they talk around the question and toe-dance around the question, and never say explicitly what they mean. But if you watch and you listen, you'll find somebody in the ranks of that kind of a movement who will sooner or later blurt out in an unvarnished way the exact direction in which they're going. And this happened in the Cochran fight. At one key juncture in a debate between the majority and the minority in the Cochran fight, one of the Cochranites blurted out that Reuther was to the left of the workers. He put in one sentence the distilled essence of what had happened to the mentality of this trade union wing of the Cochran faction.

This example helps to show that disaffection can come from a section of workers in the movement as well as from a petty bourgeois section within the movement. In each case, what is basic is the pressure of alien class influences in the environment that they are in, and the loss of their sea anchor of continued belief in the program of the party, faith in the future of the party, and a loyal attitude toward the party.

Question: Could you say some more about the role played by Pablo in the 1952 internal struggle within our party?

Answer: Well, that's a subject in itself, and we really can't get into it in any real detail without getting clear afield from the subject before us. I would simply point out that out of this struggle, something else arose on the organization side. While it is not yet codified in the basic doctrine of the movement, in the sense that we've sought to codify some of our principles in our organizational resolutions, something very clear was brought out about the relationship between an international movement and the sections and about relations within the leadership of an international movement.

The essence of Pablo's policy was an expectation that World War III was going to break out momentarily. And the moment the war broke out, revolution was going to explode, and this war-revolution crisis would compel the bureaucracies in the workers' states to self-reform and adjust on a life and death basis to this changed situation. Therefore it was important for the Trotskyist movement to get into these organizations forthwith and be there to give leadership, step to the fore, and take the control when the process began to happen. That was his essential line. We disagreed with it, and I think history showed we were right.

On the organization side, Pablo's impatience to put over his line caused him to engage in some organizational measures that are absolutely incompatible with democratic centralism. First I should explain the structure of the International: there are the sections of the International. The world congress of the International is the equivalent of a convention of the party; the congress elects an International Executive Committee, which is the equivalent of the National Committee of the party; the IEC elects a Secretariat, which is the equivalent of the Political Committee in the party; and then the Secretariat has a bureau which is more or less the counterpart of the Administrative Committee of the Political Committee in our party. On this basis Pablo started to lay down the following lines of procedure. Anybody in the bureau who disagreed with him was bound in the next body on on the basis of majority rule. Suppose there are three on the bureau and one of them agrees with Pablo and the other disagrees. According to Pablo, the one that disagrees has got to obey majority rule of the bureau in the next body, the Secretariat. Then, if he gets a majority in the Secretariat on this basis, they've got to go, as a bloc, to the IEC, and then theoretically the IEC has to go to the whole movement as a bloc. Well that's a vulgarization of democratic centralism.

There was another practice of Pablo's that was in violation of democratic centralism, in its essence, and obstructive,

devastatingly obstructive to the building of an International. We were talking yesterday about the importance of every section of the International evolving into an organization that has forged its own cadres, developed its own leadership, and is able to work in objective collaboration with an international movement. An international movement can't by appointment make leaders out of them. When a majority in a given party was against Pablo's line, he set out to maneuver behind the backs of the leadership and the majority of the party to create a faction against them. He gave the faction aid and comfort in the International. Now you can't build a world movement that way. That is not the way democratic centralism operates.

So in these respects on the international sphere, at least on the organization side, which is all I care to comment on at the moment, some very important lessons were learned in that experience about the problem of building a world movement, and about the problem of relationships between leadership and membership, which in this case takes the form of a relationship between leading international bodies and national sections of the movement.

Question: What happened to the Shachtmanite structure after the 1940 split?

Answer: They started on the basis that they were going to continue democratic centralism. But it's worthwhile to look at it politically first.

The Burnham-Shachtman-Abern opposition was an unprincipled political combination. They subordinated important political differences within the combination to the desire for knitting themselves together in a common faction for purposes of overturning the program and regime of the party. That's the essence. In this instance the debate itself showed that Burnham had never come all the way to Trotskyism. Among other things he had never come to accept the dialectical method. There's a wonderful article by Trotsky that you'll find in In Defense of Marxism, where he takes this question up. Burnham was evolving very rapidly to the right, and he was already then anti-Soviet, period. Shachtman was straddling. He found it uncomfortable to defend the Soviet Union, to go out on the hustings in this country and say he defended the Soviet Union against imperialist attack, when Stalin had just signed a pact with Hitler.

Shachtman, however, was willing to make a small reservation: in the event of an actual invasion of the Soviet Union by imperialist forces, then he said he would be forced to defend it. Burnham, however, overrode that. Shachtman's

primary concern was to get loose from the democratic centralist control of the party, so he knuckled under to Burnham. Abern, on the other hand, who was a leader of a clique, thought all the time that the whole thing was about the organization question. He didn't pay too much attention to the Russian question. This guy was a congenital cliquist, and saw a first class chance to get some licks in. That was his motivation. So they made their split.

Well they started out saying that they were going to show how things could be done. They evolved their third camp posture, and said they were going to continue the basic Leninist concepts of democratic centralism and so on. But they had scarcely gotten out of the party when Burnham walked away. He went all the way over to the right, and the next thing you know, he was writing a book called The Managerial Revolution. He wound up in McCarthy's stable back in the early 1950s. Shachtman played footsie with the possibility of getting some kind of support against us in the International, and tried a little unity caper toward us, around 1947. But it took no effort at all to show that the whole thing was a trick and a hoax, that he had not a serious thought toward the party.

Shachtman evolved in a social-democratic direction. He went on to join the Socialist Party and become one of the leading right wing social democrats. Shachtman had one small misfortune. He was born to be a lawyer, he really was. If he was working well, he had many talents. If he was working with somebody in whom he had confidence and respect as a leader, and would work under that leadership, he could do some very wonderful things. But put him out on his own, and he couldn't lead and organize the demand for icewater in hell! It was one of these cases where a person that could have been very valuable up to a given point got a little too big for his britches and wound up a nothing, politically. So they started with all the pretensions that they were going to go ahead and show us how to build a party in this country, and the whole thing collapsed. It collapsed primarily for the reason that the politics of the whole course they took was fundamentally defective.

Lecture 3

Question: Can you explain on an organization level how a loyal minority should conduct itself.

Answer: Let me give you an example from party history of what I always considered a thoroughly outstanding and serious minority in the party. It arose in a dispute in the latter part of the 1940s, over the nature of the states in Eastern

Europe. With the exception of Yugoslavia, these states had been taken over essentially by a military bureaucratic process due to the presence of the Red Army. The question was posed: what is the nature of these states? A minority developed in the party that took the view that they were in essence workers' states. They said that these states couldn't be called "degenerated workers' states," in the sense that the Soviet Union became a degenerated workers' state after Stalinism developed. They arrived at the conclusion they could best be characterized terminologically as "deformed workers' states." That is, they didn't come into being like a healthy infant, as the Bolshevik revolution did, with all its limbs and natural faculties intact, and then degenerate later. They were born with a deformity, because of the presence of Stalinism in the situation. That was the essence of the position taken by the minority.

The party did not agree with this, at first. As a matter of fact, there was considerable reluctance in the party to really face the question. But this minority thought it was important.

The minority included comrades like Joe Hansen, Tom Kerry, and Bert Cochran. They organized an ideological tendency. They were experienced hands. They did not set up a faction. They knew that while it is sometimes necessary to set up a faction, a faction is a dangerous thing, in and of itself. A faction is a lethal weapon, which has its own logic. A given leadership can set up a faction to serve a particular aim, but, as Engels said in the introduction to The Dialectics of Nature, when you set controlled forces in motion according to a plan, you also set in motion uncontrolled forces with the result that there is often a wide disproportion between aims and results. The whole implication of setting up a faction is to attack the program and regime of the party. You organize a faction, and I'll make book that from the very first, you'll pick up everybody who's got a gripe or a grievance in the party. It's instinctively sensed that a faction is aimed against the existing regime and there may be a gripe or a grievance against the regime from one or another quarter.

A leader can organize a faction, only to find out in the end that the faction tends to take control of the leader. Shachtman learned that to his great surprise in the 1939-40 fight. At the outset in that fight, Shachtman thought he was the big rainmaker. But lo and behold, he found himself a captive, and he was treated rather cynically. There's a story about a conference that the Shachtmanite faction held in Cleveland a few weeks before the split. They had finished their labors of the day at this hotel where they

were staying, and they had all retired. Burnham, a cynical s.o.b. if I ever met one -- he was just the kind of character who would do a thing like this -- had one of his cronies run upstairs to tell Shachtman and Abern and the others that a message had just come from Trotsky. So they came dashing down into the lobby dressed in their robes, and he sat there and sneered at them: "You -- independent thinkers!" Well, you can see Shachtman was no longer quite in control of his faction.

Now in the case of this difference in the latter 1940s, what the comrades did was to collaborate in discussing their views among themselves. Through a process of collective thinking, they arrived at a generally accepted concept among themselves as to what the party line should be about the definition of the nature of the buffer states in East Europe. Then, in a most responsible way, they awaited the first opportunity with the opening of an internal party discussion, to present their views in writing and at the appropriate moment, to argue for their views in discussion. And they were eventually able to convince a majority of the party that they were essentially right.

So you see, it's a very big mistake to think that you've got to organize for war in the party because you've got a difference of opinion. In the last analysis, you can't scare anybody in this kind of a party. If there were people in this party who would be scared because somebody threatened them, they wouldn't be here in the first place, because the capitalist class is threatening you all the time. You've got to reason with people. If you assume a hostile, combative attitude and try to slug your way through, you're more liable to make people angry than to convince them. But if you proceed in a reasoned way, then different criteria apply. Everybody gets a chance to hear what you have to say, and everybody gets a chance to hear what the rest of the party has to say, and they can think it out. If you proceed on the basis of reason, if you try in a responsible, loyal, and disciplined way, using the power of ideas and the force of argument to convince people, if you are right and the party is wrong, then the party will rectify itself.

It is also necessary to have a little patience. I'll spend a moment on this question first from the point of view of a leader. The duty of a leader is to try to be a little bit ahead of the ranks in grasping the feeling of what is happening in the objective process, and thinking out the most effective ways for the party to act in the given situation. It is also a duty of a leader to be patient. If a leader gets an idea for something that the party ought to do, that leader

shouldn't rush out and start knocking heads if everybody doesn't jump right up and say, "Good! That's the best idea that's ever come down the pike! Let's get at it!" A leader has got to have enough patience, enough understanding, enough of the pedagogic sense to first explain the idea, give the comrades a chance to think about it, and give the organization time to bring its consciousness abreast of the situation that the given leader seeks to call to the party's attention.

Similarly, with any person who has a dissident view, whether a leader or simply a rank and filer. On the one hand, of course all party members have the right to present their views. On the other hand, it is necessary to have a little patience with the party. A time for discussion arises, and one with a dissident view presents his or her thoughts. The discussion ends and a vote is taken. Suppose the dissident view does not prevail. The loyal thing to do then is to say, "Well, it didn't work this time. But I still think it's important, and so at the next occasion for discussion, I will raise the matter again. In the meantime, I'll think about it, I'll watch what happens." Now something else operates here, in between discussion periods. Political life is always moving. Something can happen between one discussion and the next. The person with a dissident view as against the majority opinion in the party can find that either the evolution of political reality between one party discussion and the next can give new impetus to the dissident view, or it can convince the comrade with the dissident opinion that he or she was wrong. That's always possible too, you know.

The object of this procedure is always the good and welfare of the party. That, and nothing else! Always as a loyal member of the party, see yourself in relation to the party. Never look at the party in relation to yourself. The question is, what can I do -- whatever are my abilities, talents, energies, and capacities -- to contribute to the cause in which I believe, and to which the party is dedicated? Never ask, what can the party do to advance my personal career, or magnify my ego? Always see yourself in relation to the party, never the party in relation to yourself. Those are some of the guidelines that I would suggest as to how a loyal minority ought to conduct itself.

Question: Would you comment on the concepts and problems of building a team leadership, especially in a period of expansion like we're going through right now.

Answer: First, let me refer you to some background material that's worth looking at on this question. One is a speech made by Comrade Cannon at the November 1953 plenum of the SWP where the Cochranites

were expelled for disloyalty. It is entitled "Factional Struggle and Party Leadership" and it appears in the Education for Socialists bulletin Defending the Revolutionary Party and its Perspectives. Another is a bulletin put out prior to the 1969 party convention under the title of "Problems of Leadership Selection and Leadership Structure." Both of these are well worth reading.

In Comrade Cannon's speech advancing the concept of a team leadership, he cited some examples of the antithesis, as a contrast. One that is worth noting is the idea of leadership by a star. There's more than one defect in the concept of leadership by a star. First of all, of course, it doesn't build a team; building of a team, in the last analysis, is the development of the widest possible leadership. In that way you've got as much hitting power as you can have in the cumulative leadership structure of the party, from the central leaders on down to the various levels of the organization. There's another defect in the leadership of a star. An organizer should be able to have everybody active. If there's somebody in a branch who isn't contributing to the party in the way they could, it means that the given organizer, who is responsible for that person's activities, is not wholly doing his or her job. One of the criteria for an organizer is to get production, activity, contributions from each member of the party. Now a leader who plays the role of a star is generally able to activate people only to the extent that they can be used in a specific activity where the leader is out scintillating. If you can't be used for this star's particular caper at the given moment, he or she doesn't know what to do with you.

A second contrast that Comrade Cannon cited was the notion of having cliquists as leaders. I think enough has already been said here about cliques, so I don't need to elaborate on that.

Another contrast he cites is the leadership of a cult. He took the example of Johnson, who was the leader of the state capitalist tendency in the American Trotskyist movement. But we also had others. There were two or three varieties of cultists in the organized minorities of the late 1950s and early 1960s. One was the present leader of the Workers World-YAWF grouping, Sam Marcy. Sometimes you get the feeling he has a messianic complex. In any event, he leads by the method of a cult. A cult is like a religion -- "there is only one true god -- me!!! If you don't believe it, then you are an infidel. And if you try to do something about it, there's the door." That's the attitude of the cult leader. We had another cultist out in Milwaukee, James Boulton. In addition to being a cult leader, he was a poet, and a machine

worker whose throw was off. But he supported the Swabeck tendency in the dispute of the 1960s on the Chinese question. After he left the party, he joined up with the cult leader Marcy. The irresistible force and the immovable object came together in the same organization, and we soon found out that the immovable object wasn't immovable. Some of Marcy's henchmen went up to Milwaukee and physically threw Boulton out of his own headquarters. That settled that question.

Now let's come back to the idea of a team leadership. The object of team leadership is to build the kind of a leadership formation that is so linked to the ranks of the party, and so representative of the party because of the standing that the collective leaders have as a team, that the leaders can carry the movement through the stresses and strains, the ups and downs, the twists and turns that go with the total process of revolutionary activity, without throwing the movement into convulsions. There's a rapport, a liaison, a real affinity between the leadership and the ranks. That must be one quality of a team.

Within the team itself, there has to be objectivity, mutual respect, a sense of mutual responsibility, a common understanding of the role of leadership in the party, a very extensive area of agreement on the essentials of the program, the strategy, and the tactics of the party, and a capacity to sort out the relative weight of things.

A member of a branch executive committee, working within the framework of a team concept, should keep two things in mind. One is that if he or she has a difference of opinion, with a majority of the branch executive committee, then under the principles of democratic centralism, that individual has the right to go to the branch with a minority report on the question. But a second thing that same individual should keep in mind is that a leader should not act impetuously.

I mentioned already that a leader can't wear two coats, one in the capacity of a leader, and the other in the capacity of an individual. If you take on a leadership responsibility, and if you're going to be a leader worth a tinker's dam, you automatically have to give up part of your rights as an individual. You can't have it both ways. You can't be a foot-loose, fancy-free rank and filer and a leader at the same time. It just won't work. If you've taken any kind of leading position, you've got to think, not only about your own opinion, but also about the organization. You must have a sense of proportion. A comrade with a dissident view in the executive committee has got to say to himself or herself, "Well, I still think I'm right, but is this

question of such a magnitude that I ought to go in to the branch meeting against the rest of the executive committee, and make a minority report, and have a big argument in the branch?" Maybe you should, maybe you shouldn't. I'm not saying one or the other. But think about it, be conscious of it, and remember that a leader, at whatever level, in whatever function, is responsible not only for the correct programmatic strategic and tactical line of the party, or the given unit of the party in its work, but also for the equilibrium of the party, or of that party unit. It's a damn poor stick of a leader who is always keeping the organization in a state of turmoil by constantly raising objections and minority views over small questions. If you do that, you will also discredit yourself in the eyes of the ranks. It will get to be like that old fable about the kid who called wolf. If you quibble over every little question that comes up, and then one day a serious question comes up that you want to raise, and you will have made such a nuisance of yourself that nobody will pay any attention to you.

So a team leadership must be grounded in a firm relation between the leadership and the unit that is led, on the basis of confidence in and respect for the leading unit by the comrades in the ranks. There must be a relationship of mutual respect and recognition of the responsibilities of leadership among the comrades working in the leadership team. And, the individual members of that team must have a sense of proportion about going to the party with differences of opinion that may develop within the team.

Now, just one final point on that that has to do with leadership. I spoke earlier about the danger of an organized minority artificially perpetuating itself as an organized formation inside the party after the given issue has been voted on and settled. Such a minority runs the risk of degenerating into a clique. This applies also to the problem of leaders functioning with respect to a team concept in leadership. The situation that is most conducive to building a team is when each leader has the understanding and capacity to stand in an undifferentiated relationship with the other members of the leadership, and with all members of the party. You have no special relation with any other particular leader, or any particular member or group of members inside the party.

If a difference of opinion arises, and a dispute develops, then it may be necessary temporarily to have some differentiated organizational associations within the leadership. It may be necessary for one grouping to join together collectively in thinking out the points of view that it might want to express as against the points of view of another

grouping. But as soon as that issue is settled, then the organized formation should be dissolved. If a leader tries artificially to perpetuate a grouping within the party, that can develop into cliquism.

Question: If factions are so dangerous, shouldn't the party outlaw factions in its constitution? Also, does a minority tendency have the automatic right to proportional representation in the leadership?

Answer: Let's take up the question about factions first.

There was one juncture in the history of the Bolshevik Party where they did suppress the right of factions. It was at the most extreme point in an exceedingly dangerous civil war, where they were confronted by massive imperialist intervention. In those circumstances, for that given conjuncture, under the exigencies of the struggle of that moment, Lenin and Trotsky lent themselves to proscribing factions temporarily -- but only temporarily, and only under these circumstances. I won't attempt here to pass judgement on that decision because it is a question that requires much thought and explanation. I should add, however, that there has since been much consideration in the revolutionary movement as to whether that decision was justified, even under those extreme circumstances, because it helped to give some simulacrum of a political justification to the Stalinists for making it a standard policy later, for strictly bureaucratic reasons.

The essence of Leninism includes the right to organize factions and tendencies. Now, as I have tried to point out here, it is best if comrades are mature enough and understanding enough to handle a difference of opinion through the organization of an ideological tendency. That entails the minimum danger of generating convulsive internal conditions, which are always implicit in the formation of a faction. But it would be wrong to suppress the right of organizing a faction, because the political differences may be so deep that a faction is necessary.

The question can also be looked at from this point of view. There is always a danger of split when a faction develops. But splits are also necessary at times. In addition to the molecular process of individual recruitment, a party is also built through a combined process of unifications and splits. Oftentimes splits accompany unifications.

Let me give you one example from the history of our movement. In the spring of 1936, when we were getting ready to enter the Socialist Party, we had a minority in the party headed by Hugo Oehler, who was a sectarian. Oehler was dead set

against the entry into the SP. He made a principle out of the idea that the party had to be exactly as it was, with its name as it was then, the Workers Party, which couldn't be changed. He organized a faction, a heated factional struggle ensued, and a split took place. Oehler organized his faction because he felt that the course the party was proposing to take would lead to the end of the Trotskyist movement. He thought he had to try and save as much of the party as he could, and take the leadership of the party himself. So, simultaneous with our entry into the SP in 1936, we had the split of the sectarians led by Oehler. But if we had proscribed the right of factions, what would have happened? Nothing would have changed politically. These sectarians would have retained the attitude they had, they would have pursued the course they pursued, only in a different way, one which could have disrupted the entire entry tactic. But with the right of organization of factions inside the party, we had the mechanism to deal with these sectarians, and we were able to resolve the question in the best way for the party.

When a revolutionary party functions in the hostile environment of capitalist society, there are many pressures that generate dissidence in the ranks. From time to time the party goes through processes of purge. In the course of a fight, you more deeply assimilate those who have the capacity to identify with the revolutionary movement, and the party tends to throw off other elements who have not proven to be assimilable. The organization of internal conflict is an important vehicle in this regard.

It is a matter of the most extreme importance, to a revolutionary combat party, and it is basic to democratic centralist concepts, that the right of organized dissent be protected within the party. While it is true that a faction tends to develop its own program and its own discipline, and that it implies war on the party, and it implies a split, if the party is not able to handle itself despite that, it means that something is wrong with the party leadership. If you can't handle it, don't outlaw factions, don't outlaw tendencies, but change the leadership. Get a leadership that knows what it is doing.

Now, on the question of proportional representation. There are two aspects to this question. First, as Lenin taught, it is in the best interests of the majority leadership of the party to have representatives of minority tendencies within

the leadership. They reflect a certain component of one or another magnitude, within the ranks of the party. By having representatives of a minority tendency within the leadership, it is possible for the leadership as a whole to keep more in touch with the climate in the party. It can proceed in the most informed, careful and responsible way with regard to divergences of view that may exist within the party, and the impact this has on the good and welfare of the party as a whole. From that point of view, a leadership that knows its Leninism will always be sensitive and attentive to giving minorities representation in the leadership.

That's one aspect of this question. There is also another. The minority has to be loyal to the party. Here I'll give you another example. At the 1963 convention of the SWP, Wohlforth and Robertson were both leaders of minority factions within the party. The nominating commission brought in a recommendation to the convention that they not be included on the incoming National Committee. This was debated before the convention, and the convention voted in its overwhelming majority that they should not be. Why? Because their loyalty to the party was in question. If we had made a mechanical provision that a minority is automatically entitled to proportional representation in the leading bodies of the party, we could get into some binds that are contrary to the interests of the party.

The best way to put it is to say that we generally give loyal minorities representation on the leading bodies of the party. This need not necessarily be a strictly proportional representation, however. Take the example of the developing split with the petty bourgeois opposition of 1939-1940. The majority was not much over 50%. The party was split almost right down the middle. So, at the 1939 party convention, when the National Committee elected the Political Committee for the next period, it deliberately weighted it with a majority in excess of the actual majority percentage within the party as a whole. The reason was to prevent a situation in which the representatives of the party minority could get an accidental majority at a given meeting of the PC. If we had elected a PC only narrowly divided between the majority and the minority, suppose that a member of the majority was sick, and another was out on tour or on an assignment someplace. A minority might accidentally become a temporary majority and try to take advantage of that situation. What a ludicrous thing that would be.

SWP National Committee Plenum Resolution on the Organizational Principles of the Party, May 1953

Note: the following resolution was passed by the May 1953 plenum of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party. It includes previous SWP resolutions passed in 1938 and 1940. These resolutions are superseded by the resolution "The Organizational Character of the Socialist Workers Party," passed at the 21st National Convention of the Socialist Workers Party held in September 1965.

I

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

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

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

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

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

Central Committee, having the power to act promptly and effectively in the name of the party and to supervise, coordinate and direct all its activities without exception, the very idea of a revolutionary party is a meaningless jest.

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

"The Responsibilities of Leadership"

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

"Sustained party activity, not broken or disrupted by abrupt and disorienting changes, presupposes not only a continuity of tradition and a systematic development of party

policy, but also the continuity of leadership. It is an important sign of a serious and firmly constituted party, of a party really engaged in productive work in the class struggle, that it throws up out of its ranks cadres of more or less able leading comrades, tested for their qualities of endurance and trustworthiness, and that it thus insures a certain stability and continuity of leadership by such a cadre.

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

"Responsibilities of Membership"

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

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

"Party membership implies the obligation of one hundred per cent loyalty

to the organization, the rejection of all agents of other, hostile groups in its ranks, and intolerance of divided loyalties in general. Membership in the party necessitates a minimum of activity in the organization, as established by the proper unit, and under the direction of the party; it necessitates the fulfillment of all the tasks which the party assigns to each member. Party membership implies the obligation upon every member to contribute materially to the support of the organization in accordance with his means.

"A Party of Revolutionary Workers"

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

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

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

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

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

II

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

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

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

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

"The rise of reaction on a world scale, accompanied and produced by the disastrous course of Stalinism in the

working class movement, has catapulted all centrist groups and parties (Love-stoneites, Socialist Party, London Bureau) away from Bolshevism and in the direction of social democracy. In whole or in part, all of these groups attempt to identify Bolshevism with Stalinism. Without exception these groups are all in a state of collapse and passing over to the side of the class enemy.

"Petty Bourgeoisie Transmits Skepticism"

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

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

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

"REVOLUTIONARY CENTRALISM"

"To overthrow the most powerful capitalist ruling class in the world, the

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

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

"THE PRESS"

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

"Control of Public Discussion"

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

"The petty-bourgeois opposition in our party demonstrates its hostility to Bolshevik organization by its demand that the minority be granted the right to

transform the press into a discussion organ for diametrically opposite programs. By that method it would take the control of the press out of the hands of the National Committee and subordinate it to any temporary, anarchistic combination which can make itself heard at the moment.

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

"LEADERSHIP"

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

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

"The party leadership must, from time to time, be infused with new blood, primarily from its proletarian sections. Workers who show promise and ability through activity in the union movement and its strike struggle should be elevated to the leading committees of the party in order to establish a more direct connection between the leading committee and the workers' movement, and in order to train the worker-Bolshevik for the task of party direction itself.

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

"PROLETARIANIZE THE PARTY"

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

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

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

"Steps to Proletarianize the Party"

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

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

"2. Those members of the party who are not workers shall be assigned to work in labor organizations, in workers' neighborhoods and with the worker-frac-

tions of the party -- to assist them and learn from them. All unemployed members must belong to and be active in organizations of the unemployed.

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

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

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

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

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

"Organizing Real Campaigns"

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

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

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

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

III

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

As provided by the party constitution, the National Committee directs all the work of the party, decides all questions of policy in accord with the decisions of the national convention, appoints subordinate officers and sub-committees, including the Political Committee,

and in general constitutes, between national conventions, the functioning central authority of the party.

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

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

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

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

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

APPENDIX V: INTERNATIONALISM AND THE SWP, by James P. Cannon, May 1953

We have heard that the Cochranites are claiming in the party that they have the support of what they call "the international movement." Some comrades have asked, "What about that?" Now as Tom said, we are internationalists from away back. We started our movement twenty-five years ago under the banner of internationalism. The thing that brought us to Trotsky, and got us thrown out of the Communist party in the Comintern, was our belief in Trotsky's program of international revolution against the Stalinist theory of "socialism in one country."

Our very first impulse, when we found ourselves out on the street in 1928, was to begin searching for international allies with whom we could collaborate. We couldn't find many of them, because the Opposition had been completely smashed in the Soviet Union; Trotsky himself was in exile in Alma Ata; and in America, as far as we knew for sure, we were about the only representatives on the international field of the banner of the exiled Trotsky.

But eventually we established contacts with some German and some French groups; and in the spring of 1929 Trotsky was deported from the Soviet Union to Constantinople. We wrote to him there as soon as we heard about it, received an answer from him, and, in cooperation with Trotsky, began to tie together the first threads of the new -- and what eventually became the Fourth -- International. On the record, I believe the American Trotskyists can be described, above all others, as internationalists -- to take a phrase from Comrade Hansen -- through and through.

The question of the attitude of the international movement toward us is an important one -- with this understanding: that we are a part of the international movement, despite the fact that we have no formal affiliation, and we are going to have something to say about what the international movement decides on the American question, and every other. We don't consider ourselves an American branch office of an international business firm that receives orders from the boss. That's not us. That's what we got in the Comintern. That's what we wouldn't take. And that's why we got thrown out. We conceive of internationalism as international collaboration, in the process of which we get the benefit of the opinions of international comrades, and they get the benefit of ours; and by comradely discussion and collaboration we work out, if possible, a common line.

Now it isn't possible that the international movement supports the minority in this fight, any more than it is possible that it supports the majority; because the international movement, as we understand it -- that is the membership in all corners of the world -- hasn't yet heard about the fight; is only just beginning now to get the first bulletins; and cannot possibly have decided the question. The thing narrows down to the claim -- if what we have heard is correct -- that the International Secretariat, which consists of a few people in Paris, supports the minority.

If that's so, we know nothing about it. We haven't been told that. And we don't like the

the very suggestion that the IS is taking a position on the American question behind the backs of the official leadership. The very suggestion that it is possible casts an insult upon the IS, upon its responsibility and even upon its integrity. Because it is not possible to function as an international organization without proceeding through the official elected leadership in each and every party. As I said, we know nothing of any such decision there. They have never even intimated anything of the sort to us.

In the eight years since the international organization was reconstituted, with headquarters in Paris, after the war, they have never once intimated any serious conflict or any lack of confidence in the American party and its leadership. And that has been the case ever since 1929, when the new international took its first "embryonic" -- to use the Cochranites' term -- form.

Ever since 1929, when the international leadership was a man named Trotsky in Constantinople, and half of his troops in the whole world were those we had organized in the United States -- the International has been, in the essence of the matter, not just a mechanical combination of different parties and groups. There has been an axis in it, an axis of leadership. And in the eleven years from 1929 to 1940, that axis was the collaboration of Trotsky and the American Trotskyist leadership.

That's the essence of the matter. Trotsky made no secret of it. We were his firmest base of support. We weren't by any means "hand-raisers," as Burnham said in "The War and Bureaucratic Conservatism." We had more than one disagreement with Trotsky. But in the general work he carried out, in his efforts to bring about a selection of forces, and to get rid of misfits and people who had wandered into our movement by mistake, and in his fight for a clear political line -- he always had the support of the American party.

The first World Congress of the Fourth International (there had been several pre-congresses of the International Communist League, as it was called) was being organized in 1938. Trotsky leaned so heavily on the Americans, and was so anxious to strengthen their authority in the International, that when he drew up the Transitional Program for this founding Congress, he wrote it first for the SWP. He asked us to adopt it first, and then to sponsor it at the Congress. Thus the very first programmatic document of the Fourth International appeared as the Resolution of the National Plenum of the SWP held in New York. We spoke at the World Congress as reporters on the Transitional Program.

We had gone to Mexico City, a couple of months before -- a whole delegation at Trotsky's request -- to talk over with him the contents of the program and work it out together. The points were laid down, discussed and agreed upon. Trotsky then wrote the draft and sent it to us. We called a plenum, discussed it and adopted it. That's the story of the Transitional Program -- the technical aspects of how it appeared as the resolution of the SWP.

Up to the time of Trotsky's death, and particularly after he came to Mexico, the SWP -- we

should be proud to say it -- became Trotsky's own adopted party. He was so much concerned with us and our future, and so confident that we had a great future before us, that he gave thought to all kinds of little problems of the party. As National Secretary, I had a continuous correspondence with Comrade Trotsky about practically everything that arose in the course of our work. One suggestion after another would pour out from him to us. If we disagreed, we would write back, or send delegates down to visit him. So that in the most intimate sense, the leadership of the international movement in that period was, as we called it, the Trotsky-American axis.

From 1940 -- after the death of Trotsky and the suppression of our movement in most parts of Europe by the war -- the center of the international movement, its vocal party, was in the United States -- the SWP. We no longer belonged to the Fourth International because the Voorhis law outlawed international connections. Our role, therefore, could only be advisory and consultative. But even in that capacity, we were regarded throughout the entire world as the informal representatives of Trotskyist internationalism.

Since 1945, with the close of the war, and the reestablishment of the movement in Europe and the setting up of the International Executive Committee and Secretariat there, the same relationship in essence as previously governed our collaboration with Trotsky has prevailed in the new Paris-American axis on all the big political questions. In the first period after the war, the Russian question aroused a great dispute in our ranks throughout the world. There was a big wave of Stalinophobia, which had understandable reasons. For with the end of the war, there came out the terrible stories of the Stalinist slave-labor camps and the monstrous conduct of the Stalinist armies in Eastern Europe and Eastern Germany.

These tales of horror -- which were not exaggerated but were the living truth -- created such revulsion in the ranks of the advanced workers throughout the world, that there was a big echo in our ranks, and great hesitation in our own ranks in Europe. There was a split in France over the Russian question in the immediate postwar period. Comrades said, "We can't call that any longer a workers state. That's a slave-labor state." -- and all the rest of that.

At that time, the really strong, decisive force, supporting two or three of the leading comrades in Europe, which really decided the Russian question once again in favor of defense of the Soviet Union was the SWP. As far as I know, the first really outspoken, categoric, unambiguous declaration on the question came in a speech by me, made in agreement with our party leadership, on the anniversary of the Russian Revolution, in November 1945 in New York. This speech was printed in the paper and was supported as a program by our cothinkers in Europe. It was a factor in stopping all hesitation and in clarifying, once again, the fact that we were defenders of the Soviet Union.

I did not defend the Soviet Union's slave-labor camps, or any of those horrors. I said, paraphrasing Trotsky: "We do not defend what is degenerate and reactionary. But we see, in face of all that, that the power of the nationalized economy was strong enough to prevail during the war and still stands. That's what we see, that's what we defend." That is how we defended our position on the Russian question at that critical

time.

In 1947 there was another wave of Stalinophobia, at that time especially in the most advanced circles. We began to get reports not only of what had happened in Europe, but what had happened inside the Soviet Union itself. What those monstrous, unbelievable treacherous scoundrels had done! We began to get such stories as those of Margaret Buberger, the wife of Heinz Neuman -- both of them life-time communists. He was a former leader of the German CP -- not a Trotskyist -- and had been shot by the Russians because of some political disagreement. His poor wife was thrown into a concentration camp in Russia and kept there three years. And then, when the Soviet-Nazi pact was signed and the war started, she and a carload of other veteran German communists were put into a freight train car, shipped to the border and handed over to Hitler, as a good will gesture from Stalin and his gang. And she then spent five more years in Hitler's concentration camps!

Stories like that came out, one after another -- and then began this new wave of Stalinophobia. Morrow and Goldman fell victim to it. They said: "This is too much! We can no longer defend the Soviet Union as a workers state." There were new hesitations also in Europe.

And that is when I wrote the pamphlet "American Stalinism and Anti-Stalinism" -- which these fools are now attacking in their document as some kind of evidence of Stalinophobia. But the whole thing was directed against the Stalinophobes, page after page, chapter after chapter. It was written in reply to Ruth Fischer, who had come out in Shachtman's paper denouncing us because of our position on the Soviet Union, and calling for a united front of everybody against the Stalinists. I wrote that pamphlet to show that we would unite only with genuine socialists against Stalinism -- not with red-baiters and reactionaries.

When Stuart returned from Europe shortly thereafter, I asked him, "How did they receive my pamphlet in Europe?" He replied, "When it came out in the paper, they received it as support of the line, which again strengthened the position of our international movement for the defense of the Soviet Union, with no struggle against Stalinism except on a working class basis."

Our relations with the leadership in Europe at that time were relations of closest collaboration and support. There was general agreement between us. These were unknown men in our party. Nobody had ever heard of them. We helped to publicize the individual leaders, we commended them to our party members, and helped to build up their prestige. We did this first, because, as I said, we had general agreement; and second, because we realized they needed our support. They had yet to gain authority, not only here but throughout the world. And the fact that the SWP supported them up and down the line greatly reinforced their position and helped them to do their great work.

We went so far as to soft-pedal a lot of differences we had with them -- and I will mention here tonight some of the many differences, known for the most part only in our leading circles, that we have had in the course of the last seven years.

One difference was a tendency on their part toward "Cominternism" in organizational matters -- a tendency to set up the International as a

highly centralized body, on the order of the early Comintern, which could make decisions, enforce orders and so forth, in the old Comintern fashion. We said to them all the time, "You can't do that. The International is too weak. You can't have that kind of an International under present conditions. If you try it, you will only end up in weakening your own authority and creating disruption."

The old Comintern of Lenin's time had the concept of a highly centralized international organization from the first days, but there was a reason for it then. The reason was that there had been a revolution in Russia, and the whole world movement of socialism was reacting to it. The leaders of the Russian Revolution had an absolutely decisive moral and political authority. There were Lenin and Trotsky and Zinoviev and Radek and Bukharin -- new great names that the revolutionary workers of the world were recognizing as the authentic leaders of the revolution. These were the men who set up, with the aid of a few others, the Comintern, the Third International.

They had state power in their hands. They had unlimited funds, which they poured out generously to subsidize and support the foreign parties. When there was a difference of opinion in any party, with two or three factions growing up, they could subsidize delegations to travel from any part of the world to Moscow. The differing groups could have full representation before the executive body to discuss the issues. The international leaders could get a real picture on the spot, hearing the representatives of the different tendencies themselves, before offering advice. And that's what they mainly offered in the early days -- advice, and very few orders.

Speaking of representation, I was a delegate to Moscow six times. And every time I was there, delegates from other factions in the American CP were also there. At the Sixth Congress in 1928 we had about twenty delegates from the U.S., representing all three factions, and the whole expense was paid by the Comintern.

After the degeneration of the Russian party and the emergence of Stalinism, the centralism of the Comintern -- which Trotsky and Lenin had handled like a two-edged sword, which they didn't want to swing carelessly -- became in the hands of Stalin an instrument for suppressing all independent thought throughout the movement.

Instructed by past experience, we understood the dangers for the present international movement. We believed it would be absolutely wrong to try to imitate a highly centralized international organization when we were so weak, when the ability to send delegates from different parties for common consultation was so limited, and when we could communicate only by correspondence. Under these conditions we believed it would be better for the center there to limit itself primarily to the role of ideological leader, and to leave aside organizational interference as much as possible, especially outside of Europe.

In Europe, where the parties are close at hand, it might be organized a little more tightly. But even there, we had misgivings. Comrades who were there several times had misgivings about the tendency toward organizational centralization and discipline, even as applied to the different national parties close at hand in Europe.

That's one difference we had -- a sort of running smouldering difference. We did not press our criticisms to the very end, although we had many. Such interventions as they made in this country were unfortunate. It was a double mistake that they made in the case of Morrow and in the case of Shachtman. We here have one hundred times more experience -- I don't say it in boastfulness, but that's the fact -- one hundred times more experience in dealing with faction fights and splits than they have had. Besides, we knew the people we were dealing with.

You who were in the party at the time know the story. Morrow, who had done a lot of good work in the party before, began in 1945-46 to develop Stalinophobia. I don't know how others deal with that. But I'm the kind of political doctor who says, when I find a case of Stalinophobia, that I've never seen anybody with a cure for it, and it's time to isolate and quarantine it. That disease leads straight to social patriotism and reconciliation with imperialism. That's what Stalinophobia is.

Stalinophobia led Morrow to begin to betray the SWP. He suddenly discovered that the party he used to love and admire so much was no good whatsoever. He was as much against the party record as "The Roots of the Party Crisis" is. The party was not only wrong then but had always been. Next he began sidling up to the Shachtmanites, acting disloyal and carrying information to the Shachtmanites when we were in struggle with them. He even went so far as to report to them about our Political Committee meetings in which we discussed our struggle with the Shachtmanites, telling them what we said and what we were planning.

One of our young comrades went over one evening to the Shachtmanite headquarters to buy a pamphlet or a copy of Labor Action -- and there was Morrow, sitting with a half a dozen grinning Shachtmanites and regaling them with a report of our own Political Committee meeting that he had just come from. We had a number of illustrations of that kind of disloyalty. Finally we yanked up little Felix -- what he is called, the Joan of Arc, the hero-martyr of the Cochranites -- we just yanked him up and said to him in a plenum resolution: "You've been doing so and so, which isn't right, not loyal. We censure you for that, and we warn you to cease and desist."

That's all -- just a little slap on the wrist. A few months went by, and he didn't cease and desist, and we got more evidence of treachery on his part. Finally we reported it to the party. There was no rough stuff, just a general education of the party on the facts. Then we came to the convention in 1946, the convention where we adopted the Theses on the American Revolution, against which he spoke. (I don't know whether there is any coincidence in this or not, but he spoke against it.) And when his case of discipline came up, the convention declared that in view of the fact that loyalty to the party had been violated by Morrow, that he had been warned and had not heeded the warning, he was hereby chucked out -- expelled, by the unanimous vote of the convention.

That's the way we do things in the SWP. You know, it's deceptive. This is such an easy-going party that some people who haven't been in any other party don't know what a paradise they've got. So easy-going, so democratic, so tolerant. Never bothers anybody for anything; never im-

poses any discipline. Why our National Control Commission has gone by three conventions without having anything to report. The only time the good-natured somnolence of the SWP begins to stir into action on the disciplinary front is when somebody gets disloyal. Not if he makes a mistake, not if he fiddles around, but if he begins to get disloyal and betray the confidence of the party -- then comes the surprise! All of a sudden this somnolent, tolerant party gets out the axe and comes down with it -- and off goes the offender's head!

That's what happens when you betray the confidence and the loyalty of our party. And it causes a little shock -- especially on the head that rolls! But it's a literal fact that the only time we ever expelled anybody for anything was for violating discipline, after repeated warnings not to do it. That's the only time.

Over in Paris, the IS -- which was under the pressure of the right wing of the French PCI, they were in alliance with Morrow -- the IS had no sooner seen what we had done then without waiting for our report, they adopted a resolution which, without saying so directly, amounted to a disagreement with the unanimous decision of our convention. It gave the Morrowites a new lease on life in the party. We thought: "That's not right, boys. You ought to consult us first. You ought to take into account the fact that the 1,500 people represented at our convention have some rights to be considered. If you want to be democratic, then you ought to pay some attention to what the majority thinks."

It was a very rash, precipitate action, by a small group in Paris. We just told them: "Please don't do that any more" -- and we didn't pay any attention to their intervention on Morrow's behalf. The only result of their action was to stir into new life a group of former Morrowites in San Diego. They had just about reconciled themselves to the convention decision. But on the assumption that the International was supporting their faction, they stirred into new life, and we lost the San Diego group of the SWP on that account.

Our next difference was in the case of Shachtman. We entered into negotiations for unity with Shachtman in 1947. We laid down strict conditions, which the Shachtmanites signed on the line. First, during the period of the unity negotiations neither side would attack the other. Second, neither side would admit into its ranks any member of the other side -- in other words, we weren't going to raid each other during the unity negotiations. Third, neither side would admit into its ranks anyone who had been expelled by the other side.

A little time went by, and the Shachtmanites promptly printed Ruth Fischer's letter denouncing the SWP for its attitude on Stalinism. Then they printed a letter from Weber, a deserter from our party, in which he said the SWP by its policy on Stalinism was even abetting the GPU. What did we do? We looked first at the signed agreement: "What does it say there, point one, two, three?" We checked and found that the agreement had been violated. Decision: Negotiations off -- finished. And we just put a little notice in the paper: "In view of the fact that the Shachtmanites have violated the agreement in this and that respect, negotiations are hereby discontinued -- goodbye."

That's all. It was settled by the unanimous vote of our committee. We knew exactly what we were doing. The Shachtmanites were not loyal in their unity negotiations, and we didn't propose to let them monkey with our party. We have learned how to handle these questions. It isn't

a gift from any divine power. It isn't any great genius on our part. It's just that we have had so much experience with faction fights and splits, that we know what to do with them. It becomes a trade -- just like laying bricks with Pete -- our thirty year man with a trowel.

Do you know what the comrades over in Europe did then? Germain, with the agreement of Pablo -- and again without consulting our people and even without a majority of the people there knowing it -- decided that they would be more clever than we were. Without consulting us, Germain addressed a letter to Shachtman saying that he was sorry negotiations were broken off, but hoped they would be resumed, and that he personally would stand for unity and support the unity movement in the International. It was an open invitation to Shachtman to grab hold of this rope and make more trouble for us in the party and in the international movement.

As I said, that was done without consultation with us. Comrade Stein heard about it only after the letter had been sent -- and we didn't even get a copy of the letter. I don't attribute this to any malevolence on their part, just to their inexperience. They don't know how to deal in the formalities of organization as well as they should.

Now, if Shachtman had known what the score was, he could have used this letter to advantage. But there he became a victim of his own cleverness. He thought he knew too much to be caught in another "Cannon trick." He was convinced that Cannon had put Germain up to this letter in order to inveigle Shachtman again -- but he was out of our clutches, and he was going to stay out. He disregarded the letter with a sneer. So nothing happened. No harm came. But we noted it -- all of this within the framework of our general agreement and collaboration, we noted it as an error on their part, and we let them know that that is not the right way to proceed.

Another difference arose in connection with the developments in the French party. A few months after the World Congress, where the French party had supposedly accepted the Congress decision, we suddenly heard that there was a split -- or a partial split -- in the PCI. The International Secretariat had intervened, upset the majority of the Central Committee and placed a representative of the IS as impartial chairman over a parity committee. This meant, in effect, that they had removed the elected leadership of the French party. Did you know that that really happened?

Well when we heard that, we hit the ceiling. We didn't sympathize at all politically with the French majority, which I believe was fooling around with the World Congress decisions. But we thought: "How are you going to build an International if you think you can upset an elected leadership of a national party?"

It hit me especially, because I am one of those people who, when he gets burned, like the child, always fears the fire. I had been burned by that very thing in 1925, when the Comintern by cable upset a convention majority of the Communist Party of the United States and ordered us to set up a parity National Committee. Or rather, they didn't order it, but that's what the representative of the Comintern here, a man named Gusev, said the cable meant -- that we must set up a parity National Committee (even though we had a two-to-one majority) and that he would be impartial chairman. We innocently accepted this

decision of the all-high Comintern. The two-to-one majority went into a parity commission, with Gusev as chairman in the name of the Comintern. His first action was to constitute a new Political Committee by throwing his vote to the others, thus giving the Lovestoneites a majority in the Political Committee.

We had had experience with this kind of manipulation, and I didn't like it in the French case. I was fuming, as all of our people were. But the question was: What are we going to do? We were confronted with an accomplished fact, and any attempt to intervene to straighten out an absolutely dangerous precedent in the organization procedure might help a right wing in the French party that we didn't agree with politically.

As the situation developed further, Renard, one of the French majority, appealed to me in a letter. I didn't answer him for months. I didn't see how I could write on the French question without referring to this organizational monstrosity that had been committed by the IS. I finally wrote my answer to him out of purely political considerations, and didn't mention the organizational violation at all. He had raised it in his letter, and I think that's the first time I ever answered a political letter and just pretended I hadn't read certain sections -- those sections where he complained about the organizational violations.

We disagreed with that procedure. Then there was another difference. When Pablo wrote his article about "centuries of degenerated workers states," we again had the most violent disagreement. We said, "What in the world is he talking about -- 'centuries of degenerated workers states?' In a world where capitalism is collapsing, and revolution is on the order of the day and revolution is going to be victorious -- is it going to take centuries to liquidate the bureaucratic excrescences?"

I told Comrade Stein that I was going to have to write against that, that I didn't believe in that at all. But he said, "If you write against that you will strike at Pablo's prestige and you will make his position impossible. If it appears in the International that Cannon is attacking Pablo, the whole alliance will appear to be broken. The thing is so fragile that you just can't do that."

There were repercussions in the party ranks also. When Arne Swaback came to the plenum a few days later he said: "What is this -- centuries of degenerated workers states?" And he told us that a girl comrade got up in the Chicago branch and asked: "What is this? If there are going to be centuries of Stalinism, what's the sense of my going out and selling ten papers on the street corner?" A very good question. And I heard of the same sort of thing in San Francisco.

But we kept quiet about all this in the party. I did speak about it in the Political Committee at some length when we were discussing the draft resolution of the Third Congress. My remarks were incorporated in the minutes to be sent over there, so that they would know what we thought about this, and that we would not support any implication, in the Congress resolution, of centuries of Stalinism after the revolution. That's as far as we went.

There was another complication, as you know, with the Johnsonites, who were hollering

about "Cannonism vs. Pabloism," and trying to exploit the alleged differences. That's the kind of situation you often get into in politics. If you are going to be like Breitman and weigh everything on the finest scale, allow two points here and two points there, you'll never be a political leader. You have to decide which is the main issue and which side you are on, and subordinate the others.

I didn't want to give the Johnsonites any handle. any chance to exploit my name in their fight against the main line of the coming World Congress. So at the 1950 convention, instead of speaking against the "centuries of degenerated workers states" which I would like to have done, I went out of my way to say that this talk of "Cannonism vs. Pabloism" is not right, because we are in fundamental agreement on the main line. Murry Weiss, in agreement with me, did the same thing in the Los Angeles discussions. And we took the wind out of the Johnsonites' sails.

I have spoken of all this to show that we have had differences, and fairly serious ones, but that we have considered them to be within the framework of an overall agreement. We appreciate the great work the leaders in Paris have done, especially their important contributions to the analysis of the postwar world. We appreciate the fact that they are working with a narrow organizational base, and that they are entitled to loyal support and collaboration.

These have been the general considerations. I cite them to show that if there is a Pablo cult in the party, we don't belong to it. No one has the right to assume that we, with all our respect for the work of Pablo, consider ourselves puppets who can be pulled on a string. That's not our conception of proper international relations. When Comrade Warde was traveling in Europe, while this fight was brewing in our party, he had definite instructions as to what we wanted. They asked him, "What shall we do?" His answer was: "It's up to you what you do, but my advice is, let it alone. The American party is a living organism, there are very experienced people there, just let it alone and see how it develops. Wait till everything becomes clear and then, if you want, express your opinion. But don't jump in, and above all, don't make any decisions, because you might make the wrong ones."

That was our general attitude. The whole implication of their questions was: "What can we do to help you deal with this new faction?" Our answer was: "Nothing, we don't need any help. And if we needed help, it would be very bad; because if we can only be elected and placed in leadership with the help of outside forces, we are not the real leaders of the party. And we won't accept leadership on that basis."

These were the reasons for our not wanting intervention on their part. First, we didn't need their support. Second, we don't want leadership that is not the natural and normal and voluntary selection of the rank and file. And third, if they should intervene with any kind of decision to support the Cochranites, we would have to tell them that we would pay no attention whatsoever.

Now don't take that to mean some kind of anti-international sentiment; that's just putting the cards on the table. Why wouldn't we pay any attention? Because we don't believe parties which will permit proconsuls to be imposed upon them as leaders are worth a damn. We don't think

a revolutionary party anywhere amounts to much until it is able to throw up a cadre of indigenuous leaders, who have grown up out of its struggles, who are known to its members and trusted by them. You can't monkey with the question of leadership.

We came out of the Comintern, as I said, and we remembered the crimes of the Comintern. "Socialism in one country" was not the only crime. One of the greatest crimes was the destruction of the self-acting life of the individual Communist parties. The Stalinist Comintern overthrew the indigenous leaders everywhere. Where they couldn't overthrow them directly, they would conspire against them, set faction on foot, with secret backing, to undermine and finally get rid of all the independent characters in the leadership.

That is what they did in this country. They first got rid of the so-called Cannon group of leaders (the Trotskyists); then they got rid of the Lovestoneite leaders; and then they tamed the Fosterite leaders and reduced them to the ignoble status of functionaries. When they had reduced the whole party to a docile herd, they said who should be the leader -- Browder. It was only under those conditions that Browder could become the leader; he was a man of such weakness of decision, such lack of independent character, that he couldn't fight his way to leadership. He became an appointed leader and ruled the party all these years as nothing more than a proconsul of Moscow. The proof that he had no power of his own was that when they got ready to ditch him, they just snapped their fingers -- and out went Browder.

That's the kind of business we don't like. We didn't have anything like that with Trotsky. Not at all. Trotsky wrote about this question once -- I am not quoting literally because I don't have the document before me, but I remember it almost word for word -- about the Comintern practice of getting rid of leaders. He didn't mean only Trotskyist leaders; he referred also to Germany, for example, where the right wing, the Brandlerites, were thrown out by organizational machinations and a new set of puppets placed in. Trotsky said: "Leadership is the natural growth out of a living party organism. It cannot be arbitrarily removed by outside forces without leaving a gaping wound that does not heal."

That's what Stalinism did to all the Communist parties throughout the world -- it inflicted wounds that never healed. After Stalinism came to power there was never anywhere a really authoritative, native leadership that had grown up out of the struggles of the party and stood on its own feet. That's why the CP leaderships so easily became puppets of Moscow.

Now we got thrown out of the Comintern for our independent opinions, in 1928, as I quoted from Foster's book the other day. We wouldn't support the line of the Comintern, which we thought was wrong. We asked the privilege of expressing our opinion in discussion. We didn't create any disruption. We just said that we thought Trotsky was right in the dispute and we would like, after the election campaign was over, the privilege of a limited organized discussion where we could present our point of view -- and they threw us out of the party.

We remembered that, and we didn't want any of that in the new International. We wondered, especially I personally, how it was going to be

in the new International with Trotsky. Was he going to push us around like manikins, or would he give us a little leeway and show us a little respect? I wondered.

Our first experience was very good. Friendly letters, advice, full and careful explanations, from 1929 until 1932. Then we had a little case, the case of B.J. Field, whom I wrote about in my History of American Trotskyism as the later leader of the hotel strike. But two years before that he belonged to our party. He organized a private study class outside of the branch activities, selected his own students and refused to submit his curriculum to the branch executive committee. The branch executive committee -- which looked in the constitution and saw that it says the branch controls all activities within its jurisdiction -- called on Field to submit his curriculum and let the committee know how things were going there.

Well, the branch was a little touchy -- personally I didn't have anything to do with it -- but anyhow Field refused. Here was a big-shot intellectual, who had worked on Wall Street journals, who had condescended to join a little Trotskyist movement -- and now all of a sudden a bunch of young, unimportant people wanted to put him under discipline. So he said, "No." They said "Yes. It says so in the constitution, and everything goes by law here." He insisted, No. So they put him on trial in the New York branch (I remember the meeting well, and so does Sylvia) -- put him on trial, heard the report of the committee -- and chucked him out. That's all. Expelled him.

It wasn't a very good case, and it would have been better if it could have been adjusted. But the branch said, "Against the constitution" -- and out he went. So Field, this man with his great knowledge and ability -- he decided he was going to show these New York yokels a few things. And he was a very learned man, a statistician of distinction, a good writer, a really first-class intellectual who knew economic data thoroughly because he had dealt with it all his life.

Anyhow he decided -- and he had the funds -- to take a personal trip to Constantinople, he and his wife, to visit Trotsky. Trotsky, who was so isolated, of course welcomed all visitors then. Field had all kinds of data that the Old Man was thirsting to get hold of, so as to give them some political interpretation. Being a man of action, very impulsive, he immediately sat Field down, got him to write out his data and collaborated with him on it. And the first thing we knew, a number of long, serious, important articles on the economic situation in America and its perspectives appeared in the French Trotskyist paper under the name of B.J. Field -- who had just been expelled from our organization!

We said to ourselves: "Oh, now it has come!" And that's when I got what you might call my Irish up. I said, "If Trotsky thinks he's going to treat our organization that way, he's got another guess coming." We sat down and wrote him a letter and told him: "This B.J. Field who was working in your Secretariat and whose articles you are having published in Europe: (1) has been expelled from the New York branch of the Communist League; (2) the constitution of our branch says so and so, and he violated the constitution and was expelled; (3) it is inadmissible for any other party in the International to give access to its ranks or to its press to an expelled member of our party because that is an act of hostility against our discipline. We therefore de-

mand that you discontinue your collaboration with B.J. Field, and that the French organization does the same."

I will admit that this was the greatest emotional crisis of my life. I fully expected that Trotsky was going to write back an arrogant letter and tell us what a bunch of shoe-makers we were; that the importance of Field's articles so far outweighed the constitution of the New York branch that we should wake up and recognize what time of day it was. I thought I could never accept that, because that would reduce the American party to nothing but a puppet; and you could never build a party that hasn't any rights of its own, any rights to enforce its own discipline.

We waited with resignation for the answer. And then the letter came from the 'Old Man, a most conciliatory letter: "I'm so sorry, it was a big mistake on my part. I was so eager to get this material that I didn't realize I was violating anything. By no means do I want to infringe upon the disciplinary regulations of the New York branch. I will discontinue collaboration with Field unless I have your specific approval to continue. Your criticism is correct" -- and so on.

"But at the same time," he said, "Mr. Field has a lot of economic knowledge, and the very fact that he came to see me shows he has a will to do something in our movement. I would propose, if it is agreeable to you, that when he returns to New York you do not take him back in the organization, but allow him to work as a sympathizer for six months, then consider admitting him back into the party."

That's the way our fight with Trotsky over authority and autonomy was settled. And I tell you it was a happy day when we got that letter. That convinced me that we could get along with Trotsky, that we could live with him, that we could have a party of our own which would have its own leaders, and that even the great Trotsky would have respect for our rights. That was the first incident.

Now, the minority did us a great favor when they printed the stenogram of our 1940 discussion with Trotsky. I am going to speak about that in the debate, so I won't go into it in detail here. But one thing that discussion shows is that, instead of our being mere puppets and hand raisers of Trotsky, as they say, who visited him in Mexico just to ask, "What are the orders?" -- and then clicking our heels and saying "Righto" -- instead of that, we had a big argument and discussion, a real difference of opinion.

Not only that, but a discussion which ended with Trotsky's saying in effect: "If you don't agree on this. I will not raise the question for discussion in the party. I will leave it to your judgment as to what you do about the candidacy of Browder." And so on.

Trotsky spoke with me later, in personal conversation, and said: "I won't do anything about it at all. You settle it. I don't want to create any discussion." He didn't want to let the party get the slightest intimation that he was against the leadership. The discussion concerned a question of tactics, and an important one -- but in it he showed his attitude of absolute loyalty to us.

We never had to fear that someone might go around saying, "Trotsky is against the party

leadership." We never had to fear that we might suddenly get a blow in the dark. Not from Trotsky. When Trotsky had anything to say to party leaders, he would write. He would write to me about it. When he had any correspondence with people with beefs in the party -- and he had a lot -- he would always send me a copy of his letter. So I always knew what was going on, and I never had any ground to fear that there was some kind of an underhanded, double game being played. That wasn't our experience with Trotsky.

Now that's the kind of relationship we want. We don't want any orders. We didn't want orders from Trotsky, and certainly do not want them from people lesser than Trotsky. No orders for the SWP. Advice, counsel, collaboration -- fine. But Cominternist instructions will never be accepted by this leadership. The kind of relationship we had with Trotsky is the kind we want; collaboration -- and that's all we'll accept.

Many have tried to give us orders. I think there is a Jewish proverb that says, "If you live long enough you will see everything." And one of the things one learns as he gets experience in life is that there are a number of people in this world who have the habit of mistaking good nature and patience for stupidity. We have always been good-natured and patient in international relationships, and more than once it has been taken for stupidity; and people who were not quite qualified to give us instructions undertook to do so. If we have any difficulty now, it won't be the first time.

I think some of you remember Logan. He was secretary of the International Secretariat, he had been secretary to Trotsky, and he was a learned man. But he undertook to instruct the American leadership as to what to do. We said, "No, no. We won't take that." Then there was the German group called the IKD, the "Three Theses" retrogressionists, who wrote theses a mile long. I couldn't even read them, to say nothing of understanding them. But they were awfully long theses -- and those people demanded we carry them out right away. I said, "No, no. First, I haven't read them; second, I don't understand them; third, I don't agree with them. And fourth, if you are so smart that you can write stuff I can't understand, you are just too damn smart for our party."

And then there was Munis -- you remember the great God Munis, in Mexico, who sent us all those wonderful orders and commands and criticisms, and all the rest. We patiently printed them, I'm sorry to say -- we patiently printed a lot of the stuff that preposterous, bombastic jackass wrote on the assumption that he was the successor to Trotsky. But we didn't accept it.

And finally there was Natalia. Natalia actually, I believe, fell victim to the propaganda of the Shachtmanites and the Goldmanites -- that all you have to do to get Cannon lined up is to put forth some international authority that he respects -- remember how he always just followed Trotsky? So they needled Natalia into sending me instructions on what to do. You know the sad, tragic result of that; we couldn't accept instructions even from Natalia.

As a matter of fact, we are not going to accept it from anywhere, from anyone, under any circumstances. We regard the International Secretariat -- who are a group of comrades we esteem -- as we regard them as collaborators, but not as masters and not as popes. We are going to speak out against the revelation of the minority, that

all you have to do is quote a sentence from Pablo, and that settles everything. Pablo is not our pope. He is just a collaborator. He is welcome to give us advice.

But what if Pablo and the International Secretariat should come out in support of the minority? If such a thing should occur -- and I'm not saying it will; I'm just assuming that the absolutely incredible arrogance of the Cochranites is based on some rumor that they are going to have the support of the International Secretariat -- if that should occur, it wouldn't oblige us to change our minds about anything. We wouldn't do so.

I was disturbed when I heard some comrades saying that if there should be a decision of the International Secretariat in favor of the minority, it might swing some of our people over to the minority. I remember what Trotsky wrote when he was fighting in the Russian party and the Comintern to mobilize the comrades to dare to have a thought and stand up for it. In his appeal to the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, Trotsky said: "That party member who changes his opinion at command is a scoundrel." He meant by that, that such a member is disloyal to the party; because the least the party can expect from the most inexperienced, the newest rank-and-file member is that he be honest with the party, tell the party honestly what he thinks, and not change his opinion when he gets the command from this or that leader, or this or that committee.

This is not to say that the party member doesn't have to obey discipline. But one's opinions should be sacred to himself. I hope it will be this way in our party, no matter where the instructions come from -- from the Political Committee, from the plenum or from the convention. No one should change his mind because authority tells him to. That is not the mark of a revolutionist. You are obliged to submit to discipline, you are obliged to carry out the decisions of the majority. But if you think you are right, then, as Trotsky said, you bide your time until new events occur and a new discussion opens up.

Trotsky said that a Bolshevik is not only a disciplined man but also an independent thinking man, who will raise his point of view again and again, until either he convinces the party that he is right, or the party convinces him that he is wrong.

We understand what the fight in our party here means. This party, comrades, is the most important party in the whole world. Not because we say so, not because we are braggarts, as Cochran says whenever anyone puts in a good word for the party. It is because we are operating in that section of the capitalist world which is not collapsing. We are operating in that section of the world which is a concentration of all the

power of capitalism -- the United States. The revolutions which are taking place in other parts of the world, in China, Korea, and other areas of the colonial world -- those revolutions cannot be definitive. They can only be provisional -- so long as capitalism rules the United States.

That is what Trotsky meant when he said, in his first letter to us in 1929, that in the final analysis all the problems of this epoch -- all the problems of capitalism and socialism -- will be settled on American soil. If that is true -- and it certainly is -- then those who set out to build the revolutionary party within the citadel of imperialist power, where the issues will be finally decided -- those who set out to build the revolutionary party here, with confidence in the revolutionary future, are by that fact building the most important party in the world.

They are the people of destiny -- not in the sneering phrase of the contemptible Cochranite document, which makes a joke of the assertions of our 1946 convention -- but in the real essence of the matter. If that is the case, if this party is in a crisis, and we know what the crisis is about; if it is a crisis not only of program and perspectives, the perspectives of the country and the labor movement and the party; if that is involved, and not some little difference over this or that; and if involved also is the problem of leadership, which is the decisive question of every party and every workers movement, and every revolution, in the last analysis -- if all that is involved, then this fight has to be carried through to its conclusion by the people who know what the fight is about, who know the people, who know the answers, and who are determined to carry out the answers.

That is what we are committed to. We hope to have the sympathy and support of the whole international movement. But if we don't have the sympathy and support of one individual here or there, or one group or another, that doesn't mean we give up our opinions and quit our fight. Not for one moment. That only means that the fight in the SWP becomes transferred to the international field. Then we take to the field, and look for allies to fight on our side against anyone who may be foolish enough to fight on the side of Cochran. Then it would be a fight in the international movement.

I am absolutely sure that we will be victorious here, and I don't see any reason why we wouldn't be victorious on the international field, if it should come to a fight. We hope to avoid such a fight. We are not looking for it. We have no tangible evidence to prove that there is any conspiracy against us, or any actions against us, on the international field. But if a fight should come, we will be prepared for it. That is the way we size this thing up.