

INTERNAL

INFORMATION BULLETIN

December, 1974

No. 9 in 1974

REPORT ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS CONCERNING THE INTERNATIONALIST TENDENCY PARTY

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Published by

SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

14 Charles Lane, New York, N.Y. 10014

I. Report on Recent Developments Concerning the Internationalist Tendency Party

by Barry Sheppard

[The general line of the following report was adopted by the Political Bureau of the Socialist Workers Party on November 27, 1974.]

On July 2, 1974, the Control Commission of the Socialist Workers Party submitted a report to the Political Committee of the SWP which proved conclusively that the Internationalist Tendency had organized a split in the SWP. On July 4 the Political Committee adopted the Control Commission's recommendation: "That the Internationalist Tendency's status as a separate, rival party be recognized and that the members of the Internationalist Tendency party be informed that this status places them outside the constitutional provisions of membership in the Socialist Workers Party."

Further documents and events demonstrate that the IT party has not changed its course.

I. The Internationalist Tendency Party Reiterates Its Rejection of SWP Discipline and Democratic Centralism

In early October 1974 Comrade Charles of the IMT Bureau met with leaders of the SWP. He stated that he intended to meet with members of the Internationalist Tendency. He asked the SWP leaders how those members of the IT who sincerely desired to loyally build the SWP could become members of the SWP.

The leaders of the SWP replied that if there were individual IT members who had changed their minds and wished to function as loyal and disciplined members of the SWP, the first step they should take would be to unambiguously state their acceptance of the following two points: 1) That the regularly elected bodies of the SWP have the *unconditional* right to regulate *all* the public political functioning of all members of the party. No individual members or tendencies or factions have the right to violate SWP discipline, whether they agree or disagree with decisions made by the regular bodies of the party, or whether they think such decisions run counter to the "line of the Fourth International." 2) That they accept functioning under the organizational norms of the SWP as laid down in its constitution and codified in the document, "The Organizational Character of the Socialist Workers Party." In particular, they should unambiguously state that they will abide by SWP norms concerning party-youth relations, and accept the right of the elected bodies of the SWP to regulate the internal affairs of the party including the regulation of internal discussion.

Comrade Charles said he would discuss these points with the IT leadership. The IT members rejected these proposals in their October 17, 1974, letter addressed to the SWP National Committee.

The October 17 IT letter explicitly rejects the first point the SWP leaders discussed with Comrade Charles. The IT members flatly state that if they were members of the

SWP, whenever in their opinion "the SWP violates the Statutes and presents publicly positions at odds with the line of the FI or its member sections in other countries, we will publicly disassociate ourselves from such actions and defend the line of the International." The IT members promise in this statement that they would publicly attack the SWP any and every time they *unilaterally* decide that in their opinion the positions of the SWP are "at odds with the line of the FI." This is a formula for no party at all, because the IT members could arbitrarily and unilaterally claim that the line of the SWP was "at odds" with the line of the Fourth International any time any of them disagreed with positions decided on by the regularly constituted bodies of the SWP.

The IT members single out the following political questions on which they consider the SWP to be "at odds with the line of the FI" and therefore subject to public attack: "the Allende government and military coup in Chile, revolutionary strategy in Latin America and Europe; the nature of the detente; the peace accords in Vietnam; and the character of the French Union de la Gauche." This is a rather wide-ranging list. On the detente alone, developments can be given treatment in our press at any time, which would require the IT members to issue frequent public statements of their own.

But that is not all. The IT members add that they would publicly attack the SWP each and every time they decided that the positions of the SWP were "at odds with the line of the FI or its *member sections in other countries*." (Emphasis added.) Let us look at just a few examples to see what this would mean in practice. In the current struggle against the racist mobilization in Boston, the SWP has supported the demand raised in the Black community that federal troops be sent in to protect Black school children and other Blacks from the racist mobs. The *Red Weekly*, organ of the British IMG, ran an editorial article opposing this demand. (It should be noted that the SWP has no objection to the *Red Weekly* publishing its own analysis of the Boston events or any others, although we think that their position is wrong and that they would have done well to solicit the opinion of the SWP on this question before taking a public stand.) The IT position means that they would have the "right" to publicly attack the SWP on the troops slogan, because the SWP presented a position "at odds" with that of a "member section."

During the period of the massive antiwar movement in the United States, the SWP put forward the public position that antiwar soldiers in the U.S. army should remain in the army and fight for the right to present their views. For a considerable period, many sections in Europe publicly presented a position "at odds" with

the SWP position. They said that American antiwar soldiers should desert. Many European sections went so far as to carry out this line in practice. The IT formula would allow IT members to attack the SWP publicly for its position in this case too.

One of the political questions listed by the IT members as subject to public attack by them, if they were members of the SWP, is the nature of the French Union of the Left. Leaders of the SWP have presented an analysis of the Union of the Left differing from that of our French comrades. In this case also, IT members would publicly attack the SWP's position.

In other words, in the IT view, the SWP is a second-class Trotskyist organization. If Trotskyists elsewhere present positions "at odds" with those of the SWP, as decided by the IT members, then they will publicly attack the SWP. Every section would have a veto over the positions and even analyses presented by the SWP, under threat of a public attack by the members of the SWP who are members of the IT.

Contrary to these peculiar notions of the IT, SWP discipline is unconditional and is not up for negotiation. If the IT party wants to publicly attack the SWP, we will defend their democratic right to do so, but not as members of the SWP.

Concerning the second point leaders of the SWP discussed with Comrade Charles: The IT members say nothing about abiding by SWP norms concerning party-youth relations, although this was an area of gross violations of democratic centralism carried out by the IT while it was in the SWP. They evade answering whether they agree to function under the SWP constitution and the document "The Organizational Character of the Socialist Workers Party," a resolution adopted by the 1965 SWP convention and reaffirmed at the 1973 convention as the current codification of the party's fundamental organizational principles. And the October 17 letter raises a series of demands on the SWP as *conditions* for any "reintegration" of the IT members in the SWP. Under these conditions, the IT rejects the right of the elected bodies of the SWP to regulate the internal affairs of the party including the regulation of internal discussion—a right that is spelled out in "The Organizational Character of the Socialist Workers Party," and a point discussed with Comrade Charles.

The IT's position is that they alone have the right to determine their conduct inside the party, including determining their own forms of discussion. As the report of the SWP Control Commission on the split of the IT party stated: "In the early 1960s the Robertsonites claimed the unconditional right to determine their own conduct inside the party. The 1965 SWP resolution rejects this claim, saying that '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 party would become converted into an all-inclusive federation of autonomous factions; it would degenerate into a political jungle where perpetual factional warfare prevailed' (page 15).

"The 1965 resolution further states that 'the party is therefore entitled to organize its internal discussion and to determine the forms and limits' (page 20). The time,

place, and extent of all internal discussion are determined by the democratically elected leadership bodies of the SWP, not by an arbitrary group of individuals within the party. A faction has the right to circulate drafts of proposed documents among faction members for the purpose of preparing material for presentation to the party as a whole. But an organized faction can circulate its own internal discussion bulletin only on the condition that it receive the prior approval of the party and that its bulletin be made available to the party.

"The IT has violated this principle of Leninist organization." (*SWP Internal Information Bulletin* No. 6 in 1974).

Their rejection of the two points raised with Comrade Charles exposes the fakery of the IT members' professed desire to be "reintegrated" in the SWP. The purpose of the October 17 letter was just the opposite—it is an explicit *rejection* of the request that they state whether they will function under the SWP organizational norms and constitution. The October 17 letter is designed to make sure there is no chance whatever of a "reintegration" with the SWP.

To emphasize their rejection of democratic centralism the letter adds still more conditions which the SWP would have to accept before the IT members would ostensibly "reintegrate" with the SWP.

Concerning finances, the letter states that if they were "reintegrated" with the SWP, they would place their own factional needs above those of the party, until—in their opinion—the SWP "decides to give financial assistance to all significant tendencies and factions." Thus, in advance, they state that they intend to continue the policy of boycotting party finances as they did when they were in the SWP.

Factions and tendencies in the SWP, as well as in the Fourth International, have always had the responsibility of financing themselves, except for the costs of printing the literary discussion and organizing conventions, etc. But financial responsibility to the party must come first, just as all aspects of discipline, before responsibility to any faction. In stating that they would agree to "reintegrate" with the SWP only if they were guaranteed the "right" to place their financial obligations to the IT above those to the party, the IT members are demanding that they be exempted from the SWP constitution and organizational rules binding on all members.

The IT letter charges that the SWP "conducts a total financial boycott of the Fourth International." The IT knows full well that reactionary legislation prevents the SWP from affiliation with the Fourth International, and prevents the SWP from contributing any money whatsoever to the Fourth International. The cavalier manner with which the IT members treat this question is indicative of their irresponsibility and untrustworthiness.

While the SWP is prevented from financially contributing to the International, for decades it has carried out various projects on its own that have objectively aided the spread of Trotskyist ideas on a world scale. Comrades in the world movement have always recognized that this work is of substantive magnitude and until very recently have given the SWP moral credit for it.

A point on "Majority-Minority Collaboration Inside the SWP" is included in the letter to give comrades of other sectors of the world movement, who are not in a position to know the facts, the impression that the members of the IT had been excluded from responsible assignments while they were in the SWP. The facts are the opposite. The members of the IT systematically boycotted party finances. They refused responsible assignments in the branches and were among the most inactive members of the party.

The October 17 letter states that the IT members have "been forced to devise applications of the general line of our movement to interventions, mass work, and the recruitment of new militants to Trotskyism, through our own limited means," while they are waiting to be "reintegrated." But this is nothing new and not something they do reluctantly—the IT was carrying out its own interventions and secret recruitment while it was in the SWP, in violation of SWP discipline, as has been amply documented in *SWP Internal Information Bulletin* No. 6 in 1974. For example, at their convention, the IT party delegates adopted unanimously a trade-union resolution for the guidance of their members' work in the trade unions, outside the discipline of the SWP. Now they openly affirm that this is their perspective.

The IT also puts forward the condition that its members must be placed on the National Committee of the "reintegrated" SWP. They state that minority representation is a "right." There are no provisions in the SWP constitution or in its organizational resolution that make minority representation on leading bodies a "right," i.e., compulsory. Representation of significant loyal minorities on leading bodies is a tradition of correct Bolshevik functioning, one which the SWP vigorously upholds. This question came up in regard to the IT at the 1973 convention of the party. The convention delegates decided—correctly, as has been proved—against placing any member of the IT on the party's National Committee at that time because of the concrete evidence that was before them, in the form of the Barzman letter, of the IT's *disloyal* conduct towards the SWP and the Fourth International and the IT's split course with regard to both.

II. A Transparent Maneuver

One of the conditions for their "reintegration" in the SWP laid down by the IT members in their October 17 letter is that the SWP must "immediately" admit the Baltimore Marxist Group, the Revolutionary Marxist Collective, and the Socialist Union.

Shortly after July 4, when the SWP Political Committee took action to put a halt to the entry operation of the IT party, these three small groups applied to join the SWP. All three stated that they supported the positions of the Fourth International and were willing to abide by the discipline of the SWP.

The SWP branches in the cities where these groups are located have known them as public political opponents of the party. Considering their record of activity in opposing the SWP in various aspects of our external work, their assertion that they were prepared to abide by SWP discipline appeared problematical. Nevertheless, we took their applications at face value and proposed

to each of them that they engage in a period of close political and organizational collaboration with the SWP, in preparation for joining the SWP. We proposed that during this brief transitional period they undertake to meet minimal requirements of membership in the party and function under the discipline of the party. This proposal would have allowed the SWP on one side and these groups on the other to get to know each other and to test in practice their willingness and ability to function under SWP discipline.

All three groups rejected functioning under SWP discipline and failed even for a single day to carry out our proposals that they help build the SWP in their day-to-day work. Instead, they continued to publicly oppose and attack the SWP.

In their August 16 letter, the Revolutionary Marxist Collective went so far as to assert that agreement with the SWP proposals—i.e., functioning under SWP discipline—would be tantamount to the "political destruction and suppression of the politics of the Fourth International in the Bay Area." Given this view, it is clear that the RMC never had any intention of functioning under the discipline of the SWP.

In its August 28 letter, the Socialist Union rejected building the SWP in any fashion unless it was immediately taken into the party. But the SWP could have no confidence whatsoever that a group which refused to meet even this minimal test would in fact function as disciplined members if they were taken into the party. Also, they demanded that the party accept one of their members who still holds the view that the SWP is a roadblock to the American revolution and must be destroyed—a view that precludes that comrade from acting as a loyal member of the SWP. Further, the group as a whole thinks the SWP is "ill" and only "possibly reformable," which makes it extremely difficult to function in a disciplined manner, and demonstrates all the more the need for a testing period to see if they could function as disciplined members.

The Socialist Union also stated in its August 28 letter that it would oppose SWP candidates in the East Los Angeles city council election. In this election, the SWP fielded two candidates for a five-person city council, and extended critical support to three candidates of La Raza Unida Party.

The Baltimore Marxist Group, in its reply to our proposals, did not even bother to mention them. It can only be assumed that they too rejected them, in light of their failure to begin to carry them out in practice. Instead, the BMG raised a new condition upon their application, that the SWP must first "reintegrate" the Internationalist Tendency party.

All three groups defend the IT party's split operation and gross disloyalty and indiscipline to the SWP. We can only conclude from this that they too reject the SWP's constitution and organizational principles and would function inside the SWP in a disloyal fashion in the example set by the IT.

Obviously, these groups never had any intention of joining the SWP as disciplined and loyal members. Our positive response to their applications caused them to pull back from their original statement that they were willing to abide by SWP discipline. Their "application"

was thus exposed as a transparent maneuver aimed at obtaining ammunition for their struggle against the SWP.

III. The Collins Letter

The July 19, 1974, letter from Jim Collins of the Revolutionary Marxist Collective to the Internationalist Tendency headquarters proves that this unprincipled maneuver was carried out in collaboration with the Internationalist Tendency party.

In his letter to the IT center, Collins proposes to the IT and the IMT that they coordinate their stories when the RMC delegation meets the SWP to discuss their application for membership in the SWP. The main concern was to prevent the SWP from finding out that the RMC had been collaborating with the IT party behind the back of the SWP. Collins asks the IT party and Comrade Charles of the IMT Bureau to cooperate in backing up the RMC lies. The maneuver was coordinated with "Zazlow [of the Los Angeles Socialist Union] and Rich in Baltimore."

The maneuver of "applying" to the SWP was to be of short duration. Collins thought it would be over in about a month: "For the next month at least, we have defined our main area of work as being in and around the SWP-YSA and with the IT on this question." Presumably other, more fruitful areas of work would then take precedence.

In their October 17 letter, the IT party members quoted from a July 17 letter of theirs in which they pledged "not to discuss internal matters of the SWP or YSA with persons who are outside the Fourth International." The Collins letter demonstrates that this pledge was a lie.

In this letter sent "in lieu of minutes," Collins tells Massey, Barzman and Co. that the RMC intends to "work closely during this whole process" with people still inside the SWP. He makes a series of suggestions as to how the RMC should work with the IT—"under adequate security precautions of course." He wonders how the RMC can be represented at the next Central Committee meeting of the IT, "now that we have applied to the SWP."

It is evident from the Collins letter that the IT was collaborating with this grouping outside the SWP before July 4 and has continued to do so, as part of the IT party's attack on the SWP.

IV. The Welch-Clark Letter and Document

The October 17 letter of the IT speaks for the 65 IT party members. Included in this 65 are Russell Welch and Cheryl Clark.

We now learn from a letter sent by Welch and Clark to the IMT that they were expelled from the IT October 12-13. The October 17 letter from the IT, however, makes no mention that Welch and Clark were expelled from the IT, but demands their "reintegration" into the SWP along with the rest of the IT. We note from the Welch-Clark documents that they view the SWP as reformist and that they are doing everything possible to split the Fourth International—yet the IT includes them in its demand for "reintegration."

The earlier letter from Welch and Clark, to the German Kompass tendency, confirms that for a considerable time

the orientation of the IT had been to split the SWP. Differences within the IT on this question have been tactical. One wing, among them Welch and Clark, argue that the IT should immediately, and publicly, justify its split on political grounds. Others temporarily want to be more "diplomatic" in an attempt to place the blame for the split organized by the IT party, on the SWP.

We learn from the Welch-Clark letter and document that "for over a year" the IT has been "racked" by the question of whether the SWP should be characterized as "centrist," or "not quite centrist yet," "a right opportunist sect," or "not quite a right opportunist sect yet."

Welch and Clark explain that in December of 1973, Comrade Langston presented the position within the IT that the SWP had not yet gone through a "definitive test" on whether it is reformist. Langston introduced his view at an IT National Steering Committee meeting at that time. "It was totally rejected by the leadership then and rightly so," Welch and Clark inform us. Thus, by the end of 1973, the IT had come to the conclusion that the SWP was finished as a revolutionary organization. The decision to split (even if under the guise of a kind of "entryism *sui generis*") follows with iron logic.

At the May convention of the IT party, a motion from the IMT Bureau was discussed. The contents of the IMT motion have still been withheld from the SWP, although it is summarized in the IT party's report of its convention. This report is contained in the *SWP Internal Information Bulletin* No. 6 in 1974. The IT report of its convention states: "The report which had previously been given by the [IMT] Bureau representative to the NAB [North American Bureau of the IMT] meeting, argued that the H.W. [Bill Massey] document posed problems, in that it incorrectly viewed the degenerative process of the SWP as completed and in that context seemed to set in motion a series of events leading to the expulsion of the IT and the establishment of the IT as a flimsy group outside of the SWP."

Now we learn more about the IMT's evaluation of the SWP from the Welch-Clark document. They say the IMT views the SWP as "revolutionary with right deviations," although the IMT has "no illusions" that the SWP leadership and "most of the ranks" are reformable.

The delegates at the May convention of the IT party, overwhelmingly rejected the IMT position in favor of their own perspective. By a 19 to 4 vote, the IT party convention adopted a four-part motion: "1. Stating agreement with the NAB in rejecting the position of the IMT Bureau. 2. Rejection of the motion of the Enlarged IMT Bureau. 3. Accepting the authority of the IMT Enlarged Bureau but pledging to seek to reverse the decision. 4. The opening of an immediate discussion in the IMT on North America." (See "First National Conference of the Internationalist Tendency," in the *SWP Internal Information Bulletin* No. 6 in 1974.)

Welch and Clark state that "the whole sense, the whole spirit behind the motion at the conference, . . . was to take a hard stance on the questions of our perspectives. . . ." This motion reflected the generally held view in the IT that the period of "entryism" in the SWP should be rapidly concluded. "Before the May conference," Welch and Clark explain, "it was often said and the opinion

was overwhelmingly held that a long term perspective within the SWP would mean our destruction."

Welch and Clark object that under the influence of the IMT, the "hard stance" on the "question of our perspectives was lost. We chose to be 'diplomatic.'"

After the SWP Control Commission exposed the whole splitting operation of the IT, and the SWP Political Committee called a halt to the IT party's temporary entry tactic in the SWP, the IT Political Committee again took a "hard" line, that is, one more in accord with the views of Welch and Clark. They state: "At the recent expanded PC meeting (all but 6 members of the national steering committee were present) the position taken was that come hell or high water we will become an independent organization." The October 17 IT letter confirms that this decision of the IT expanded PC is being carried out.

V. New Questions Concerning IMT Complicity with the IT Split

The Welch-Clark document and the Collins letter raise new questions about the complicity of the IMT in the split operation carried out by the IT. The character of the relations between the IMT center in Europe and the IT apparently was such that Welch and Clark could write the following: "A recent letter from Comrade Charles [for the IMT Bureau] to the IT called our response to the SWP's split document remiss and weak. Further we should admit and self-criticize ourselves for:

"1. being too highly structured

"2. being too forward on the May 11th actions (The IMT denies any responsibility for the distribution of the USEC statement on Chile)

"3. not telling the SWP we were dealing with outside groups

"4. not long ago declaring ourselves a faction. These charges are unbelievable! The IMT has politically condoned all these actions. . . ."

If this assertion about the IMT leaders is true, then they bear responsibility for secretly condoning violations of discipline by the IT.

Welch and Clark confirm the existence of a split wing of the IMT in Europe that holds the position "that a revolutionary international cannot include the SWP!"

The Collins letter outlines a series of lies to be adopted as their story by the IT and the IMT concerning the fake "unity" maneuver carried out by the Revolutionary Marxist Collective, the Baltimore Marxist Group, and the Socialist Union. That would represent another instance of the IMT functioning behind the backs of the leadership bodies of the SWP and the Fourth International, this time as part of a maneuver directed against the SWP carried out by groups outside the Fourth International.

The IT maintains that as a tendency or faction in the SWP it has the right to disregard decisions made by the elected leadership bodies of the SWP. But the statutes do not give even the United Secretariat or the International Executive Committee the right to overturn majority rule in the sections and sympathizing groups of the International. The statutes state: "In no case has it [the IEC] the power to alter the majority rule of a regularly elected leadership of a national section."

To support the stand advanced in the letter of the IT, it is quite clear, would mean to disregard the statutes of the Fourth International.

II. October 17, 1974 Letter from the Internationalist Tendency Party to the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party

Internationalist Tendency of the Socialist Workers Party
c/o John Barzman and Bill Massey
Chicago, Illinois

October 17, 1974

To: National Committee, Socialist Workers Party

Dear Comrades,

On July 17, 1974, a letter signed by sixty-five members of the Socialist Workers Party who had been purged on July 5, 1974, was sent to the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party. The letter also spoke for comrades who were purged without being named in Cde. Barnes' letter listing "known members of the Internationalist Tendency Party". Our July 17 letter demanded our immediate reintegration into the SWP. A statement by the Political Committee of the Internationalist Tendency of the Socialist Workers Party, which was appended to it, explained that this reintegration should take place on the basis of the "normal criteria for membership in the Fourth International, the SWP, and the YSA—agreement with the general program of the F.I., acceptance of the discipline of the Fourth International, the SWP, and the YSA, and commitment to work as active militants in these organizations". Although this letter was submitted prior to the 15-day constitutional deadline for appealing disciplinary procedures, we have received no answer, or even acknowledgement that it was received.

The statement appended to our letter explained that until a decision of the United Secretariat had been made, we would continue to regard ourselves as disciplined members of the SWP. We stated: "a) we will not publicize our expulsion b) we will not discuss internal matters of the SWP or YSA with persons who are outside the Fourth International c) we will not intervene against the SWP or YSA in public forums or meetings d) in mass work, we will place ourselves under the discipline of the appropriate SWP or YSA fraction". Since that time, the United Secretariat has met and taken up the question of the expulsion of the Internationalist Tendency from the Socialist Workers Party. The expulsion was condemned as a bureaucratic act and the SWP was urged to immediately and collectively reintegrate the IT. Resolutions passed by the national leadership of numerous sections of the Fourth International have taken the same stand. In addition, the Internationalist Tendency's answer to the charges contained in the "Materials. . ." document have been made available to you at the United Secretariat and will be printed in a forthcoming International Information Bulletin. As you are aware, this answer contains a series of refutations of the accusations against the IT, acknowledgement of certain minor errors which were not subject to expulsion, and a recapitulation of our general view of the situation and the proper functioning of democratic centralism.

Since the meeting of the United Secretariat, we have received no word from you. In fact, the efforts which various comrades of the Internationalist Tendency have made to collaborate with the SWP in its activities have met with hostile responses. For example, two comrades in Oakland, California, requested to sell the Militant. The branch organizer answered them that they would have to sign a statement saying that the "Internationalist Tendency Party" had split from the SWP, before they would be allowed to sell. In other instances, comrades who asked to collaborate with party fractions were summarily dismissed. It has become impossible for the comrades of the Internationalist Tendency to attempt to guess what the current national orientation of the party is toward the handling of any number of issues, or how the party branches have decided to prioritize such orientations in terms of allocation of forces to various areas of work and specific directives for intervention. Therefore, although we refuse to believe that the leadership of the party will persist in refusing our reintegration, and although we do not wish to become a public faction, in order to carry out our revolutionary duties in the mass movement we have been forced to devise applications of the general line of our movement to interventions, mass work, and the recruitment of new militants to Trotskyism, through our own limited means. This in no sense implies the setting up of a rival organization to the SWP, a rival press, or written public attacks on the present course of the SWP. It is merely the recognition that without all the rights of party membership, not all the responsibilities of party membership can be carried out. We sincerely hope that this undesirable situation will be resolved as rapidly as possible so that we can assume fully our responsibilities as party members.

In line with our stated desire to resolve the situation created by our expulsion as rapidly as possible, the Steering Committee of the Internationalist Tendency recently met and instructed us to explain to you our view of the situation. In our view, a step toward resolving the situation in the American Trotskyist movement by agreement of the two parties involved can be taken prior to the meeting of the International Executive Committee which is scheduled to take up the question in late December, 1974. We believe such a step would be a significant contribution to lessening the tensions which exist within the International. It is with this goal in mind that we send this letter. A common initiative on our part can only help the work of the International Control Commission and of the International Executive Committee.

We believed at the time of our expulsion and we still believe now that the differences between the Internationalist Tendency and the SWP majority do not warrant a split on a national scale, any more than the differences between the International Majority Tendency and the International Minority Faction warrant one on an international level. In our opinion, the single most important

factor which led to the situation where the I.T. was purged from the SWP was the unduly factional and monolithic conception of internal party life and relations with the International which guided the actions of the SWP leadership. Such factional behavior by the leadership of the party was made possible by the ambiguity of the 1965 Organizational resolution. As you are aware, we believe that its interpretation of the Party Constitution and democratic centralism is grossly lopsided in not indicating the rights of minorities, and in implying that all minorities rapidly become the toy of alien class pressures rather than positive contributors to the process of political clarification through ideological struggle. At present what must be established to insure a functional and lasting reintegration of the IT into the SWP is the willingness by both sides to abide by the norms of democratic centralism as defined by the founders of the international communist movement, and as enriched by the practice of our world movement. We think the following clarifications of the norms of democratic centralism must be accepted by all parties concerned:

1. The Rights of Tendencies and Factions to Hold Internal Discussions and Meetings

This is a right the LTF claims for itself but rejects for other tendencies and factions within the International and the SWP. We believe such a right must apply universally. It includes the right to hold faction meetings on both a local and national scale. It includes the right to internal literary discussion and communication within the faction, not merely oral discussion and personal correspondence. We reject the conception of the SWP leadership that minorities are automatically obliged to submit all such materials to the leadership for approval. Such a conception contradicts the very purpose of a faction; i.e. to be a *separate, organized* formation to conduct political struggle inside the revolutionary organization. We claim the same right of faction privacy for our faction that the LTF claims for itself. Finally we reject any conception that organized minorities have no right to exist except during pre-convention discussions.

2. Faction Structure and Leadership Bodies

We believe that factions have the right to elect executive bodies at the local and national level to lead the faction, to speak for it within the revolutionary organization and, where necessary, to determine faction policy between collective meetings and conferences. We accept the principle that the composition of such bodies should be announced to the SWP majority. We also believe that the faction has the right to hold delegated conferences at the national level. Given the numerical size and dispersion of our faction and the geographic reality of the United States, this is a basic precondition for our democratic functioning.

3. Representation on SWP leadership bodies

Representation of significant minorities on the leading bodies of the revolutionary organization is not a privilege. It is a *right*. In fact, it is one of the most elementary aspects of democratic centralism. We do not hold

a rigid position on the question of *proportional* representation, but we think the denial of any representation on the National Committee to a minority of nearly 10 percent is inexcusable, particularly when this minority represents the views of the majority of the Fourth International. We realize that the present composition of the NC was determined by a convention and can only be changed by a convention. We propose as interim measures that members of the minority be named as *ex officio* members of the NC, to be formally seated at all NC plenums with voice and that the SWP leadership at this time explicitly commit itself to recommend minority NC representation to the next SWP convention.

4. Finances

The financial policy of the SWP leadership is purely factional. The official finances of the SWP (which includes both LTF and non-LTF comrades) are used to finance factional activities of the LTF, both within the U.S. and abroad. At the same time, the SWP refuses to give any financial assistance to minorities (unlike most sections of the FI) and conducts a total financial boycott of the Fourth International. Until the SWP decides to give financial assistance to all significant tendencies and factions, we must have the right to finance our faction's activities. Inasmuch as none of us are independently wealthy, this inevitably means a much reduced financial contribution from our individual militants to the SWP.

5. NonFactional Recruitment

Membership in the world Trotskyist movement must be open to all those who agree with the basic program and adopted positions of the Fourth International. While faction members are obliged to avoid contravening the positions of the SWP majority on U.S. questions or other questions as yet unresolved by the F.I. in discussion with non-members of the F.I., they have every right to engage in contact work on the basis of the positions of the F.I. Militants who agree with those positions have every right to membership in the SWP. Specifically, those members of the Baltimore Marxist Group, the Revolutionary Marxist Collective (San Francisco) and the Socialist Union (Los Angeles), experienced militants who completely support the program of the F.I. and the decisions of the Tenth World Congress and who have applied for membership, must be immediately admitted.

6. Majority-Minority Collaboration Inside the SWP

In order to maximize the possibility of both factions working together to build the Trotskyist movement in the United States, in order to reduce tensions which are not directly related to differences over questions of political line, it is necessary for the SWP leadership to integrate minority comrades into all areas of work, not just organizational or administrative assignments. In the past, minority comrades have been largely excluded from anti-imperialist fractions, presentation of internal educationals and public forums, selection as candidates in the SWP's numerous election campaigns, etc. Minority comrades who are union members have not been permitted to develop union interventions under the direction of the SWP leadership. This discrimination has con-

tributed to the development of incorrect attitudes among minority comrades in relation to the unity of American Trotskyists. In order for such attitudes to be corrected, it is necessary for the SWP leadership to make specific and concrete commitments to insert our faction into the SWP's political interventions and campaigns. The general model for the content and implementation of such commitments should be the recommendations in the report of the IMG fact-finding Commission.

7. The Norms of the Fourth International

The SWP's indiscipline, disrespect, and outright disloyalty in relation to the statutes and decisions of the Fourth International is notorious throughout our world movement. Our faction accepts the discipline of the SWP on all questions where the FI has not adopted clear positions. We do respect the right of the SWP leadership to determine the tactics for implementing specific decisions of the F.I. in the USA. We will not consider ourselves to be a separate organization if reintegrated. Therefore, even when the SWP refuses to implement decisions of the International to build specific actions or campaigns, or does so on a different political basis (as is usually the case) we will not seek to execute this implementation ourselves, but will struggle inside the SWP to insure that decisions of the International are respected. But on questions of program and political line, the authority of the Fourth International remains paramount. We will continue to support and advocate all adopted positions of the Fourth International, *inside and outside the SWP*, particularly in cases of issues such as: the Allende government and military coup in Chile, revolutionary strategy in Latin America and Europe; the nature of the detente; the peace accords in Vietnam; and the character of the French Union de la Gauche. Whenever the SWP violates the Statutes and presents publicly positions at odds with the line of the FI or its member sections in other countries, we will publicly disassociate ourselves from such actions and defend the

line of the International. Until the SWP begins to fulfil its obligations to distribute *Inprecor*s as an organ of the United Secretariat, we will continue to assume certain responsibilities in relation to its sales as well as those of publications from other sectors of the International. (We note here the precedent of the IMG Fact-Finding Commission recommendation that the British minority be given special responsibilities to distribute Intercontinental Press).

The above points of clarification are not a "special arrangement" to alleviate organizational problems. They are the basic norms of democratic centralism. They are universal criteria for the functioning of a Trotskyist organization (except under specific conditions such as clandestinity). Such criteria are common place in the vast majority of organizations of the F.I. They thus constitute part of the principled basis for membership in the American fraternal organization. The IEC should assign the International Control Commission or an ad hoc committee (on a parity basis, for instance) to supervise the implementation of these norms in the SWP, in order to really solve the crisis marked by the expulsion of the IT. If reintegrated, we will consider these clarifications to be our rights and will act accordingly. Otherwise it is impossible for us to assume our responsibilities as a minority: that is, our duty to help to build the SWP under the direction of its leading bodies; to accept majority rule; to avoid obstruction of the implementation of the majority line; and to contribute to the political clarification of the SWP and its adoption of a correct revolutionary Marxist orientation.

Comradely,
s/John Barzman

cc: United Secretariat, International Control Commission,
Files

III. Correspondence with the Bay Area Revolutionary Marxist Collective

July 9, 1974

To: Socialist Workers Party Headquarters, NYC

Comrades:

The undersigned members of the Revolutionary Marxist Collective (Berkeley-San Francisco) would like to apply for membership in the SWP (and YSA) on the following basis:

- a) agreement with the positions of the Fourth International as expressed in its world conference documents;
- b) desire to engage in public political practice in the name of the Fourth International;
- c) willingness to abide by the discipline of the Socialist Workers Party, which but for reactionary legislation would be the section of the Fourth International in the United States.

The following individuals are applying for membership in the following branches of the SWP:

Jim Collins	SWP	Oakland-Berkeley
Barry B.	SWP	San Francisco
Bob G.	SWP	San Francisco
Susan S.	SWP and YSA	San Francisco

We have sent letters stating the above to the appropriate branches of the SWP (San Francisco) with a copy to the USFI in Brussels. These letters also include information about where we can be contacted. The following letter is to inform you directly about our application (on learning from the Berkeley SWP that this was correct procedure) in the hopes that we can be admitted into the SWP as soon as possible.

Yours fraternally,
s/Jim Collins (for the
four names above)

* * *

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
July 29, 1974

Revolutionary Marxist Collective
Jim Collins
Barry B.
Bob G.
Susan S.

Dear Comrades of the Revolutionary Marxist Collective,
The purpose of this letter is to follow up on the July 19 meeting between you four comrades, the SWP Bay Area organizers, and myself. As you know, we made a concrete proposal to you to facilitate the dissolution of the RMC into the SWP. You indicated that you wanted some time to consider our proposal, and would discuss it further with us when I get back on the West Coast.

To aid our discussion, I would like to summarize our proposal. It was as follows:

That the party branches in the Bay Area and yourselves begin immediately a period of close political collaboration, leading toward the fusion of your group in the SWP. Concretely, we propose the following steps to be taken immediately: 1) That your political work be carried out in consultation with the Oakland/Berkeley and San Francisco organizers; to facilitate this, regular meetings would be set up between yourselves and the organizers. 2) That you begin to make regular financial contributions to the party. 3) That you collaborate with the party in helping to prepare and build the September 11 Chile actions being organized by USLA, and dissolve the Chile Solidarity Committee into USLA to strengthen our common work in this area. 4) That you attend forums. 5) That you undertake regular sales of *The Militant*, working with SWP members on sales teams. 6) That you help in SWP election campaign work.

Jim raised the question of whether you all could receive the internal discussion material of the SWP and the Fourth International in this period of collaboration, and we indicated that we thought this would be a good idea. Bob also raised the question of his work in the AFT; we indicated that this work, as all your political work, should be done in collaboration with the party. If Susan is in a position to work in building CLUW, she should work with our CLUW fraction.

Jim also raised the question of attendance by RMC members at the Oberlin educational conference in August. If you accept our proposal, it would be a good idea for you to come to Oberlin, since you would then have a chance to see the party as a national organization, and participate in discussions about party work in the period ahead.

When I arrive back on the West Coast, I'll get in touch with Jim through the Bay Area organizers.

Comradely,
s/Barry Sheppard
Organization Secretary
Socialist Workers Party

cc: Oakland/Berkeley SWP Organizer
San Francisco SWP Organizer
Political Committee

* * *

August 6, 1974
SWP
Berkeley, Calif.

Barry B.
San Francisco, Ca.

Dear Barry,
This letter is to confirm our telephone conversations on July 31 and Aug. 1. During those conversations you

indicated to me that the Revolutionary Marxist Collective had rejected our proposals for collaboration. You also indicated that you had your own proposals which you would send to us in writing.

Fraternally,
s/Jeff Powers
SWP organizer
Oakland/Berkeley

cc: SWP National Office
Barry S.
Steve C.
file

* * *

August 16, 1974

To: SWP (San Francisco); SWP-NO; USFI.

From: The members of the Revolutionary Marxist Collective (San Francisco-Berkeley) currently applying for membership in the SWP.

Dear Comrades,

On Friday, July 19, the four members of the Revolutionary Marxist Collective who are applying for admission to the SWP (JC, BB, BG, SS) met with three representatives of the SWP in San Francisco (BS, SC, JP) to discuss our application. At the end of a detailed and fraternal discussion, Cd BS of the SWP made a number of proposals for an interim working arrangement of our group with the SWP, proposals revolving around our submission to the discipline of the SWP in all public activities (such as our work on Chile solidarity) and a commitment to the SWP in terms of financial and political collaboration (selling papers, attending forums, working in election campaigns, etc.).

The focus of our discussion at this first meeting revolved around the question of submitting to the organizational discipline of the Socialist Workers Party. In particular, Cd BS focused on the alleged violations of this organizational discipline by the former Internationalist Tendency in the name of "carrying out the line of the Fourth International" and indicated that any such actions on our part would not fulfill the requirements of admission to the Party.

We objected at the time and we object now to the manner in which the SWP comrades introduced the question of the alleged "violations of discipline" of the former Internationalist Tendency. As we understand it, this expulsion is currently a matter at dispute in the FI and its leading bodies, and thus hardly a proper item of discussion during an application to join the SWP. Even were the item resolved, we would still object to the totally one-sided presentation of organizational disciplinary violations (alleged and otherwise) not only with regard to this tendency but to all previous tendencies as well.

However, the matter has been raised by the SWP representatives and is of obvious importance for us given our open and public support for the positions of the International Majority Tendency, (which are by the de-

isions of the recent 10th World Congress the positions of the FI as a whole). We therefore feel it necessary to give our positions on the major questions of politics and discipline raised by the SWP representatives in order to clarify the future discussion. These positions have been arrived at only after lengthy discussion, which explains the delay in writing our response.

Firstly we must state our belief that the expulsion of the Internationalist Tendency (for it was in fact an expulsion as we read the documents) was totally unjustified on organizational or political grounds and appears to be an attempt to quash internal and international political differences with the politics of the SWP. Moreover, the references in the document to the Revolutionary Marxist Collective are tendentious, misleading and erroneous. The fact that some members of the RMC know some members of the IT is hardly grounds for insinuating factional activity on either our part or on the part of the IT, which we deny and for which the SWP majority has adduced no proof whatsoever.

Secondly, we must state our total astonishment for the political "deviations" of which the Tendency is accused. Since when is selling the press of the FI or handing out official statements of the FI a crime? Since when is it a crime to know and talk to other supporters of the FI inside or outside the party, or indeed with members of opposing political tendencies or beliefs? Since when is it illegal to organize a tendency inside the SWP, for the new interpretations of the SWP majority of organizational discipline practically make any oppositional tendency inside the party impossible?

It is clear that these "deviations" are also assumed to apply to the members of the Revolutionary Collective. For we have stated our open support for the politics of the majority of the Fourth International as did the Tendency. We have sold the press of the Canadian RMG and distributed the Chile statements of the USFI and sold Inprecor, as has the tendency. Moreover, we have put forward in Non Intervention in Chile and in the San Francisco Chile Solidarity Committee the politics of the FI, as well as our document on Chile which is largely drawn from articles in Rouge and which applies the analysis of the FI to the current situation in the USA. Finally, we try to talk about the politics of the Fourth International with militants inside and outside the party, as did the Internationalist Tendency.

Which brings us to the question of the conditions the SWP sets for our admission into the SWP. What do these conditions involve? They involve:

ceasing to put forward the position of solidarity with the workers and peasants of Chile in the Chile Solidarity Movement;

breaking off the political contacts we have gained through our six months of political activity in the Bay Area;

ceasing to sell the press of the Fourth International, notably Inprecor and the Old Mole.

At the same time as we are under the discipline of the party, we will not be allowed into any internal meetings of the party and have been told or warned that expression of serious political differences with the politics of the SWP to members of the Party or YSA could work unfavourably against our admission into the Party.

These conditions mean nothing more nor less than the political destruction and suppression of the politics of the Fourth International in the Bay Area. The position of the International on Chile cannot be put forward, we are told; nor can the press of the International be sold. And furthermore, you had better not even try to put these politics forward within the party for you will not be invited to our internal meetings and discussions with individuals will weigh against you.

We cannot accept these conditions, which amount to political and organizational muzzling of the politics of the USFI in the Bay Area. This is particularly vital given the disgraceful performance of USLA at the recent regional planning conference for the September 11 events on Chile in this area, where the SWP members present publicly spoke and voted against the politics of the FI as expressed in the recent declaration on Chile solidarity on September 11, politics which we are attempting to carry out.

Having stated our positions on these questions, we would like some points of clarification from the SWP and from the USFI regarding certain questions of organizational discipline and political line.

On Chile work: does admission to the SWP/FI mean that we have to drop our current ongoing *solidarity* work and sales of literature espousing that position and restrict our politics on Chile to those of USLA?

On publications: does admission to the SWP/FI mean, as Cd BS asserts, that we will not be able to sell the press of other sections and sympathizing organizations of the FI?

On political differences inside the Party: What are exact limitations on organized political tendencies or factions inside the SWP and inside the FI?

On finances: Does the non-payment of 10 percent of income (a stipulation not in the SWP constitution and not used as the basis for SWP payments, if any, to the USFI) disqualify one from membership in the party?

On party discipline: What are the procedures and approximate time periods for challenging the line of the party on a particular issue, for instance a desire to sell the publications of the FI at a particular demonstration; or the desire to represent the line of USFI statements in public Chile meetings? It seems to us that in certain extreme and very important political situations, *political* concerns should predominate over organizational fetishism.

In general we would like further clarification from both the SWP and the USFI of what is meant by "carrying out the line of the Fourth International" (which according to its constitution is a democratic centralist International) while at the same time submitting to the organizational discipline of the Socialist Workers Party.

Until such clarification, we cannot foresee agreeing to the complete suppression of the politics of the USFI in this area, which the conditions raised by the SWP for our (possible) admission into the party would involve.

We would suggest a meeting with representatives of the SWP as soon as mutually convenient to discuss this response and related issues. In the interim, we will participate in SWP forums and (wherever possible) we will

plan our political activities in collaboration with the Party. One such activity would be the implementation of the political declaration of the USFI on the September 11 demonstrations in solidarity with the workers and peasants in Chile.

Finally, as per our earlier request (at the July 19 meeting), we would request that the SWP make available such documents as further clarify the currently disputed questions, documents from both International and Internal SWP debate and discussion.

Fraternally,
s/Jim Collins
for the RMC members
Jim Collins
Barry B.
Susan S.
Robert G.

* * *

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
November 27, 1974

Revolutionary Marxist Collective

Dear Comrades,

In a letter dated July 9, 1974, you applied for membership in the SWP. On July 19, I and the two SWP Bay Area organizers had a meeting with you, which was summarized in my letter of July 29. We suggested a period of close political and organizational collaboration between the RMC and the SWP, leading to the dissolution of the RMC into the SWP. During this period, you would undertake to meet minimum membership requirements in the SWP as outlined in my July 19 letter.

Your letter of August 16, 1974 rejects our proposal out of hand. You raise spurious reasons for doing so. The bulk of your argument is that to abide by SWP discipline is tantamount to the "political destruction and suppression of the politics of the Fourth International in the Bay Area." Since your group in no way represents the politics of the Fourth International in the Bay Area or anywhere else, and since the politics of the Fourth International are represented in the Bay Area and the United States as a whole by the SWP—the sole sympathizing organization of the Fourth International in the United States—your argument is false. It also follows directly from this argument, as well as from your refusal to meet these minimum requirements for membership in the SWP, that you are not able to abide by the discipline of the SWP, in spite of your original statement to the contrary.

Further, you include in your August 16 letter a series of false and scurrilous charges against the SWP.

Obviously, further negotiations are pointless, and we consider the matter closed.

Comradely,
s/Barry Sheppard
for the Political Bureau
Socialist Workers Party

IV. Correspondence with the Los Angeles Socialist Union

Los Angeles
July 16, 1974

City Organizer
Los Angeles Local
Socialist Workers Party

Dear Comrade:

We, whose names appear below, are members of Socialist Union, a local independent Trotskyist organization. We are in essential agreement with the program, policies and organizational principles of the Fourth International, have been circulating its press, and popularizing its policies and its work. We are naturally eager to be associated with the International and to help build a strong section in the U.S.

We have therefore decided to apply for membership in the S.W.P., since it is the sympathizing section in the U.S. (unaffiliated only because of the reactionary Voorheis Act), and to urge other independent supporters of the 4th to do likewise.

We are aware of the division within the F.I. We are in general agreement with the positions of the majority tendency (IMT). Since these differences are obviously permissible within the S.W.P. and the International, this should not present any obstacle to our admission. We are, of course, prepared to abide by the decisions of the party and to accept its discipline.

Our organization grew out of a small study group consisting of independent Trotskyists (formerly members of Liberation Union). Last summer we formed the Socialist Union and began to engage in propaganda and action projects. We initiated the Farm Workers Support Coalition, which you joined, and which was quite effective, as you know.

Next, we initiated the Lawton-Gardner Defense Committee in connection with the third frame-up trial. This committee is carrying out effective work of publicity, fund-raising and demonstrations. Some of your members have participated in several of these activities.

Our comrades active in La Raza Unida Party were the initiators of the demonstration around the Mexican Consulate on May 18, 1974, protesting the recent arrests and torture of revolutionaries across the border. This was quite successful, (as reported in the *Militant*), and we were glad to see a contingent from USLA on the picket line.

In addition to these actions which we initiated, we participated in demonstrations organized by others, including the S.W.P. Thus, as you know, we helped to build the May 11th demonstration against the Chilean junta. We intervened with effective banners and literature, which in addition to demanding freedom for political prisoners, called for support to the resistance and for a Socialist Chile. Our banners also popularized the symbol of the Fourth International.

We also participated actively in the demonstration in the Black community protesting the assault by the police against the community and the brutal murder of the SLA members.

In all public activities we sold and/or distributed literature of the F.I. and some of its sections.

Throughout our brief existence, we have continued our studies uninterrupted. This has served both to educate our cadres and to win new people to Trotskyist ideas. At present we have a study group in process on the history of revolutions and counterrevolutions in the capitalist era. More than 20 members and contacts participate, including a number of Blacks and Chicanos.

Our action projects, combined with our study groups and participation in community organizations, have born fruit. We have gained 12 new members, including 5 who are members of oppressed minorities, and a number of close sympathizers and contacts. Our Chicano comrades have recently begun a new class in the barrio which looks promising.

Of our 19 comrades, 16 reside in the L.A. area, and 3 in Riverside, and 6 are members of oppressed minorities. We have a fraction of 3 in La Raza Unida Party, 6 in the Food Conspiracy, (a radical community organization), and several in unions. About half of our members were formerly associated with the S.W.P. or the Y.S.A. and have been reactivated.

We are certain that our group can make a substantial contribution toward building a strong local of the S.W.P. in Southern California.

We are prepared to meet with representatives of the Los Angeles S.W.P. local at your convenience to expedite the dissolution of the Socialist Union into the Socialist Workers Party.

Alejandro A.	Comradely,
Don A.	Samirah L.
Susan B.	Alvaro M.
Woody D.	Jesus M.
Adrienne di D.	Melody R.
Jeff H.	Stephan S.
Mickey H.	Evelyn T.
Jeanne H.	Frank W.
Nadine K.	Pearl W.
	Edith Z.
	Milton Zaslow

cc: USFI

* * *

July 17, 1974

Socialist Union
c/o Milton Zaslow

Dear Comrades of the Socialist Union,

I have received your letter of July 16, 1974, signed by Alejandro A. and 18 others, requesting a meeting with representatives of the Los Angeles SWP local "to expedite the dissolution of the Socialist Union into the Socialist Workers Party."

Of course, we are pleased that your organization has

come to the conclusion that it is in "essential agreement with the program, policies and organizational principles of the Fourth International" and therefore you want to join the SWP.

I propose that your group as a whole meet with myself, as the Los Angeles City Organizer and as representative of the SWP Political Committee, and the two Los Angeles branch organizers to discuss this question. For the next few days, however, I will be in the Bay Area, for a similar discussion with members of the Revolutionary Marxist Collective who have also raised the question of joining the SWP. Following those meetings, I am going on th New York for about a week on national SWP business. When I return, I'll put other things aside so we can hold this proposed meeting as soon as possible. Thus, we could hold the meeting sometime during the week of July 29-August 3, if this is convenient for you.

I will contact Milt Zaslow by telephone upon my return to Los Angeles.

Comradely,
s/Barry Sheppard

cc: Westside L.A. SWP Organizer
Central-East L.A. SWP Organizer
Political Committee

* * *

August 5, 1974

Socialist Union
c/o Milt Zaslow

Dear Comrades of the Socialist Union,

This is to confirm my telephone conversation with Milt to the effect that we will meet with the comrades of the Socialist Union at 10 a.m. Saturday, August 10 at the SWP hall, 710 S. Westlake.

In preparation for this meeting, we make the following proposal: To facilitate the dissolution of the Socialist Union into the SWP, we propose that the comrades of the Socialist Union begin immediately a period of close political and organizational collaboration with the SWP in Los Angeles.

Specifically, we propose that the comrades of the Socialist Union, during this period of collaboration, carry out their political work in all areas in collaboration with and under the direction of the L.A. SWP branches, and to accomplish this, that regular meetings be set up between the Socialist Union comrades and the branch organizers. This would include the following: 1) Comrades of the Socialist Union would take regular sales assignments of *The Militant* each week, functioning as part of the branch sales teams. 2) The SU comrades would collaborate in helping to build USLA in Los Angeles and in helping to build the September Chile demonstrations under USLA slogans. 3) The work of those SU comrades who are helping to build La Raza Unida Party be carried out under the direction of the SWP branches. 4) The work of SU comrades involved in building CLUW or in other union work be carried out

in collaboration with and under the direction of the appropriate party fractions. 5) Comrades of the Socialist Union would be assigned to help build the SWP election campaign; the Socialist Union would issue immediately a public statement supporting the SWP campaign. 6) All comrades of the Socialist Union would make regular financial contributions to the party, according to their means. 7) SU comrades would regularly attend branch forums. 8) Any study classes currently being conducted by the SU would be organized in collaboration with the branches of the SWP.

If the comrades of the Socialist Union accept this proposal for a period of close collaboration with the Los Angeles branches, leading to the dissolution of the Socialist Union into the SWP, we would also like to suggest that it would be a good idea for as many of the SU members who can make it to come to the Socialist Activists and Educational Conference the YSA and SWP are holding August 17-25 in Ohio. This would help you get a better picture of the party nationally, and give you the opportunity to participate in the discussions we will be holding there about party work for the fall.

Comradely,
s/Barry Sheppard

cc: Political Committee
L.A. organizers

* * *

August 12, 1974

Socialist Union
c/o Milt Zaslow

Dear Comrades of the Socialist Union,

On Saturday, August 10, 1974 a delegation from the Socialist Union met with a delegation from the SWP to discuss the question of the dissolution of the Socialist Union into the SWP. At this meeting, you stated that our proposal to begin a period of organizational and political collaboration between the SU and the SWP, as outlined in my letter of August 5, was unacceptable to you. You stated that while you were not opposed to beginning a period of collaboration in principle, you objected to our proposals because you do not want to help build the Socialist Workers Party during this period of collaboration.

We suggested, and you agreed, that you prepare a written counter-proposal, outlining the kind of collaboration you would like to have preparatory to the dissolution of the SU into the SWP. We all agreed that we would hold another meeting after we had had a chance to consider your counterproposal.

There are two other matters that developed in the course of the August 10 meeting that we think you should clarify as part of your counter-proposal.

The first of these concerns the political evaluation of the SWP held by the SU. During the meeting, reference was made to the fact that some of the present members of the SU were formerly members of the SWP. One SU comrade, Comrade Mickie H., resigned from the SWP as recently as April 15. When she resigned, Comrade Mickie submitted a statement to the SWP, which charged that the SWP had "abandoned its revolutionary duty in the U.S." and internationally, and that the SWP lacked

an "international perspective" as well as a "class perspective" which makes the SWP "an obstacle to the world revolution rather than a part of it." She concluded: "These observations and conclusions have led to my conviction that the SWP/YSA will not be the vanguard party of the American Socialist Revolution. This is the cause of my resignation." At the August 10 meeting, I read aloud these passages of Comrade Mickie's statement and Comrade Mickie, who was present as part of your delegation, said that she still holds to the characterization of the SWP contained in these statements. Comrade Milt Zaslow, when asked what characterization the SU would make of the SWP, replied that while the SU considered the SWP to be within the Trotskyist movement, it was "sick" and only "possibly reformable."

We would like to know how many members of the SU hold opinions of the SWP similar to Comrade Mickie's, and would like to know exactly what is the political evaluation of the SWP held by the majority of SU members.

The second matter came up when Comrade Zaslow stated that there was a new condition to the SU's proposal to join the SWP. He stated that the application of the SU to join the SWP was conditional upon the Internationalist Tendency party being re-admitted into the SWP. I explained that the ITP had split the SWP, and therefore was no longer part of the sole sympathizing organization of the Fourth International in the United States.

We would appreciate your clarification of this point.

Comradely,
s/Barry Sheppard

cc: Political Committee
East-Central L.A. SWP organizer
Westside SWP organizer

* * *

August 28, 1974
[received 9/7/74]

Socialist Workers Party
c/o Barry Sheppard

Dear Comrades:

We received your letter of August 12, 1974. The ostensible purpose of the letter is (1) to solicit a written counterproposal from us regarding collaboration, (2) determine (a) how many members of the Socialist Union hold to the opinion of Comrade Mickie H. and exactly what our political evaluation of the SWP is, and (b) what relationship we see between our application for membership and the demand of the expelled IT members for reintegration [sic] in the SWP.

If this were the *real* purpose of the letter, it would be entirely superfluous, since all this was fully dealt with in our discussion of August 10, which you have on tape. (Incidentally, we will contact you shortly for a copy of the tapes as per our agreement.)

We are reluctantly compelled to conclude that the real purpose of your otherwise unnecessary letter, with its slanted account of the proceedings of the meeting of August 10, was not written for our benefit, but for a

much broader audience, i.e., for propaganda purposes.

We will, therefore, reply for the benefit of the same audience, on the assumption that you will distribute copies of this letter to all those who received yours.

We did indeed reject your proposal for "collaboration" between the SWP and SU, because, in our opinion, it was not a proposal for collaboration at all, but for the dissolution of the SU and assignment of its assets to the SWP without the benefits of membership, and without the slightest assurance that we ever would be accepted into membership. You propose that our "political work in *all* areas" be carried out "in collaboration with and *under the direction of the L.A. SWP branches.*" (our emphasis) This is then spelled out in clear detail: our money, our time, our energies, our fractions, our classes, (hence, our contacts), are all to be placed at the disposal of the SWP. This naturally means, in effect, that we drain our own organization of all its resources, while helping to "build the SWP."

But, you ask: why if we want to join the SWP do we object to building it? We offered to dissolve our organization entirely and help build the SWP as loyal disciplined members. We did *not* offer to dissolve SU to become loyal disciplined *non-members*. If we are not permitted to work as first class members of the SWP, with full rights, then we have no choice but to work through our own organization which, unavoidably, and through no fault of ours, places us in competition with the SWP. You cannot have it both ways: you cannot expect us to abandon our independent organization and freeze us out of the SWP at the same time. We decline to become an auxiliary of the SWP without voice or vote in its decisions.

But perhaps we should trust you to open the closely guarded doors to us in good time, (3 months? 6 months? 6 years?), if we prove our good faith? But your insistence on a prior period of collaboration means that *you* have doubts about *us*, and need to test us. Why then do you expect *us* to demonstrate complete confidence in *you*? If there is to be a period of testing it will be *mutual testing*, which means that we will *really collaborate*, and that means as independent organizations, without any subordination on either side. But besides all that, have you forgotten so soon . . . *we have been through all this before!* When the comrades, then organized in Liberation Union, applied for membership, you were ready to accept all, (without this kind of so-called "collaboration"), except Comrade Zaslow, the founder and organizer of the group. Hewas to go through this kind of "collaboration" first, and then if all went well, he would be able to join his comrades in the SWP. Although it was a bitter pill, they decided to "trust" you, and went along in good faith. Eight comrades joined the SWP, and Comrade Zaslow "collaborated" from the outside. What was the upshot? After 6 months, he was interrogated for 6 hours — on tape — in a deliberate attempt to dig out every possible difference (which he never tried to hide), and was then rejected, not for faulty "collaboration" at all, but for having certain opinions. . . . opinions which were widely held within the Fourth International and the SWP.

The letter sent to Comrade Zaslow informing him of his rejection did not refer, by a single word, to any fail-

ure in "collaboration", only to his differences. Above all he was barred because he refused to confess that in 1953 he "participated in an unprincipled bloc with the aim of liquidating the party." But all this could have been ascertained by asking him these questions *before* the "collaboration!"

Furthermore, Comrade Zaslow has *still* not changed his mind. Why then are you proposing to accept him now, i.e., after an unspecified period of "collaboration?" Have you decided that you were wrong after all in excluding him because of his differences? If so, it would be good to hear that from you. If not, then the proposal to "collaborate"—once more—prior to being accepted into membership, is a hoax.

So, to sum up: we applied for membership in the SWP. You refuse to let us in without a testing period. We don't think that it is necessary, but if you insist, our reply is then we will both test each other.

That is, we propose a period of *genuine* collaboration. We propose that we agree upon a number of areas that seem most suitable for cooperation. We have in mind, for example, the campaign against the use of violence on the left, which has stirred up much interest and discussion in left wing circles, and has already put the Stalinist hoodlum elements on the defensive. It offers an excellent opportunity for educating newly radicalized youth on the question of workers democracy and principled relations among working class organizations. We can collaborate on a common policy for the struggle against those who are attempting to sabotage this effort. We observed regretfully that the SWP, although invited verbally and in writing, was one of the few left organizations that was not represented at the first conference on August 17.

We think the Lawton-Gardner frame-up trial is another issue around which we can work together. The trial is scheduled to begin on September 26, and the interest and tempo of activities should increase.

Regarding classes; we think it might be a good idea if there were cross representation, i.e., if some of our members participated in your classes, and vice-versa.

Where we have common fractions, we suggest that joint fraction meetings be held, with the participation of one or more representatives of both executive committees, in an attempt to arrive at common policies.

As part of an overall plan of collaboration, SU would declare its support for the SWP candidates, would supply speakers at election rallies, forums, etc., and would issue campaign literature. We must say frankly, however, that we do not attach the same importance to this particular election campaign as you do, (especially since you are compelled to conduct a write-in campaign), and therefore could not give it the high priority that you do.

We are open to suggestions for other areas of cooperation.

Now, on the matter of Comrade Mickey H.'s letter of resignation, which you quoted so extensively (and which had previously been read by you to us at the meeting). As we have already told you, these are Comrade Mickey's personal views, and not those of the group. What is your purpose in raising this question again? You should be pleased to know Comrade Mickey has not been lost to the movement, that indeed she is an active, responsible

member of our executive committee, and is our literature director. You should instead be asking yourselves how you managed so completely to alienate such a fine young comrade. In any case, she has told you that she is prepared to rejoin if the entire SU group is accepted, and work as a disciplined member.

Regarding Comrade Zaslow's comments in response to your question as to whether he considered the SWP to be healthy, he replied that he thought the party suffered from a certain illness, but not fatally so. He refused to absolutely guarantee that it could be reformed.

Finally, with regard to the IT comrades whom you have recently purged. Since they are our co-thinkers, their fate is naturally not a matter of indifference to us. We obviously wish to be associated with them, and therefore we see the question of the reintegration of the IT comrades in the SWP and the acceptance of the SU comrades as being closely related.

We take this occasion to express our outrage at the expulsion of the entire opposition tendency without a pretense of a trial—without written charges, without a hearing, without an opportunity to defend themselves. There is absolutely no precedent for this in the history of the Trotskyist movement. Even the Trotskyist left oppositionists were accorded the formality of a trial in the Stalinized C.I. This constitutes a scandal which will terribly damage the reputation of Trotskyism, and provide invaluable ammunition to all of our enemies. It is a particularly reprehensible act when we recall that you raised an enormous hue and cry when the IMG national committee voted to *censure one* comrade without written charges, a hearing, etc. etc. We think that this achieves a new low in hypocrisy and cynicism.

Comradely,
Milton Zaslow, for
Socialist Union

P.S. We just learned that you have rejected the request of the City Terrace chapter of the La Raza Unida Party that you withdraw your candidates running in the East L.A. elections, inasmuch as it (LRUP) is running a full slate, and you claim to support it.

As you know, several of our comrades are members of LRUP-City Terrace, and are very active in its campaign. We, of course, support its full slate of candidates, even though critically, since its election platform falls far short of a revolutionary socialist program. This organization, its candidates and program reflect, even if inadequately, the interests of the masses of the barrio as against the Democratic and Republican agents of their exploiters and oppressors, and it has the support of the more advanced strata of these masses. The SWP is completely isolated in the community. Your profession of support to the LRUP candidates, while you run in direct competition with them, can only appear to Chicano militants as pure hypocrisy. We think your policy in this matter is sectarian, arrogant and insensitive.

We therefore favor the withdrawal of your candidates in that election, and will not support them if they run.

* * *

14 Charles Lane
New York, N. Y. 10014
November 27, 1974

Socialist Union
c/o Milt Zaslow

Dear Comrades,

In response to your letter of July 16, 1974, in which you stated that the Socialist Union desired to dissolve itself into the SWP, we made a series of proposals to you, contained in my letter of August 5. We suggested a period of close political and organizational collaboration between the SU and the SWP, leading to the dissolution of the SU into the SWP. During this period, you would undertake to meet minimum membership requirements in the SWP, as outlined in my August 5 letter.

At your meeting of August 10, you rejected our proposal. Your letter of August 28 reiterates this stand, raising spurious and irrelevant reasons for doing so.

The bulk of your argument is that you do not wish to build the SWP, even for a short period, unless you are immediately taken into the SWP. This spurious argument reflects your characterization of the SWP as ill and only possibly reformable. The fact that you find it impossible, even for a short time, to meet the minimum membership requirements of the SWP demonstrates that in fact you are not able to abide by the discipline of the SWP, in spite of your original statement to the contrary.

In addition, your August 28 letter goes on to level false and scurrilous charges against the SWP. You even state that in any case, you will oppose our election campaign in East Los Angeles.

Obviously, further negotiations are pointless, and we consider the matter closed.

Comradely,
s/Barry Sheppard
for the Political Bureau
Socialist Workers Party

V. Correspondence with the Baltimore Marxist Group

12 July 1974

Socialist Workers Party
1345 E St. NW (4th fl)
Wash., D. C.

Dear Comrades:

We would like to formally apply for membership to the SWP as individuals. Presently, we are members of the Baltimore Marxist Group. We support the positions of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International and agree to abide by the discipline of the SWP.

Fraternally,
Rick E.
Michel S.
Jack S.
Lisa S.
D. M.

cc: SWP NO, New York City
F. I., Brussels

* * *

14 Charles Lane
New York, New York
July 20, 1974

Rick E.
Michel S.
Jack S.
Lisa S.
D. M.

c/o Michel S.
Baltimore, Md.

Dear Comrades,

We were pleased to receive a copy of your letter dated July 12, 1974 applying for membership in the SWP.

We would like to discuss this with you as soon as possible. I suggest that your group meet together with myself, as a representative of the Political Committee of the SWP, and with Bitsy Myers, Washington, D. C. Organizer of the SWP. I plan to be in Washington on Tuesday, July 23, and can be available for a meeting either Tuesday afternoon, or any time Wednesday. Is this convenient for you? You can reach me through Bitsy Myers at the SWP offices in Washington. The address and phone number are:

SWP
1345 E Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20004
tel: (202) 783-2391

Comradely,
s/Gus Horowitz

cc: Washington, D. C. SWP Organizer

* * *

Socialist Workers Party
14 Charles Lane
New York, New York 10014
July 30, 1974

Baltimore Marxist Group

Rick E.
Michel S.
Jack S.
Lisa S.
D.M.

Dear Comrades,

I am writing to summarize the situation as it stands right now regarding your applications for membership in the SWP.

A meeting was held on July 24, 1974 between Rick, Michel, and D.M. of the BMG; Bitsy Myers, Washington, D.C. Organizer of the SWP; and myself, from the Political Committee of the SWP. Jack and Lisa were unable to attend the meeting, but their application still stands, and I assume Rick, Michel and D.M. will report to them on this first meeting between us.

Most of the discussion concerned the political views of the SWP and the BMG on world and national politics.

During the discussion you stated that your proposal was to dissolve the BMG into the SWP.

In order to facilitate the dissolution of the BMG into the SWP, we proposed the following to you: 1. That we jointly carry out sales of *The Militant* in Baltimore, and sell subscriptions jointly also. 2. That the BMG help in the work of building the SWP election campaign in Washington, D.C. In particular, we requested that you help in the petitioning mobilizations that have been underway in Washington. 3. That the BMG work with the SWP in support of the September 11 Chile demonstrations called by USLA. As we explained, it is SWP policy to carry out Chile work by helping the USLA, and we would like the BMG to help convince the supporters of the Chile Resistance Committee to participate in this work. 4. That SWP members participate in the two socialist study groups in which the BMG works, in order to help win the other people in these groups to Trotskyism. 5. That you attend forums. 6. That you contribute financially to the SWP.

You stated that before agreeing to the above proposals, you wanted to study the facts about the split of the Internationalist Tendency from the Socialist Workers Party, and to study the 1965 SWP resolution on the organizational principles of the SWP. In particular, you said you wanted to study the norms of the SWP with regard to the proper functioning of tendencies and factions.

Enclosed is a copy of SWP *Internal Information Bulletin*, No. 6 in 1974, "Materials Related to the Split of the Internationalist Tendency From the Socialist Workers Party." The cost is \$2.10. If you want any more copies, let us know and we will send them promptly (or if it is more convenient, copies should be available from the

Washington, D.C. branch of the SWP.) Also please let us know if you want any more copies of the 1965 SWP resolution, "The Organizational Character of the Socialist Workers Party."

To learn more about the views of the SWP, some of the best sources are *The Militant*, the *International Socialist Review*, and the publications of Pathfinder Press. Enclosed is a list of *Education for Socialists* bulletins, published by the SWP's National Education Department—you may not have seen all of these.

You told us that you already had copies of many of the internal bulletins of the SWP and the international internal discussion bulletins, which you had obtained from the Socialist Union in Los Angeles. If you send us a list of those bulletins which you already have, we can recommend additional reading to round out the discussion for you.

Comradely,
s/Gus Horowitz

cc: Bitsy Myers, Washington, D.C. SWP Organizer

* * *

August 15, 1974

Dear Don [Gus Horowitz]:

I wish to withdraw my application for membership in the SWP. I do this as an individual, and not as a member of the BMG, which I am no longer.

Any further correspondence with the BMG should be directed to the following address:

Rick E.
[street address]
Baltimore, Maryland

Michel S.

* * *

Baltimore, Md.
September 30, 1974

Gus Horowitz
Socialist Workers Party
14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014

Dear Comrade:

After the application of the members of the Baltimore Marxist Group and the subsequent meeting of the group with Bitsy Meyers and yourself, the BMG has studied the case of the Internationalist Tendency and has taken

the position that the IT was unjustifiably expelled from the SWP. Therefore we have decided to make the dissolution of the BMG into the SWP contingent upon the reintegration of the IT into the party. We would like to meet with you to discuss the matter further.

Comradely,
s/Jack S.

P.S. We are ordering a bundle of *Militants*.

cc. D.C. SWP branch

* * *

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
November 27, 1974

Baltimore Marxist Group

Dear Comrades,

On July 30, 1974, I sent you a letter summarizing our proposal for a period of close political and organizational collaboration between the BMG and the SWP, to facilitate the dissolution of the BMG into the SWP. During this period, you would undertake to meet minimum membership requirements in the SWP, as outlined in my letter.

Previously, at a meeting on July 24, you indicated that you wished to study the facts about the split of the Internationalist Tendency from the Socialist Workers Party before making up your minds as to whether you would agree to our proposals. In your letter of September 30, 1974 you do not mention our proposals, and we can only assume that you reject them, as you have taken no steps to meet these financial and other minimum requirements. Your unwillingness to do so indicates that you have no desire to meet these norms, and therefore are not able to abide by the discipline of the SWP in spite of your original statement to the contrary.

In addition, you now make a further condition upon your application, that the Internationalist Tendency party must be "reintegrated" with the SWP. The IT party organized and carried through a split of the SWP, as you are aware, and have maintained this course.

Obviously, further negotiations would be pointless, and we consider the matter closed.

Comradely,
Gus Horowitz
for the Political Bureau
Socialist Workers Party

* * *

VI. Letter from Jim Collins to the Internationalist Tendency Party Political Committee

July 19, 1974

Comrades,

This letter is in lieu of minutes about the recent activities of the RMC and particularly our relations to the SWP and the IT.

After the discussions with Charles, the RMC had a number of meetings where we discussed carrying out the mandate of the IMT as outlined by Charles about the specific way of applying to the SWP. Three of us decided to carry out this way if that became necessary at the end of our outside group discussion; SK decided against; CA and EB were not in town at the time, but EB is leaving the country and CA is not returning until the end of August (?). Neither was likely to agree to the perspective of the IMT in any case.

On hearing of the expulsion of the tendency, the three of us who had decided to comply eventually by the IMT perspectives agreed to carry out the application in that manner immediately. A letter was written and sent yesterday; also the first personal contacts with SWP members indicating our decision was made by JC in Berkeley yesterday.

As expected, the only thing the SWP was interested in was "Who we talked to in the tendency and the IMT". They said that all other considerations would be handled by their national office in New York. We have decided to tell them that we spoke to the following people on the following occasions, who tried to convince us to join the SWP:

Massey at the regional Chile conference in May

Garth at the meeting described in the SWP split document

Charles at the Chile Solidarity Committee film

None of these was prearranged; there are no letters; the other interchanges that have taken place were at public meetings of various types (particularly Chile), etc. It is important that this information be understood and accepted by the Tendency here (Garth) and nationally (Massey) and by the IMT (Charles). Also that Jim received letters with Zaslow and Rich in Baltimore if they demand that type of information; but the letters were thrown away; and we don't volunteer the information.

We intend to follow up our application with appearing and perhaps intervening at SWP public meetings; and discussing the applications with individual members and sympathizers of the SWP and the YSA. We are going to contact the tendency here about also indicating our knowledge of the expulsion of the IT from the SWP and our disapproval of that. If okayed, we will start discussions on this next week in private discussions with SWP and YSA members.

We also intend to work closely during this whole process with members inside the SWP, particularly Garth and Carlos. We would suggest the tendency approve joint meetings under adequate security precautions of course; to refuse such meetings in the guise of security seems incorrect given our current need to coordinate strategy and

tactics closely. We would also hope that in future the tendency leadership would contact us directly about any big change in the situation nationally; we can be conveniently reached at Barry's office or personal phone number, which we believe is in the hands of the IT.

For the next month, at least, we have defined our main area of work as being in and around the SWP-YSA and with the IT on this question. We are also continuing our work in the Chile Solidarity committee and NICH though little happens in either at the present time. A full discussion on Chile perspectives will take place this Sunday.

Our study group has been going now for two weeks; we are hoping to continue this as a permanent thing with a stable and growing number of supporters. A copy of our subject matter is enclosed (this is an abbreviation and alteration of suggested study matter from an outline for the IMG by Blackburn).

At the present time, we are trying to get together some analysis of the other forms on the far left, notably the Maoists and the anti-Leninists (SR, RA, NAM). This will be for some newspaper or journal articles as well as for internal discussion.

We are sorely in need of sufficient and timely publications of the FI. We would like to know if Chicago can handle these for us or if we should order directly. We intend to send in a check for INPRECOR subscriptions shortly; in the meantime we must report that we have only been getting ten copies of cc 0 and "1" which is entirely insufficient; we want 30 cc an issue please.

Secondly, our RMC postal address works if addressed not to any individual or another person than RMC. We would like mail to be readdressed to this PO Box.

Thirdly, we have received no copies of the OLD MOLE since May. We have not even received the Chile supplement as yet. Can Chicago check on this or are we to deal directly with Toronto?

Fourthly, we have not received the new copy of *Internationalist* as yet. Have these been sent out?

Fifthly, are we to receive copies of the IT internal mailings? In particular, we would like to receive all the information everyone else in the tendency gets about the recent expulsion from the SWP. We would also like to be included in any preparations for a Central Committee meeting which may be planned in the future, and some information about our representation in such a meeting now that we have applied to the SWP.

As a personal aside, I would hope that documents would be prepared for the eventuality that the tendency will not be allowed back into the SWP; and also some statement from the leadership of the tendency for the joint functioning of the tendency and the outside groups in the interim, as well as afterwards.

Yours,
s/Jim Collins

P.S. As indicated by phone, cd. SS has joined the RMC and is applying with us to SWP and also YSA.

VII. Letter from Russell Welch and Cheryl Clark to the Kompass Tendency

Russell Welch and
Cheryl Clark
Houston, Texas
Sept. 3, 1974

Herbert Obenland
Frankfurt, Germany

Dear Comrades:

As members of the Internationalist Tendency for the past two years we have become increasingly concerned over the IT's position on the nature of the SWP and our subsequent attitude toward it. Seeing the SWP as reformist, we think the only principled conclusion is an open, immediate political break with it, notwithstanding Comrade Germain's opportunist organizational maneuvers. We also think the IT has tended to rubber stamp IMT political positions in the past with little discussion internally, passively accepting their politics as a lesser evil to those of the SWP.

We are enclosing a document we have just submitted for adoption at the upcoming IT plenum. Also, we recently went through Winnipeg, Canada on a vacation and found some comrades in the RMG who we discovered to be in political agreement with ourselves. We are also enclosing a copy of their recent declaration of tendency which we intend to solidarize with and submit for consideration to the IT at its upcoming plenum. We would be anxious to hear any comments or observations you have on the documents.

Another problem we face in the IT is our lack of information on the actual practices of the European sections. They've always been held up as models to us, but we've never had access to any substantive information as to their actual political practice. Any information in this regard you think significant would be greatly appreciated.

Communist greetings,
s/Russell Welch
s/Cheryl Clark

Our attitude toward and our evaluation of the SWP has been a political question that has racked our tendency for over a year. A number of differing opinions have been expressed: the SWP is centrist; it's not quite centrist yet; the SWP is a right opportunist sect; it's not quite a right opportunist sect yet. These differences are quite serious, because they should, for principled Marxists determine our policy toward the SWP. But to date we have yet to undertake any serious attempts to resolve this question. The seriousness of this question has increased greatly in our relationship with the IMT, which has always had an incorrect analysis of the SWP, and has led to completely inadequate practical conclusions on their part for us and our relation to the SWP.

To date the debate has mostly been a tactical one, the point of departure has been how many recruits we

can get and from where. This is insufficient. There are fundamental political issues at stake. If we are serious about winning the proletariat to Trotskyism we will not stand before them and tell them they must join an SWP that is *rotten and reformist*. We were wrong to think this in the past and it would be criminal to continue to function with this position.

If we purport to be Trotskyists we cannot tell workers, we cannot tell any politicized elements we are in political contact with, to join a party of betrayers. The SWP has not merely failed to carry out its revolutionary responsibilities in every arena it intervenes in, not just recently, but for a number of years. Its approach to work in the anti-war, women's and Black movements, its trade union work, work in CLUW, its election campaign, etc., reflects not tactical, secondary political differences, but fundamental political differences of a principled character in each arena. The SWP has functioned as shameless attorneys, defending every kind of bourgeois liberal and mainline trade union bureaucrat.

That Comrade Charles can come here and tell us, as the IMT's representative, that we should "recruit organizationally to the SWP, but politically to the IMT (or FI)" indicates major political disorientation on the part of the IMT itself, or worse, simple cynicism. There is but one correct political answer to the reformism of the SWP. To build a Trotskyist party in the U. S. it is necessary to counterpose ourselves politically and organizationally to the SWP, whose concrete politics are the antithesis of everything the Fourth International stood for under Trotsky. It is necessary to break completely from the SWP and break now. It might be argued that the SWP expelled us, we want to expose them and their organizational degeneration. In reality, this is a trivial point. The SWP's degeneration is also and *primarily* political. A complete political break is both politically justified and necessary.

It has been our (the authors) position for quite some time that the SWP is a reformist party. It constitutes a roadblock to the socialist revolution in this country. It is not a question of centrist confusion or of occasional opportunist deviations on the SWP's part. The politics of the SWP are consistently and fundamentally counter to those of the Transitional Program and the heritage of Leninism. The IMT leadership has long claimed ignorance of what the SWP's policies really are (even though it is their political responsibility at all times to know)—we cannot. We have been implementing their reformist policies for years. We will cite just a few examples.

For many years the SWP pursued a class-collaborationist policy in its anti-war work. This was not primarily because of Vance Hartke's presence in NPAC, though this was indicative. In the earlier days of the movement the SWP toyed around with a bloc around "Peace Now," they went through a "Bring the Boys Home" phase. Their call to bring the troops home from Vietnam to enforce law and order in Mississippi was despicable as was their publicizing of the slogan "Bring our Black GI's

Back Home."

It's been said many times in our tendency that there were two tasks for revolutionaries on the Vietnam question: 1) to build a mass anti-war movement; and 2) build a left wing within this movement. It's been further stated that the SWP did an admirable job in one respect and failed dismally in the other; then somehow we conclude since they carried out one they can't be so bad. This approach is wrong comrades, terribly wrong. What were the politics of this mass anti-war movement? They were bourgeois pacifism and bourgeois defeatism.

The two cannot be separated. On what basis do we build the anti-war movement, except upon the same basis that we would build the left-wing—upon class struggle politics? How do we put the mass movement together, to have something in which to build our left-wing? Do we have demands for the movement and separate demands for a left-wing?

The demand of "Out Now," outside the context of a revolutionary program, was easily twisted in the hands of the "dove" bourgeoisie. The SWP lent itself to this end. It's often been said that "Out Now" was a principled demand. That is true in the abstract, but that's not how we approach the question. There are instances where the demand for a constituent assembly will be a principled demand. But if a party in a revolutionary situation in a colonial country raised this "principled" demand and failed to raise all the other demands flowing from the concrete situation we would hardly praise their actions as exemplary. They would be betrayers despite their raising of one isolated "principled" demand.

The SWP blocked with any and all and raised no politics. This wasn't just a mistake of a secondary nature. It was a consciously political act on their part, they raised no politics precisely to create such a bloc. This is where their class collaboration really came out. Because NPAC openly sought an ongoing class bloc with the bourgeoisie on its terms it lent itself to the subversion of the anti-war movement. This is why the ruling class by pulling American troops out of Vietnam could completely undercut the mass anti-war movement. Yet American imperialism's counterrevolutionary struggle against the Vietnam revolution has not ceased and the question of the Vietnamese revolution retains all its significance for revolutionaries today, even if the SWP's "defense" of the revolution has ceased.

If we have learned anything from Lenin and Trotsky, it is that every struggle *must* be linked to the general struggle of the proletariat for power. Every struggle must be used to raise the consciousness of the participants of the true nature of class society and the necessary road forward, led by the working class and its vanguard; because the reformists will use every struggle to triumph with their line. A left-wing is merely an embryonic base to reach out to with our politics, to fight against other tendencies, to broaden itself, and vie with the reformists for leadership of the movement, on the basis of a revolutionary program.

The SWP's work in WONAAC was no different. At one time the SWP stood for free abortion on demand. But their program had to be lowered in order to bloc with NOW and Congresswoman Bella Abzug. The point here is not that you cannot march with bourgeois lib-

erals to obtain a democratic demand but that the SWP chose their issue precisely to obtain this bloc.

On the abortion question this amounted to betrayal on the SWP's part. The heart of the abortion question focused around the working women and women of the ghetto subject to the butchery of illegal, back-alley abortions. The "democratic right" to abortion has little content for them. Only the demand for "Free Abortion on Demand" had any relevance to the vast majority of women the abortion issue affects.

At the national CLUW conference in Chicago the SWP did nothing about the rotten compromise arranged by the union bureaucrats to keep the conference from backing the Farmworkers. In Houston we've been following a series of sellouts in CLUW by Debby Leonard on a nurses struggle at Jefferson Davis Hospital. A resolution calling for rehiring the nurses was tabled to a committee set up by Leonard, composed of herself, 2 AFSCME bureaucrats and 2 independents, to be approved without being subject to rank-and-file approval and this most elementary demand ("rehire the nurses") was deleted, on objections from the AFSCME leadership. We could cite numerous other examples of the SWP's treachery in their Black work, trade union work, election campaigns, etc.

It's often said, "Well, their day to day politics may be lousy, but on paper that [sic] are still for revolution". What are the SWP's politics if they are not what they call on the workers to do in the class struggle? These are not just practical mistakes, divergences from their program, in each case they have been theorized by the SWP and flow from their political analysis.

It's been said that the SWP still defends revolutionaries around the world. But what kind of defense? They vehemently opposed any attempts to raise slogans that would have taken sides in the civil war in Vietnam within NPAC, they refused to raise any such slogans themselves. Another good example is their defense of the ERP-PRT and more recently the Spanish section. Their "defense" was to publicly denounce them. How did the SWP defend the Internationalist Tendency from attacks in the bourgeois media? Can we expect better in the future? And what of their "exemplary" defense of the MIR in Chile.

Some comrades feel that as long as the SWP continues to talk about Trotskyism you can't say they're reformist; it has not yet met a definitive test. This is ridiculous, the SWP is not a mass party; its opportunities for real betrayals are limited. If it occasionally exhibits what appears to be centrist traits it is only because it has yet to find the final vehicle for its betrayals. Occasionally it may be able to come off sounding very left in the abstract on some questions but only because it has nothing going for it in the particular arena. On the evidence, it is only because it does not constitute enough of a force for the bourgeoisie to worry about that prevents it from betrayals such as entering into popular fronts. The idea that the SWP has not yet met a definitive test was introduced by Comrade Langston at the December 1973 IT national steering committee meeting. It was totally rejected by the leadership then and rightly so. Yet when the IMT's representative in June imposed this incorrect idea on us we all passively accepted it.

The IMT's perspectives for the IT raises real ques-

tions about its motives. Comrade Charles says the SWP is "revolutionary with right deviations." It is quite clear that this is the IMT's analysis. Yet at the same time they "have no illusions about the SWP leadership being reformable." Further, most of the ranks are not reformable. This is a very obvious contradiction to anyone with any basic understanding of Trotskyism. If the SWP is "revolutionary with right deviations," then we should view it as our party, further we should really believe that we can win this party over. The truth is the SWP is reformist; a complete political break is a clearcut necessity.

We are caught up in a game on an international scale and as things stand, we are only passive, observer-victims. Before the May conference, it was often said and the opinion was overwhelmingly held that a long term perspective within the SWP would mean our destruction. That was our political evaluation. Yet when Comrade Charles came and gave us the IMT's incorrect perspective for us we capitulated.

The four-point motion introduced by the comrades from D.C. at the May conference and which passed overwhelmingly was somewhat diluted by our leadership shortly afterward and the whole sense, the whole spirit behind the motion at the Conference, which was to take a hard stance on the question of our perspectives was lost. We chose to be "diplomatic." But diplomacy does not solve political problems. When our leaders accompanied Comrade Charles on his national tour of the IT a couple of weeks later, they did not represent the position we had taken at the conference, they were there to reinforce the IMT's position.

We were saved from our death then, not by our own doing, nor by the IMT, but by the SWP, through our expulsion.

We've known for some time Comrade Germaine's [sic] perspectives for us. Sell INPRECORs and do nothing else while a control commission spends months investigating and the USEC tries to pressure Barnes into taking us back. We have all generally agreed this will destroy us. At the recent expanded PC meeting (all but 6 members of the national steering committee were present) the position taken was that come hell or high water we will become an independent organization. But the PC has since taken a position that opens the door for our capitulation to the IMT once more.

A recent letter from Comrade Charles to the IT called our response to the SWP's split document remiss and weak. Further, we should admit and self-criticize ourselves for:

- 1) being too highly structured
- 2) being too forward on the May 11th actions (The IMT denies any responsibility for the distribution of the USEC statement on Chile)

3) not telling the SWP we were dealing with outside groups

4) not long ago declaring ourselves a faction

These charges are unbelievable! The IMT has politically condoned all these actions and when the question of a faction was posed to the International Majority *Tendency*, they opposed the idea. The PC met and voted to accept the essence of Charles' letter before our representatives went to Europe. This is in sharp contrast to the position taken at the expanded PC meeting.

It's often been said the IMT does not know the truth about the SWP. How many plane trips do Comrades Massey and Barzman have to make to Europe to explain? Comrade Charles' comments in June (political line didn't count in France in '68, what counted was apparatus and in the U.S. the SWP has the apparatus) clearly indicates the IMT wants to keep the SWP in the USEC, for its apparatus, to preserve the unity of the Fourth International. Why is it the IMT continues to subordinate fundamental political questions to organizational "unity"? If the IT goes down the drain, so what! If we're dedicated revolutionists, we'll take it all in stride. The IMT's attitude can be summed up very clearly as *better more, but worse*.

The IMT position is that:

- 1) a working class radicalization will go through the SWP, therefore, that is where the IT belongs
- 2) if there is not a working class radicalization in the foreseeable future, then the problem is one of preserving Trotskyist cadres and the SWP is the most viable place for this.

This approach is totally incorrect. They seek unity through diplomacy, politics be damned. Diplomacy will not solve the political problems.

Our differences with the IMT at this point can not be called organizational. They are very clearly political. The key difference being on our analysis of the SWP. Our own political position on this in the past has reflected our diplomatic relations with the IMT (which have been somewhat analagous [sic] to those of the IMT with Barnes) more than political reality. We must take the correct position on the nature of the SWP; that it is a reformist party, a roadblock in the path to socialist revolution. *We must split openly, publicly, completely with the SWP.* That is the only correct political conclusion. We do not want to imply that there is a common political outlook between ourselves and the Jebrac or Ali groups in the FCR and IMG respectively, we do not agree with their basic strategy. But we wholeheartedly agree with them that a revolutionary international can not include the SWP! That is the political reality. *We must split now, immediately and put the political onus on the IMT to act as principled Trotskyist internationalists!*

VIII. Letter from Russell Welch and Cheryl Clark to the IMT Bureau

Russell Welch and
Cheryl Clark
Houston, Texas
October 25, 1974

IMT Steering Committee
c/o Pierre Frank
Paris, France

Dear Comrades:

We are writing to inform you of our recent expulsion from the Internationalist Tendency. Our positions placed us outside the bounds of the IT, therefore we were expelled; that was the motivation given, quite similar to Barnes' justification for the expulsion ("split") of the IT, without trials, without charges.

As members of the IT's national steering committee Cheryl and I submitted a document on the nature of the SWP in August for consideration at the IT plenum held October 12-13. At the end of August, we were on vacation in Canada, and met and discussed the positions of the Bolshevik-Leninist tendency in the RMG. We later came to independent agreement with their document after careful consideration and submitted it to the IT national steering committee for discussion.

On their return from Europe, Cde Massey and Barzman talked with us both on a number of occasions. Initially, we were told the documents would not be circulated for security reasons. Later, Cde Massey called to inform us the plenum was being postponed and asked again if we still wanted our documents distributed as documents would be distributed prior to the plenum. He said they would be sent out at that time, two weeks prior to the plenum. He also informed us we would have 20 minutes reporting time on the first point on the agenda. We agreed to this even though we knew then the first point (The nature of the International) was only on the agenda to politically isolate us prior to the discussion on perspectives for the IT as Cde Massey had already informed us. We also stated we wanted extended time under the discussion on the IT's perspectives, which Cde Massey agreed to at that time. A week later we sent a letter to the PC requesting minority reporting time on this point which was never responded to.

Two days before the plenum we called again on the

status of our documents and were told they weren't out yet as the PC had decided that they had a low political priority.

At the plenum itself, we were expelled after the first point on the agenda. The ITPC handed out the Bolshevik-Leninist Tendency document and gave comrades 25 minutes to read it, then presented a short report recommending our exclusion for technical. The IT, you see, is only a tendency, differences could exist in a party, but not a tendency. An examination of the CLA after its expulsion from the CPUSA in 1928 exposes the incorrectness of their method. In our own report and summary, we made it clear we were not submitting the BLT document to a vote, rather we thought there were significant questions raised by certain actions of the IMT that warranted a much closer study of the FI, its history and practice, to enable us to draw the correct historical conclusions for our future development. We added that we support the BLT document but see it as just an initial step toward beginning this most important discussion.

We emphasized that while we had some differences with the IMT, we agree with the Transitional Program and adhere to the principles of democratic centralism and had and would uphold the program of the IMT in practice while fighting for our positions during discussion periods. Nevertheless, with the exception of Cheryl and myself, only one alternate member of the IT's national steering committee voted against our being excluded. The IT made it very clear both before and at the plenum they would prefer that we go to the Spartacist tendency than raise our viewpoint on the SWP inside the IT. The IT's action effectively suppressed our position on the SWP (that the SWP is reformist), as comrades were never allowed to see the document and we were barred from participating in the perspectives discussion.

This action reflects the worst traditions of the bureaucratic fetishism of Cde Barnes of the LTF and sets an extremely dangerous precedent in the IT, i.e., bureaucratic suppression of political disagreements, which can only hinder the development of our international movement. While we do not think this act represents the August 4th of the IMT, we think it is most indicative of tendencies in both factions of the USEC.

Comradely,
s/ Russell Welch
s/ Cheryl Clark

cc: United Secretariat
Herbert Obenland