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## On the Russian Question

By R. JOHNSON (WP of SA)

The International Bulletin for February, 1945, contains two contributions on the Russian Question: one a letter from Natalia and the other a letter from Martin. They both call for a revision of the position which the slogan "Unconditional Defence of the USSR" has occupied in the programme of the Fourth International up to now. They both call for a relegation of this slogan from the front rank to the background. As this is a matter of very great importance, we presume that it will be the subject of the widest discussion in the ranks of the International before any decision is taken. With this end in view we wish to make the following contribution to the discussion.

The Fourth International's main thesis on the character of the Soviet Union and the slogan for the unconditional defence of the Soviet Union, which flowed therefrom, were the chief features which distinguished our Marxist position from that of all the pseudo-Marxist bodies. In the last decade these were at once the corner-stone and the testing instrument for the sifting out and

elimination of all the petit-bourgeois tendencies which tagged themselves on to our movement. Literally all the petit-bourgeois stumbled and broke on the evaluation of the Soviet Union and the distinction between Stalinism and the Soviet Union. The Eastmans, the Hooks, the Souvarines, Serges, Eugene Lyonses, the Piverts, Shachtmans and Burnhams—all broke down on this test. Unlike ourselves, these eclectics abandoned the testing-rod of Marxism, Lenin's theory of the State, the class basis of fascism and imperialism on the one hand, and the Soviet Union on the other. Relying solely upon the crimes of Stalinism as their empiricist yard-stick, they remained wilfully blind and deaf to the basic economic structure and class relations as brought about by the October Revolution and still left intact. While they dropped out, one by one, after each new crime of the Stalinist bureaucracy (for them identical with the Soviet Union), our Marxist position on the character of the Soviet Union stood up to the test of events—in spite of the Moscow Trials, the Hitler-Stalin Pact,

**Finland.** We condemned Stalinism and its criminal policies, but we defended the conquests of October. "Unconditional Defense of the USSR signifies, namely, that our policy is not determined by the deeds, manoeuvres or crimes of the Kremlin Bureaucracy, but only by our conception of the interests of the Soviet State and World Revolution." (L.T. "In Defense of Marxism," p. 39).

This slogan is a fundamental strategic evaluation in the process of the Permanent Revolution. For this reason all questions of a secondary nature, all temporary changes, all conjunctural shiftings in the political sphere must be subordinated to it. This slogan flows from our position of revolutionary internationalism as expressed in theses of Lenin and Trotsky and our rejection of Stalin's nationalistic theory of "Socialism in one country." This slogan was kept in the forefront of the Fourth International because, up to now, we have considered as valid Lenin's thesis: "We do not live merely in a State but in a system of States and the existence of the Soviet Republic side by side with imperialist states for any length of time is inconceivable. In the end one or other must triumph." (Vol. 16, p. 102). If, then, it is now proposed to relegate this slogan to the second or third rank, it can only be done on the assumption of one of the following three alternatives: (1) That the thesis of Lenin and Trotsky is no longer valid, i.e., the two systems are no longer irreconcilable, and therefore can exist side by side indefinitely. (2) That Stalin's thesis is correct, i.e., Socialism has finally and irrevocably triumphed in the Soviet Union. (3) That Shachtman's thesis is correct, i.e., the counter-revolution has triumphed, and there is no difference between the Imperialist States and the Soviet Union. In 1940 our position was clear. (See "In Defense of Marxism" by L.T.) Let us see whether events since then have so radically changed the relation of forces between Imperialism and the Soviet Union as to make the question of the defence of the Soviet Union either superfluous or unjustifiable.

There can be no doubt that the Soviet Union emerged from the war against German Nazism in a stronger political position than upon her entry into it. Her political prestige extends far beyond those countries in the Balkans, Central and Eastern Europe which are under occupation or under the immediate influence of the Soviet Union. But at the same time the Soviet Union emerged from the war much weaker economically. There can be no doubt that the complete destruction of a large section of Soviet industry and agriculture has left the USSR much weaker today vis-a-vis world imperialism, than she was in 1940. The impression that the USSR is at the pinnacle of her military power as a result of the victory over German Nazism is superficial. The substance of this military power is more apparent than real, because in the final analysis the sustaining of this military power for a longer period or for another war, depends on the strength of her economy. It is from this contradiction between the political prestige and the economic weakness that the danger of imperialist intervention takes added impetus. And it is chiefly for this reason that high ranking officers of the American army, particularly in the Air Force and the Navy Departments, are now making open propaganda for an immediate war against the Soviet Union. They make no secret of the fact that, while the USSR is now very much weakened, the USA is now at the height of her mobilisation.

Moreover, it is an indubitable fact that imperialism miscalculated the strength of the Soviet Union for war. Unwillingly and reluctantly Anglo-American imperialism was forced to enter into the inter-imperialist struggle. But it was overjoyed when Germany attacked the Soviet Union, and so certain were they of the Soviet Union's coming out decisively weakened—if not entirely crushed—that they gave her military supplies to keep the fight going. Had they foreseen the outcome, they would never have done so. For if World War I can be considered as the first round of the struggle for imperialist survival, and World War II as the second round, then imperialism can be considered as having lost the second round as well. World War I ended with the October Revolution and the loss to imperialism of one-sixth of the world. The whole post-War I period was dominated by the erection of a

"cordon sanitaire" around the Soviet Union, and the keeping of the boundaries of the USSR as far from Central and Western Europe as possible, as well as its economic and political isolation. But at the end of World War II imperialism finds not only the complete atomisation of this "cordon sanitaire," not only the disappearance of imperialist Germany—the bulwark against the Soviet Union—but it finds Eastern and Central Europe as well as the Balkans to all intents and purposes lost to imperialism. It has a hard fight to preserve the capitalist substance of these states—Yugoslavia, Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Russian-occupied Germany. They seem to have but little faith in Stalin's assurances that a Soviet economy will not be imposed on these states. It is the "cordon sanitaire" from the other side.

If one thing is clear, it is that imperialism will not give up Europe without a fight. And that is one of the reasons for the third round. Whether in the next six months or in the next six years, an attack on the Soviet Union is unavoidable, if only for this one reason: in the redress of the relation of forces in Europe, imperialism cannot stand complacently by while the balance of power in Europe swings in favour of the Soviet Union. That is, even provided that no major revolutionary change intervenes in the meantime—a supposition worthy only of a British Labour Party leader. Any major revolutionary upheaval, whether in Italy or France, in Czechoslovakia or Belgium, cannot but accelerate the attack of Anglo-American imperialism on the Soviet Union, in spite of the counter-revolutionary nature of the Stalinist bureaucracy. American-British imperialism can maintain capitalism in Europe to-day, only by supporting the most reactionary regimes. If every popular demand for democracy (bourgeois democracy) is met by civil war and fascist dictatorship, only an imbecile could visualize a revolutionary uprising without the open and active intervention of imperialism. But to-day the spectre of fascism haunts the Kremlin bureaucracy no less than it haunts the working masses, and, falling a maintenance of the status quo, Stalinism will be driven by the logic of events and against its will, either to intervene on the side of the workers or to acquiesce in the erection of another anti-Soviet bastion. We are not here concerned with an evaluation of Soviet intervention (after the lesson in Spain) but with the inevitability of a clash between imperialism and the Soviet Union.

The emergence of the USA from the position of isolation to one of active and indisputable leadership as the dominant imperialist power with interests in every corner of the globe, brings it into conflict with the Soviet Union in both the Far and Middle East and Europe. Already China has become the political battleground between the two. Above all, the elimination of the two greatest aspirants and competitors, Germany and Japan, and the reduction of the other two, France and Italy, to the position of third rank powers, leave only the USA and Britain as the two unchallenged masters of the imperialist world. The establishment of a partnership between the two, with Great Britain's unavoidable acceptance of the position of junior partner—an acceptance shared by the British Labour Party no less than by the Tories—makes the prospect of an inter-imperialist conflagration virtually impossible for the time being. Thus the conditions when inter-imperialist contradictions for a time overshadowed the class-contradictions and thus prevented a common, unified and straight war of intervention against the Soviet Union, no longer exist. So the stage is already set for the third round which will either seal the doom of the Soviet Union or be the end of imperialism.

If we accept this perspective and yet decide to remove from our programme the clause concerning the defence of the Soviet Union, then we must be clear in our minds that during these five years the Soviet Union has undergone such a cardinal change in its economic base that today nothing is left of the conquest of October that it is worth defending, nothing is left to warrant a distinction between the Soviet Union and imperialism. Five years ago we decided to break with the Shachtman group precisely on this question. So, either we have to admit that the petit-bourgeois opposition were right and the Marxists wrong, or we must be able to produce valid proof of a radical change during these

five years. Natalia brings forward two arguments. The first is: "The military triumphs have strengthened the position of the Soviet bureaucracy (the internal enemy); reaction is growing—from this it is necessary to draw the conclusion with regard to the slogan of the defence of the USSR." The second is: ". . . you apparently have in mind the still unliquidated nationalised sector of property and planned economy. But . . ." And then she comes back to the first, and her chief argument: the Soviet bureaucracy.

But when we decided on this slogan we knew of the counter-revolutionary nature of this bureaucracy. Moreover, it was precisely because we could not entrust the defence of the Soviet Union to this bureaucracy, that we stressed it. And therefore the slogan of the defence of the Soviet Union was, for us, inseparable from our struggle against the bureaucracy.

How is it possible for anyone to state that the Soviet Bureaucracy has become more reactionary during the past five years? What measuring-rod is used? Is it the "liquidation" of the Comintern? The abolition of the Internationale? Or the appointment of a few church dignitaries? What can these add to the liquidation of democracy within the Soviets, the liquidation of the party, the Komsomol, etc.? What fresh crimes have been added to the record of Stalinism to make the bureaucracy more reactionary than it was before the war? Could there still be degrees of criminality beyond the Moscow Trials, the annihilation of the entire Bolshevik wing of the party culminating in the assassination of the Old Man? Yet in spite of all the horrors of the Thermidor, we still put the slogan of the Defence of the Soviet Union in the forefront. Precisely because we made a distinction between the Soviet Union and the Stalinist bureaucracy; we drew a distinction between a trade union and its opportunistic leadership; between an organism and its parasite. Is it that we no longer make a distinction between the Soviet Union and the Stalinist bureaucracy? Has the parasite to all intents and purposes become the organism? Has the organism degenerated to such an extent that it is no longer worth while defending it? This appears

to be the opinion of Natalia when she speaks of the "still unliquidated nationalised sector of property and planned economy." It would seem as if it were merely a matter of mopping-up the remnants still left unliquidated. Yet we are unaware of any such radical change in the economic structure of the Soviet Union and its class relations. To our knowledge, the "still unliquidated nationalised sector" comprises 98% of the economy of the USSR. Before playing around with fundamental slogans such as the Unconditional Defence of the Soviet Union, we have need of something much more substantial than vague subjective generalisations that the Soviet bureaucracy is "the most reactionary in the world."

Thus, while we agree with Comrade Martin that "we had better wait and see what is going to happen before we even think of playing with the idea of changing or modifying our policy which, of all schools of thought on the Russian question, is the only one that turned out to be based on the realities of the situation," we cannot but conclude that he changed his mind. For in the final paragraph he actually comes to the same conclusion as Natalia. Both say that there is no question of abandoning the slogan. But Martin's change of "emphasis" is the same as Natalia's "pushing back to the second or third rank." For us, however, the Defence of the Soviet Union was never an end in itself; it was part and parcel of our struggle for the European revolution and for the world revolution. "The Defense of the USSR coincides for us with the preparation of world revolution. Only those methods are permissible which do not conflict with the interests of the revolution. The Defense of the USSR is related to the world socialist revolution as a tactical task is related to a strategic one. A tactic is subordinated to a strategic goal and in no case can be in contradiction to the latter." (L. T., "In Defense of Marxism," p. 17-18). This was our position in 1940 and we see no reason why we should now play with the idea of changing it. Neither in the nature of the Soviet Union nor in the international situation do we find any justification for such a change.

July, 1945

## Factionalism vs. Objectivity

By AL LYNN, Los Angeles

Comrades here in Los Angeles have been somewhat irritated at the lack of seriousness displayed in an article entitled, "An Answer to Comrade Weiss," appearing in a recent issue of the Internal Bulletin. While a criticism of tactics is always in order and usually very helpful for further activity, we find substituted for such an objective criticism, a factional attack. It is true that the party is engaged in a factional discussion, but for a comrade to approach every aspect of party activity in such a light looking for the spectre of "bureaucratism" gains us nothing. It is apparent that Comrade Goldman has passed on to others his method which has been aptly characterized by Comrade Weiss as "a product of laziness in gathering facts plus energy in distorting them."

For example, Comrade Leeds cites from the anti-fascist report (by Comrade Weiss on the Los Angeles campaign) the call by two Jewish organizations for a picket line at Smith's meeting. This "proves" that we were wrong in our appraisal of the conditions surrounding the call for a picket line at Smith's initial Los Angeles meeting. It "proves" that we lacked the necessary audacity and that the WP possessed it.

Comrade Leeds makes a mistake which under the conditions surrounding the present factional discussion has a much greater significance than it could possibly have had under other conditions. The two Jewish organizations did not call for a picket line at Smith's first meeting but for his third. For the first Smith meeting, and for the second no support from any source except our own was in evidence for the picketing proposal. This was demonstrated also by the results of their picket lines.

Despite 50,000 leaflets, publicity in the papers and on the radio there were less than 150 on the first picket line and much less at the second. Smith was enabled to boast, "We are thousands and they are 25 or 50 at the most, and they talk of breaking up our meeting. If we went out and said 'boo' they'd run." Contrary to Leeds' idea there was something to lose! Smith's morale was boosted.

Far from tail-ending the movement we were very active in the labor movement during this period. And when Smith held his third meeting, which did arouse a lot of feeling in the community, we were instrumental in arousing the labor movement to action.

But much more important than establishing the record on this point or berating a comrade for making a mistake is our analysis of reasons for making this and other mistakes. What entered here were factional considerations. In his haste to find something wrong with a "Cannonite" document (I understand that Comrade Weiss is supposed to be a Cannonite), he didn't bother to check his material and allowed his eagerness to overcome his reason.

The same tendency is revealed in his statement that Weiss proceeds by means of "deliberate falsification" to accuse the WP of ignoring the labor movement. A strong statement, but let us do what Comrade Leeds did not do and examine the record. Smith held five meetings in Los Angeles.

We received a communication from the WP a few days before the first meeting which called for a united front of the "radical" organizations including the SP, SLP, IWW, WP and

ourselves. No mention of the labor movement. Similarly for the second meeting although this time I believe they left out the IWW, and the SLP. Discussions around the third meeting resulted in their statement about expecting nothing from the labor movement. It was on the basis of this consistent attitude and actions of the WP that Comrade Weiss in his article appraised their line. Our movement has always looked at other movements, not on the basis of individual actions or statements but rather from an analysis of policy, program, line. The WP analysis of the situation in Europe and of Germany in particular also confirms this line of theirs. For example they say, "... the German working class, along with every other layer and segment of German Society, lies inert, disorganized and bewildered, in the center of the vacuum." (October 1945 *New International*). Pessimism exudes from their very pores. On this basis they take upon themselves all the tasks which they consider the working class incapable of solving.

Under the pressure of events and also a certain amount of pressure from ourselves they changed a certain amount during this period. They added the trade unions to their mailing list and they included the labor movement in their "united front" appeals and other communications. Can we conclude from this that they changed their line? Let me present an analogy which we will confine only to the question of determining line. In Germany before Hitler took power the Communist Party called for a "united front from below." That is, they invited members of other parties to join theirs but refused to have a genuine united front with other working class organizations against fascism. Subsequently when this charge was brought against them, they pointed to two occasions on which they had made such an offer of an organization-to-organization united front and therefore claimed that the charge was false. Comrade Trotsky in the pamphlets on Germany pointed out very adequately that we do not determine a line on the basis of isolated gestures, events, statements, etc.

But we have other data to go by. Smith held further meetings and here again is the record of the WP:

Their report on the counter-demonstration to Smith's third meeting which appeared in an issue of *Labor Action*, far from realizing the objective changes which were taking place, attributes the whole movement to the effect of their picket line at the earlier meetings. "The Workers Party of Los Angeles did what it believed was correct in face of the fact that labor unions, the CP, the IWW, the SLP and the SWP withdrew from the fight or had done nothing up to that point. Only after the initiative taken by the WP, was attention directed to Smith's campaign and the mass meeting held as reported on above." (*Labor Action*, July 30, 1945).

Smith called his fourth meeting. A few days before the Mobilization for Democracy (the united front organization) called a meeting to discuss tactics, we received a letter from the WP which proceeded along the same line they had been following all along. "We believe that the Mobilization for Democracy which organized the Olympic Auditorium rally will again constitute its forces, but it is likely (to say the least) that as before they will be unwilling to organize a mass picketing action." We on the other hand had been proceeding in the meantime to mobilize all our union forces so that when the MFD held its meeting later in the week we dominated it and pushed through the proposal to picket, forcing the Stalinists to go along with our line. A few days later 20,000 pickets came out under the leadership of the Mobilization (which was controlled by forces other than those of the WP's wishes and prognoses).

Smith called a fifth meeting (trying to wear out the anti-fascist movement) and the WP went on as if nothing had ever happened. Since they were sure that no one could take action

aside from themselves they issued a call for a picket line of their own which they found themselves compelled to withdraw before distribution could take place. I think that this disposes of the question of their line.

We are told that surely we, "the second largest branch in the party," with "numerous contacts," can organize a successful picket line. How do we determine our activities in an anti-fascist or any other kind of campaign or party work? We do not take into account the relative size of the Los Angeles Local in the SWP but rather our relative size in the local labor movement. We try to maintain a sense of proportion and estimate the objective relationship of forces realistically. We did not, in this case, regard ourselves with or without the WP as having sufficient forces to act alone. Our subsequent role demonstrated that as a force within the labor movement, mobilizing militant pressure, our strength is considerable.

The WP on the other hand confined themselves entirely to the "radicals." They sent a call to the Socialist Party which calls for free speech for Smith. They sent a call to the Socialist Labor Party which never considered the question. And they sent a call to the IWW which doesn't go in for "political action" and which has proven to be very reactionary. (They supported Ryan in the East Coast Longshore situation.) They did not address this united front appeal to the labor movement which they did not expect to act "at this time." And they didn't address it to the Communist Party. As a matter of fact they sneered at us for making a proposal to "... the Stalinist Communist Party of Los Angeles for a united front! !!" In other words they appealed to those who proved not capable of participating and left out precisely those forces which proved to be among the most effective. If we ever committed such a master stroke we would call for a wholesale re-evaluation of our line.

I might say at this point that I believe that the WP was more interested in gaining momentary advantages through publicity at the expense of the anti-fascist movement as a whole. It would be as if in the course of leading a strike, the party impatient to boast of its key position were to announce, "We, the party, are the leaders." The only difference between such stupidity and what the WP did, is that they weren't even "leading the strike."

At every point they rushed out with leaflets calling for picketing in the name of the WP so that everyone could be sure that they were the leaders; at every demonstration "the large red circular banner blazoned 'Workers Party' stood out prominently in a sea of placards..." (some comrades claim that they rushed up to the head of the line so that everyone would know that they were leading the demonstration but this may be an exaggeration); at a meeting of the Mobilization for Democracy which they considered impotent, they actually dashed up to the platform insisting that the chairman announce over the microphone a cash donation they were making in the name of the WP; their reports in *Labor Action* show that they believe that they are the ones chiefly responsible for picket action.

Our experiences with them in the labor movement only check with their current activities. We saw them engage in hare-brained adventures which victimized not only themselves but key union militants, thus weakening the struggle when it should open up. All so that everyone should know who they are. But you can't substitute sensational advertising techniques for revolutionary tactics!

Contrast their line with ours. We have enough confidence in our program so that we do not have to worry about whether or not we are in the immediate leadership of the movement. We know that when we actually have the masses behind us, behind our program, then we will play our true role as leaders. Now, we push our program.

# A Letter of the AK of the IKD

(Editors' Note: A copy of the following letter was forwarded to the National Office of the SWP from Europe.)

December 5, 1945

To all Friends,

We have just read the letter in which our Belgian friends speak out against the planned split of the SWP minority (US). Since, like our Belgian friends (and surely the majority of all sections and the majority of the minority itself), we are opposed to such fruitless and senseless split, we would like to state the following:

1. From the beginning the minority intended to carry through a split, if its maneuver of "unity" aimed exclusively against the leadership, ran up against difficulties.

2. This decision to split was made and announced seriously by them following the October 7 Plenum when they decided to join the WP within a few weeks, or at the latest in two or three months.

3. The minority is allegedly conducting its main fight against the "methods" of the majority, against bureaucracy and so on. However, as in practically all other instances, they use on the question of unity the very same methods as the majority. That is they lie when in their explanations (to the Plenum) and their letters, etc., they deny that they have a split perspective and instead become indignant about Cannon (who is supposedly "suspicious" of them in this connection, and yet knows "better").

4. The sharpest advocate of split is Daniel Logan but amongst the members of the minority there is little sentiment for it. Among other things, the group in Chicago does not want to go along. For this reason Morrison devised a trick—to "provoke" the majority to expel the minority, and thus shield himself from the onus of split. It is certain that the majority will resort to expulsions when the minority and the WP leadership issue a "joint" statement. This joint statement is therefore

the next bureaucratic maneuver, and people who devise such means presume in their solemn statements to carry on a "fight" against . . . bad methods.

5. In the same category of tricks are Logan's proposals concerning the IS and the EEC. We will send you as soon as possible a number of letters, reports, etc., dealing with this question. We hope that this material will be helpful to you in clarifying the undecided questions, and will convince you to reject Logan's proposals. Logan is acting completely on his own and without any control and is at least equally to blame with the majority leadership for the existing intolerable situation.

6. (Reference to writer's address deleted—Ed.)

7. We are conveying this information as the old AK of the IKD, which has been involved in this whole controversy and which has published a number of documents in this connection. This represents, if one only counts those friends who are in complete agreement with its line, not less than 40 members, let alone those with whom discussion was impossible up to now. We will provide you (and especially the EEC) with full explanation of our position and, if necessary, we will at every conference bring proof that we ourselves have had to suffer from the "methods" of the majority, that we were branded by Logan in the identical manner and that he is, in a special sense, the chief source of all the lies and slander against us. It is very bad for any organization which tolerates such filth as is to be found against us in the November FI. It has nothing to do with "sharp polemic" (which we would welcome). Anyone at all acquainted with the documents knows that every word in that article is falsification and slander. Logan too permitted such slanders to stand unchallenged and evaded all clarifying polemics. Is it not high time to send out one of these "protests," with which certain friends are usually so free against all the slanderers of the FI?

With comradely greetings,  
AK of IKD

## The Answer of the SWP Minority to the Letter from the PCR of Belgium

December 20, 1945

To the Central Committee of the PCR of Belgium:  
Dear Comrades,

We have read and carefully considered your letter to us of November 15. We welcome your intervention in the dispute in the SWP despite the fact that your first blows are directed against us without any justification. We are confident that before our correspondence goes very much further we shall be able to convince you of the necessity of intervening in support of unity of the Trotskyists of the United States and not, as your first letter has done—although this was not your intention—intervening in support of Cannon's fight against unity.

You have helped Cannon by accepting at face value the story he is spreading abroad that our faction means to split. Comrade Demaziere, Secretary of the PCI of France, writes us on December 2 that "the Belgian comrades have told me that you are speedily moving toward split." Before you spread this story, you should first have asked us our attitude after which, we are sure, you would not repeat Cannon's version.

Unlike you who consider a split a catastrophe, Cannon desires a split and is already preparing to split the party by expelling or suspending us. Cannon wants you to believe that we want a split and not unity, so that when he removes us from the party you will think he has acted against those who meant to split in any event. On December 4 the Cannon majority of the Political Committee adopted a motion stating it will take dis-

ciplinary action if our faction continues its course. This move is preliminary to getting rid of us. We believe that the Cannon group was encouraged to take this step at this time in part by your letter which showed that the Cannon version of the internal situation in the party was being given credence abroad.

We agree with you that a split would be a catastrophe. We agree with you that there is no justification for a split. Cannon, on the other hand, long ago branded us as "anti-Trotskyists" and is proceeding to throw us out of the party. Far from considering a split a catastrophe Cannon says, quite openly, that our faction is part of the Workers Party with which he refuses to unite. His opposition to unity with the Workers Party is the driving force which impels him to get rid of us who want unity with the Workers Party. Those who are against unity of the Trotskyists of the United States are the splitters, not those who want unity.

Your first duty now is to demand of Cannon that he halt his steps toward our expulsion. Even if, as Cannon alleges, we are guilty of a formal violation of discipline by virtue of our relations with the Workers Party, Cannon must not be permitted to expel us until the International has had an opportunity to deal with the question of unity. If he had the slightest real regard for the public opinion of the International, Cannon would not threaten us on the eve of the preconference. Cannon will try to move heaven and earth to prevent the preconference from taking a decision on the question of unity. The whole weight of the

International must be thrown against the Cannon group's attempt to oust us.

Cannon was encouraged to move against us not only by your acceptance of his story that we mean to split, but also by the other ways in which you supported his fight against unity. You may think your letter did not support his opposition to unity. You may point to the fact that your letter explicitly says that you have not taken a position on the unity question. In actuality, however, you are, perhaps unwittingly, already passing judgment on a large part of the unity question when you condemn us for having organized a faction to struggle for unity, for seeking "aid outside the party" (presumably you mean by this our relations with the Workers Party), for exacerbating the faction struggle and for unjustified accusations against "the exemplary internal democracy" of the party. All this, despite your good will, constitutes aid to Cannon in his struggle against unity and for getting rid of us.

By what criterion do you condemn us for having organized a faction to struggle for unity? We believe our organizing a faction is justified on two grounds: (1) the transcendent importance of the unity question—unity is decisive for the future of the party as we shall show in detail below; (2) the attitude of the Cannon group toward differences of opinion, which is epitomized by the fact that the moment Goldman and I introduced our resolution on unity on July 12, Cannon denounced us as agents of the Workers Party.

Even if "the exemplary internal democracy" existed in the party as you fondly believe, we would be justified in forming a faction to struggle for a decision which we believe of transcendent importance. We believe that without unity the SWP is doomed to monolithic degeneration—is that not a question of sufficient importance to justify an organized struggle on it? Under the most exemplary conditions of internal democracy in the Russian party and the Communist International, factions were organized to struggle for certain goals and nobody dreamed of adducing democracy as an argument against forming these factions. You are straying far from Bolshevism, dear comrades, when you criticize us for forming a faction to fight for our ideas. Cannon's condemnation of our forming a faction has at least the superficial logic that he maintains the question of unity is of little importance: he says openly enough that the party can be built without the comrades of the Workers Party and without our faction. But how can you criticize our forming a faction when you have not as yet taken a position on whether unity is desirable, how important it is, the meaning of Cannon's opposition to it, etc., etc.? What right do you have to say that the question of unity does not justify our organizing to struggle for it?

Once you really grapple with the unity question and take a position on it—and we are confident that you will decide in favor of unity as have the British party, the Spanish group in Mexico and Comrade Natalia—then you will be confronted with the necessity to understand the full significance of Cannon's opposition to it. You will have to realize that Cannon is not guilty of a mistake but of a crime in persisting in preventing unity of the Trotskyists of the United States. You will have to come to agree with us that the Cannon group's opposition to unity is a touchstone indicating the fact that it is a bureaucratic tendency, a monolithic tendency.

How naive you are, dear comrades, when you consider the internal bulletins "a striking proof of the existence of an exemplary internal democracy in the SWP." By that criterion the Comintern was still a healthy organism when Stalin permitted the publication of Trotsky's "The New Course" in *Inprecorr* in 1924. At a given stage a monolithic tendency can exist side by side with an internal bulletin; formal democratic rights still exist at a given stage of the degeneration of the party. Under the conditions of extreme hardship under which your party is compelled to operate, our internal bulletins may appear quite ample to you. But, given the actual means of the SWP, the internal bulletin is an extremely narrow arena for the minority, which is barred from writing on disputed questions in

*Fourth International* except for an occasional token article. When an important article on Italy is written in July and published in the October internal bulletin (to name but one example), you should think twice before you take the internal bulletin as a striking proof of internal democracy.

More important, what is the fate of the internal bulletins? The Cannon leadership makes no attempt to get the comrades to read them or to hold discussions on their contents in those branches where there are no minority members to insist on discussions. The real situation is indicated in the remark of a majority comrade that they have to publish the stuff but nobody has to read it; in the example of branches where internal bulletins pile up without being distributed; in the statement of a branch organizer that no discussion of the contents of the latest bulletin is necessary because there is no minorityite in the branch. Ask Cannon to provide you with the figures for the past two years of the sale of internal bulletins to individual members (not the bundles sent to branches but the number sold) and you may begin to get a better idea of the reality underlying these internal bulletins. You may begin to realize their role as Potemkin villages.

And then, the unpublished part of the discussion! It is impossible to convey it to you; one has to live through the pogrom atmosphere aroused in the branches against us, in speeches by first and second-rank leaders of the majority—not the "statesmanlike" speech occasionally published in the internal bulletins but the ones which really set the tone. To mention but one example: Cannon's charge, in a debate with Goldman in Chicago, that Goldman in prison preferred to fraternize with labor racketeers rather than with his comrades. Abroad you do not hear these things, but they mold and pervert the minds of the ranks of the party.

For corroboration of these facts, we refer you to any European comrade who has had direct contact with the SWP. In the last years a number of European comrades have had to take refuge in America. Not one of them supports the Cannon group. Cannon tries to dismiss all of them as disoriented emigres. Among them, however, are valuable leading comrades of a number of sections. The unanimity of their testimony against the Cannon group ought to indicate what the real situation is here.

However, we do not ask you to take the word of the European comrades who are here, nor our word. Neither heretofore nor now have we asked you to judge the Cannon leadership on the basis of facts which could be established only by those present here. We have asked you to judge solely on the basis of facts which you already have in your hands: the written record, the party publications, internal bulletins, i.e., the political positions taken by the Cannon group and the methods they have employed to defend them.

We have characterized some of these political positions and methods as "bureaucratic acts," as "Stalinist germs," and we have come to the conclusion that they are manifestations of a bureaucratic tendency, a monolithic tendency. However, we have always been very careful to limit ourselves primarily to our criticism of specific political positions taken by the Cannonites, to specific methods or acts on their part. Thus we have written a series of case histories which deal with the greatest concreteness with specific events in the life of the party. We have never insisted on your or anybody else's agreeing with us that they are "bureaucratic acts," "Stalinist germs." We have always made clear that we do not insist on what name you give them; what is important is to criticize and correct the specific positions or acts or methods.

And certainly we never charged that a bureaucracy exists in the SWP. The Cannonites have pretended that we have, and you appear to be taken in by their pretense when you write us that "in none of your documents have you been able to prove or to make precise until now your accusations according to which a 'bureaucracy' exists in the SWP." You tell us that you have read the October 1945 internal bulletin. Had you done so carefully, however, you could never have attributed to us this absurd argument as to whether or not a bureaucracy exists in the SWP. We refer you to Comrade A. Stein's "The Bureaucratic Tendency in

the SWP" in the October bulletin which, on behalf of the minority, explains over and over again for some 2,500 words that we do not claim a bureaucracy exists, over and over again explains that "a leadership does not have to have a privileged material basis in order to commit a number of serious political errors . . . Furthermore, we are confronted by the fact that the leadership refuses to correct the errors and the method from which they flow. And when a leadership mistakenly believes that admission of errors and open discussion in the ranks of the party to correct the line undermines its authority, then bureaucratic controls over party life become inevitable." Don't you understand, comrades, the difference between saying a bureaucracy exists, and what we have actually said, namely, that the Cannon leadership has a bureaucratic (more, monolithic) attitude toward political differences? We repeat, we don't insist on your accepting our terms. As Comrade A. Stein said in that article: "You disagree with our description and analysis of the 'bureaucratic tendency'? We shall be glad to continue to discuss this with you until there is mutual agreement. But that should not prevent us from fighting together now against any incident or idea that is alien to Bolshevism . . . In that way, whatever our differences may be on the plane of explanation, we shall be fighting against those specific ideas and acts that bring harm to the party."

What specific ideas and acts? We must remind you of enough of them to bring home to you that it is not a matter of isolated incidents but of a long and continuous process. In the following list we shall not refer primarily to the political errors of the Cannon group. We do not think the political errors committed by the Cannon group are a crime. Their defense by bureaucratic means is the crime that has hurt the party.

### 1943

1. Suppression of the minority documents of the October 1943 Plenum and of Morrow's article of December 1943, "The First Phase of the Coming European Revolution": circulation limited only to National Committee members, refused to party members. Cannon's justification: that the documents should be kept from the membership until the principals to the dispute returned from prison (which would be January 25, 1945). To attempt to suppress documents on burning political questions is a bureaucratic act. But call it by any other name, if only you will condemn it.

### 1944

2. Hansen's infamous article, "How the Trotskyists Went to Prison," being in reality a build-up of Cannon. Despite protests from many comrades, the article was reprinted several times—in *The Militant*, *Fourth International*, as a pamphlet. Not only we but Cannon made the article a test case: he wrote that he who does not see the necessity of such an article does not understand the art of leadership. What do you call an artificial build-up of leaders in the party press? We call it a bureaucratic act. Call it what you will, but condemn it.

3. The anti-Bolshevik Macdonald used the Hansen article as proof that Bolshevism is identical with Stalinism. Goldman wrote an answer to Macdonald, citing our condemnation of the Hansen article as proof that such build-ups of leaders is not part of Bolshevism. The Political Committee refused Goldman's answer to Macdonald publication in the party press—as though Hansen's fawning eulogy of Cannon were party policy! We call this a bureaucratic act. What do you call it?

4. James T. Farrell, the novelist and chairman of the Civil Rights Defense Committee, devoted friend of our movement, wrote a letter to *Fourth International* criticizing the Hansen article and another article which he correctly called a "literary apache" attack on Shachtman. The Political Committee refused to publish Farrell's letter. To defend this bureaucratic blunder, Cannon committed a crime: he wrote that Farrell's comradely letter was "a coarse and brutal insult to the party" and that as an "amateur" Farrell had no right to criticize professional politicians. Doesn't the stench of such a bureaucratic attitude reach you across the Atlantic, dear comrades?

5. The Political Committee censured four rank and file comrades for meeting to discuss with some comrades of the Workers'

Party. It also called a special New York membership meeting to drive the point home. We challenged this attempt to prohibit any comrade from meeting and discussing political questions with members of another workers' party. The majority leaders alleged this was not the issue, whereupon we offered to settle the controversy if they would accept the proposition that the censure was not meant to prevent comrades from discussing with WP members. The majority leaders refused. Their final position is formulated by the then Acting National Secretary, M. Stein, in his declaration that comrades who go to "meetings and classes of opponent organizations" are guilty of anti-Bolshevik conduct; and his report to the National Convention that: "The four comrades censured stepped out of bounds and they have done it disloyally. Not only did they discuss with the Shachtmanites for the sake of discussion, but they kept it hidden from the party. They didn't report it to the party. They didn't ask advice from the party. That is disloyalty toward the organization and we never could stomach disloyalty." The Cannonite position, thus, is that no member may discuss with members of the Workers Party except with the permission and under direction of the party leadership. What is this, except bureaucratic fear of free discussion in the labor movement? To this bureaucratic blunder Cannon adds two political crimes: he justifies the censure because to talk with comrades of the Workers Party is to talk with the "Menshevik traitor clique" and brands those opposed to the censure as belonging to an "anti-Trotskyist tendency."

6. The suppression of the minority documents of the October 1943 Plenum ends on the eve of the November 1944 Convention, allegedly because the majority is yielding to the entreaties of the minority, but in reality (since the majority decision originally had been to suppress the documents until the principals to the dispute returned from prison) because one document had leaked out and been published by the Workers Party. But the documents are disloyally beclouded by being given to the party with a statement by the Political Committee which says: "We are issuing these Plenum documents only as a concession to the demand of Comrade Morrow who insists that the various drafts and amendments which were discussed by the Plenum be published . . . We do not think these documents are essential to the clarification of the issues, the education of the party members, or as an aid to the party rank and file in arriving at a correct point of view." Yet central to the pre-convention discussion were the issues involved in these same documents. As I wrote at the time: "The membership is scarcely encouraged to read the Plenum documents when it finds them preceded by a Political Committee foreword arguing that the documents are not worth studying." I was too polite; I should have branded it as a disloyal and bureaucratic act.

7. One of the main issues in the dispute at the October 1943 Plenum is the minority's insistence on the Stalinist danger to the European revolution. Nearly a year later, continuing his errors at the Plenum, Cannon in a letter dated August 23, 1944 (signed by Dobbs but representing Cannon's views) proposes that the party call upon the Warsaw guerillas to "subordinate themselves," i.e., deliver themselves, to Stalin's generals. Comrade Natalia intervenes, demanding that the defense of the revolution against Stalin be placed in the foreground and that the defense of the Soviet Union be pushed to the background. Cannon gets a copy of Natalia's letter. Without one word of reference to his August 23 letter, he writes another adopting Natalia's position. Natalia's letter and Cannon's response to it are published; his previous letter is suppressed. The effect created (and sought) is that Natalia and Cannon have always been of one mind on this question. When the leader of the party covers up his errors, is that not a bureaucratic act, a Stalinist germ, which must be burned out of the party?

8. Comrade A. Roland writes a big document, "We Arrive at a Line," showing all the previous errors on applying the slogan of defense of the Soviet Union, exposing Cannon's attempt to suppress his letter on the Warsaw guerillas, etc. Roland is condemned by the leadership for introducing his document on the very eve of the convention, for not having made the record

previously on the party's errors, for failing to appear to defend himself at the convention, for lapsing into political inactivity, etc. All too true. But now some fifteen months have passed, and the Cannonites have yet to answer the political content of Roland's document; Cannon has yet to write one word concerning suppression of his letter on the Warsaw guerillas.

9. The minority conducts a struggle to introduce its amendments into the draft convention resolution. At the convention itself the majority suddenly produces a series of what it calls "literary and clarifying amendments" which (1) yield to the minority on the principal remaining questions in dispute and (2) yield to Natalia's line of pushing to the foreground the defense of the European revolution against Stalin and to the background the defense of the USSR. Are such political somersaults "literary and clarifying amendments"? To pretend they are is a bureaucratic method of changing a political line. The "literary and clarifying amendments" have never been published in the *Internal Bulletin*, so that no comrade not present at the convention could judge their political significance. Is that not bureaucratic suppression of political errors?

10. The December 1944 *Fourth International* gives the public the Cannonite version of the European dispute: it conceals the majority's changes in political line; lies about the convention vote; falsifies the minority's position. It is a classical example of bureaucratic redoubling of abuse of those who forced the Cannonites to change their line.

## 1945

11. Returning from prison, Morrow writes "A Balance Sheet of the Discussion on Europe," May 1945. Whether correct or not, it is a political document which asserts political positions and makes grave charges against the majority which in any healthy party would unquestionably receive a conscientious examination and answer. You yourselves testify to that fact when your letter informs us that you "hope to be able to take a position soon toward the group of questions raised by the 'Balance Sheet' of Comrade Morrow." Even in your case, comrades, one must say in all frankness that we have noted an extreme reluctance on the part of you and other European comrades to take positions on the important political questions involved in the dispute in the SWP. While you say that you have never concealed your agreement with the SWP minority on the European questions, this letter of yours is the first time you have indicated your agreement in so many words. Even now you still delay taking a position on the even more important questions raised in the "Balance Sheet," namely that the original errors of the Cannonites were only political errors but their refusal to admit the errors, their changing their line while suppressing the evidence of the change, their falsifying the position of the minority, etc. are crimes. But you do state that you are about to take a position on these questions. Your delay is undoubtedly in part justified by the fact that you received the documents late, had to translate them, had to consider them while you were preoccupied with the terribly difficult task of reorganizing and reorienting your movement after five years of illegality, etc. What, however, do you think of the conduct of the Cannon group which stands accused by the "Balance Sheet," which has had it since March 1945 and now, nine months later, still shows not the slightest sign of answering it? Is it "exemplary internal democracy" when the minority is granted the formal democratic right of having its document published, but denied the real content of internal democracy, namely the responsibility of the majority to encourage and organize a discussion of it and to answer it?

12. Cannon, from prison, proposed what should be the contents of that infamous December 1944 issue of *Fourth International* which is the subject of our "Balance Sheet." In a letter of November 28, 1944 (published in the April 1945 bulletin), he wrote:

"Next, we deem it essential, as we have previously remarked, to publish the convention resolutions in the magazine; and to publish with them the rejected amendments of Logan and the rejected criticisms of Cassidy (Morrow)—giving the vote in each case. And a report of the convention

should be published in the magazine giving an explanation, from the point of view of the majority, of the reasons for the convention's decisions."

Compare this paragraph with the contents of the December 1944 *Fourth International*, and you will see that the fountainhead of all the lies in it was Cannon himself. Certainly he never criticized it in the party. It is necessary to underline this point since Cannon is spreading the story abroad that that number of the magazine was an "error" made while he was away.

In that same letter, and much more important, you will find a significant part of the explanation why Cannon has failed to answer our "Balance Sheet" and other post-convention documents on the European questions. Why answer, when he has got the votes? On the contrary, he thinks the votes against us should impel the minority to "reconsider their position"! This thought of his may seem so incredible to you that it is necessary to quote the entire paragraph:

"Logically such a decisive vote as that recorded by the convention after an unrestricted preparatory discussion in the party should impel the opposition to reconsider their position and make an effort to learn something from their experience. Unfortunately, logic makes but slow headway in establishing its hegemony over certain types of human minds where prejudice fights on its home grounds. Past experience tends to discount any optimistic hopes that may be entertained in this respect. I can't remember ever knowing a professional democrat who paid respectful attention to the cardinal principle of democracy, i.e., the subordination of the minority to the majority. They demand 'democracy' but they are firmly convinced that demos is a fool."

Even more revealing of Cannon's outlook is the next paragraph. The questions in dispute are European questions above all, and in any event we of the minority have the elementary right to appeal to the *International*. Yet Cannon writes:

"It would not be realistic to consider the disputes as settled, as far as the illogical 'democrats' are concerned, by the simple fact that the party membership has given its decision. It is to be expected, rather, that an attempt will now be made to transfer the debate to the international field . . ."

And then Cannon, in the next paragraph, proceeds to give his recipe for concocting the December 1944 issue of *Fourth International*.

To demand that a minority be silent because it is a minority; to adduce votes as a proof that the minority is wrong; to consider it illogical that the minority appeals to the *International*—what is this but stinking bureaucratism?

13. We assume you have read Daniel Logan's "On the Slogan of the Republic in Italy and its Discussion in the SWP" in the June 1945 *Internal Bulletin*. When a comrade of the *International* stature of Logan makes such charges, they certainly merit a reply. But we have still to see a single word in writing by the Cannonites either in answer to this article or to others by the minority dealing with the slogan of the republic in Italy. The Cannonites refused to adopt the slogan, rallied against it for a year in the party verbally—and cannot be gotten to put a single word in writing. Is this, comrades, your idea of "exemplary internal democracy"?

14. On June 21, we had a very sharp dispute in the Political Committee on the slogan of the republic in Belgium. The minority motion favoring the slogan was voted down; we defended our views in the July *Internal Bulletin*. Subsequently we learned that you comrades had adopted the slogan. Does the Political Committee think it was right or wrong on this question? No answer to this day. In the branches Political Committee members like Warde and Wright try to make a distinction between our views and yours; but not a word from them in writing. Is this democracy?

15. In the documents on the unity question since July, you have a score or more examples of the dishonest methods of the Cannon group; since you are now examining these documents, we shall not repeat the examples here. Permit us to remind you, however, that Cannon, who a few weeks before had issued the



slogan, "We must deepen the split," (April 1945 bulletin) and opposed unity when we introduced our resolution, then without any explanation dropped open opposition and pretended to find it necessary to probe all questions to the bottom before answering the question of unity. You do not have to be here, comrades, to realize that Cannon is being dishonest. Consider that he refuses to answer the simple question, whether the existing political differences between the SWP and the WP are admissible within one revolutionary party. In her letter of August 28 favoring unity, Comrade Natalia correctly declares that the two parties "in the fundamentals march under the one and the same banner. The programme of the minority (i. e., the Workers Party) is known to the majority from the former's literature; there is no necessity to discuss it." The British party and the Spanish group in Mexico have likewise found it possible to answer this question in the affirmative from afar. Cannon dares not answer it in the negative because he would then have to say precisely what political differences of the Workers Party are not admissible in one party, and he knows that in such a concrete political dispute he would be defeated in the International. So he evades giving any answer. But the question is legitimate and deserves an answer. Don't you agree that those who evade this central question are guilty of a dishonest, bureaucratic maneuver?

16. Comrade Natalia's letter of August 28 goes unanswered—Cannon and his group would not even vote in favor of sending it to the party branches, although it was Natalia's wish. Instead, a member of the Political Committee, Grace Carlson, dares—such is the education she has received—to explain to the Plenum that on her visit to Mexico she saw that Comrade Natalia is under the influence of Munis, she does not know English, Munis twists things in translating them to her. Neither Cannon nor any other majorityite leader dissociated himself from this vile denigration. In the corridors it is multiplied: Comrade Natalia is old and ill, no longer herself . . . You and we, dear comrades have seen such methods before, but never in the Trotskyist movement.

17. You have seen, in our letter of November 15, our estimate of Cannon's speech on the Russian Revolution anniversary. We consider it violates the last convention resolution. We asked for a discussion of it in the party. Cannon refused. His motivation, in two motions in the Political Committee, is: (1) if Morrow wishes "to challenge the principled position of the party from the viewpoint of Shachtmanism, as he indicated in private conversation, let him quit playing hide and seek with the party and write a resolution and submit it to the party for discussion." The alleged private conversation is a falsehood, Morrow does not share Shachtman's position on the Russian question and said so in the Political Committee before the Cannon motion to that effect was adopted. Whereupon, at the next meeting, Cannon found a new pretext for not debating his speech: (2) "In view of the fact that Comrade Morrow has announced that he is going to write a series of articles reviewing the Russian question, we invite him to expedite his writing, publish it in the Internal Bulletin, and then if he wishes we begin oral discussion in the organization contrasting the positions."

Morrow did announce that he was writing a series of articles reviewing how our Russian position has been tested by the war. The Fourth International would be politically bankrupt indeed if it did not review what has happened. But why must discussion of Cannon's speech wait until such a series of articles has been written, which may well take a year or more? In our criticism of Cannon's speech we defend the convention resolution, which says that defense of the Soviet Union has receded and in the foreground now is defense of the European revolution against the Big Three. Our forthcoming articles will continue to defend that proposition. Why, then, not debate Cannon's speech now, when it has disoriented the membership? The following, from the Political Committee minutes, may help you see what is happening:

**Morrow:** You impute a position to me (Shachtman's) and then demand that I put that imputed position in writing before you will debate Cannon's speech . . . Well, you are the majority and

you can do as you like. But I am proposing to debate Cannon's speech.

**Cannon:** We want to debate the Russian question. It is broader.

**Morrow:** Yes it is broader. You can bury your speech in it.

Is this not a bureaucratic act, that Cannon refuses to permit us to discuss his speech in the party?

We must call a halt to this list, although we have far from exhausted the specific manifestations of a bureaucratic attitude. We know as well as you that a bureaucracy with a privileged material base does not exist today in the SWP; but that is no answer to our specific analysis of the existence of a bureaucratic tendency. If the degeneration of this tendency continues it will inevitably also find itself a privileged material base in the trade union bureaucracy.

Cannon has repeatedly declared that the cry of a danger of bureaucratism is a manifestation of petty-bourgeois skepticism. He has received his answer in the August 28 letter of Comrade Natalia.

"Incomprehensible to me, dear friend, is the persistence with which you put aside the danger of bureaucratism in our ranks. The danger is possible; it is in the air; to be conscious of the possibility of such a danger in and of itself already means to forestall it and it consequently signifies the possibility of avoiding it . . . wouldn't it be more expedient to attentively follow all the tiny forms of its possible manifestations (if there are any) and to condemn them?"

That is what we ask comrades to do: to condemn those of the above-cited manifestations of bureaucratism which they consider harmful to our movement. We are asking you to do what Trotsky offered Shachtman in 1940: to fight against any specific bureaucratic act which the opposition could point to.

Your assertion that we are repeating in the organizational question Shachtman's error of 1940 is thus completely baseless. Shachtman could not accept Trotsky's offer to fight against any specific bureaucratic act because Shachtman hurled the general charge of "bureaucratic conservatism" without specifying what were the particular manifestations of this "bureaucratic conservatism." Shachtman did not point to objectionable Cannon motions, speeches, articles, against which we or Trotsky could join him in struggle. Shachtman's principal document of 1940 on the organizational question, *The War and Bureaucratic Conservatism*, was and remains indefensible. For it offered no serious evidence of a kind which the membership could judge. It referred to private conversations, alleged incidents in the leadership which were not recorded and were unrecordable, etc. True, since Shachtman was dealing with Cannon as his subject matter, there are characterizations in his article which are similar to ours. But with this decisive difference, that Shachtman asked the membership to vote on a general charge against Cannon without evidence, whereas we are asking comrades to take a position on specific motions, resolutions, articles, on recorded errors of commission or omission of the Cannon group.

We and Trotsky were right in rejecting Shachtman's document. If Shachtman today tries to defend his errors of 1940 by pointing to our present criticisms of the Cannon group, he is no more correct than is Cannon when he defends himself against our criticisms by pointing to Trotsky's rejection of Shachtman's criticisms of 1940. Profound changes have taken place since 1940. Such a list as the 17 manifestations of a bureaucratic tendency which we have listed above could not have been drawn up in 1940. Trotsky's living presence was an example of a correct attitude and a check on those who would conduct themselves otherwise. Cannon would not dare to do then what he does today. Not only was that check on Cannon removed by Trotsky's death, but the departure from the party of the misguided opposition, which included a large part of the most critically-minded and politically-awake members, left Cannon with a free hand. Shachtman committed a crime in splitting, for which the movement is still paying.

Five years have passed and brought profound changes. We did not fight against the minority of 1939-40 only to fall victim to the degeneration of the Cannon group. We did not fight

against the minority of 1939-40 in order to establish the supremacy of Hansen articles; of prohibitions of discussions with comrades of the Workers Party; of a *Fourth International* magazine which is a disgrace to the name of Trotskyism; of Cannon's mad cry to rally to the defense of the Soviet Union today, etc., etc., etc. Many things have changed since 1940, including the groupings in the movement. It is necessary to analyze each of the present groupings without past prejudices. We believe the Cannon group has changed for the worse, and we try to explain in what the change consists. We believe the Shachtman group has changed for the better and we try to explain in what the change consists. As for our own group, it too has changed. We were all too slow in understanding the developments of the past five years, in Europe, in our own party, in the Workers Party. But we believe that we are now beginning to grasp them and are changing ourselves in the process.

You tell us, with assurance, that the Workers Party "is even further distant from the conceptions of the minority than are the majority comrades." You are mistaken. We shall try to show you why.

A correct political estimate of the Cannon group must be based not only on its formal program and resolutions but also on what it does with the program and these resolutions. Our letter of November 15 gave you the example of how Cannon violated the convention resolution by bringing to the imminent foreground the defense of the Soviet Union. What is the status of a program and resolutions which can thus be flouted? Obviously the leader is more important than the program in the SWP, i.e., it is a monolithic tendency which dominates the party.

A Bolshevik bends his organizational means to serve his political line. Cannon, however, bends his political line to serve his organizational ends. To miseducate the International against the minority, the December 1944 *Fourth International* branded the minority's differences as if they were no less than programmatic. But within a matter of weeks Cannon decided on a peace maneuver, and wrote a joint statement of the Political Committee which stated: "The differences on the convention resolution dealing with 'The European Revolution and the Tasks of the Revolutionary Party' are not fundamental in character. The differences, insofar as they have found definite expression thus far, are rather secondary in character and relate primarily to questions of interpretation and emphasis. It remains to be seen whether, in the course of events and further discussion, the present differences will be reconciled in agreement or developed into principled divergences." A concession to the minority—but an empty one. At the very same moment Cannon was preparing for publication in the April Internal Bulletin his "notes" and "reflections" on the party discussion in which he says the minority presupposes the defeat of the European proletariat and that the party dispute is not one over tempo but of perspectives for our epoch. In the same place you can see how seriously Cannon meant the joint statement's, "It is possible and obligatory to collaborate harmoniously," when he writes: "In my opinion, Morrison's articles are insults to the party. Any leader who does not react angrily to these insults is lacking in respect for himself and for the party. Such people will be weak reeds to lean on in a crisis."

Under these conditions is it correct to say, as your letter does, that "on the political plane the divergences seem to have diminished" between us and the Cannon group? You agree with us, as your letter states, "on the subject of European questions, in the first place in those which concern the importance of democratic slogans in the present period." On the other hand, Warde, the theoretician of the Cannon group, writes in the October bulletin:

"Morrow tries to reconcile the liquidationist outlook of the 'Three Theses' revisionists with the revolutionary program of the Fourth International. This later became more explicit in his feverish insistence upon the 'method of democratic demands' as the master key to the present stage of the revolutionary struggle in Europe—a position shared by both Shachtman and the 'Three Theses' group."

Our real position, as you know, is very different from that of

the Three Theses. (It was we and not the Cannonites who—in articles by Morrow and Loris—wrote the only serious criticism of the Three Theses.) Yet it is not simple dishonesty which causes Warde to link us to the Three Theses. He so completely fails to understand the role of democratic demands in Europe today that he lumps together all those who affirm their importance. It is true that the Cannon group no longer dares openly criticize specific democratic demands which were in dispute—the republic, Constituent Assembly—but this is only to avoid head-on conflict with the European sections which support these demands. But the Cannonites continue to inculcate the membership with the same attitude that democratic demands are revisionist. Tomorrow, if you and other European comrades support us not only on the European questions but also on unity, the Cannon group is perfectly capable of explaining to the membership that you do so because you share our revisionist support of democratic demands.

It is not correct, then, to say that the political differences between us and the Cannon group have "constantly diminished." It is true that the Cannonites artificially accentuate the differences and invent new ones in order to adduce a "theoretical" explanation for the minority's stand on unity with the Workers Party; this is the aim of the Warde article in the October bulletin which declares: "What is basically at issue in the current dispute is nothing less than a defense of the philosophy, traditions, program and organizational conceptions of our movement against the latest attempt of a petty-bourgeois minority to frivolously tamper with them in theory and discard them in practice." In laughing at the absurdity of Warde's claims you should not, however, overlook the fact that his article is a classical example of a bureaucratic tendency bending its political line to serve its organizational ends. It means that the Cannon group is not a political formation held together by a given set of political ideas, but is one in which the leader can make the most fantastic turns without the possibility of correction. In this sense, therefore, it is impossible to say what precisely are our political differences with the Cannon group, and even more impossible to predict what Cannon will make them out to be tomorrow.

The Workers Party, on the other hand, is a political formation. We know precisely what our differences are with it. The most important differences which existed between us and the Workers Party are now in the past. Our differences on the theory of bureaucratic collectivism in the Soviet Union remain, but with the receding of the question of the defense of the Soviet Union the practical importance of our difference on the Soviet Union has disappeared. Infinitely more important now is our common position of defense of the European proletariat against the Big Three. The Workers Party position against defensism in China during the imperialist war—a position shared by the Indian section of the Fourth International—was an important difference but has disappeared with the war; likewise its differences with us on support of the Congress-led struggle in India during the war. These were the main differences. There are other differences which we have no desire to gloss over, on which we have written and shall continue to write. But none of them are crucial today.

On the other hand, the Workers Party agrees with us on unity and on the broader question of which it is part: the struggle for a genuinely democratic-centralist party and against monolithism. The Workers Party agrees with us on the importance of democratic slogans in Europe in the present period.

These two questions are so all-important today that we can justly say that agreement on them means that we are politically closer to the Workers Party than to the Cannon group.

We did not say this in our original resolution on unity of July 12, and correctly so. At that time the Workers Party did not have a correct attitude toward unity of the Trotskyists of the United States. Thanks to its original error of splitting from us in 1940, it failed to recognize the need for unity, and still justified separation by referring to the Cannonite organizational methods. But the Workers Party changed its position, a change which, as the British comrades correctly say, was entirely progres-

alive and should have been hailed by all Trotskyists. The Workers Party decided in favor of unity and agreed to subordinate itself in action to the majority of the united party. When its request for a tendency bulletin in the united party was made by Cannon an obstacle to unity, the Workers Party agreed that it would not exercise the minority right to a tendency bulletin in the united party. In our resolution of July 12 we called the Workers Party a revolutionary Marxist tendency. When it adopted a correct position on unity, it became correct to call it a tendency in the Fourth International. There are thus three Trotskyist tendencies in the United States, and, for the reasons we have explained above, our tendency is closer to that of the Workers Party than to that of the Cannon group.

The crime of the SWP majority in refusing unity is as great if not greater than that of the Workers Party in splitting in 1940. The Cannon group has no real political reasons for not uniting, its real reasons are arithmetical: Cannon does not want a large group in the party which will not blindly follow him. His refusal to unite is thus, as we have explained in other documents, indicative of his desire to build a monolithic party. Hence the dispute on unity is not simply a question of a difference of opinion on an important matter but a profound difference on the kind of a party we want and how to build it.

Were the SWP healthy, the question of unity would have been resolved as soon as it was proposed by us and accepted by the Workers Party. But the SWP is not healthy, hence the vicious and dishonest resistance of the majority leadership to unity, hence the profound importance of the struggle for unity, hence the justification for our having formed a faction to fight for it, and the justification for our insistence on continuing the struggle despite Cannon's threats to expel us if we do.

The alleged obstacle to unity was the Workers Party proposal for a tendency bulletin. Cannon made no attempt to remove this obstacle. We did, in our letter of November 15 to the Workers Party urging it to remove this obstacle. The Workers Party on November 27 acceded to our request. The Cannon group's answer is a Political Committee motion of December 4 which (1) asserts nothing is changed and (2) warns the minority that if it continues "in relation to opponent parties as an independent factor, the party will be compelled to take disciplinary action." Thus, instead of admitting that an important advance has been made toward unity, and on that basis reopening the question of unity with the Workers Party, the Cannon group bureaucratically turns its guns on the minority which dared to forward the cause of unity. As always when Cannon is defeated politically, he redoubles his abuse against those who are right.

Cannon's threat will not deter us from continuing the struggle for unity. Our submission to Cannon's discipline would be a far greater blow to the movement than our continuing the struggle for unity and being expelled and joining with the Workers Party.

Cannon would not expel us if he had the slightest thought favoring unity. Were it simply that he doesn't want unity at the present moment, he need only tell us frankly that he wants more time, and we would be willing to wait. It is only because he is determined to prevent unity at all costs that he would go to the length of expelling us for fraternizing with the Workers Party. If he does expel us, then it is proof certain that he does not want unity. In that case, our place is with those who do want unity. Together with the comrades of the Workers Party we shall continue the struggle for unity.

We shall not, however, leave the SWP. Every effort must be exhausted to achieve unity. But, as in the case of the correspondence with the Workers Party which removed the obstacle of the tendency bulletin, it is clear that all steps connected with unity require our independent activity. Our independent activity is not, as is alleged, a method to provoke Cannon to expel us, but it serves to bring utmost clarity to the question of unity. Either our independent activity will lead to unity of the two parties, or Cannon will expel us and thereby show his last-ditch hostility to unity.

We understand very well that our method of independent ac-

tivity is an extraordinary one which goes counter to the observance of formal rules which under normal conditions are accepted as a matter of course. But the issue is of such extraordinary importance as to justify our course.

Permit us to remind you of Trotsky's words: "even in the Bolshevik Party, with its very severe discipline, Lenin first emphasized that the essence is more important than the form; that the ideas are more important than the discipline; that if it is a question of fundamental importance, we can break the vows of discipline without betraying our ideas."

Cannon has committed a crime in preventing unity. Do not permit him to use democratic centralism as a shield for his crime. Put the substance above the form. Turn your attention to the question of unity. If unity is achieved, it will solve the present crisis. If unity is correct, it must be fought for, by us and by you, without permitting Cannon to subordinate it to questions of formal discipline. Real Bolshevism puts substance above form. Real Bolsheviks would consider the relations between the minority and the WP primarily from the point of view of its political contribution to unity. When, instead, Cannon threatens the minority with disciplinary action, neither you nor we should permit him to hide his crime behind the formula of democratic centralism. Nobody should be fooled by Cannon's raising questions of formal discipline in order to prevent settlement of the political questions. Dear Comrades, permit us to remind you that the leaders of the minority are not undisciplined newcomers but revolutionists of long standing. We are old enough and experienced enough to understand democratic centralism, not only the form but also the substance.

We welcome your statement that "the approach of the world preconference presents every opportunity to decide this question (of unity) at that occasion." We hope the other European sections will support your proposal to decide it at that time. In doing so, you will have to be on your guard against Cannon's maneuvers, for he will do his utmost to prevent a decision by the preconference, since he is convinced beforehand that the British party's decision is the forerunner of the decision of all the European sections. The International must take a firm stand for unity. Failure to do so means aiding Cannon in building a monolithic party.

We do not ask the International to order the SWP to unite with the WP. It would not be desirable to force unity. Without wholehearted acceptance by a majority of the party membership, the unity could not be long-lasting. What we ask is that the International recommend and urge unity. Such an expression of the public opinion of the International may help to open the eyes of the best elements who now blindly follow Cannon.

If the Cannon leadership resists the public opinion of the International and is able to maintain a majority for such resistance, then the task of uniting the Trotskyists of the United States will be long and difficult. We fear the Cannon leadership will thus resist, but that remains to be seen and demonstrated to your satisfaction.

In deciding in favor of unity, the International will recognize the existence of three Trotskyist tendencies in the United States which belong together in one party. Whatever political differences the International may have with any of these tendencies, they should all be acknowledged as Trotskyist and as part of the Fourth International.

Unity is the main question. All other questions connected with this dispute are secondary and tertiary to a correct position on unity. Whatever the International may think or be led to think concerning the conduct of the Cannon group, of our group, or of the Workers Party, during this dispute, is entirely secondary to a decision on unity. That decision must not be evaded or postponed for the sake of secondary considerations.

With comradely greetings,  
Albert Goldman  
Felix Morrow  
(for the SWP minority)

# Resolution on the Fusion Question in the USA

By the RSP OF IRELAND

The RSP considers that the political differences between the SWP and the WP are not fundamental enough to justify the existence of two separate parties. We support, therefore, the proposals for the immediate fusion of the WP into the SWP. However, we consider it to be important that the WP leadership should publicly acknowledge that the split-away engineered in 1940 constituted a serious breach of Bolshevik discipline.

In the struggle to organize the American workers for the revolution the SWP and the WP base themselves on the same programmatic fundamentals. The major theoretical dispute between them remains the question of the USSR. However, notwithstanding the rejection of the theory that Russia is a workers' state the Shachtmanite comrades objectively defend the nationalised property by virtue of the fight they wage for the victory of the international socialist revolution, which alone guarantees its survival.

The decisive factor in world politics today is the unfolding of the revolutionary situation in Europe. US imperialism and Stalinist Russia are the two most powerful forces of counter-revolutionary intervention. The re-entry of experienced comrades and the addition of the new cadres recruited by the WP would strengthen the SWP in its fight to halt intervention and to give material aid to the European revolution.

However, notwithstanding the fact that the central slogan of our movement "To defend the USSR as an isolated fortress" has been replaced by the slogan of defending the European Revolution against imperialism and the Stalinist state the possibility of the unconditional defence slogan being advanced to the foreground again cannot be excluded. It is precisely the deep-going decay of the system that makes the widest zigzags in the political situation possible. The possibility of a series of adverse turns in the class struggle sufficient to place the third world war on the agenda cannot be ruled out of our perspectives. In such an eventuality the controversy over the nature of the USSR would again come to the forefront unless (and this cannot be taken for granted) theoretical agreement had been reached in the interim. We therefore do not think that the elimination of the immediate threat to the USSR should be advanced as a

main argument for fusion. Were this a major reason for a united party, then a change in the military situation of the USSR might be taken as sufficient grounds for the existence of two separate parties.

The SWP leadership at no time justified the existence of the split on the grounds of the theoretical dispute and we do not consider that the question of re-entry should in any way hinge on the theoretical discussion over Russia. Irrespective of the military situation of the USSR the basic revolutionary task of overthrowing imperialism still confronts the workers of the world and it is because there is agreement on this fundamental problem that we regard fusion as imperative.

The question of fusion should be viewed with full realisation on both sides of all implications, unfavourable as well as favourable. The query "Will it work?" is open to two interpretations:

1. Even if democratic centralist principles are loyally adhered to, will not the party stand in danger of acute internal controversy paralysing its work? But that danger is part of the overhead costs of building a revolutionary party on democratic centralist lines—as for example the Brest-Litovsk and TU controversies in the Russian Bolshevik Party.

2. Will not the Shachtmanites split the party again when a favourable opportunity arises? This is clearly based on a certain psychological appraisal of the WP leadership. Our proposal that the WP leaders publicly before their own supporters, admit their breach of Bolshevik discipline in 1940, would in some measure safeguard against this contingency.

With regard to the dispute over the character of the USSR we believe an international discussion should be begun on this question, published in the theoretical organs of the various sections. Even although it may be contemplated that no new conclusions of a fundamental character will be reached, it is still nonetheless necessary to review and evaluate the evolution of the USSR since "In Defence of Marxism" was written. We reiterate, however, that fusion agreement should be reached independently of the theoretical discussion.

Robert Armstrong, Secretary  
Revolutionary Socialist Party

## A Note on Our Letter of Resignation

By DAVE JEFFRIES and LEO LYONS

We understand that our letter of resignation has been circulated in the party with a prefatory note by M. Stein stating that it serves to reveal the real situation in the minority faction and that it bears out the contention that Goldman and Morrow are headed for split.

We must state here, especially for the benefit of the minority comrades, that our letter was not written or submitted for publication with any intention whatsoever to have it serve as an "expose" of the fact that the minority was headed for split. The letter was written and published solely to motivate adequately our act of resignation. Once given our disagreement with the course of the faction it was necessary to resign in order to avoid that state of "suspended animation" we have referred to. Once having resigned, it was necessary to proffer an adequate motivation. In any case, our letter can not do any harm to the minority that it will not do to itself, for it is the act of splitting, not the revelation of the intention to do so, that does the damage. Since the minority has decided to split, it must take the consequences, one of which is the party knowledge of that decision. We repeat: it is not we who damage the minority; it is the minority which damages itself.

But we must say with equal candor to the rest of the party: the mistaken course of the minority does not justify the sins of the majority. When, for example, the PC states that nothing is changed by the pledge of the Workers Party not to exercise the right of publishing its own internal bulletin in a unified party, thus disposing of an issue which Comrade Cannon had erected into a big barrier against unity—then the PC is not only delivering a factional blow against the minority but it is striking at the best interests of the party. If the majority had been sincerely interested in a correctly-based unity it would have said—"All right, the minority has violated discipline, and for that we condemn it, but the interests of unity are more important than our differences with the minority, and we recognize that a barrier to unity has been removed." Bolshevism has always regarded content above form, and if the majority had sincerely desired unity it would have recognized the advance made, while striving to come to an honest "mode de vivre" with the minority aimed at avoiding further violations of discipline. But to come to such a "mode de vivre" would require the majority to take an honest attitude on the whole unity question, and that it has never done. For example, how can Comrade Cannon square the state-

ment made in his September 2 speech to the New York membership that "We are not going to play abstentionist politics. We will answer every letter" with the fact that three letters from the WP asking questions of the party have gone—ignored!

No—the majority leadership is no more interested in avoiding a split than is the minority. If it were, its entire attitude would be different. The policies of the majority and minority complement each other. Each act of indiscipline on the part of the minority is used by the majority as an excuse for strengthening its stand against unity, and each step away from unity on the part of the majority is used as an excuse for further violations of

discipline by the minority. Thus is formed the vicious circle which is driving towards a split in the party—a split which is anxiously anticipated by both sides, with the only delaying factor being the concern of both to maintain as much formal propriety as possible.

We conclude: the responsibility for the split rests on both sides—the majority's responsibility is no less because it is indirect. The disastrous politics practised by both factions is heading the party towards a politically unjustified split.

A shabby chapter in the political history of our party is rapidly approaching a close. We can only try to open up a new one.

## An Answer to Dave Jeffries' Letter of Resignation

By ALBERT GOLDMAN

December 23, 1945

Dear Dave,

Felix set me a copy of your statement in which you resign from the faction.

I can assure you that I have nothing against you because of your resignation. So firmly am I convinced that comrades should think things out for themselves and act accordingly that, even when I see a young comrade make a ludicrous mistake, I admire him for his independence. Far better to think independently and make ludicrous mistakes than to follow blindly. The former can be cured, the latter becomes a Stalinist disease.

But why did you not take greater care in presenting my position? I do not want to call your presentation a distortion although it comes very close to belonging in that category. I feel a little downhearted because I thought that in our faction all the comrades would learn to give the opponent credit for the best possible position and never to take advantage of a bad formulation. I hope you remember this rule in the future. Go out of your way to present the opponent's position in the fairest possible light.

You present my position as if it is a question simply of preferring expulsion rather than walking out of the party. I admit that I gave in to those comrades who were against walking out. I do not hesitate to say that an unwillingness to walk out when walking out is correct is a prejudice. I "walked out" of the Communist League of America in 1934 and I am convinced that I was correct. Under the circumstances I saw no value whatever in remaining in the CLA. I wanted to do some work in the CP and subsequent events confirmed my theory that to dally around would be to lose the only opportunity.

In the present situation my main motive in refusing to walk out is to place the decision up to Cannon. We want unity and by our independent activity on behalf of unity we can accomplish two things. First we show that unity to us is so important that we consider the observance of formally correct party procedure as of quite secondary importance. Second, by acting independently on behalf of unity we make certain to ourselves and everybody else what Cannon's position on unity is. We can state that he is against it and is sabotaging every effort for unity, but this is too serious a situation not to exhaust every effort to convince ourselves and those who are interested that Cannon is determined not to have unity.

If Cannon simply does not want unity now (for some reason or other), our independent activity on behalf of unity would not be the cause of expulsions. It is only because he is determined to prevent unity at all costs that he would go the lengths of expelling us because we fraternize with the WP. If he expels us then it is proof certain that he does not want unity and that we belong with the WP. If Cannon had the slightest notion in favor of unity he would not expel us for independent activity; he would tell us frankly the situation, and we would be willing to wait for unity.

Our independent activity is not a method to provoke expulsion as you intimate in your statement but is a method to place the whole burden for the split on Cannon. You may not agree with

it but do not distort the position. Give all of the factors involved and not only one.

Unfortunately the motion which I introduced at the faction meeting does not contain the explanation that I give above. I had not planned to introduce it and did so only because the nature of the discussion convinced me that it was necessary to introduce a "fundamental motion." It was hurriedly written and contained the bare outline. But do not forget that I explained the motion in practically the same words that I use above.

To a question either presented by you or someone else as to what I would do if Cannon did not expel us for our independent activity on behalf of unity, I answered: First that is not very likely. Second, I am perfectly willing to remain in the party acting independently on behalf of unity because in effect it would lead to unity between our faction and the WP as well as unity between our faction and the SWP. I simply drew a logical conclusion from a badly posed question. But that is not my fault. I think that Cannon will either expel us for our independent activity or our independent activity will lead to unity of the two parties. I admit that the second is the far less probable.

As for your position that the faction should proceed to formulate a political position on various important political problems you evidently do not want to answer, in your statement, the argument given to you that the faction was not formed to grope around for political positions. It was organized to achieve unity. You will learn I hope that one does not form a faction in order to formulate a position on various questions. You should always start discussing questions in the party rather than in a faction. You should form a faction only on the basis of a position you have already reached. Otherwise it will look that you got a clique together and having nothing to keep you together you find it necessary to start taking a position on various questions.

I do not know from whom you got that idea, which I admit sounds profound to experienced comrades. Whoever gave you that idea has a queer notion as to the purpose of a faction. Remember, people join a faction because they agree with some proposition that some comrades have already worked out and do not join a faction in order to work out propositions.

If, because of your decision to submit to Cannon's discipline, you remain in the party and fight for unity and against a monolithic party and also for correct political positions, and if in the years to come you will be able to show that you defeated Cannon on all questions, I shall be the first to recognize that you were correct. For myself, I repeat, if Cannon succeeds in preventing unity I belong to those who have my ideas of the functioning of a party and with whom I agree in the basic political questions.

I shall have nothing but admiration for those comrades of our faction who, in the hope that they can put up a successful fight, insist on remaining in the party regardless of what Cannon does. I hope the suspicion of some comrades, that those who will submit to Cannon's threats will make their peace with Cannon, will be proved wholly unjustified.

Comradely,  
Al Goldman

# A Reply to Comrade Goldman's Letter

By DAVE JEFFRIES and LEO LYONS

January 11, 1946

Dear Al,

We have received your answer to our letter of resignation, and we cannot forebear from making a rejoinder to several of its points.

You call our step a "ludicrous mistake" made by a "young comrade." This appears to us a little condescending. More than that, it is slightly out of place, since all the ludicrousness one could desire can now be observed in the succession of rationalizations being produced by the members of the minority—and not the least of them by yourself in the letter you address to us.

In what way we distort your position it is difficult for us to see. All our assertions are based on your statements made to the faction and in the faction resolution, and you have not challenged their correctness. We could adduce divers other similar and even more telling quotations if we had some of your letters at hand. For example, the classic injunction written to Comrade Williams: "Patience! Patience! Expulsion is not far off." comes to mind.

To argue away what is down in black and white you produce your rationalization, and "ludicrous" is indeed a charitable word in this case. You present two "reasons" for your "independent activity" (what a euphemistic phrase!): (a) that it will demonstrate how important you think unity is, and (b) that it will result in "final proof" of whether Cannon is for unity. Which one of these two reasons is the more laughable would be a problem for Burrum's ass.

If you are looking for methods to "demonstrate" how important unity is to you, there is a much more "impressive" way. That is . . . to leave the party outright. If "independent activity" is supposed to demonstrate how important you think unity is, certainly the more drastic the step the more important it will seem. Actually, of course, the International, for whose benefit all this play-acting is designed, will be no more favorably impressed by the "independent activity" than by an open split. Violation of discipline is no argument whatsoever in favor of unity; it is only an argument against you. Those in the International who are opposed to unity can only be strengthened in their opposition by your course; those who are in favor of it cannot be made more so by indiscipline, and those who have not made up their mind can only be driven away. Who are you fooling but yourself?

As for your second reason—let all those who need further proof that Cannon is opposed to unity continue their search 'til the cows come home; we have two good eyes and two good ears and we have had enough. You are well aware that we always worked on the premise that Cannon would allow the consummation of unity only if forced to by the pressure of the International. You are now proposing to take whatever pressure there remains off, because when you provoke expulsion you simply enable Cannon to say: "Ah Hah! You see! How can we trust the Shachtmanites not to violate discipline when even the minority, which by

its own admission shares WP organizational concepts, violates the party statutes?" Your provoked expulsion is the last argument that Cannon needs to close the books on the entire unity question, at least for a long period of time. It will be a case of "out of sight, out of mind."

And Comrade Goldman, your violating discipline does not put the burden of the split on Cannon! Just the opposite! We have explained in the "Note on Our Resignation" in what sense we hold Cannon as much responsible for the split as the minority, but we must confess that you are certainly doing all you can to relieve him of his share of the burden. Your provoked expulsion will be about as effective in putting the blame on Cannon as Shachtman's was in 1940.

Incidentally, we cannot remember that you stated either of your two "reasons" at the faction meeting when you introduced your resolution. We do not wish to dispute the point with you, but this is one of the many reasons why we cannot escape the impression that all your argumentation is nothing but *ex post facto* rationalization. Instead of all the acrobatic maneuvering, wouldn't it be much more simple to say, "Since there will be no unity, we want to join the WP"?

Finally, a word on your ABC lecture that factions are not formed to "work out propositions." Of this we are quite aware; that is why we have not issued a call for a faction based on "groping for political positions." It is also true that one does not form a party to grope for political positions. However, neither does one who already belongs to a party run to the world at large in order to agitate for a political position that is in one respect or another different from his party's. Instead, he takes it to those who are closest to him politically and tries to convince them of its correctness and of the need to adopt it. And that is just what we tried to do in the faction, which is, in a sense, a party within a party.

It was our elementary duty to those who had been closest to us in political conceptions to attempt first to bring our position before the faction. If the faction had been taking a normal course and been oriented towards remaining in the party, it would not have been necessary to introduce any special resolution to the effect that the faction should orient towards the elaboration of a political platform instead of a split. Under normal circumstances we simply would have introduced our political proposal for discussion in the faction. But it was scarcely possible to do this when the faction was intent, not upon struggling for necessary and important political positions inside the SWP and the International, but only upon a split.

As it is, we discharged our duty towards the faction. We attempted to prevent it from jumping overboard by showing it that there was something to live for; we are under no obligation, however, to drown with it.

Fraternally,  
Dave Jeffries and Leo Lyons

## Two Letters from Felix Morrow

Dear Comrades:

The following is from a letter of the Political Bureau of the RCP to the European Executive Committee, Sept. 20, 1945:

"During the recent discussion on the European question which developed in the SWP, the majority of the leading comrades in Britain supported the position of Loris-Morrow. It is our opinion that the events of the past few months have completely vindicated Morrow in his main contentions."

Comradely,  
Felix Morrow

December 31, 1945

C. Thomas, Organizer  
Local New York, SWP

Dear Comrade:

In the City Letter to the branches dated Dec. 19 appeared the following paragraph:

"Minority Resolution on the Russian Question. The Political Committee at its recent meeting took up the question of the reso-

lution on the Russian question introduced by representatives of the minority at various branch meetings. The decision of the Political Committee was to invite Comrade Morrow to expedite the writing of a series of articles which he said he was preparing on this question for inclusion in an internal bulletin. When this material is received the oral discussion will be organized by the PC in accordance with party procedure."

This paragraph in the City Letter mistakes the facts in the following particulars:

1. The resolution referred to was not a resolution on the Russian question but a minority motion on Comrade Cannon's speech published in the November 17 *Militant*. The motion offered nothing new on the Russian question but stood on the position of the last convention resolution which it considered had been violated by Comrade Cannon's speech.

2. The articles which Comrade Morrow stated he was writing

on the Russian question are not considered by him and the minority as necessary to a decision on whether or not Comrade Cannon's speech was a violation of the convention resolution. It was the majority of the Political Committee which insisted on delaying any discussion of Comrade Cannon's speech until the minority writes on the Russian question. The minority still insists on its motion that Comrade Cannon's speech be discussed now and not in an indefinite future. The membership should understand that the Political Committee motion which ostensibly invites Comrade Morrow to expedite his writing is in reality a counter-motion preventing the minority from opening in the branches a discussion of the errors of Comrade Cannon's speech.

I would appreciate your having this letter of correction read in the branches.

Comradely  
Felix Morrow

## Extracts from PC Minutes, Dec. 18, 1945

### MOTION BY MORROW.

Motion on the Dec. 15 *Militant* Editorial endorsing Reuther:

1. The Dec. 15 *Militant* editorial on the GM strike endorsed Reuther's leadership of the strike setting him apart from the other UAW leaders as one whose career is "bound up with a victory in the GM strike" whereas the others aim at a compromise. This editorial endorsement of Reuther, following upon the PC's endorsement of Reuther's Nov. 19 arbitration proposal, is not an isolated error but indicates a definite line of support of Reuther without any criticism.

2. The erroneousness of this alleged distinction between Reuther and the other UAW top leaders was shown on Dec. 10, before *The Militant* editorial went to press, when Reuther endorsed the offer to Ford to penalize "unauthorized" strikers, an offer which GM picked up.

3. The next issue of *The Militant* should correct the error of endorsing Reuther, openly acknowledging its previous mistake.

4. Party policy in the GM strike shall be one of public criticism of the wrong policies of the strike leadership while giving it critical and independent support. The auto fraction is instructed to carry out this policy immediately. If it is necessary to partici-

pate in Reutherite-led caucuses in some locals, the participation shall not include endorsement of Reuther.

**Substitute Motion by Dobbs:** If Comrade Morrow wants to criticize the party line in the UAW strike, he be invited to write an article in the Internal Bulletin.

### Discussion on motions:

**Stein:** The whole approach of Morrow to the General Motors strike has been false from the beginning. He pursues a line of literary radicalism and nothing more. Shows he is completely divorced from the living movement, doesn't understand it, and, furthermore, doesn't know how to deal with it. The editorial was no endorsement of Reuther. It tried to indicate a division existing within the leadership which is genuine, has been existing for a long time. And a revolutionist who doesn't know how to take advantage of a division in the bureaucracy doesn't know the first thing about trade union activity, or any other kind of activity for that matter. The motion starts from a false premise. is wrongly motivated, and is therefore not acceptable.

**Vote on Motions:** Substitute motion by Dobbs: Carried unanimously. Motion by Morrow: Lost.

## Letter to Comrade Williams

By KARL KUEHN, Philadelphia

Philadelphia, Pa.  
August 4, 1945

My Dear Oscar:

Upon my return here today I find your letter of July 21 asking my reaction to the "Resolution on Unity" of which you enclosed a copy.

I had already attentively heard a careful reading of this resolution before I left for the Vacation School and thus had gained some impressions of it quite independently of all other persons. This not only gave me a pertinent interest in the comments I overheard at Camp from widely divergent areas and viewpoints, but also, added to these, gave me some definite things to look for upon my leisurely reading today of the copy you sent. Details of the Cannon-Goldman debate before the New York City membership have not yet reached me.

My over-all impression has not changed much from the first: namely, that the resolution lacks facts or circumstances which were not adequately considered at the time of the split five years ago. In such absence of any new important factor I cannot see the propriety of reopening the question.

Still I feel impelled to regard this open-mindedly for reasons suggested in paragraphs 13 and 14 of the resolution. These seem to give the core around which the other arguments adhere, though loosely. Even here there is an apparent distortion which needs clearing up. I might agree that "the elimination by history of the question of the defense of the Soviet Union" could lead to almost anything, in much the same sense in which I might agree that elimination of the law of gravity could lead to almost anything. Wisely, the resolution refrains from stating that history has actually eliminated either. Yet the mere suggestion of such possible elimination sounds infantile and un-Marxist to my humble and limited understanding. With this distortion—be it mine or the resolution's—cleared away, I might agree too that "any willingness on the part of the comrades of the WP to accept the conditions proposed by Trotsky—should lead to a serious attempt at re-unification," though that's putting it a little strong. But the resolution does not show me this willingness. Let the WPer's indicate directly or by authentic intermediary, such a willingness and I would regard it as a new factor worthy of inspection.

You see, from my practical experience I know that one side or another in a squabble must admit error or make concession before there can be reconciliation. I find neither in the resolution.

Yes, I agree that numbers of the WPers is not a determining factor. If the net effective work of our party could be measurably increased either at once or in reasonable potentiality, we dare not toss such asset overboard nor ignore it. Yet here again I am constrained to see distortion; more specifically, a gross overestimate in the resolution's implications of net effectiveness of the WPers in either trade union or other fields. From my observations in the Philadelphia area I think they are properly characterized as bunglers for whom a great deal of corrective education in the form of disciplined experience, is the indicated dosage.

Paragraph 16 of the resolution, describing some attitudes which do "not justify us in forever barring the door to those who left us," would lose its flavor of abstract innuendo and become much more easily acceptable if followed by the down-to-earth simple five-word statement that "There is no such bar."

As to the concluding paragraph 17, it strikes me as insufficiently constructive. It is negative. While therein it seems a correct enough summation of the whole document, it leaves a great silent void in answer to the ever proper question, **What Next?**

Would you change the leadership of the party? If so, why not say so and state on what programmatic or principled basis? Would you offer concessions to the WPers? If so, what are they? Would you go out into the field to organize the party better?

Whom would you send and where to? Or is it possible you would shunt aside as useless all or any of the present staff, the sacrifice, devotion, work, effectiveness however small, of a single comrade? If so, which and why?

No, I cannot yet see a case in the resolution. But I favor giving its authors and adherents ample opportunity to clarify whatever is the essence of their position which they have not yet succeeded in conveying to my consciousness. Under these circumstances, however, I cannot join their faction. You have failed to equip me for it.

I must go even farther. The signers of the resolution and the organizers of the faction have undertaken an obligation to come through quickly and clearly and concisely with any point they may still be holding back, or be not only discredited as leaders but also branded as wasters and de-railers of their followers from the activist track our party follows. I, for one, don't have much time for trifling.

I shall particularly try to avoid decisions based on emotionalism or prejudice. Despite some deplorable departures of that nature by leading comrades in the heat of debate, I think our party is, on the whole, sufficiently democratic and sufficiently representative of real workers in whom Lenin had such deep and fruitful confidence, that you and I too can maintain at least a working balance of serenity, mutuality and cooperation toward our great central common goal.

Comradely,  
Karl