

May 20, 1975

TO LENINIST TROTSKYIST FACTION COORDINATORS

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed are the following items:

1. A report on the April 19-20 meeting of the United Secretariat by Johnson.

2. A report on the recent convention of the GIM, the German section of the Fourth International, by Johnson.

3. A number of items related to a recent split in the Internationalist Tendency in the United States, and the formation of a new organ known as the "Internationalist Tendency (new faction)."

The IT(NF) claims approximately 48 members, 30 of whom were former SWP members, 12 of whom were former YSA members, and 6 of whom were never members of either. At the time of their split, the IT claimed approximately 130 members in the SWP and YSA.

The enclosed items are:

a. A letter from some IT members, read to the May 1-4 plenum of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee by Comrade Bart, who was a guest at the plenum.

b. A May 15, 1975, letter from John Barzman on behalf of the Internationalist Tendency (new faction) to Barry Sheppard.

c. A May 19 letter from Barry Sheppard to John Barzman.

4. A copy of a letter from the IMT Bureau to the IT conference at which the split occurred. The IMT Bureau letter was sent to the SWP leadership by Comrade Aubin.

5. A February 8, 1975, letter from Comrade Pierre Frank to Bill Massey commenting on the IEC meeting. The letter was printed in the IT's internal discussion bulletin.

Comradely,

Ed Shaw

REPORT ON APRIL UNITED SECRETARIAT MEETING

By Johnson

The major questions at the April 19-20 United Secretariat meeting were the adoption of a May Day declaration and rather lengthy political discussions on Indochina, Portugal and Spain. LTF members present were Adair, Atwood, Galois, Johnson and Marcel.

1. May Day declaration. The declaration was adopted unanimously (See Intercontinental Press, Vol. 13 No. 17, May 5, 1975). The members of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction on the bureau and United Secretariat voted for the declaration while expressing some reservations about it, especially over the triumphalist speculation about Portugal, Spain and Europe.

2. Indochina. A resolution was adopted by majority vote, with LTF members voting against. It is printed in the same issue of Intercontinental Press and in Inprecor No. 24. The disagreements over the line of this statement were essentially the same as those that emerged at the time of the Peace Accords. The major points raised by the United Secretariat members supporting the LTF were:

A. The general line of the resolution is that the victory in Indochina is a result of the Paris accords and the ability of the PRG leadership to take advantage of the situation resulting from the accords. We pointed out that the victory occurred despite the accords and the line of the Vietnamese Stalinists.

B. The resolution tends to equate the establishment of the Provisional Revolutionary Government in Saigon and the new Cambodian government in Phnom Penh with the inevitable creation of workers states. While the eventual establishment of new workers states in Indochina is a possible development, the Stalinists' continuing call for the creation of class-collaborationist coalition governments as outlined in the Paris accords is a major obstacle to the development of the revolution and the creation of workers states.

C. Underlying the differences on points A and B were disagreements on the character of the Vietnamese Communist party. The discussion on this point led to an exchange of views on the East European, Yugoslav, Chinese and Cuban revolutions including the theoretical questions involved. The exchange of opinions was along lines similar to the views expressed in the International Internal Discussion Bulletin (see the resolution on China submitted by the United Secretariat minority members [IIDB Vol. X, No. 13] and the reply by the IMT [IIDB Vol. X, No. 22] and in the exchange between Pierre Rousset and Fred Feldman and George Johnson in the International Socialist Review.

D. The resolution underestimates the importance of the role played by the international antiwar movement and especially

Report by Johnson/2

the American sector of it. The only reference to the role of the antiwar movement is a brief sentence stating, "The U.S. defeat in Indochina in fact also depended on the emergence of an international movement of solidarity with the Indochinese revolution and on the growing breadth of antiwar sentiment in the United States which, in the present economic context, imposes immediate limits on Washington's ability to intervene."

3. Portugal. A draft statement on Portugal was presented and discussed but not voted on. It will be redrafted in light of the discussion and presented for a vote at the next United Secretariat meeting.

Discussion centered around the role of the Trotskyist forces in Portugal today and how to build them; how to concretize the workers and farmers government slogan in the present situation in Portugal; the role played by the Communist party, and the character of the MFA and our political line toward the MFA.

This discussion on important new events did not follow the divisions that already exist in the International. It was an exchange of ideas that at least partially cut across faction lines.

4. Spain. A draft statement on Spain was presented but it was not voted on either. Comrades from Spain will be discussing the draft before the next Secretariat meeting and exploring the possibilities of arriving at a common document, or clarifying differences around a single draft.

It was reported that the LCR-ETA/VI is holding an internal discussion now. Some of the comrades are reportedly rethinking their ideas on exemplary "initiatives in action." One of the proposals under consideration is to change the public position which has been expressed on the Carreo Blanco assassination.

* * *

The minutes of the March and April United Secretariat meetings have not yet appeared. The problem has been differences over the recording of votes and consultative votes in light of the IEC decisions. We hope this can be resolved so a single set of minutes can appear.

May 16, 1975

REPORT ON THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE
GRUPPE INTERNATIONALE MARXISTEN

(German section of the Fourth International), by Johnson

At the February 1974 National Conference of the GIM, immediately following the World Congress, three tendencies were represented but no tendency was able to win a majority of the delegates to its positions. The Internationalist Tendency won 46% of the delegates, Kompass tendency won 45% and the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency won 9%. All three tendencies continued to exist following the conference.

The 1974 conference decided that as the largest of the three tendencies the IT should receive a majority of the incoming Central Committee and Political Bureau. As a majority in the leadership, it would implement its position in the national activities of the party and in the newspaper. This was to give the IT the chance to test their line in practice and convince the membership whether their line was correct or not. It was agreed to keep the discussion bulletin open and to hold the next conference within one year.

There were two main items on the agenda at the 1975 conference, which was held the first weekend in March: (1) the political situation and the tasks of the GIM and (2) the character of the German Social Democracy (SPD). Votes on the counterposed general political resolutions were used to determine the relative size of the tendencies. As in 1974 no tendency received a majority. The relative strength of the three tendencies remained about the same as a year ago.

The discussion on the general situation and orientation was similar to the discussion one year ago. There was more concrete discussion on the results of some of the activity of the section, such as Chile defense work, women's liberation (especially defense of the right to abortion) and some activities in defense of democratic rights.

The discussion on social democracy elicited the greatest interest and participation. This debate began in the summer of 1974, when the political bureau of the GIM decided to call for a vote for the SPD in the Lower Saxony state election. This was the first time the section had called for a vote for the SPD in several years. The Kompass tendency opposed this decision because in its opinion the SPD is a bourgeois party. It requested a special national conference be held in September 1974 to discuss this one question. An agreement was reached in the Central Committee not to hold the conference but to place the SPD question on the agenda of the regular conference. In the meantime, it was agreed the GIM would not call for a vote for the SPD.

In the pre-conference discussion the Kompass Tendency put forward the position that the SPD has become a capitalist party and it is unprincipled to vote for it.

The Internationalist Tendency put forward the position that the SPD is still a tendency within the workers movement ("a bourgeois workers party"), and that it is therefore permissible from the point of view of principle to vote for it. The IT then divided over whether it is tactically correct to vote for the SPD in Germany today. A group that defined itself as a "subtendency" of the IT was led by Mintoff. It held the view that today the GIM should call for a vote for the SPD as an expression of working class political independence. The majority of the IT thought that in the political situation in Germany today, the GIM should not call for a vote for the SPD, but should call a vote for the "revolutionary left" instead.

The Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency held the position that the SPD remains a current within the workers movement and that the GIM should call for a vote for the SPD today as a means of expressing a class vote against the bourgeoisie. In this the LTT position was similar to Mintoff's. There were disagreements between them on how to orient toward the SPD and how to build the GIM.

Much of the discussion was focused on the single question of who to vote for, rather than the GIM's overall strategy toward the SPD. There was almost no discussion about also running GIM candidates in the elections, a course of action favored by the LTT.

There was extensive written discussion prior to the conference. The resolution presented by Mintoff on the character of the SPD was adopted by a vote of 85 for, 78 against and 7 abstentions. At the same time the overwhelming majority of delegates voted against calling for a vote for the SPD today. Thus in practice the difference between Kompass and the IT majority about what to do is rather small. Kompass favors a vote for what it considers to be the working class parties in Germany today (the Communist party and the Maoists). The IT majority favors voting for the "revolutionary left" (the Maoists). There were many abstentions on this question.

The fact that no tendency received a majority for its political resolution created some difficulties in electing the incoming leadership. Kompass argued that the last conference had elected a majority of IT supporters to the central committee so they could test their line. Their failure to win a clear majority at this conference was an indication that they had not convinced the membership. Further Kompass said the IT had abused their majority. Therefore they opposed using the same formula at this conference (to allow the largest minority to have a majority in the leadership) without some guarantees that all tendencies would be involved in leading the activity of the section. At the very end of the conference Kompass presented a twelve-point proposal on what activity the GIM should carry out and how the leadership should be organized.

As it proved impossible to discuss this proposal before the delegates had to return home, they decided to postpone the final

GIM report/3

session of the conference for one month. A parity committee was created to try to reach agreement among the tendencies on how to elect the incoming central committee.

The IT thought it should receive the majority of the leadership. The LTT proposed that the most reasonable way to elect the leadership was proportionally, adding several people who did not support any tendency and who had previously been on the central committee. In their opinion the most important task for the incoming central committee was to clarify the discussion.

When the convention reconvened the first week in April Kompass and IT were able to agree on the composition of the central committee. They agreed that efforts would be made on both sides to guarantee that all tendencies participated in the day-to-day leadership; that specific areas of responsibility would be assigned to supporters of all tendencies. There was agreement on a series of activities to be carried out. On this basis the conference unanimously elected a central committee with a majority of IT supporters.

The text of this agreement was printed in Was Tun. The agreement, along with the Was Tun article on the conference itself, will be published in a coming issue of Intercontinental Press.

May 15, 1975

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[The following letter was read to the SWP National Committee plenum, May 4, 1975, by Comrade Bart who was a guest at the plenum. No signatures were read.]

To: The National Committee of the SWP

Dear Comrades:

1) The undersigned comrades, all former members of the Internationalist Tendency, have formed a new faction in continuity with the former IT. The platform of this faction consists of:

a) The resolutions adopted by the 10th World Congress of the Fourth International and the platform of the International Majority Tendency.

b) The document "Building a Revolutionary Party in Capitalist America" submitted by the IT to the 1973 SWP convention.

c) The open letter of the IMT to the last conference of the IT and the first seven theses of the resolution adopted by the IT Steering Committee meeting of October 1974; that is to say, a definition of the SWP as the Trotskyist organization to which all U.S. supporters of the Fourth International should belong and a commitment to fight for the reintegration of the IT (and now our faction) into the SWP.

Membership in our faction is based on agreement with this platform. The division of the former IT resulted from differences on precisely this question. Some comrades felt that the tendency should include all U.S. supporters of the IMT regardless of their attitude towards the SWP. (* Add sentence.) [sic] We felt that such a policy was impossible in a grouping which defined itself as an expelled minority of the SWP, which rejected the view that a new Trotskyist party should be built in the U.S., and which defined its priority as the fight for reintegration into the SWP.

2) This leaves no conceivable political basis for the continuing exclusion of ourselves from the SWP. Despite your contention that we were a "separate party" at the time of our expulsion, we have now refrained for almost a year from constituting a new public organization. Now the reconstitution of the majority of the former IT into a new faction with the platform outlined above eliminates any possible doubt as to our programmatic position in favor of the unity of all American Trotskyists in the framework of the SWP.

We are therefore calling upon the SWP National Committee to immediately reintegrate our faction and all other comrades who were expelled last year who are still willing to accept the discipline of the SWP. As we have stated to the January

Letter to Plenum/2

IEC plenum and in various communications to the SWP PC, we place no pre-conditions on our membership in the party.

3) Our faction has elected a steering committee of nine comrades. These are: John B., Jeff B., Mark L., Peter K., Cathy M., Danny L., Pat Q., Martha Q., John H. We have also left three seats open for other members of the former IT who agree with our programmatic position on the SWP but disagreed with us on the policy on membership as outlined above. These comrades have not yet decided whether or not to join our faction. If and when they do, their names and their selection of comrades to the Steering Committee will also be made available to you. Thus, the list of signatories below is a preliminary list and will probably be expanded.

Communist greetings.

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John Barzman
(Coordinating Committee, Internationalist Tendency, new faction)
Chicago, Illinois

May 15, 1975

Attn: Barry Sheppard
Political Bureau, SWP, New York

Re: Your statement that you "were in the dark"

Dear Comrade Barry,

This letter is pursuant to our phone conversation of May 13, 1975. At that time, you stated to me that you "were still in the dark" concerning our new faction. This was in reply to my questions about the decisions of the plenum of the National Committee of the SWP, decisions which you have as yet not formally communicated to us. Your answer was surprising given the history of contacts between the IT and the SWP leadership. To clarify the situation, let me remind you briefly of the most recent offers that we have made, and of the standing demand by comrades of the IT to be reintegrated in the SWP.

Following the Plenum of the IEC, I wrote to you on February 29 with concrete proposals for collaboration, and asking you whether you had any questions about the IT. The letter invited you to attend the conference of the IT which was scheduled to take place a few weeks later so that there could be an exchange of views. You declined to attend that conference.

Following that conference of the IT, which took place on April 5 and 6, 1975, I tried to arrange for a meeting with you in New York to report on the results of that conference. You refused to meet with me. After much protesting, Cde Barnes agreed to hear a report from two international guests who had attended the IT conference. They gave a full report on that conference to you.

Prior to the SWP Plenum, Cde Bill Massey and Cde Aubin wrote to you and spoke to you about the desirability of Cde Hovis attending the SWP Plenum so as to give a precise report on the situation of the IT. You refused to allow Cde Hovis to attend the plenum even though he is a member of the United Secretariat, as well as of the IT.

At the plenum, both Cdes Aubin and Mackenzie, who had been international guests at the IT conference gave a report on the situation of the IT. You asked for a list of members of the new faction, and Cde Mackenzie agreed to hand you the list which we had entrusted to him; for technical reasons of living arrangements and schedule, this was not completed. This list was mailed to you on May 8, by Cde Mackenzie. On May 9, I mailed the complete set of pre-conference documents of the IT, as well as the resolutions adopted at our October 1974 Plenum and at the April Conference. Also included was the call for our new faction.

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If you are still "in the dark" it is through no fault of ours.

As things stand now, the only report which we have received on your decisions, has been the oral reports of Cdes Aubin and Mackenzie. We would like to have you inform us formally of the precise nature of your decisions. Pending the arrival of such a precise decision on your part, this is how we see the situation.

There is a standing application by comrades of the IT to be reintegrated to the SWP. This application was first communicated to you in written form by a letter of appeal against the action taken against us, signed by 65 comrades, and dated July 17, 1974. This application was regularly reiterated by phone calls, letters, and personal talks, as the process of appeal through the international bodies was underway. Whether or not your decisions conform with the IEC recommendations, we have decided to follow the SWP Plenum decisions, and let the record speak for itself. Therefore our demand for reintegration will now be addressed to the local branches of the SWP to which the Plenum of the National Committee has referred us.

As a result of the whole past period which included mistakes by the IT which have been documented by ourselves, but especially a factional behavior by the SWP leadership leading up to the action of July 4th against the IT, and the interminable process of appeal in which your factional obstinancy played no small part, a process of political differentiation began to take place in the IT. The result of this process is that a number of comrades have been either rendered dysfunctional by the whole process, or have sectarianized in their view of the revolutionary party in this country, the SWP; that is to say, they have been unnecessarily alienated and politically removed from the party. This fact had to be dealt with and we felt it could not be dealt with adequately within a single faction. This is why the majority of the IT decided to form a new faction whose membership would be restricted to comrades who agreed with its platform and were willing and capable of actively building the SWP. This question is explained in some detail in the documents I have sent you.

Over half of the IT comrades decided to join this new faction; others are still in the process of making a decision. As their decision is made known to us, you will be so informed. The new faction has set criteria of membership which involve certain activities under the guidance of the SWP branches, and we are confident that these comrades who are in our faction will continue to demonstrate their loyalty to the SWP in practice in the ways you suggest. We ask that they be collectively reintegrated into the party, through the various branches.

Barzman/3

We hope that more of the comrades who were concerned by the actions of July 5, 1974 will be reintegrated into the party. Gestures of reconciliation on your part would certainly help the process, and benefit the Trotskyist movement as a whole in this country.

One point remains to be clarified. We understand the plenum decisions concerned only comrades expelled from the SWP in July 1974. However our faction also includes: comrades who were in the YSA IT, and whose tendency merged with ours; and comrades who were recruited to our faction since the July 5, 1974, date. Since we have found them to meet the requirements of membership in a revolutionary organization, ability to defend the program, commitment and activity, we are asking that they be admitted into the SWP. If they find themselves in areas without an SWP branch, we are referring them to the YSA NO for at-large status, or to the nearest YSA local. They will be included in the list of members of our new faction which conveners will deliver to organizers of party branches. In addition they will write a personal application identifying themselves. The breakdown of our current membership is attached.

If you are in the dark about anything else, I can always be reached at [telephone numbers listed in letter], the latter being my home address. Please let us know your opinion on these matters as soon as possible.

Comradely,

John Barzman, for the Coordinating Committee

cc: Bureau United Secretariat

I.T. new faction 5/15/75

This list modifies and details the list sent 5/8/75:

San Francisco: Garth C., Carlos, Gloria H., registered out of the SWP; John E. recruited by the IT.

Oakland-Berkeley: Lew P., Fran M., Tim K., registered out of the SWP; Trudy H., John H., in the IT through merger with YSA IT.

Portland: Connie S., Chuck S., Alan H., Kari C., registered out of SWP.

Houston: Jeff B., Danny L., Jana P., David R., John S., Jeanne S., Randy E., registered out of the SWP.

Saint Louis: Mark L., Peter K., registered out of the SWP; Greg H., Joe Z., in the IT through merger with the YSA IT; Bill H. recruited by the IT.

Washington, D.C.: Kirk L., in the IT through merger with the YSA IT.

New York: Vasquez, registered out of the SWP.

Chicago: Bill B., John B., Cathy M., Debby P., Martha Q., Pat Q., Judy R., Beth S., Adam S., Ted S., registered out of the SWP; Rob B. in the IT through merger with the YSA IT; Julie R., recruited by the IT.

The following comrades who live in areas where there are no SWP branches will apply to the YSA:

Madison: Judy H., Mark K., in the IT through merger with the YSA IT; Virginia F. recruited by the IT.

Brillion, Wisconsin: Doug Z., in the IT through merger with the YSA IT.

Kansas City: Rick G., in the IT through merger with the YSA IT.

Iowa City: Bob F., Chuck M., in the IT through merger with the YSA IT; Bill B., Bob M. recruited to the IT.

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14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
May 19, 1975

John Barzman
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Comrade Barzman,

I received your two letters dated May 15, 1975 today, as I just got back from Boston. However, the discussion we had after the Boston march on Saturday the 17th supersedes these letters, and I would like to confirm the main points we discussed.

At the recent plenum of the SWP National Committee, a report was made that took up the Internationalist Tendency. The general line of this report was adopted unanimously, and we are presently working on getting it in printed form along with the other reports and resolutions. When it is done, it will be made available to all members of the United Secretariat, including yourself. However, I went over the gist of the report with you.

You told me that you spoke for the Internationalist Tendency (New Faction), and that when you referred to the reintegration of "comrades of the IT" you were referring to the comrades of the IT (New Faction), although you hoped that other comrades of the former IT would also apply to join the SWP.

Along the lines of the plenum decision, I explained that the comrades of the IT (New Faction) should get in touch with the SWP branches in their area and begin to carry out SWP-building activity as decided by the branches. The branches, after going through a period of working with comrades of the IT (New Faction) would decide on any recommendation for membership. I pointed out that it was important for each IT (New Faction) comrade to do this so the branches can make an objective evaluation of his or her application for membership. You indicated that any members of the IT (New Faction) who were unwilling or unable to begin such SWP-building work under the direction of the branches would be dropped from the IT (New Faction).

You told me that Comrade Massey had resigned from the IT (New Faction) for personal reasons, and I notice his name is not on your list of IT (New Faction) members. Have Comrade Massey also resigned as a fraternal observer of the IEC?

Comradely,
s/Barry Sheppard
National Organization
Secretary

March 19, 1975

TO: Political Committee of the Internationalist Tendency

FROM: Enlarged Bureau of the IMT

Dear Comrades,

The IT Political Committee, after consultation with the members of the Steering Committee, has decided to cancel the Plenum previously scheduled for March 15 and 16 and to hold instead a delegated conference on April 5-6. The conference of the IT is meeting to draw a balance sheet of the latest session of the IEC, at which comrades of the leadership of the SWP and comrades of the leadership of the IT were present as fraternal observers (reactionary legislation prohibiting their formal membership in the IEC). The conference must also examine the perspectives that derive from this IEC session and must set an orientation for the whole IT in the coming period.

On the occasion of this discussion, the Bureau of the IMT wants to give you its opinion on these questions, although the IMT Bureau claims no decision-making power in the preparation or conduct of the conference.

A. Balance Sheet of the IEC

In accordance with the mandate of the IMT members of the IEC, who met to examine the results of the IEC plenum, the IMT Bureau made a statement (annexed to the minutes of the IEC meeting) in which it stressed the essentially positive character of the conclusions of the IEC session for the entire International.

1. Politically, the discussion of the recession and its political and social implications in the advanced capitalist countries showed that the differences that exist between the IMT and the IEC minority faction are not based on a different analysis of the recession. On the contrary, the unanimous adoption of a resolution on this point should permit the movement to confront new developments in the world situation from a common point of departure and therefore with lines of intervention that at least conform to the framework of the analysis drawn up by the entire International leadership, although they will of course differ according to national realities.

2. The adoption of a resolution on the political situation in Argentina and the tasks of Argentine Trotskyist militants presented by the IMT in counterposition to the minority faction's support for the orientation expressed in the statement of the Executive Committee of the PST raises the political fight to a new level. The positions expressed in the PST statement are now, at least formally, the positions of the minority faction, which endorsed them. The IMT is therefore justified in confronting all the components of the minority faction -- and thus also the leadership of the SWP, which is in political solidarity with that faction -- with the political implications for their own orientation of the conceptions upheld by the leadership of the PST.

In such a struggle, the leadership of the IMT aims at an important political objective: a differentiation and decrystallization within the components of the international minority that represent

national majorities, the actual transference of the PST's theses to the national practice of these groupings would run counter to their traditions.

3. This objective, among others, can be obtained only through the prior elimination of organizational obstacles that tend to impede the indispensable debate by providing so many pretexts for an interminable organizational polemic that is unproductive for the activity and education of the International.

That is why we consider the expanded participation of the minority faction in the United Secretariat and its presence in the Bureau of the USec as a step forward. That is also why the IMT accepted the presence in the USec of a member of the PST with the status of an observer without counted or recorded vote. The axis of these organizational measures -- the last-mentioned of which represents a concession that is necessary in helping to lower the level of tension now prevailing in the International -- is to bring the minority faction into the leadership of the world movement, including its day-to-day leadership, to the utmost of its capacities and potential by having the minority faction share the responsibilities and problems of leadership.

Any attitude that would aim at excluding a significant minority of the International from effective leadership positions -- apart from being in contradiction to the traditional principles of democratic centralism to which we adhere both in the conduct of the internal debate and in the direction of the activity of the International -- would only lead to results opposite to those the IMT is seeking: the construction of a united and strengthened International capable of politically and organizationally aiding the development of the sections. By once again raising a knot of internal tensions in the movement, such an attitude would only contribute to paralyzing the International with multiplied factional activities and would wind up by heaping discredit on the International both inside and outside the sections.

Increased political and material collaboration, on the other hand, should favor the correct conduct of the internal debate while sacrificing neither the work toward centralization nor the extension of the International's public impact, which is required by the intensification of the class struggle nearly everywhere.

4. Finally, the recognition of the comrades of the IT as fraternal observers of the International (in a motion that was adopted by the IEC unanimously) allows us to envisage a rapid positive solution to the grave crisis opened by the expulsion of the IT from the SWP. In the meantime, the motion entitles the IT comrades to enjoy all the rights reserved for members of the Fourth International (although it does not recognize the IT comrades as members of the Fourth International, as that is forbidden by the Voorhis Act).

Undoubtedly, the comrades of the IT are disappointed that the IEC did not definitively settle the question of their reintegration into the SWP. Certainly, that would have put an end once and for all to the already too long period of uncertainty inaugurated by the expulsion of the IT from the SWP on July 4, 1974.

The IMT has several times unambiguously expressed its position in favor of the collective reintegration of the IT into the SWP. It did this once again at the IEC by stating its agreement with the

report of Comrades Karl Anderson and Tantalus, supported by Comrade Hoffman. But given a choice between a majority vote for the position of the IMT, which in any case would not have been binding on the minority faction, and a unanimous vote for the recommendations of the International Control Commission and a common motion of the IEC as a whole, the IMT preferred to choose the latter solution, because it was the only one that can now aid the reintegration of the IT into the SWP on the basis of the unanimous recommendations of the ICC and the positions taken by two members of the SWP Political Committee who committed themselves to push within their National Committee for the adoption of the recommendations of the ICC.

In any case, on the basis of the statutes of the International that was the only solution possible, because on questions of this type the IEC does not have executive power, but only the right to express an opinion and also because according to the SWP statutes only the NC can make such a decision.

Thus, the crisis has not yet been resolved on the national or international plane -- far from it. But the IEC at least permitted the ways and means of its resolution to be posed. The final outcome now depends on the International minority's will for effective collaboration, the attitude adopted by the international majority, the broad outlines of which we have indicated, and the behavior of the IT, which we must now examine in more detail.

B. Perspectives for the IT

1. Whatever disagreements we may have with its orientation, intervention, or internal functioning, the SWP is the only Trotskyist organization in the United States. The SWP has a long tradition and a national base and has played a role on a national scale that has carried it to the head of significant mass mobilizations which, after a period of stagnation, are now tending to emerge once again because of the crisis that is shaking the American imperialist system.

Thus, given the present state of affairs, there is no political or organizational argument justifying separation from the SWP, nationally or internationally. This fact must serve as the basis for a determined policy of the IT of struggling for its reintegration into the SWP, as you yourselves affirmed in the political resolution of your October plenum. Nothing essential has changed since that date; if anything, the perspective of reintegration is even more concrete than it has been at any time during the past eight months.

Obviously, the condition for the realization of this perspective is that the majority of the SWP effectively implement the terms of the IEC motion recommending collaboration between the SWP majority and the IT and that the comrades of the IT do the same, without losing themselves in unverifiable hypotheses about the "probability or improbability of reintegration," which can only serve as a pretext for avoiding dealing with the necessary priorities.

2. At this stage, we believe, the priorities of the IT must be centered precisely around the concrete proposals for collaboration in the general areas of intervention of the SWP. The present re-emergence of social struggles in the United States provides numerous opportunities for this collaboration, through which the comrades of the IT, in addition to fighting effectively for their reintegration, can make an effective contribution to the development and spread of

Trotskyist ideas among the mass movement and the vanguard.

Carrying out such a project in the two months remaining before the National Committee plenum of the SWP will contribute to demonstrating to the leadership and membership of the SWP and to the whole International that the IT genuinely respects the principles of democratic centralism on which it bases itself in justly demanding its reintegration, even though these principles require that the IT comrades act under the leadership of or in collaboration with militants who uphold conceptions with which the IT comrades differ, sometimes in important respects.

3. Carrying out such a project should prepare for the active and rapid reintegration of the IT comrades into the SWP. Moreover, this project will allow the IT comrades to develop their capacity to politically elaborate a revolutionary orientation for the United States on the basis of a real activity.

This work can be aided by an examination of the positions upheld by the IT in the past and by drafting synthetic documents on the major problems in the United States. It will thus raise the political level of the IT and consequently the quality of its contribution to the building of the revolutionary organization in the United States. An abstract political discussion divorced both from the necessary reference points provided by militant activity in the various sectors of intervention and from the development of the discussion that will be held within the SWP before its next convention would threaten to draw the IT toward overestimating the particularities of the tendency and toward the independent unfolding of a sectarian dynamic that would represent a retreat from the best political contributions the IT has made within the SWP, contributions that must now be systematized and clarified.

4. This process must lead to a swift reintegration of the IT into the SWP. The expulsion of the IT constituted a flagrant attack on the Leninist norms that are in force in our movement. For the IMT, the fight for the reintegration of the IT into the SWP is a principled fight that goes well beyond a simple organizational conflict. What is at stake in this struggle is the defense of democratic centralism, not only as a method of building the International and its sections, but also and above all as a fundamental acquisition of our program. From this standpoint, any solution involving the individual reintegration of the members of the IT is unacceptable to the IMT.

Moreover, an individual reintegration would lead in the direction of recognizing the right of the SWP leadership to choose among the IT those members who fulfill some particular conditions. The members of the IT were expelled from the SWP because of their adherence to the IT and not because of this or that individual violation of discipline. Thus, the comrades of the IT must be reintegrated collectively into their party.

Nevertheless, just as any conditions posed by the leadership of the SWP to the reintegration would be unacceptable, any conditions for their reintegration posed by the IT would be equally unacceptable to the SWP and to the whole International. The statutes and decisions of the national leadership bodies must be respected by all members of a Trotskyist organization, whatever disagreements they may have with the documents or orientations upheld by the national leadership.

The IT cannot claim a privileged status. In demanding its reintegration into the SWP, the IT at the same time commits itself to respect the discipline of the SWP such as it is described in the statutes and in the organizational resolution of 1965 and not to impede the activity determined by the elected leadership bodies of the SWP. The IT commits itself, as it has already done in several documents and statements, to contribute to the building of the SWP to the best of its ability -- without renouncing its own political positions, which it will raise at the appropriate times within the framework of the internal debate within the SWP.

5. All these points relate to a strategy of the long-term construction of a tendency within the SWP. They are in no way dictated by conjunctural exigencies. Any activity of the IMT in the United States must rest on these bases. This implies, among other things, that these considerations will not disappear after the plenum of the SWP.

If, as we hope, the SWP NC decides on reintegration, the comrades of the IT, while continuing to defend the positions of the IMT against those of the minority faction, will again take their places within the SWP. They will then have to decide how to participate in the internal debate of the SWP, which does not necessarily imply the immediate reformation of a faction based on a national platform; that must be determined on the basis of various criteria, not the least of which is the character of the political theses presented by the leadership to the next convention of the SWP.

If the reintegration is refused by the SWP, the IMT could not but support a possible expansion of public activities by the IT, activities aimed at preserving the very existence of a group of comrades in political solidarity with the International. But there again, the political basis of the activity of the IT would scarcely be modified at all in the final analysis. The IT would then have to continue to wage a principled battle for reintegration and would have to draw the conclusions that flow from this for its intervention, which would be likely oriented toward maximum collaboration with the SWP majority in order to reunite the two factions of American Trotskyism in the same organization as quickly as possible.

6. The IT is in fraternal solidarity with the Fourth International with its majority tendency. In solidarity with the IMT it upholds the essential bases of the international platform of the IMT in the international debate.

But the IT is also a national tendency that aims at reintegration into the SWP, within which it has already defended its own positions on questions of political orientation in the United States. The IT cannot continue to exist unless its members are armed with clear conceptions in both these areas. Particularly as concerns the definition of strategy and tactics for the United States it seems to us that the tendency must once again clarify these questions on the occasion of its conference. That would permit the squelching of the interpretations the SWP leadership has read in to some of your documents and would provide the whole of the IT with a solid basis for work in the future.

We repeat: The existence of the IT is difficult to compare with the situation of other groups of comrades of the IMT in the

International. Adherence to the IT today must rest on agreement with the essential documents of the IMT, but also on agreement with the essential political and organizational points of a national orientation along the lines of the one we have tried to sketch out. In the absence of such agreement, political and organizational heterogeneity will complete the work of disintegration that the SWP leadership has attempted to effect.

The confirmation of such a line by the comrades who share it thus seems to us vital in the present stage, on the eve of a new turn in the objective situation of the IT, in order to assure the tendency of the best chances for success.

We hope that the few points we have raised in this letter will aid you in your discussion and contribute to the positive development of the work of your conference, which we consider very important and which we hope will be fruitful.

Fraternally,

Enlarged Bureau of the IMT

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[The following letter from Comrade Pierre Frank to Bill Massey was printed in the Internationalist Tendency's Internal Discussion Bulletin #1 in 1975.]

February 8, 1975

Dear Comrade Bill,

You have asked me what is, according to me, the significance of the IEC decisions for the IT and what consequences they have.

First of all, I think that these decisions are of the utmost importance which it would be erroneous to underestimate. In fact, the IEC decisions are declaring void the part of the SWP expulsion that concerns the relations of the IT members with the International. Up to now to be expelled from the SWP meant ipso facto the break of the special relationship that exists for members of the SWP with the International. By the IEC decisions the members of the IT are in the same situation towards the International as the members of the SWP. For the International, members of the SWP and members of the IT are on equal footing. Of course the IEC decisions are considered by the majority of the International as concerning a faction expelled from the SWP whilst the SWP leadership sees them as concerning a separate organization from the SWP. This difference could not have been resolved by the Plenum. Therefore the majority of the International speaks of "reintegration" in the SWP, the leadership of the SWP of a "fusion".

Though written in evasive terms, the unanimous decision of the IEC is a very important matter for the comrades of the IT. It is the first time that the International had [sic] not ratified expulsions from the SWP. It is also the first time that leaders of the SWP have accepted: a) that the International Control Commission deals with an "internal" matter of the SWP; b) that a "recommendation" of the IEC concerns an "internal" problem of the SWP. I do not believe by that that the SWP has accepted the conception of the world party as expressed by me in some articles, but I consider what has happened as a change for the better.

Will you soon be reintegrated in the SWP or will the coming May Plenum interpret the vote of the IEC in a way that would prevent it? Such a discussion seems to me useless. In less than four months we will know. In any case, for the time being, the activities of the members of the IT should start from the premise that the IEC decisions will be accepted "in good faith" and therefore they should carefully avoid anything that would or could hinder this.

Since your expulsion, the IT members have been waiting for the IEC and have had no external activities. Now they can start some activities which are not contradictory to the IEC decisions.

Pierre Frank/2

As the IT is considered by the SWP as a separate organization, the comrades of the IT can in the first place reinforce their ranks with comrades who, not only are partisans of the F.I., but are also in agreement with them concerning their relation towards the SWP. In this matter I see first of all the YSA members who have been expelled for the same reasons as you; I don't know exactly the question of the groups which were outside the SWP but you should consider it. You can also make some individual recruitment.

You can be sure that the International will be ready to help you for cadres schools and that the press of the International is open to you, of course not for attacks or polemics against the SWP. I see no reason why you could not create some study circles, providing that they are not directed against the SWP.

Now what should be your relations with the SWP as long as you are not yet reintegrated? It depends also on them. But I don't see any reasons why you should attempt to bind yourselves, as I understand some of your comrades think of, with a rigid formula for a situation which will become clearer next May and for activities which will necessarily be limited and probably different for different comrades. I would rather try to give what may be some guiding lines. In some cases, as for example the next march of Boston, I understand that there will be no difficulty. For other campaigns of the SWP, as long as you are not formal members of the SWP, you remain free to determine your degree of participation in these campaigns, the only thing you should have in mind is that there be no opposition or obstruction from your part.

The most delicate problem is probably the cases where your own comrades are present in some larger organization with members of the SWP and where there are differences concerning the line to follow in such organizations. I would not there too try to find a formula for all cases. I would deal with each case on its own merits, as long as you are not formal members of the SWP, taking a position which would not prevent future collaboration in a reunified SWP.

These views of mine may not seem very precise, but I don't see any possibility to be more precise in a situation which will remain fluid until next May, where to the IEC decisions which will remain valid we will see how the NC is understanding and implementing them.

Yours Fraternally,
Pierre