

# INTERNAL BULLETIN

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PARTY POLICY IN THE NEW YORK ELECTION CAMPAIGN

(Adopted by P.C., July 12, 1945)

In agreement with the Political Committee, the New York Local has decided to enter candidates for Mayor and City Council in the New York elections, and the New York Party members are now busily engaged in collecting the necessary signatures to the nominating petitions of Comrade Dobbs, candidate for Mayor, and Comrade Simpson, candidate for City Council.

At the Political Committee meeting of June 28 Comrade Goldman introduced the following motion:

"That we instruct the New York City Committee to contact the workers Party and attempt to arrive at an agreement with that party for the purpose of avoiding a situation where candidates of our party in the coming city election campaign run against candidates of the Workers Party."

"That as a basis for discussion we propose that the Workers Party withdraws Shachtman as a candidate for mayor and supports our candidate and that we withdraw our candidate for city council and give critical support to a candidate nominated by the Workers Party."

"The above motion is made on the assumption that the election platform of the Workers Party will be essentially the same as our platform."

Following this, on July 5, the New York Local of the Workers Party addressed this letter to our New York City Committee:

"As you know, the Workers Party has nominated Comrade Max Shachtman for the office of Mayor in the coming New York municipal campaign. We note that the Socialist Workers Party has nominated Comrade Farrell Dobbs for the same office, and Louise Simpson for the office of Councilman. The campaign platforms presented by the Workers Party and the Socialist Workers Party in the New York election will, in all likelihood, reveal no fundamental or radical differences. Under these circumstances, much confusion can be created among workers, especially those who are more advanced politically, and the common cause to which we adhere can be harmed."

"We believe it is possible to arrive at an agreement between the two parties which, while assuring the political integrity of both, would eliminate the confusion and avert the harm. While confident of the possibility of joint action in the election campaign, we do not wish to anticipate its exact terms."

"Therefore, we have selected a sub-committee to meet with a similar committee representing your organization for the purpose of exploring the possibilities of joint action in the New York election. Our sub-committee is prepared to meet with you at the earliest possible moment."

"Fraternally yours,

Local New York, Workers Party  
Reva Craine, Organizer"

We reject this proposition on the following grounds:

1) Our purpose in participating in the New York City elections, by nominating our own candidates for Mayor and City Councilman, is to popularize the program of the party and to build the party. An electoral "agreement" with the Workers Party would not serve this basic purpose but only add confusion.

2) We campaign for the whole program of our party against the programs of all other parties, including the Workers Party. We make no united fronts for propaganda, but only for actions.

3) At the present stage of the development of the American labor movement we advocate and support the movement for an independent labor party and for independent labor tickets as a means of promoting the independent political action of the workers as a class. In those cases where independent labor candidates are nominated, with a broad base of support in the trade unions, we usually are willing to withdraw our own candidates and give critical support to the labor candidates. This, however, is not a binding rule; we always reserve the right to run our own candidates if we think such action is advantageous in the circumstances. Even when we support the candidates of other working class parties we do not support their program and do not enter into any propaganda united front with them. We make our own campaign and advocate our own program.

4) We are not disturbed by the alleged "confusion" that can be created by the separate campaigns of two parties having approximately the same municipal platforms and ostensibly the same general programs. This "confusion" cannot be dispelled by an electoral combination but rather by drawing sharp lines of demarcation. The task consists in explaining to such workers as may be interested that our party is the genuine party of Trotskyism while the Workers Party is a petty-bourgeois counterfeit.

5) Since both the SWP and the WP are small propaganda parties, lacking broad bases of support in the trade unions, an electoral agreement or combination between them could not be expected, in the present circumstances, to involve substantial masses of workers in independent political action. Such a combination would only represent a caricature of an independent labor ticket based on mass support and an unprincipled combination in the field of propaganda.

6) The task of our New York Local consists in utilizing the municipal election for a concentrated campaign of propaganda and agitation for the party program, and combining it with a party building and recruiting campaign. For this they need no election deals or agreements with the Workers Party or any other party. On the contrary they need to carry on their own work, independent of all other parties and against them.

STATEMENT OF MINORITY OF POLITICAL COMMITTEE  
ON NEW YORK ELECTION CAMPAIGN

1. The motion favoring an attempt to arrive at an agreement with the Workers Party for the election campaign in New York, so that our candidate for mayor should not be opposed by a candidate of the Workers Party, is based on an analysis of all the factors in the particular situation that confronts us. There is no general principle from which we can deduce that we should or should not attempt to come to an agreement with an opponent workers' party in order to prevent a split in the votes of the advanced workers. All of the factors in the particular situation must be analyzed to determine what is the correct tactic. The statement of the majority is wrong primarily because it attempts to settle the question by reference to a general principle, such as the correct application of the united front tactic.

2. The situation in New York is as follows: A Republican Party politician, supported by groups of Democratic Party politicians and by the Liberal Party is running against a Democratic Party politician supported by Tammany and the Stalinist American Labor Party. The Workers Party has announced its intention of trying to place Max Shachtman on the ballot. We have designated Farrell Dobbs to run for mayor and Louis Simpson to run as candidate for the Council. Two small revolutionary propaganda parties with campaign platforms that are very similar are to conduct a campaign against the two capitalist parties and against each other.

In this particular case the tactic of arriving at an agreement to avoid an electoral conflict with the Workers Party is dictated by the need to concentrate our attack, during the campaign, against the capitalist parties and for our immediate program dealing with the question of jobs for soldiers and workers in the coming period. To have an opposition candidate from a party recognized by the advanced workers as a revolutionary party, and having a platform similar to ours necessarily injects a confusing factor into the campaign and tends to shift the issue, for the advanced workers, to the question of our relationship to the Workers Party and away from the fundamental issue of our immediate program and our attack against the capitalist parties.

3. There is no question but that class conscious workers who are opposed to capitalist parties and have sympathy for the revolutionary movement (and in New York there are many such workers) will resent being compelled to choose between parties which they deem to be based on the same general program. In general, advanced workers want unity and frown upon a division which to them seems inexplicable and unnecessary. It is not possible for us at all times, to gratify the desire of advanced workers for unity, but wherever it is possible, without the least sacrifice of principle, our party should take this healthy tendency into consideration. Any division which seems unnecessary to advanced workers tends to discourage them from active participation in the revolutionary movement. There is nothing so discouraging to such workers as fights among working class parties, fights which to them are inexplicable. That party which shows an advanced worker that it did its utmost to avoid division on a particular occasion, is most likely to get a hearing from him.

4. When the motion for negotiation with the Workers Party was first presented to the Political Committee, Comrade Stein advanced two arguments against it. One, that it is first necessary to discuss our estimate of the Workers Party and whether or not we should fuse with it before taking action on such a motion. Two, that we are participating in the election campaign to present our program and build our party and therefore it is impossible to accept such a motion. The first argument has been entirely omitted from the written statement presented by Comrade Cannon and dealing with the motion. If this means that this argument has been withdrawn we must record that as progress.

Nevertheless it is necessary to deal with this argument because it will undoubtedly be used by other comrades who will follow the majority of the P.C. The same argument was raised by Comrade Cannon when the motion for a trade union bloc with the Workers Party for the purpose of building a left-wing movement in the trade unions was presented at the last Plenum meeting of the National Committee. The argument was that we must first discuss and decide our political estimate of the Workers Party before we can take up the practical questions of cooperating with that party. This has the sound of a profound argument but only a little thought is necessary to see how superficial and worthless it is.

One would imagine that we have never heard of the Workers Party; that we know nothing about its origin and activities. Were one to propose a trade union bloc with the Socialist Party, would it not be a strange proposal for someone to make, that we first discuss our political estimate of that party? Actually we have never made any official estimate of the S.P. All comrades who pretend to know something about the labor movement know what the S.P. is. A proposal for a trade union bloc with the S.P. should elicit a discussion of a practical nature, such as, what forces the S.P. has in the trade unions and what is the program of the S.P. in the trade unions. It is necessary to have a thorough analysis of an opponent party if the question is one of fusion but not when the question is one of cooperating with it in some particular action. And we know more about the Workers Party than we do about the S.P. Either one is on principle against cooperating with the Workers Party under all circumstances or one must argue each proposal for cooperation on the basis of the situation involved in the proposal. One can be against fusion with the Workers Party and for a particular proposal for cooperation. One can be for fusion and against a particular proposal for cooperation.

5. The first objection raised in the written statement presented by Comrade Cannon, against the motion on the election campaign, tells us that our purpose in participating in the campaign is to popularize our program and build our party. An electoral agreement with the Workers Party would not according to Comrade Cannon, serve this basic purpose but only add confusion. How an agreement, which provides that Shachtman withdraw as candidate for mayor and support us and we withdraw our candidate for councilman and give critical support to the Workers Party candidate, would prevent us from presenting our program and building the party, and how it would add confusion, is a real mystery. We would still have our own program and popularize it. And if anyone thinks it will be difficult to explain why we give critical

support to a candidate that has a similar program let him consider the far greater difficulty of explaining why we made no attempt to avoid an election conflict between two parties that have a similar program.

If we don't have an agreement an intelligent worker is bound to ask why, and if our answer is that we want to build the party he will ask: are you or are you not taking this campaign seriously? The intelligent worker is interested not in the abstract question of building the party but of fighting the capitalist parties and even an election campaign appears to him as a struggle against capitalism and he does not want a division of forces.

The building of the party is best achieved if we can give convincing answers to the questions of intelligent workers. The building of the party depends upon the adoption of correct tactics and not upon running an independent candidate for the purpose of building the party.

6. "We make no united fronts for propaganda but only for actions". So runs the second objection to the motion. Why drag the question of the united front into this discussion? It looks as if Comrade Cannon sees a united front problem in a motion which simply states that we should come to an agreement to avoid an election conflict with the candidate of another workers' party, under certain conditions. He has also evidently heard or read about the correct principle that we should make no united fronts for propaganda purposes and will-nilly drags that principle into the discussion.

The motion does not provide for a united electoral campaign with a common program and with the same propaganda. We shall have our own candidate, our own program and our own propaganda, if the agreement can be reached. Is this a united front? To consider it such is stretching the meaning of a united front to an extent where it becomes absolutely meaningless. One must be utterly confused on the question of the united front or intentionally want to confuse others in order to raise it with reference to the motion under discussion.

7. It is impossible to understand why our attitude on the Labor Party is dragged in. It has absolutely no relevancy. Objection #3 also says: "Even when we support candidates of other working class parties we do not support their program and do not enter into any propoganda united front with them. We make our own campaign and advocate our own program". Surely, surely. But who is advocating a united campaign with a united program? Who is advocating a united front for propoganda? This whole argument appears to be presented by one who has not read the motion or, if he did, has not understood it. It can also be the argument of one who is desperately searching for an objection and can find none.

8. The statement adopted by the majority of the P.C. assures us that the possible confusion to the workers who are confronted by similar programs is to be dispelled by explaining that "our party is the genuine party of Trotskyism while the Workers Party is a petty bourgeois counterfeit". Is there anyone so naive as to believe that we can really dispel confusion by assuring a questioning worker that the Workers Party is a "petty bourgeois counterfeit"?

In reality the task of explaining our differences with the Workers Party is immensely facilitated once we eliminate the question why we made no attempt to avoid a conflict in the election campaign. The question then shifts to the differences between us and the Workers Party and not to the similarity of our programs and our failure to make an attempt to avoid a conflict. An advanced worker is more likely to listen with sympathy to an explanation of differences provided he sees a real effort made to avoid conflict between two workers' parties at a time when he thinks they should concentrate their attacks on the capitalist parties.

A tactic which compels our agitators to be on the defensive against any advanced worker who wants to know why we made no attempt to avoid a conflict is a tactic which harms the party and does not aid in building it.

9. Objections 5 and 6 repeat the objections raised in previous paragraphs -- about the united front for propaganda only and about the Labor Party. All of these objections have been answered.

The statement adopted by the majority of the P.C. is a mess of confusion and shows that if one is determined to go through with an indefensible position, he is compelled to resort to arguments that are completely irrelevant and worthless.

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RESOLUTION ON UNITY WITH THE WORKERS PARTY

1. It is now more than five years since the group which we designated as the "petty-bourgeois opposition" left the party. Immediately after the split, they organized the Workers Party under the leadership of comrades with many years of experience in the revolutionary movement. After five years we note that their activities in the labor movement continue unabated. They publish a weekly agitation paper, Labor Action, and a monthly, New International; put up candidates in elections; conduct fraction work in trade unions, etc. They took with them in the split 40 per cent of our membership; their present activities indicate that they have retained a substantial portion of this number and recruited new elements.

2. Assuming that the Workers Party is but one-third the size of our party today, we cannot ignore the possibility of re-unification of the two forces on the ground of their allegedly sparse numbers. Unification would result in approximately a 25 per cent increase of our forces. More important, unification would return to the party cadre elements who are the product of decades of Marxist training and experience and whom we cannot hope to recruit elsewhere.

3. Our attitude toward re-unification must be based on a political estimate of the Workers Party. This means not to repeat what we said about the minority at the time of the split, but to analyze without prejudice the history of the Workers Party and the character of its program and present activities.

4. With the exception of the important questions of the nature and defense of the Soviet Union, the Workers Party remains on the fundamental programmatic basis of the Fourth International. Its propaganda, agitation and activities are based in the main on the program of transitional demands adopted by the Founding Congress of the Fourth International.

5. The acid test of a workers' party is its attitude toward imperialist war. Without the slightest hesitation and with no opposition in its ranks, the Workers Party took a Leninist position toward its own imperialist bourgeoisie. It has maintained that position throughout the war. Some comrades deny that this is an acid test of the revolutionary character of the Workers Party; they point to the anti-war position of Martov in World War I and of the Young Peoples Socialist League in this war, as examples of centrists or non-revolutionists who oppose imperialist war. The speciousness of this argument is that it ignores the fact that Martov and the Y.P.S.L. remained in parties dominated by social-chauvinists, whereas the Leninist character of the Workers Party's position includes its recognition of the principle that Leninists must have their own party and cannot remain in one party with social-chauvinists.



6. The comrades of the Workers Party have shown that they remain loyal to the proletarian revolution. On the American scene the W.P. has followed the same general course as our party: against the no-strike pledge and against class-collaboration through the War Labor Board, for a Labor Party, etc. On the question of the defense of the European revolution against Stalin and the imperialists it has likewise followed the same course as we. Today the similarity of the two parties' programs and activities has become still closer, with the disappearance into the background of the question of the defense of the Soviet Union, and the appearance in the foreground of the urgent need to defend the European revolution against Stalin, a question on which the Workers Party is in complete agreement with us. It is inevitable that militant workers will not understand our separation into two parties which they deem to be similar in fundamental program and immediate aims. Nor can we justly deny to these militant workers the essentially revolutionary character of the Workers Party.

7. The Workers Party position on the Soviet Union is that it is a bureaucratic-collectivist state. However, this does not constitute an insuperable obstacle to unity. Within the Fourth International there have for some years been currents rejecting the concept that the Soviet Union is a degenerated workers' state. Nobody has claimed that the Fourth International must expel comrades who believe that the Soviet Union is a bureaucratic-collectivist state or a state of capitalist restoration.

8. Yet there are comrades who, while agreeing to the principle that differences on the Soviet Union are no bar to unity within the Fourth International, nevertheless argue that the comrades of the Workers Party do not belong in the Fourth International because they are "revisionists." But revisionists in the classical sense refers to reformists of the type of Bernstein, who distort Marxism for the purpose of giving up the class struggle and the proletarian revolution. The "revisionism" of the Workers Party is obviously not to be confused with Bernsteinian revisionism; the former is a revision of the Marxist theory of the state in the sense that the WP theory of bureaucratic collectivism is not compatible with the Marxist theory of the state; but we must recognize that the Workers Party agrees with us against Bernsteinian revisionism on the necessity of carrying on the class struggle to proletarian revolution, and denies that it has abandoned the Marxist theory of the state whereas revisionists openly proclaim their abandonment of it. Only those bewitched by words can fail to distinguish between Bernsteinian revisionism which has no place in the Fourth International, and the "revisionism" of those who differ with us on the Soviet Union but who do have a place in the Fourth International and actually have a place in several of the parties of the Fourth International.

9. Another argument against unity is that the "petty-bourgeois opposition" has continued to move further and further

away from us since the split. This abstract spatial metaphor is not a valid political proposition. It is true that several political differences have arisen in the past five years between the position of our party and that of the W.P., but neither singly nor together are they a bar to unity. There are differences on the question of material aid to China; on some phases of our military policy; on our attitude to the Stalinist parties; differences on the national question in Europe during the Nazi occupation may also still exist to a certain extent. But differences on all those questions must be expected with comrades in our own or sister parties of the Fourth International. They are not questions upon which a difference of opinion can be expected to lead to a split, assuming the disputants to be Bolsheviks and sensible. On some of these questions we had differences in our own ranks and no serious factional struggle resulted. Moreover, many of those in the W.P. who differ with us on these questions would be influenced by our arguments were they to be in our party; much of these differences can be laid to the existence of two separate parties. Perhaps also many of our comrades would be influenced by the arguments of the Workers Party comrades if they returned, but this too is natural and to be expected. He who objects to unity on the ground of these differences and possible future differences will only find satisfaction in a monolithic party, a party without differences, which in reality would not be a revolutionary party at all.

10. Another argument against unity is that the very fact that the "petty-bourgeois opposition" split from us shows they do not belong in the same party with us. This argument amounts to saying that once we have a split there should never be unity again. It is completely alien to the method of Trotsky, who so often attempted to heal splits in the parties of the Fourth International. Following earlier unsuccessful attempts by Trotsky, our French comrades have recently succeeded in healing a nine-year split with the Molinierists. Our Belgian comrades have again offered unity to the Vereecken group, with whom they have more long-standing and far deeper differences than we have with the Workers Party. The fact that the comrades of the W.P. split from us is irrelevant to the question of unity now.

11. Some comrades insist on continuing to characterize the W.P. as "petty-bourgeois" and to use that as an argument against unity. "When did they change?" is the argument against those who say that unity is possible now. A date is demanded of us. We cannot give it, but we can indicate precisely in what the change consists of.

(a) Our characterization of them as "petty-bourgeois" was based mainly on the fact that we considered they had yielded to bourgeois-democratic pressure in abandoning defense of the Soviet Union during the period of the Stalin-Hitler pact when bourgeois-democratic public opinion was hostile to the Soviet Union. But had they continued to yield to democratic public opinion, they would not have adopted a Leninist position on the

war, a position which indicated that the comrades of the W.P. were capable of resisting far greater bourgeois-democratic pressure than was exerted during the Stalin-Hitler pact.

(b) In the split Burnham was the ideological leader of the petty-bourgeois opposition. But Burnham left the W.P. and with him also a small group influenced by his anti-Marxist theories; likewise Macdonald, an anti-Bolshevik, did not find himself at home in the W.P. The departure of these elements was an important factor in permitting the group to remain on the fundamental position of the Fourth International, instead of taking the path first indicated by Burnham.

(c) During the war the petty-bourgeois elements in the W.P. found jobs in industry and many of them had their first experience in fighting in the ranks of the organized workers. They undoubtedly made many mistakes because of inexperience, but we cannot deny their seriousness of purpose and their devotion to the labor movement. We can also expect that the large number of their members drafted into the army have undergone a significant transformation through their experience with masses in the war.

These are the specific changes which answer the formalistic question as to when the W.P. ceased to be a petty-bourgeois group.

12. Even if it had remained a petty-bourgeois group, that would be no principled obstacle to unity, for even when we characterized them as a petty-bourgeois opposition the party was willing to keep them in its ranks. Although the organizational question was raised in the form of an indictment of the Cannon regime as a bureaucratic-conservative tendency, and although that question played an important role in the struggle culminating in the split, the basis of the struggle was the question of the defense of the Soviet Union. Under the guidance of Trotsky, we took the position that a split on this question was not justified; that it was possible and desirable for the minority to accept discipline in action and to strive further to win the majority of the membership to its point of view. Trotsky proposed that the minority be given guarantees that factions would not be prohibited; that no restrictions would be imposed on factional activity other than those dictated by the necessity for common action; that the minority could choose to have an internal bulletin of its own or a common one with the majority. The minority demanded the right to publish a public newspaper agitating against the party position. This right the majority rejected as irreconcilable with Bolshevik procedure. The split occurred because the minority violated the convention decision denying it permission to publish a public organ.

13. It is clear from the facts that led to the split that either the elimination by history of the question of the defense of the Soviet Union, or a willingness on the part of the comrades of the W.P. to accept the conditions proposed by Trotsky to avoid the split, should lead to a serious attempt at re-unification.

14. The question of the defense of the Soviet Union has not been eliminated by history but it is no longer the burning question that it was in 1940. The burning question today is the defense of the European revolution against Stalin, on which both parties agree. This creates the possibility of working together again in one party. No one can say if and when we are likely to bring to the fore again the slogan of defense of the USSR. The variant of a fairly long term of peace between the imperialists and Stalin is more likely to occur than the variant of war. At any rate it is necessary to invite the W.P. comrades to re-enter our ranks, offering them the same conditions that we were willing to offer them in order to avoid the split.

15. How the W.P. will react to such an invitation is not certain. The important thing is to work out a correct line for our own party on this question: to invite the W.P. to unite with us on the same conditions we offered in 1940. We shall benefit no matter what attitude the W.P. takes. A refusal on its part can be utilized to tear away some of their supporters within and outside their party. Acceptance means increasing our membership by several hundred among whom are capable comrades with many years of experience in the revolutionary movement. It means eliminating a party whose existence side by side with ours causes much confusion.

16. An attitude which condemns those who split to permanent separation from the party, regardless of their loyalty to the revolution, is incompatible with the true spirit of Bolshevism. In the course of building a Bolshevik party, sharp differences of opinion, even bitter struggle and splits, are almost unavoidable. Unification after a split, when tempers have cooled, when events have eliminated or pushed to the background the cause of the controversy, is just as obligatory as refraining from splitting. We correctly characterized the split as a criminal blunder against the movement, but that does not justify us in forever barring the door to unity with the W.P.

17. An unwillingness to unite with comrades who have different opinions has nothing in common with Bolshevism. Such an attitude bases itself on the concept of a monolithic party whose leaders, while granting formal democratic rights of discussion, do not in reality conceive of differences of opinion and discussion of the differences as a method of building a healthy Bolshevik party. They do not have confidence in their ability to convince intelligent revolutionists; they depend upon blind followers. Building the party to them is to create a machine with a membership that is docile and accepts unquestioningly the directives of the leaders. The question of unification with the comrades of the W.P. is thus of enormous symptomatic importance in determining the kind of party we want to build. The party's decision will be a touchstone indicating the direction in which we shall henceforth move.

Morrow  
Goldman  
Williams

ON "UNITY WITH THE SHACHTMANITES"

(Speech by James P. Cannon at New York Membership Meeting,  
July 25, 1945)

1. The Evolution of Goldman's Policy

For the past year and one-half we have been witnessing an attempt on the part of comrade Goldman to bring about a fundamental change in party policy by the step-at-a-time method. Without clearly stating his objective at any time -- and perhaps without even formulating it in his own mind -- he has been trying to lead the party to a complete reversal of an established position by "stages." At the Fifteenth Anniversary Plenum, a year and one-half ago, Goldman gave his first faint indication of a conciliatory attitude toward the Shachtmanites, and began to express doubts about the Bolshevik system of organization and its alleged tendency to degenerate into Stalinism. The Plenum, taken by surprise by such an untimely reminiscence of the past, showed no sympathy for this strange and alien note in our discussion.

About a year ago, at the time of the famous "censure of the four" we noted that Goldman's violent objections contained a political under-current of the same type. We know that various comrades objected to the censure. Some thought it was too severe an action in view of the fact that rank and file comrades were involved. Others were of the opinion that the action was tactically inadvisable. We all recognized that differences of opinion on these points were quite legitimate. But Goldman's contribution to the discussion bore an entirely different character. He tried to justify indiscriminate fraternization and even collaboration with Shachtmanites, without the approval of the party and behind the back of the party, as a perfectly normal procedure. The party leadership correctly rejected and condemned Goldman's argumentation as a manifestation of conciliationism toward the petty-bourgeois opposition. The convention endorsed this point of view.

The minority at the Convention, I am told, violently objected to this imputation. But later developments have shown how correct it was.

At the May Plenum of the National Committee Goldman took a further step along the same path -- again on a small "tactical" proposal. He proposed that we approach the Workers Party for the construction of a permanent national bloc for trade union work. As you know, the Plenum rejected this proposal on the ground that it pre-supposed a change in our political attitude toward the Shachtmanites, a change which the party had not yet authorized. The Plenum refused to adopt the tactical implications of a line before debating and settling the question of the line itself.

A few weeks ago we had another small tactical proposal from Goldman. This was his motion that we enter into an election

agreement with the Shachtmanites in New York by agreeing to withdraw one of our candidates for exchange of a withdrawal of one of theirs, or something of that sort. As you know, the Political Committee rejected this proposal too. We rejected all "nibbles" at the question of changing our attitude toward the Shachtmanites as long as we had no proposal to change it fundamentally. The attempts to introduce a fundamental change of line in any question in stages by small tactical steps is the classic method of opportunism. Bolsheviks first discuss and decide the fundamental line in every important question and then discuss its tactical application.

## 2. Two Concrete New Developments

We now have two concrete new developments.

The first is a motion by Goldman and Morrow that we approach the Shachtmanites with an offer to readmit them into the party on the 1939-40 terms and that the Political Committee appoint a committee to begin negotiations with them on this basis. Parenthetically, I might remark that the proposal for the Political Committee to appoint a committee to begin negotiations for the carrying out of a line not yet authorized by the party shows a conception of party organization functioning that is somewhat strange to us. The party convention condemned "conciliationism" with the Workers Party. The P.C. has a full right to propose a change of this attitude but has no right to introduce such a change and take practical steps to implement it on its own authority. These "fine" points of organizational procedure -- these "formalities" which are such an essential part of our conception of party organization -- don't weigh very much in comrade Goldman's mind.

The Political Committee procedure was a quite different and far more correct one. Its decision was to refer the matter to the next Plenum of the National Committee and in the meantime to indicate what its recommendations would be for the consideration of the Plenum. I have been appointed by the Political Committee to explain its point of view here to you tonight.

The discussion in the Political Committee on this motion brought out some developments of the political activities of comrades Goldman and Morrow which are pertinent to the question under discussion and will be of interest to you.

Prior to the last Plenum we heard numerous rumors of repeated conferences of Goldman with Shachtman. When questioned about it in the Political Committee prior to the Plenum, he blandly informed us that he had had numerous meetings with Shachtman and had discussed the question of unity, etc. with him. Needless to say, these meetings with leaders of an opponent party had taken place without the prior knowledge or authorization of the Political Committee. When the latest proposal was under consideration in the Political Committee meeting of July 12 we again made inquiries as to whether other meetings with the leaders of the Shachtmanites had taken place in the meantime. Here are some extracts from the Minutes of the Political Committee of July 12.

Question by Stein of Goldman: Did you have any negotiations with the W.P. or any of its members on this?

Answer by Goldman: I had no negotiations with anybody.

Question by Stein: Did you have any talks with them on their attitude to this?

Answer by Goldman: I had many talks with them.

Question by Stein: What was their attitude? Whom did you talk with?

Answer by Goldman: They refused to commit themselves. Shachtman, Carter, Gates, Johnson, Erber -- that is all I can remember.

Question by Stein: You say they refused to commit themselves?

Answer by Goldman: They refused to commit themselves.

Question by Stein: Would you like to give us a report of the talks you had, exactly what transpired?

Answer by Goldman: With all of them I urged them to re-enter the party and all of them said that they do not think that with Cannon and the Cannonites in the party that they should. However, if there is any move on our part, they will have to consider it, discuss it, and take some attitude. They admit that their attitude to Cannon should not be an objection to unity, and therefore they are willing to discuss the question. That is the essence, but they will not commit themselves.

Question by Stein: I would like to ask Morrow the same questions: whether he had any discussions with members of the Workers Party along these lines?

Answer by Morrow: I have run into a few of their rank and filers. Those are the only ones I have asked how they feel about coming back. I would say the general sentiment is rather negative among those I talked to.

Question by Stein: Whom did you talk to?

Answer by Morrow: I will be hanged if I can even remember their old party names. Some of the younger people who left. Most of them were in the Yipsels.

Question by Cannon: You had no talks with any of the leaders of the Workers Party?

Answer by Morrow: Sure, I had talks.

Question by Cannon: Give us a list of their names.

Answer by Morrow: Surely. Coolidge, Gates, Shachtman.

The second new development is the announcement of the minority that they have formed a closed faction to conduct "an organized struggle" in the party. Thus the "truce" is broken and in its place we have a declaration of war. Worst of all, the caucus meeting to organize the faction was held at the same hour that the New York Party Local had called a mobilization of party members to gather signatures on the nominating petitions of our candidates in the New York election, and in conflict with this party mobilization. Thus the new faction is tainted at its very origin by an anti-party action.

What are the "war aims" of the announced faction? They are clearly set forth in the "Call" which they have circulated as a sort of factional manifesto. The war aims of the faction as set forth in this "Call" are: (1) Unity with the Shachtmanites and (2) fight the "Stalinist" regime in the Socialist Workers Party. Say what you will about this platform, no one can say it is a new one. We have heard it before. It is the old familiar pattern. Throughout our history every opportunist political tendency has invariably coupled its political proposals with an indictment of the party regime and organizational methods, which have invariably been characterized as "Stalinist."

### 3. The Documented Record of the Struggle

Both of these questions and the struggles around them have a history and fortunately for the younger members of the party it is a written history -- written and documented in the published books which record all stages of the historic struggle of 1939-40 against the petty-bourgeois opposition led at that time by Burnham, Shachtman, and Abern -- namely, "In Defense of Marxism" and "The Struggle for a Proletarian Party." The documents of the 1939-40 fight are a part of the rich political capital of the party.

These documents recapitulate the whole forty-year struggle between Bolshevism and Menshevism. These documents must be studied by all the young members of the party who did not have the opportunity to participate in this struggle and who wish to prepare themselves properly for an understanding of the fundamental issues in the present discussion. The attitude of a party member toward the history of his own party is one of the surest signs of his seriousness, or his lack of it. We learn from our own experiences as well as from the experiences of others, and the lessons of these experiences must not be forgotten. They must be incorporated into the flesh and blood of the party so that old errors will not be repeated and gains achieved in struggle not light-mindedly thrown away.

In order to discuss properly the motion for "unity with the Shachtmanites", we must first go back and establish what the fight and split was about in the first place. If we were right, we must maintain our position. If we were wrong, the error or errors must be pointed out concretely and then corrected. Up to the present we have heard no open statement by the minority, no frank and explicit contention, that we were wrong and Burnham-Shachtman right. But, as we have seen, the policy of the minority is unfolding in "stages." Perhaps this will be the next stage. But even before



they have openly avowed their solidarity with the Burnham-Shachtman conception of party organization, we can already see that it is implicitly contained in their recent speeches and proposals. That is the essence of the matter; and that is what makes this meeting of such great and decisive importance for the future of the party.

For the first time since the split of 1940, our line in the historical fight is challenged. We intend to discuss this question thoroughly and to the end because we firmly believe that the concept of the party is fundamentally decisive for the building of the party. I intend to make many speeches on this subject in the course of the discussion. Tonight, however, there is only time for a brief synopsis which can serve as an introduction for more elaborate remarks later.

As you know, the struggle of 1939-40 culminated in a split. The printed record -- "the Books" -- show what the issues were and who was responsible for the split. We characterized the faction of Burnham, Shachtman and Abern as "petty-bourgeois opposition," not only on the Russian Question as Goldman would represent it, not on any single point of difference. We characterized their whole systematic line of conduct and political methods as well as organizational conceptions and practises, and their basic composition, as petty-bourgeois. Here is the way Comrade Trotsky described this faction, which later split and formed the Workers Party:

"It is necessary to call things by their right names. Now that the positions of both factions in the struggle have become determined with complete clearness, it must be said that the minority of the National Committee is leading a typical petty-bourgeois tendency. Like any petty-bourgeois group inside the socialist movement, the present opposition is characterized by the following features: a disdainful attitude toward theory and an inclination toward eclecticism; disrespect for the tradition of their own organization; anxiety for personal 'independence' at the expense of anxiety for objective truth; nervousness instead of consistency; readiness to jump from one position to another; lack of understanding of revolutionary centralism and hostility toward it; and finally, inclination to substitute clique ties and personal relationships for party discipline."

Trotsky accused Shachtman not of a political error here and there but of an "outright theoretical betrayal." He denounced the idea of a split "as a despicable betrayal of the Fourth International." He characterized the first number of the New International -- the magazine which they stole from the party -- as a "petty-bourgeois counterfeit of Marxism." The documented record of the struggle shows that we left no ambiguity whatsoever in our analysis of the basic character of the opposition faction which later became the Workers Party. We were right on the political questions in dispute at that time -- and they were wrong. We were right on the "organization question" -- in reality the conception of the party -- and they were wrong. If our minority now disagrees with this appraisal, let them point out their disagreements concretely. Then we will discuss the questions again. If they can convince the party that we have been

incorrect in our estimation of the struggle up till now, the estimation can be changed. But they will not succeed in changing it by indirect implication without presenting the issues frankly.

The record shows that we tried to prevent the split by every kind of means, that we offered the most extraordinary concessions to keep them in the party. In spite of that, they rejected the decisions of the party convention. They rejected the subsequent conditions of the Emergency Conference of the Fourth International. They repudiated national and international discipline. They defied the public opinion of the entire Fourth International, all the sections of which, as far as I know, supported the majority. They split the party, formed a rival party, and declared war on our party. That is how the record stood in the spring of 1940.

This documented record of the fight must be studied line by line by every member who wishes to prepare himself seriously for an understanding of the present discussion. It was in the struggle against the petty-bourgeois opposition and the victory of it that our party became a party.

#### 4. The Development of Our Party Since the Split

The split was a very deep one, costing us no less than 40 percent of the party membership. In spite of that, the split caused no demoralization in our ranks and brought no "catastrophe" to our movement, as they had confidently predicted. We went forward from the first day. We gained in struggle against them as party against party, as we had previously defeated them in the struggle as faction against faction. Our great work of proletarianization, transformed the party from a discussion group into a genuine workers' organization.

Our younger cadre of proletarian leaders who had been somewhat over-shadowed and kept in the background by the intellectuals and fast talkers in the old party came forward and developed in the new party. In the year 1944 when all the older and more experienced leaders were out of action, this younger cadre showed its caliber! The year 1944 was the richest year of accomplishment in the entire history of our movement. (Except 1945, which will be richer yet). We have another reserve cadre of precious talents among the comrades who have been drafted into the military forces. If the whole present leading staff were put out of action and these absent comrades would return, they could construct a whole political committee, if necessary, an organizing bureau and an editorial board. And the party would have every right to put confidence in their capacity to lead the party firmly and worthily.

We have been recruiting new members steadily and at an ever-accelerating pace since the split. Our numerical preponderance over the splitters increases from month to month.

The Militant, which Trotsky once criticized very sharply for its intellectualism, has become a real workers' paper; not only a brilliantly-written paper for the workers, as Trotsky described the

old Militant, but also a paper of the workers. The popularity of our paper is attested by the astonishing successes of our great subscription campaigns. A year ago the National Committee rather hesitatingly asked the membership to get 3,000 new subscribers, wondering at the same time if the goal had not been set too high. The membership responded with a total of about 7,500 new subscriptions. Again this year, a goal of 10,000 new subscribers was set by the party leadership and you responded with more than 22,000. Fund campaigns, with goals undreamed of in the old days, have been over-subscribed in every case.

How is all this to be explained? Does this give a picture of a party that is demoralized, stagnating or going backward because of the absence from our ranks of the old petty-bourgeois opposition? All the facts speak most eloquently to the contrary. The steadily mounting successes of our party can only be explained by its homogeneity, by the revolutionary morale of the party membership, by their confidence in the party and in the leadership, by their ardent party patriotism. These sterling qualities cannot be manufactured at will. They can only be the reflection of the nature of the party itself.

The old party was paralyzed by its predominantly petty-bourgeois composition. This was the basic cause which threatened it with destruction, plunged it into the terrible crisis of 1939-40. Trotsky had warned us time and again that there was no salvation for the Socialist Workers Party except along the line of proletarianization. He said in one of his articles:

"The class composition of the party must correspond to its class program. The American section of the Fourth International will either become proletarian or it will cease to exist."

Look at the composition now! The basic proletarian cadres of our party are concentrated in large and flourishing fractions in auto, maritime, shipyard, steel and other basic industries. This is the proletarian core of the party. In the 1939-40 factional fight Burnham and Shachtman found an automatic source of strength and support in the bad social composition of the party. The petty-bourgeois elements, especially in New York where they were predominant, responded to the opposition faction almost by reflex action. By the same token it is clear that the source of the pitiful weakness of the present opposition, as far as numerical support is concerned, is to be found in the predominant proletarian composition of the present party.

##### 5. The Development of the Petty-Bourgeois Opposition Since the Split.

How has the petty-bourgeois opposition, which split from the party in 1940 and formed a rival party, developed since the split? And what is their present attitude toward the Socialist Workers Party? We don't need to send a committee to meet them in order to find the answer to these questions, as Goldman has proposed. We have more reliable information as to their membership strength than they give to Goldman. Our information is more reliable and comes from our

qualified representatives in the field, who observe them closely and know almost precisely what their strength amounts to. As to their policy in general and their attitude toward us in particular, we don't need to inquire about that either. It is clearly revealed in their press for anyone who is interested to read.

They deepened the theoretical and political differences of 1940 and developed new ones. The anti-Marxian theory of a new "bureaucratic class" displacing socialism as the historic successor to capitalism -- a theory which was kept in Burnham's brief-case during the old faction fight -- has now been adopted as the official policy of the Workers Party. To be sure this wonderful "theory" of this remarkable new "class" is so far restricted to "one country." But that can't last long. The Shachtmanites, like all other opportunists, develop their policy in "stages." They condemned our military policy as a sort of social patriotism in the spirit of pacifist abstentionism. They have adopted the liquidationist's "Three Theses" on the National Question in Europe, which all Marxists in the Fourth International have condemned as a revision of Marxism. They have revised the program of the Fourth International on China and on India. They have differed with us in almost every case in the concrete application of our Labor Party policy. Even on the comparatively simple question of trade union work, and the methods of conducting it under conditions of war and virtual illegality in the unions, their methods have had very little in common with ours.

Now unity, like every other practical political question, must be discussed concretely, not hypothetically. And one of the most important prerequisites for a serious consideration of unity between two political groupings is their attitude toward each other. These attitudes do not fall from the sky. There are political and social reasons for them as a rule. These factors always prevail over personal feelings. The entire history of the movement is convincing proof of this. Goldman has given us some information as to the present attitude of the Workers Party toward us after a separation of five years, although we didn't really need it.

In the very same meeting of the Political Committee where he made his motion to appoint a committee to begin negotiations with the Workers Party he reported what he had learned in his numerous conversations and conferences with the leaders of the Workers Party which I have previously quoted. They didn't think that with "Cannon and the Cannonites" in the party, they should re-enter the party. Since the policy of "Cannon and the Cannonites" has been supported by about 95 percent of our party, this would seem to be a rather serious obstacle to any practical consideration of unity at the present time. That at least is the way the Shachtmanites understand it. Their slogan is not "Unity with the Socialist Workers Party!" but "Leave the Socialist Workers Party and Join the Workers Party!" This is the slogan they have carried in their paper in the past; and only recently Comrade Dan Leeds in Chicago reported to the party that Shachtman had invited him and his friends to act according to this slogan.

By this I do not mean to say that the Shachtmanites are opposed to unity in general or to unity with anybody. Far from it.

They want unity all right, but not with us. In the very recent period they have been assiduously seeking unity with the organization of the Socialist Party Yipsels, who have been nestling very snugly in Norman Thomas' Socialist Party throughout the war, and whose leaders are consciously Souvarinist, consciously anti-Bolshevik. We for our part would consider unity with such people an indecent betrayal of principle. Those who reject Bolshevism have nothing in common with us. But Shachtman offers to accommodate the anti-Bolshevik Yipsels as readily as he accommodated himself in the old fight to the bloc with the anti-Bolshevik Burnham against Trotsky and the majority of our party.

Just listen to this; In Labor Action of April 2, 1945 appears an Open Letter from the Workers Party to the convention of the Yipsels. The letter begins by saying, "The Workers Party sends you and your convention warm fraternal greetings." That, I must say, is a quite proper and cordial salutation to the convention of a friendly organization with which one is seeking unity. Perhaps a similar greeting was sent to the recent convention of our party, but if so it got lost in the mails and was not received by the convention. The letter takes note of the Souvarinist idiosyncrasies of the Yipsel organization and dresses them up euphemistically, as follows:

"We know that many of you have significant differences with the Workers Party, particularly on questions relating to historical estimations, more particularly on the question of historic Bolshevism or Trotskyism and of aspects of the Russian Revolution."

Now isn't that put daintily? Can you imagine a fancier literary formulation, a more delicate way of brushing the Souvarinist Yipsels with a feather so as not to hurt their feelings? After all you see, it is only a question of "historical estimations." Historical estimations! Estimations of what? Of historic Bolshevism and aspects of the Russian Revolution! That is to say, of the fundamental principles and conceptions and estimations upon which our movement is founded. There are "differences" on these questions says Shachtman. In that case a principled Trotskyist would state frankly what the differences are and demand a discussion of them and a prior agreement on the questions as a condition for unity. That is the way, for example, we proceeded with the American Workers Party, before the unity which was executed in 1934. That is the way Lenin and Trotsky taught us to proceed in each and every case.

But Shachtman, in a hurry for unity, takes a far more accommodating view of the matter. "To us," says the Open Letter -- referring to the differences on questions relating to "historical estimations," -- "this is the least disturbing aspect of the problem of our relations." And on that basis they say to the convention of the Yipsels:

"We propose to you;

"Join ranks with the Workers Party!

"Let us be more concrete. We propose to you;

"That the YPSL shall fuse with the Workers Party and operate as its youth organization."

After hearing this, let no one accuse the Shachtmanites of being opposed to "unity" at all times and under all conditions and with all organizations. But they are discriminating in their search for unity. Like every other political grouping they seek unity with those whom they feel to be closest to them and reject the idea of unity with others. Their attitude is clearly shown by a juxtaposition of their comradely unity offer to the Souvarinist, anti-Bolshevik Yipsels and the attitude they displayed toward our party at about the same time.

Just two weeks before they sent their touching offer of fraternal unity to the Social-Democratic Yipsels, they put on record once again their irreconcilable hostility to our party. Labor Action of March 19, 1945 contains the following editorial statement: "The Workers Party has very serious and fundamental disagreements with the Socialist Workers Party . . . Nor do we agree with many practices of that party nor its concept of what a revolutionary socialist party should be." Should we, perhaps, send a committee to inquire if this was a typographical error in their paper? If they have "fundamental disagreements" with us on political questions, and if they don't agree with our "concept of what a revolutionary socialist party should be" -- on what basis should we propose to unite with them? On the basis of "fundamental disagreements"? That was never our concept of the basis for unity.

One of the strongest distinctive features of international Trotskyism has been its accurate analysis and exposure of Stalinism as the betrayer of Communism, its unremitting struggle against the Souvarinist, Social-Democratic and bourgeois liberal campaign to identify the two, and to lump Stalinism and Trotskyism together as simply variant expressions of the same fundamental doctrine, i.e., Communism or Bolshevism. The press of the Workers Party yields more and more to this monstrous misrepresentation. They use the words "Stalinism" and "Communism" interchangeably. In almost any issue of Labor Action reporting struggles in one trade union or another, they identify the Stalinists as "Communists" and thereby contribute as much as they can to the confusion and miseducation of the workers who read their press.

Take this same issue of Labor Action, dated March 19. There is an account of an internal fight in what they call "the Communist-Stalinist-infested and controlled United Farm Equipment & Metal Workers of America." This Social-Democratic expression, "Communist-Stalinist", is not an isolated error of the writer. It represents a political line which is repeated over and over again in the article. The article refers to "the Communists at the Tractor works." It goes on to say, "the Communists have resorted to the most desperate measures." It continues, "the Communist thugs have beaten up McCormick workers." It refers to a former president of the local who "was defeated by the Communists in the last election." It goes on to condemn the "moves on the part of the Communists" and refers again to the "physical beatings meted out by the Communists."

What is the political tendency shown here? Is that a tendency toward political reconciliation with us who wage an irreconcilable struggle against the Stalinists in the name of Communism? Or is it a tendency toward capitulation to the reactionary dogma that Stalinism and Communism are the same thing, that Stalin is "Lenin's heir", as Burnham explained in his latest article in Partisan Review.

During the past year, while our minority was softening its attitude toward the Shachtmanites and snuggling up to them, the press of the Workers Party enormously sharpened its attacks on our party. While Goldman has been explaining to us his sudden discovery that the Workers Party is a "revolutionary Marxist-Leninist organization," the latter has shown no disposition to return the compliment to our "Bureaucratic Jungle." Quite the contrary. In the New International, March 1945, Shachtman explains: "The future of the SWP as a revolutionary organization is, at best, a dubious one. We recognized that five years ago. What has happened since has only made this fact plainer and caused many others to realize it." (The "others" whom he refers to are Goldman, Morrow and Company).

Again in the New International of April, 1945, Shachtman explains that unity with us is impossible because of "the sterile, bureaucratic regime which the Cannonites have imposed upon and continue to maintain in the SWP, a regime which the new minority in the SWP rightly describes as Stalinist in its trend." The "regime" they are talking about is the regime which was specifically endorsed by more than 90 percent of the party delegates at our recent party convention.

In this same article which reviews the split of 1940 and the subsequent developments, Shachtman defends the position of the petty-bourgeois opposition on every point; justifies their action in splitting; justifies even their demand for the right of the opposition to have its own independent public organ.

In the face of this record I think we are entitled to say that those who want to be "unity brokers" should address their sermons to the Shachtmanites, and not make fun of our party by addressing them to us.

## 6. The Basis for Unity

When we Trotskyists make unity with another group we do it only on a rigidly principled basis and no other. We never refused such a unity and never will. On the contrary, the record of the past shows that we have always sought and taken advantage of every opportunity to find a principled basis of unity with other groups which were moving, however confusedly, in our direction. But we never wasted our time, and I hope we never will waste our time, in futile "negotiations" for unity with political groups moving in an opposite direction. For us, the program is decisive; and by program we mean the whole program and not 50 percent of it and 50 percent of its opposite.

We are urged "to eliminate the confusion caused by two parties!"

That is a good idea. But one must undertake to carry it out realistically. That means either (1) to eliminate the differences which account for the existence of the two parties, or (2) to explain them clearly. The worst method of all is to transfer the confusion inside our party. That would only make the confusion more confounded and paralyze our party activity in the process.

It is vain to hope that we can eliminate rival parties and groups in a labor movement surrounded by capitalism and subject to all its direct and indirect pressures which are transmitted into the labor movement through various political groups, parties and tendencies. Lenin couldn't do it and neither could Trotsky. Lenin only struggled to make his own party dominant and to keep its own line clear and free from opportunist political dilution and organizational diffusion. There will always be minority groups and parties, up to and even after the workers' conquest of power under the leadership of a single revolutionary party, and that will always create a certain amount of confusion. But it is better to have the confusion outside the party than inside. At least that was Lenin's idea; and the historical test demonstrated that it was a very good idea. The worst confusion of all would be caused by transforming our own party into a federation of factions. That is a program for confusion combined with paralysis.

#### 7. Two Conceptions of a Party

Our conceptions of the revolutionary party are explicitly set down in official resolutions and other documents adopted by the party and printed in the book devoted to "The Struggle for a Proletarian Party." We have discussed and decided this question many times in the past and have always firmly rejected the concept of the party as a federation of factions, which became popularized in this country under the name of the "all-inclusive party." We had some experience with this theory of organization during our sojourn in the "all-inclusive party" of Norman Thomas and Company. At the conclusion of that experience we had a debate with Burnham and Carter, just prior to the convention where the present Socialist Workers Party was formally constituted, nearly eight years ago. The convention resolution set forth the position of the party on this point, as follows;

"Experience has proved conclusively that this 'all-inclusiveness' paralyzes the party in general and the revolutionary left wing in particular, suppressing and bureaucratically hounding the latter while giving free rein to the right wing to commit the greatest crimes in the name of socialism and the party. The S.W.P. seeks to be inclusive only in this sense: that it accepts into its ranks those who accept its program and denies admission to those who reject its program."

When the petty-bourgeois opposition of 1939-40 revived the agitation for "all-inclusiveness", the party responded by reaffirming this resolution at the convention of April, 1940. This same convention which steered a firm course toward proletarianization and away from the sterile atmosphere of the discussion circle, to which our



minority wants to drag us back, spoke out in advance against it;

"To attract and to hold workers in the ranks of the party, it is necessary that the internal life of the party be drastically transformed. The party must be cleansed of the discussion club atmosphere, of an irresponsible attitude toward assignments, of a cynical and smart-aleck disrespect for the party."

Trotsky, who fought longer and harder than anyone for genuine party democracy, against a real and not an imaginative Stalinist bureaucratism, never gave any support to the idea of the party as a federation of permanent factions. In his great criticism of the program in 1928, while dealing his heaviest blows at the bureaucratic monolithicism introduced by the Stalinists, nevertheless declared: "A fighting party can never be the sum of factions that pull in opposite directions. (Third International After Lenin)."

It appears more and more that our minority is adopting the discredited organizational conceptions advocated by the petty-bourgeois opposition of 1939-40 and applied in practice in the Workers Party since the split. They have not openly espoused "The War and Bureaucratic Conservatism", that bible of Menshevism on the organizational question compiled by Burnham, Shachtman and Abern, but they adopt its basic ideas one by one and attempt to pass them off on the party in the name of "the spirit of Bolshevism." Are they trying to make fun of us? Do they think we have forgotten everything we fought about in the old fight? We don't seem to talk on the same plane. We don't seem to want the same thing. The kind of a party they are dreaming of would never be a workers' party, but only a new and deteriorated version of the discussion club from which we emerged through the struggle and split with the petty-bourgeois opposition of 1939-40. Nobody can drag us back to that.

### 8. The Dangers of Factionalism

The latest action of our minority is a step on a dangerous path. The call for the formation of a faction -- a party within the party -- is a declaration of war that is bound to sharpen the atmosphere, all the more so because it is an ill-considered and unjustified decision. I hope they will reconsider this decision and return to the truce which they signed a bare three months ago.

As you know, the Bolshevik party does not prohibit factions. Sometimes they are unavoidable when great principled differences are involved, especially if the party leadership infringes upon the democratic rights of a minority and deprives them of normal means of ideological struggle. There is nothing of that kind in our party, as you know. Serious, responsible and loyal comrades will always think ten or a hundred times before resorting to closed faction organization because they know that, even in the best case, faction organizations are a standing menace to the unity of the party. The history of our movement shows conclusively that the formation of separate factions has led more often to splits than to ultimate reconciliation and the dissolution of the factions again in one party. We must learn from the experiences of the past in this question as in all other questions.

It would be difficult to think of a flimsier justification than that which the minority has offered for their hasty and light-minded decision. A bare three months ago they joined with us in a declaration to the party. This declaration stated, that in view of the undeveloped nature of the differences, there was no basis for sharp factional struggle or for the existence of factional formations in the party ranks. But now they allege that someone insulted comrade Goldman in a discussion within the confines of the Political Committee, so they announce the formation of a faction to avenge the insult. That is subjective politics of the most infantile kind. To be sure, insults do not contribute to the normalization of the party atmosphere, but Goldman should be the last one to make complaints on this score. He should be the last one to complain about the party "atmosphere." All he has to do is to change his own attitude and tone and the "atmosphere" will change automatically.

It would be far better for the minority to take a more grown-up, more responsible and more loyal attitude toward the party. Better go back to the terms of the truce while there is yet time. Better agree once again, in the language of the truce, "to collaborate harmoniously and constructively on the basis of the convention decisions to carry on the work of the party and build up the party." If they insist on their reckless decision to organize a closed faction, it will raise the question of the necessity of a more serious, a more thorough and searching inquiry into the reasons. The party will have to probe more deeply into the theoretical and political reasons which are implied but not clearly stated, into the social compulsions which drive them on such a reckless course.

It is an axiom in our movement, and in the last great fight comrade Trotsky emphasized it once again, that "every serious factional fight in a workers' party is a reflection of the class struggle." The existence of one closed faction inevitably calls forth the organization of a counter-faction. That is the law of factional struggle. If two factions are formed, if they become closed and hardened and intensify their struggle, the party cannot content itself with the examination of the mere superficially stated differences. The party will have to probe deeper and establish the fundamental causes, the hidden reasons which lie at the bottom of the factional frenzy but are not openly and frankly avowed. The party will have to establish the social basis of each faction and make a decision as to which is the petty-bourgeois and which is the proletarian tendency in the unbridled factional fight which "reflects the class struggle."

#### 9. Untimely Talk About "Unity"

The proposal for "unity with the Shachtmanites" is not a concrete and realistic proposition for our party at the present time. The attitude of the Shachtmanites -- an attitude which springs from political considerations -- rules it out. And the formula of the minority is especially inept, untimely and unrealistic. "The conditions of 1940" were a formula based on concrete conditions existing at that time. Among these conditions were the facts that the petty-bourgeois opposition had not developed the full implications of their position; that they were still members of one party with us; that they represented 40% of the membership; and that we could still entertain hope that the

instruction of events would come to the aid of our arguments and influence the petty-bourgeois opposition of 1940 to modify their position and reintegrate themselves in the movement. But life has passed that by. We now have new times, a new situation, deeper differences, even sharper antagonisms and a far different relation of forces.

Our policy must be based on the present reality. In 1940 they were inside the Socialist Workers Party. This gave them rights and privileges and entitled them to concessions which we would never dream of offering to a rival group outside the party. Permitting a group to remain inside the party on condition of discipline, and inviting an outside group to come into the party to conduct an organized factional struggle from within -- these are not the same things. And 1940 and 1945 are not the same years.

The factional manifesto of the minority explains that they want to bring the Shachtmanites as an organized faction into our party in order to "strengthen" the S.W.P. That sounds like irony. They evidently think we need a bigger and better factional fight in the party. We don't think that would strengthen us and aid in the development of our ambitious expansion program adopted by the recent convention and now going forward with full speed on all fronts. Obviously they are thinking that the entry of the Shachtmanites into our party would strengthen our present minority through the medium of a "bloc," of the type which we saw in the 1939-40 fight. But it would be very difficult for anyone to prove the advantages of such a "bloc" to the party itself.

Someone may ask, "But would not unity under present conditions at least increase our membership and thereby strengthen us numerically?" To such a question we can only answer, "Yes -- and no; more no than yes." We are now recruiting new members at the rate of 300 per year and the rate of recruiting is increasing from month to month. That is, a year's new recruit equals the maximum total membership of the Shachtmanites; and the quality is better because our new recruits are predominantly proletarian trade union militants, the very type out of which the future party of the revolution must be constructed. A principled unity with another ideological grouping, even a very small one, even a group of ten members, would undoubtedly help and strengthen us and would be well worth our time to achieve. But a false unity of the type proposed by our minority, followed immediately by an internal factional struggle and paralysis of party work, would be more apt to stop recruiting and drive the new workers away from the party. That we don't want. That we will not permit under any circumstances.

Our basic orientation is proletarian. We want a party of workers, a party where the worker feels at home. We want a party where the worker feels himself to be the master of the house. We want a leadership that is predominantly proletarian. We are building such a party and such a leadership and we intend to continue on this course -- the course which has brought us such good results since the split of 1940, and which promises far greater successes in the coming period.

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## WRONG POLICY AND FALSIFICATION

By Albert Goldman

(Note: The following article is based on remarks made during the course of a debate with comrade Cannon, at a New York membership meeting.)

To show you what terrible results an attitude of grudge and personal hostility to the Workers Party can bring, I shall cite the incident that recently occurred at Los Angeles -- a shameful incident, an incident that every intelligent party member must regret deeply because it is a disgrace to our party.

A meeting was scheduled to be held under the auspices of the largest group of what can be called American fascists, at a large hall in Los Angeles on June 25th. Our party is supposed to be carrying on a campaign against the fascists of Los Angeles, a city which seems to have been made the headquarters for the reactionary elements of this country. But for some mysterious reason our party evidently did not consider that anything has to be done or could be done to protest against the meeting.

The Workers Party branch of Los Angeles sent out a call to the radical parties proposing a united front picket line. All of the radical parties, including our party, rejected the proposal. A letter by comrade Blake (see Internal Bulletin, July, 1945) explains the reasons for the rejection and presents what our comrades proposed as a substitute for a united front picket line. The whole policy is the product of comrade Murry Weiss.

The Workers Party correctly took the chance of calling for a picket line without the cooperation of any other party. It could have been a failure but it was worth while taking a chance. Over 150 persons heeded the call and participated in the picketing. Hundreds of people were watching the picket line led by the members of the Workers Party. The capitalist press carried news of it.

The verdict must be that due to the efforts of the alert and militant members of the Workers Party and in spite of the sabotage of the leaders of our Los Angeles branch, a successful picket line surrounded the fascist meeting. All the more terrible was the criminal conduct of those responsible for our failure to participate, because with our participation there would undoubtedly have been three and possibly four times the number of pickets. The workers of Los Angeles would have been furnished with a living example of what to do in the struggle against fascism.

"Can we however", is asked in the letter explaining the Los Angeles policy, "organize an effective picket demonstration in the available time as the Shachtmanites have proposed?" Here it would seem that the time element is the main factor preventing participation in the proposed picket line. When the proposal was first received we are not told. My guess is that there were at least four

or more days available, a sufficient period of time for comrades to act provided there was the will and the energy. This is proved by the fact that the responsible comrades stated that if the trade unions organized a picket line our party would join it. If there was sufficient time for the party to mobilize its forces had the trade unions called the demonstration, why was there not sufficient time to participate with the Workers Party?

The arguments presented in the letter make it clear that our failure to participate in the picketing was due to the fact that the Workers Party took the initiative in proposing a united front and thereby destroyed any desire on the part of the responsible comrades in Los Angeles to have the party do any picketing.

Evidently comrade Weiss felt the necessity for covering up his line with some substitute proposal and with some theory. He probably felt the necessity of confusing the members. And so, according to the letter, he proclaimed: "We reject the proposal to call a demonstration for Monday in the name of the party or in united front with the Shachtmanites. However, if the C.P. or the trade unions take any action Monday, we will certainly participate". (emphasis mine)

It is indeed gratifying and extremely heartening that comrade Weiss assures us that if the trade unions take part he would be willing to tag along. What greater boldness can one demand?

To justify the substitute proposal the "theory" is advanced that "under the present circumstances the main line of our campaign should be to get the labor movement to act". Hence it was decided to send united front proposals to the A.F. of L., C.I.O., and the Stalinists.

Undoubtedly it would be wonderful if we could get all of these organizations to unite with us in a demonstration. But did it not occur to our far-sighted leadership that these organizations might be slow to move and might even throw our proposal into the all-consuming waste basket, just exactly as we do with the proposals of the Workers Party? How frequently is the statement made that we are too large in comparison with the Workers Party, to justify participating in united fronts with that party. But how about our size in comparison with the trade unions or even with the Stalinist party?

That we should get the labor movement to act is to be taken for granted. But let us not utilize that correct idea in order not to act until the labor movement acts. One of the methods of getting the labor movement to act is for our party to act even when the official labor movement does not act.

Comrade Weiss recognizes that the party must act under certain circumstances even though the labor movement does not act. He does not exclude a demonstration called by the party without the support of the trade unions or the Communist Party. It is this fact which makes it clear that he refused to participate in the demonstration on June 25th because the Workers Party proposed a united front and would undoubtedly have its pickets at the meeting. It was possible not to

accept the united front offer and still have our own pickets but comrade Weiss would then be compelled to permit our members to touch the untouchable "renegades".

Comrade Cannon adds his justification to that of comrade Weiss. He says the Shachtmanites rely on the action of the party alone while we rely on the masses. This, of course, is completely baseless and demagogic. Where does he derive the proposition that the Workers Party wants to rely only on the party? From the fact that the Workers Party did not wait until the trade unions acted? But comrade Weiss admits that it is not necessary under all circumstances to wait for action by the trade unions. The Workers Party followed the correct method of acting at a time when the trade unions are unwilling to act. What is more, the Workers Party asked for a united front of all radical organizations, which shows that it is anxious to have part of the labor movement do some acting.

The result: no picketing by our party. Picketing by members of the Workers Party and those who came out at the call of the Workers Party.

It can be presumed that we shall be given a lecture on the united front and we shall be informed that a united front is intended to set large masses into motion. That is perfectly true but it is also true that a united front on a small scale is not excluded by the fact that a united front on a big scale is better than one on a small scale. The Los Angeles situation shows that a united front on a small scale is better than no united front at all. The difference between 150 pickets and 500 pickets is considerable and justifies the application of the united front tactic.

The theoretical confusion created by the refusal to participate in the demonstration against the fascists is bad enough. What is infinitely worse is the method of falsification by omission which some of our comrades had to resort to in order to cover up a blunder of the worst sort. In The Militant of July 14th, there was an article dealing with the rising fascist movement in Los Angeles and the efforts of our party to combat it. The story mentioned the meeting of June 25th. It made no mention of the fact that the Workers Party called for a united front picketing demonstration, that we rejected it, and that 150 people picketed the meeting under the leadership of the Workers Party. This method of falsification comes from the Stalinist school; it has nothing to do with Trotskyism.

The necessity for falsification proves the incorrectness of a tactic. Not every tactic which is incorrect is followed by falsification. But every tactic which results in falsification is always incorrect. For those who are responsible for such a tactic have not simply made a mistake likely to be made by inexperienced people. The mistake is of a nature that they feel unable to defend and resort to falsehood in order to conceal it.

Beware, comrades of an attitude to the Workers Party which not only leads to mistakes but to the necessity for falsification. Such an attitude can be nothing other than a Stalinist attitude.

That there will be a correction of policy as a result of the criticism of the comrades of the minority is certain. The "theories" of comrade Weiss are too crude to be accepted. Already in The Militant an editorial appeared calling for picketing of fascist meetings.

There will of course also be boasting about the effectiveness of our line in getting the labor movement to act. The story in The Militant of July 28th about the CIO anti-fascist meeting slyly suggests that we were responsible for that meeting. Vain boasting just as falsification by omission must be rooted out from our party.

What there will not be is a recognition of a mistake and an open correction. The comrades of the minority must be content with the thought that their criticism retards the development of harmful tendencies in the party. Due to the minority there will not be, for some time to come, another Hansen article about our great and beloved leaders. The concept that our members cannot talk with or discuss with members of the Workers Party has been thrown overboard. Now the rule is that one must "report on negotiations carried on with Workers Party leaders". In a party with a real Bolshevik regime such a thing would be taken for granted. Almost everybody, with the exception of policemen, understands that loyalty cannot be legislated into existence. Under Lenin and Trotsky there were no rules requiring a party member to be loyal.

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CALL FOR THE FORMATION OF A FACTION TO SUPPORT  
THE P.C. MINORITY RESOLUTION ON UNITY WITH THE WORKERS PARTY

We call on all party members who agree with the main point of our resolution -- for inviting the membership of the Workers Party to return to our ranks under the conditions the party offered them to remain in 1940 -- to join with us in an organized struggle for this purpose.

This question has great practical importance for our party and the Fourth International, since a correct attitude toward those who differ with us on the Soviet Union but remain revolutionists would result in a substantial increase of our membership and would prevent splits over this question in the future throughout the International.

Important as this question is, however, we would not under other circumstances necessarily form a faction to fight for it. In a normal, healthy atmosphere it is possible to avoid having a faction, even where there are differences on important questions. A group of comrades does not necessarily have to organize a faction to fight for a change in party policy.

The conduct of Comrade Cannon at the July 12th meeting of the Political Committee, when the resolution on the Workers' Party question was introduced, shows the real nature of Cannon and his immediate followers when confronted by the necessity to discuss an important issue. He proceeded to question the minority P.C. members, Morrow and Goldman, concerning their relations with W.P. leaders. When asked what was the purpose of the questions, he stated: "We want to know what party you are working for." To this, he added the charge that comrade Goldman "is a stooge for Shachtman". Thus, at the very outset of the discussion, he has created an atmosphere making impossible a calm and objective discussion of the question. This typifies what can be called Bolshevism-a-la-Cannon.

It must be remembered that the existence of two tendencies has been admitted by the leading comrades of both the minority and the majority. We have different attitudes on the necessity for discussion of controversial issues. The P.C. majority looks upon it as a necessary evil and in practice discourages it, whereas the minority considers it as absolutely essential to a living, thinking Bolshevik Party. The majority tends to accept the necessity of a "build-up" of leadership and a hero cult; it tends to educate the rank and file to accept without question all the policies handed down by the leadership. The minority stands for an educated, alert, critical and disciplined membership.

The objection of Comrade Cannon and his leading followers to inviting and urging the members of the W.P. to return to the party is symptomatic of their tendency to build a monolithic party. They are determined not to have a large group in the party composed of articulate and able people who differ with them, although the differences are compatible with membership in the party.



Formal democracy and genuine democracy are very different things. Formal democracy can easily be emptied of its democratic content by a leadership uninterested in the free play of a rich internal political life. The Cannon group represents such a leadership. For important leaders to oppose such a slogan as immediate proclamation of the democratic republic in Italy but to refuse to commit their arguments to writing is a method of miseducating the party. Formally to grant a minority an internal bulletin but to make no effort to interest the membership in the discussion of the questions raised in the bulletin is abiding by the letter of democratic procedure, but it has nothing to do with encouraging a real discussion for the purpose of raising the political level of the party.

Whereas the central political issue of the faction is the question of fusion with the Workers Party, Comrade Cannon's conduct at the P.C. meeting once more brings to the fore the necessity of fighting for a real Bolshevik party freed from all characteristics which we associate with Stalinism.

We find it essential to organize a faction in order to provide our supporters with the cohesion necessary to resist the hostile atmosphere which Cannon is creating against us. We shall, through the faction, supply not only our supporters but other party members as well with discussions on burning political questions in an atmosphere which is conducive to finding the best possible solution to all questions confronting our party and the International.

Our fundamental aim as a faction is to win a majority of the party to the necessity of strengthening our party and the International by fusing with the Workers Party. In our struggle for this aim, we shall also try to demonstrate to the party membership what a real living, thinking Bolshevik party is.

Albert Goldman  
Felix Morrow  
Oscar Williams

July 21, 1945.