

INTERNAL BULLETIN

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Issued by
SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY
116 University Place
New York 3, N. Y.

20¢

November 20, 1945

Dear Comrade Thomas,

Enclosed you will please find a copy of a letter that I have sent to the Steering Committee of the Minority faction. It is self-explanatory. I am doing this so that my position in the present internal discussion may be noted by the party.

Please keep the letter on file for any possible future reference.

Fraternally yours,

(signed) Jerry Alberts
Chelsea Branch, New York

* * *

November 20, 1945

Dear Comrades,

The purpose of this communication is to announce my formal resignation from the Minority faction and to explain the reasons for this action so that there may be no confusion or ambiguity about it.

I first came to the conclusion that I would eventually have to leave the faction upon my return to this country about a month ago when I heard reports of Comrade Morrow's speech before the New York membership. As you know, it was there that he announced his intention to leave the party. On confirming this and on hearing comrades Morrow and Williams elaborate their split perspective I found myself in profound disagreement with them and the majority of the faction. Of course the correct course in such a case would be to stay in the faction and fight for the correct perspective. But due to the fact that I will be out of contact with the party and faction for an indefinite period I am announcing my resignation now.

I may add that I never agreed with Morrow's evaluation of the Cannon leadership and joined the faction solely on the question of Unity. Now that Unity has been abandoned by the majority of the faction there is no reason for me to remain.

My personal plans are to remain in the party and fight for Unity in the manner outlined by the Bayonne comrades. This is the only Bolshevik way.

For Unity and the Proletarian Revolution,

(signed) Fraternally yours,
Jerry Alberts,
Chelsea Branch, New York

December 16, 1945

TO THE COMRADES OF THE MINORITY FACTION:

Dear Comrades,

With this letter we are forced to resign as members of the minority faction. We must do so because we are not and cannot be in agreement with the present course of the faction, and because our attempt to change that course has had no success.

The present faction was formed on the basis of a struggle for unity between the Workers Party and the Socialist Workers Party. That the achievement of such a unity of the revolutionary forces in the United States remains an urgent necessity goes without saying, and that the sole barrier to its consummation has been Cannon and his group likewise is self-evident. But the present faction is no longer one organized principally on the basis of the struggle for this unity. That unity is still desired by everyone in the faction is obvious, but since the faction comrades in their majority regard unity as highly unlikely for the present (and in this they are correct) they have transformed the immediate aim of the faction from unity of the SWP with the WP to unity of the minority with the WP. It has been transformed from a faction for unity into a faction for split.

That this is so has been tacitly admitted by Comrade Goldman, and the transformation has been embodied in the highly peculiar resolution adopted by the faction at its December 9th meeting, the first part of which reads, "If unity is not achieved, our place is with those who are also for unity (the WP)".* What is strange about this resolution is that its second part, following the above, reads, "We shall not walk out of the SWP, but will continue to pursue our independent policy with relation to the WP." Now one might wonder how two such contradictory statements can live happily side-by-side in the same resolution, how the faction is going to find its "place with those who are also for unity" if it is "not going to walk out of the SWP." Under the fire of the Bayonne comrades and ourselves on exactly this point at the meeting, Comrade Goldman explained how this contradiction was to be resolved -- the faction was going to be expelled, and if it was not expelled for what it was planning to do in the immediate future, it would go further -- to the point of writing for and distributing "Labor Action"! In other words the faction would not walk out of the SWP in form, only in actual fact! This expulsion subterfuge is indulged in in the belief that it will somehow look better to the International -- a vain hope, for the International is not blind. Why we cannot go along with such a policy of deliberate provocation to expulsion surely needs no explanation.

When we speak of the disintegration of the faction, we mean something very concrete. With everybody and his brother in the party knowing that a split is going to take place, no one is prepared to listen to the faction's arguments on any subject, and the faction membership for its part makes less and less of an attempt to make itself heard by the party majority. Under these circumstances, those comrades who are opposed to split find little to keep them functioning in

*Quotations from this resolution are from memory, but I am certain, completely accurate in their essence.

the faction. It is consequently faced with defections from all sides.

At the December 9th meeting we presented a resolution aimed at changing the course of the faction. This resolution had as its central theme that political clarification, involving the further development of a political platform for the faction, was the only path for a grouping aspiring to become a separate political tendency to traverse. This orientation, having as its aim a struggle to win over the members of the SWP and the International to certain political ideas as opposed to splitting, was summarily voted down. The faction is now bent on one thing only, and that is getting out of the party with the best possible grace. It has exhausted itself as a political grouping and will undoubtedly disintegrate completely once it gets inside the Workers Party. Those comrades inside the faction who are opposed to split will find that they have no other choice but to resign also, unless they want to remain, with the rest of the faction, in a state of suspended animation while the process of walking out or getting expelled goes its slow way.

We, for our part, intend to do what we can to influence the comrades in the SWP in the direction of our political ideas. We retain, needless to repeat, all our estimations as to the political methods of the Cannon leadership. We will do what we can, together with those who remain and share our estimate, to combat these methods, but we will do it on the political plane, with the "organizational" question, so often a boomerang, in its proper subordinate (very subordinate) place. On this basis, we are convinced, we can win the ear of no few thinking comrades in the SWP. That is our place, and that, no matter how difficult, is our job -- to join the Workers Party is merely to escape it.

Fraternally,

Dave Jeffries,
(Member of Steering Committee
Minority Faction)

Leo Lyons

November 15, 1945

Max Shachtman, National Secretary
Workers Party
114 W. 14 Street
New York City

Dear Comrade,

The SWP Plenum resolution on unity, in referring to the proposal of the WP negotiating committee on a tendency bulletin in the united party, merely states the following: the WP "would insist on the right to publish their own discussion bulletin under their own control." Ostensibly, therefore, the SWP majority does not take a position on this question. However, in the actual life of the party it has become clear that the majority advances the tendency bulletin proposal as a great stumbling block to unity.

For our part, we do not believe that this is the real stumbling block to unity. Nevertheless we believe that it should be removed. The Plenum refused to take note in its resolution of our distinction between the right to a tendency bulletin and the exercise of that right. We believe that the WP should make that distinction and pledge itself not to exercise the right in the united party under the following conditions:

(1) That the SWP cooperate closely with the WP for the purpose of preparing the membership of both parties for unity, and that after unity there will be real cooperation of the SWP and the WP;

(2) That the SWP recognize the right of a minority to issue its own bulletin for the purpose of convincing the membership of the correctness of its views.

Needless to say, nobody could demand nor could the WP comrades agree, to refrain forever from exercising the right of a minority to issue its own bulletin. No responsible minority would exercise that right without great justification, but no responsible majority would ever prohibit it from exercising it. If the right is used unjustifiably, a majority should easily be able to discredit a minority for doing so. But a united Trotskyist party is so all-important today that for the sake of it we appeal to the comrades of the WP to pledge themselves not to exercise this right, subject to the conditions indicated above.

Fraternally yours,

(signed) Felix Morrow
for the SWP Minority

WORKERS PARTY of the United States
Max Shachtman, National Secretary
114 West 14 Street, New York 11, N. Y.

November 27, 1945

James P. Cannon,
National Secretary,
Socialist Workers Party
116 University Place
New York 3, N. Y.

Dear Comrade:

Enclosed please find copy of a letter which we have sent to Comrade Felix Morrow of the SWP Minority.

Fraternally yours,

(signed) Max Shachtman,
National Secretary
Workers Party

MS/CW
enc.

* * *

November 27, 1945

Felix Morrow
SWP Minority Group
214 West 16th Street
New York, N. Y.

Dear Comrade Morrow:

Our Political Committee has agreed to the proposals on the question of the tendency bulletin made by the Minority Group of the Socialist Workers Party in your letter of November 15. Your proposals afford us still another occasion for reiterating and amplifying our position. It has been stated with sufficient clarity in our written communications to the Socialist Workers Party and at the two oral discussions that took place between the delegations of the two Parties prior to the recent Plenum of the S.W.P.

What was involved from the very beginning of the discussion on the unity of the two organizations was not a determination of the Workers Party comrades to issue a tendency bulletin of their own on the very first day of the existence of the projected unity Party, regardless of circumstances. For example, so far as our Political Committee was concerned, this was made clear in the first report made by its representative to a general membership meeting of the New York Local of our Party, a report substantially repeated to most of the other Locals of our organization several months ago.

As you know the question involved in reality was the right of the minority in the united Party to issue such a tendency

bulletin. The SWP Plenum Resolution is literally correct in stating our position as an insistence "on the right to publish their own discussion bulletin under their own control." In the oral discussions between the delegations of the two Parties, it was not we but the principal representative of the SWP who called attention to the fact that, for example, the leadership of the American Trotskyist movement, himself included, had freely permitted the Oehler group to publish an internal bulletin of its own inside the organization in 1934-1935. Therefore, he added, it was not a question of the "right" to such a bulletin "in the abstract," a right which could presumably be granted; but rather a question of our "attitude". We could not then and cannot today construe this otherwise than as a reference to our opinions about the present majority faction of the SWP. These opinions we expressed candidly to the SWP delegation. We pointed to what is generally known, namely, the fact that our comrades do not have sufficient confidence in the present leadership of the SWP, particularly with reference to its record toward inner-party opponents and critics, and are therefore concerned with assuring their democratic rights in the united Party by having the minority's right to its own bulletin jointly acknowledged by both sides. We are perfectly ready to admit that abstractly considered this lack of confidence may prove to be exaggerated, or even groundless. In like manner, we admit that common work and common experiences in the united Party may cause the comrades of the Workers Party to abandon their opinions on this score. They are not ready, however, to abandon them merely on demand. What they are prepared to abandon in the interests of unity, has already been made amply clear and precise. We consider it enough.

We can go further and say that even the question of the right to issue a tendency bulletin is, in a sense, only the formal side of the matter. Ordinarily, it would not occupy the place of importance it has been given in the discussion on unity. As you so rightly put it, "we do not believe that this is the real stumbling block to unity." The "stumbling block" is the conception of the SWP Majority Group of the kind of Party revolutionary Marxists should have and build. Our Party shares with the Minority Group of the SWP the conception of the Bolsheviks which was fought for with such emphasis and clarity, especially since 1923-1924, by Trotsky and his supporters. The SWP Majority, in practise and often in words as well, holds the conception of a "monolithic" party, which flies in the face of our whole tradition. We are compelled to say now that unity of the two organizations is possible only if this conception is abandoned. It is primarily in this sense that the question of the tendency bulletin is so important. It serves as the concrete test, at the present junction, of the conceptions held on the kind of Party we must build -- a sterile "monolithic" faction, or a united democratically-centralized party of action in which there is freedom of opinion and grouping, and the assurance of democratic rights for all views compatible with the fundamental program of revolutionary Marxism.

This is how the real issue stands. To it, the other considerations can well be subordinated, including the matter of whether a minority would issue a tendency bulletin the morning after the unification, a year afterward, or at all. It is in this sense that we are prepared to accept the proposals of the SWP Minority.

Fraternally yours,

(signed) Max Shachtman,
National Secretary,
Workers Party

MS/CW

MOTION ON CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN MINORITY FACTION AND WP

Adopted by the Political Committee

The Political Committee takes note of the exchange of correspondence between the Minority faction of the Socialist Workers Party and the Workers Party. This correspondence does not affect in any respect the motivation and the conclusions of the Plenum resolution. The Political Committee is not empowered, nor does it find it necessary, to change the line of the resolution. "Agreements" made between the Workers Party and its agents in our ranks do not in any way involve or commit the Socialist Workers Party.

This exchange of correspondence between the Minority faction of the SWP and WP represents a demonstration of the fact that the Minority faction has been acting independently of the SWP and in collusion with the WP in the unity discussions in violation of our traditional concepts of democratic centralism and the most elementary concepts of party loyalty. By this exchange of correspondence, the Minority indicates that it has failed to subordinate itself to the will of the party as expressed by the Plenum and to follow out the line of the Plenum in public relations with the Workers Party as an opponent organization.

The Political Committee warns the Minority that if it continues on this reckless, undisciplined and disloyal course, whereby it appears in public or in relation to opponent parties as an independent factor, the party will be compelled to take disciplinary action in order to safeguard the integrity of the party.

December 4, 1945.

Motion Carried; Morrow voting against.

MOTION ON PREPARING FOR UNITY

By Felix Morrow

In a letter of November 15, the SWP Minority proposed to the Workers Party that it pledge itself not to exercise the right of issuing its own tendency bulletin in the united party under the following conditions:

(1) That the SWP cooperate closely with the WP for the purpose of preparing the membership of both parties for unity, and that after unity there will be real cooperation of the SWP and the WP comrades;

(2) That the SWP recognize the right of a minority to issue its own bulletin for the purpose of convincing the membership of the correctness of its views.

In a letter of November 27, the Workers Party accepted these proposals.

The Political Committee takes note of the pledge of the Workers Party not to issue a tendency bulletin in the united party. On its part, the Political Committee recognizes the right of a minority to issue its own bulletin, the Minority's justification of the need for doing so being of course subject to criticism by the Majority.

The question of the tendency bulletin having been eliminated, the Political Committee considers that there are no obstacles to unity.

The Political Committee favors the immediate commencement of a period of cooperation between the two parties for the purpose of preparing the memberships for unity.

The discussion in the party press with the Workers Party shall have as its aim the preparation and consummation of unity, while fixing precisely the differences between the two organizations.

Following the period of cooperation and preparation, a convention shall be called for the purpose of consummating unity.

December 2, 1945.

Motion lost; Morrow voting for.

LETTER TO THE COMRADES OF THE MINORITY OF THE POLITICAL BURO OF THE SWP

Brussels, November 15, 1945

Dear Comrades,

The internal bulletins of the SWP until October 1945, as well as a series of letters and documents not yet published permit us to have a definite opinion, however superficial, about the present internal situation in the SWP. We have never concealed how much the political views of the comrades of the minority on the subject of European questions, in the first place in those which concern the importance of democratic slogans in the present period, and especially the slogan of the republic in Belgium, are close and akin to our views. We hope to be able to take a position soon toward the group of questions raised by the "Balance Sheet" of Comrade Morrow. But all this permits us to consider with all the more uneasiness the evolution of the minority comrades on the question of unification. We do not wish as yet to take a position on the heart of the question, to know if the tactic employed during the pourparlers (with the WP) by the comrades of the majority is or is not justified by the higher interests of the party. But even the constituting of a faction having for its aim unification with Shachtman, who is even further distant from the conceptions of the minority than are the majority comrades; the insistence with which the comrades of the minority try to seek if necessary outside the party for allies in their faction struggle, and the extremely dangerous talk -- reported to us by some comrades present at the October Plenum -- talk according to which the minority would be ready for a split if unification would not be realised -- all this impels us to say to the comrades of the minority: a false step on your part before the world preconference, a split in the American party on which all the sections of the world have their eyes fixed, would be a veritable CATASTROPHE for our movement, and would constitute the hardest blow you could deliver to the sister-parties of Europe. Such a split as well as the exacerbation of the faction struggle itself seems to us without any justification, neither on the political plane, where the divergences seem to have constantly diminished, nor on the organizational plane, where even the reading of the internal bulletins constitutes for us a striking proof of the existence of an exemplary internal democracy in the SWP. In any case, we must state that in none of your documents have you been able to prove or to make precise until now your accusations, according to which a "bureaucracy" exists in the SWP. We regret having to state how much these vague accusations recall the accusations formulated in the past by the Burnham-Abern-Shachtman opposition which you yourselves so seriously combatted.

To repeat, dear comrades, this letter does not constitute in any measure a solidarisation with the opinions of the majority or minority on the question of unification with the WP. We think that the approach of the World Preconference presents every opportunity to decide this question at that occasion. We only want to put you on guard against all factional bitterness and inflexibility, which seems to us at the moment, we repeat, absolutely unjustified, and which could provoke an immense harm to our whole international movement to which you have rendered until now such considerable services.

With the most comradely greetings,

(signed) E. Germain

Letter read before and approved by the Central Committee of the PCR.

Rosario, Argentina
October 18, 1945

Dear Comrade Cannon:

We hope that you will have received the number of FRENTE OBRERO with which we resumed publication of our organ. We should be pleased if you would let us know, in the contrary case, in order to send you other copies.

You will undoubtedly understand that because of the unstable conditions of legality of our movement, we cannot send you current information regarding it. It is necessary to tell you, however, that it has been sometime since we received The Militant and Fourth International. Since the month of April or May we have not received a single copy of either publication. We hope that this inconvenience likewise can be overcome.

From the publications of Shachtman (which they have sent us without us soliciting them) we have learned about the polemic carried on by the leadership of the SWP with the new petty-bourgeois and unsteady-before-imperialism opposition of Morrow and Goldman.

Awaiting prompt news from you and the receipt of your publications, we greet you warmly,

(signed) M. Pettijean

DRAFT RESOLUTION ON THE PROPOSED FUSION OF THE SWP WITH THE WP (USA)

Adopted by Political Bureau, R.C.P. (England), Nov. 17, 1945

For Discussion at the Central Committee, December 1st and 2nd, 1945

The C.C. of the R.C.P., having examined the available material regarding the proposed fusion between the Socialist Workers Party (American Section of the Fourth International) and the Workers Party, has come to the following conclusions:

1. At the time of the 1939-40 discussions in the SWP, both the majority of that Party and Comrade Trotsky considered that the political differences with the Minority, though of a serious character, were not such as to justify a split.

2. Nevertheless, the Minority, under pressure of petty bourgeois public opinion, of which it was a reflection, split from the SWP and the Fourth International to form the Workers Party. It motivated this split by the refusal of the Majority to grant it "rights", such as the publication of its own outside organ, to which, in point of fact, it was in no way entitled. Thus, these organisational demands of the Minority, together with the split, revealed that it had a totally false conception of democratic centralism.

3. During the period that has since elapsed the Workers Party has continued to maintain its false position on the Russian question, and has developed further erroneous positions on other important questions -- in particular in relation to China and to the national question in Europe. However, on the main issues confronting the American working class, e.g., on the question of the formation of a Labour Party, the Workers Party has continued to base itself on the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International. Moreover, within the Fourth International itself, there are to be found defenders of the policies of the Workers Party on Russia, China, Europe, Etc., and no one has called for their expulsion. Thus, the differences between the SWP and the WP remain today such, as could be contained within the framework of a single section of the Fourth International.

4. On the question of democratic centralism a marked change has taken place in the attitude of the Workers Party. Though owing its origin to a split from our American section, this Party has now approached that section with proposals for unity. Moreover, it has further stated that it agrees with the statement of the SWP that "when divergences of opinion occur, unity can be maintained only by the scrupulous observance of the democratic principle of the subordination of the minority to the majority and strict discipline in public activity and action." It has undertaken to maintain discipline thus outlined in the event of fusion. (Letter to the SWP, 15.9.45). Thus, the Workers Party is now prepared to accept the basis of democratic centralism.

5. This complete change of attitude on the part of the Workers Party would appear to be due, on the one hand, to the fact that the SWP has outstripped the Workers Party in both membership and influence,

and on the other, to the pressure for unity on the part of the advanced workers who find themselves faced with rival papers and organisations both putting forward substantially the same policies, with rival candidates in elections with substantially identical programmes, etc.

6. The CC of the RCP welcomes this new attitude on the part of the Workers Party and regard it as an entirely progressive change; a sign of a turn from petty bourgeois organisational concepts back to those of Bolshevism.

7. It is our opinion that fusion under the present conditions would be a progressive step and one that should be supported by our American section and the Fourth International as a whole. Even if the Workers Party today has but one third of the membership of the SWP, it still represents a significant force which is not likely to disappear in the immediate future, if no fusion takes place. Moreover, the existence of two rival parties, with similar programmes both claiming to represent Trotskyism, must sow confusion among the advanced American workers and thus serve as a hindrance to the future progress of the Fourth International in the USA.

8. Such a fusion would also strengthen our movement internationally since it would tend to discourage splits and splinter tendencies throughout the world and would assist the process of fusion where such splits exist.

9. We do not disguise the fact that such a fusion, like all others, can bring with it certain dangers. It would be an international tragedy, for instance, if the Shachtmanite views on the Soviet Union and on the national question were to gain a majority in the fused organisation. But the numerical preponderance of our American section, combined with the correctness of its ideas on these questions, enables us to have every confidence that the position of the Fourth International will be upheld and further strengthened in the fused organisation. Given the correct approach on the part of the majority in the fused organisation, there would be every chance that at least the best elements of the Workers Party would be won over to the political point of view of the majority of the Fourth International.

10. In view of the above considerations, the CC of the RCP believes that the SWP and its leadership should do everything possible to bring about with the least possible delay, a fusion with the Workers Party. Pending the completion of such a fusion, and as an aid to it, the maximum contact be arranged between the memberships of the two parties and the carrying out of united front activity by the two organisations against the common enemy.

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STATEMENT OF THE MINORITY ON THE PC MOTION OF DECEMBER 4
ON THE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE MINORITY AND THE WORKERS PARTY

The motion adopted by the majority of the Political Committee is a typical piece of bureaucratic thinking and acting. It is a clear proof that Comrade Cannon is determined at all costs to prevent unity of the Trotskyists of the United States.

Ever since the Political Committee majority broke off the discussions on unity with the Workers Party, the ostensible justification has been that unity was made impossible by the WP's request for a tendency bulletin in the united party. Cannon never even took the trouble to urge the WP to forego its demand for the sake of unity.

Anxious above all to achieve unity, the minority presented a formal request to the WP to pledge, in the interests of consummating unity, not to express the right of a minority to publish its own tendency bulletin after unity has been achieved.

The Workers Party consented to the request of the minority. Were the Political Committee majority honest in its attitude toward unity, it would have applauded this intervention of the minority. For thereby the ostensible obstacle to unity had been removed.

Instead, the majority takes the attitude that nothing has been changed by this important concession of the WP. Thereby the majority shows that it used the tendency bulletin issue merely as a pretext to justify Cannon's unwillingness to unite. The hypocrisy of the Political Committee majority on this question is thus clearly revealed.

The majority claims that it alone has the right to enter into agreements with the Workers Party. Good! We concede that right. But why did not Cannon take the initiative in clearing up what he claimed to be a chief obstacle to unity?

Instead of admitting that an important advance toward unity has been made and on that basis re-opening the question of unity with the WP, the Political Committee majority bureaucratically and hypocritically turns its guns on the minority which dared to forward the cause of unity. As always when Cannon is defeated politically, he redoubles his abuse against those who are right.

Real Bolshevism puts substance above form. Real Bolsheviks would consider the exchange of correspondence between the minority and the WP primarily from the point of view of its political contribution to unity. Instead Cannon threatens the minority with disciplinary action.

It goes without saying that the minority will not be deterred by this threat from continuing the struggle for unity.

Steering Committee
SWP Minority

Resolution on Faction Orientation (Meeting: December 9, 1945)

1) The present course of the faction (SWP-Minority) is leading clearly and inexorably toward its disintegration as a political and organizational entity. The question of split has thrown the faction into a crisis that can only be delayed and not solved by a postponement of the final decision for a couple of months. A number of comrades led by Williams are prepared to split within a few weeks, whether the faction in its majority does so at that time or not. A larger number, represented at present by Comrades Goldman and Morrow intend to wait for a time in the hope of being expelled or of influencing the International more favorably. A large number of comrades in Chicago are not favorably inclined towards walking out, and others, principally in Bayonne and Newark definitely intend not to leave. This deepening division in the faction is reflected in the vacillation of the leadership, principally Comrades Goldman and Morrow, in its attitude towards split.

2) The situation is not much better from the International standpoint. The favorable capital accumulated by the faction as a result of its struggle on the European question is rapidly being dissipated as a result of the clearly-evident split orientation. This is clearly revealed by the letter from Belgium, which is only a forerunner of what will come if we continue in the present direction. A split will not only isolate us organizationally from the European sections but will wellnigh undo all the good work we have accomplished in winning their ear on the questions of European tactics and throw them into the arms of Cannon. Shachtman in the past five years has found how difficult it is to influence the International by shouting through the window instead of speaking from within. Our experience will be no better.

3) The root of the present crisis in the faction is easy to find. The faction is not an ideologically homogeneous unit. With the exception of the question of democratic demands, which has by now become a dead letter, the faction has not got a political platform. What is more, the present leadership has no intention of giving it one, being oriented exclusively in the direction of split. Having nothing but the position of unity with the WP as cement to hold it together, the faction must of necessity begin to dissolve in all directions the minute a question transcending the bounds of that position (leaving the SWP) comes up. There exist inside the faction the most diverse positions on some of the most important questions, such as the national question, Russian question, etc. It is correct to say that a number of individual comrades are closer in their political position to the WP than to the SWP; it is not correct that the faction as a political unit is closer to the WP. On the contrary, insofar as the faction has taken an official position on questions, those questions on which it differs from the SWP, objectively regarded, are not so great as those on which, by negative inference at least, it differs with the WP. The fact that most comrades feel methodologically closer to the WP signifies only the political potentialities of the present faction. The best proof that the faction is not regarded as an independent ideological grouping, which it is essential to preserve whole and to extend, is provided by the attitude of those comrades who would disregard the majority decision of

the faction and leave to join the WP immediately. They thereby give the best indication that they do not regard the faction as a clearly-delineated ideological grouping, for if they did, surely everything would be subordinate to maintaining the organizational unity and cohesion necessary to build the faction. By evincing little care as to what becomes of those comrades who do not leave with them, they point an unwitting finger at the root difficulty of the faction: that once the question of unity with the WP is exhausted unfavorably, the faction has nothing to hold it together -- it has no political platform.

4) To analyze the crisis is to indicate the remedy. The situation in which the faction is coming to an inglorious end, leaving mainly Cannon the victor, must be changed. Those comrades who took the lead in forming the faction did so in the hope that it would have the effect of forming into a cohesive group all those who had adhered to the minority point of view. As we have seen, just the opposite is taking place. There is only one solution that will reverse this trend, and that is for the faction to begin an intensive discussion for the purpose of elaborating a political platform, with which to combat the Cannonite heresy-hunters. That such a platform exists in embryo in the political positions of many comrades and in the methodological approach of almost all has already been indicated. What is necessary is to develop this into a finished platform with which we can appear before the public opinion of the International.

5) Only in this direction will the faction be able to re-consolidate itself, hold together its present membership, attract many who vacillate between us and Cannon, and, above all, when a sympathetic hearing from the European comrades upon whose ability to apply the correct program and tactics in the period ahead everything depends. To weld together a dependable cadre around a correct political program is our present task -- it cannot be accomplished by leaving the SWP which will only shatter the faction and discredit it in the eyes of the International.

6) To implement these decisions the faction:

a) Resolves to orient itself away from splitting to join the WP, and instead to focus its main attention upon the immediate elaboration of a political platform, for the purpose of conducting a struggle inside the SWP.

b) Instructs the Steering Committee to prepare the discussion of such a platform as soon as possible.

Voters for: Dave Jeffries
Leo Lyons
Shirley Allen

MOTION ON COMRADE CANNON'S SPEECH ON THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

By Felix Morrow

The position of the party on defense of the Soviet Union was fixed at the last convention, the resolution of that convention recognizing that the slogan of defense was no longer to the fore; that "the fight for the defense of the Soviet Union against the military forces of Nazi Germany has essentially been won"; that "the present reality is. . . the conspiracy of the imperialists and the Kremlin bureaucracy to strangle the revolution. We therefore push to the fore and emphasize today that section of our program embodied in the slogan: Defense of the European Revolution Against All its Enemies."

Today, just as at the time of the November 1944 convention, the present reality remains the conspiracy of the Big Three against the revolution. The pushing to the fore of the slogan "Defense of the European revolution against all its enemies" and the receding into the background of the slogan of defense of the USSR remains correct and will in all probability continue to be correct for a whole historical period. War is inevitable under capitalism and therefore if the revolution is not successful a war among the Big Three is certain eventually; just as preparations for World War II began immediately after World War I, so war preparations have begun already now for World War III. But before World War III can take place, a whole series of economic and political pre-conditions must first come into existence which do not now as yet exist.

Party policy on this all-important question was stated in Comrade Warde's article, "The Big Five at London", in the November 1945 Fourth International: that Washington is in no mood for war; that the tide of events is now running in the opposite direction; that the growing revulsion against war since the atomic bomb bridles the war-mongers; that Washington now seeks to cash in on its war gains and therefore has material reasons for wishing peace; that the Big Three are held together by their common fear of revolution and hence Stalin remains a firm ally of the Anglo-American imperialists for this reason.

Entirely contrary to party policy, therefore, was Comrade Cannon's speech (Militant, November 17). Equally, his speech was in flagrant violation of the obvious facts. Particularly we condemn the following central passages in his speech:

"A tremendous wave of public sentiment against Russia, reminiscent of the early days of 1917-19, is being set into motion. The present agitation recalls again the days of the Soviet-Finnish war when every democrat, every liberal, every Russophobe, every anti-Stalinist, was waving the flag for war against the Soviet Union. . . we see the same thing developing again today. . .

". . . Trotsky predicted that the fate of the Soviet Union would be decided in the war. That remains our firm conviction. Only we disagree with some people who carelessly think that the war is over. The war has only passed through one stage and is now in

the process of regroupment and reorganization for the second. The war is not over, and the revolution which we said would issue from the war in Europe is not taken off the agenda. . ."

We condemn the above passages for the following reasons:

1. There is no analogy between the present reality and the situation in 1917-19 or during the Soviet-Finnish war. Were there an analogy, our whole party press and activity would have to undergo a decisive change. Our principal slogan would become "Defense of the Soviet Union," our press would be devoted to that task, etc., etc. What is at issue here is not a mere matter of prediction concerning when the next war will come, but what should be the content of our political work during the whole next period.

2. Comrade Cannon's line plays into the hands of the Stalinists who are raising a hue and cry about the war danger precisely in order to cover up the fact that the Big Three remain united in their attempts to strangle the revolution. Our emphasis must be the opposite of that of the Stalinists, namely that both the Kremlin and the Stalinists abroad continue their counter-revolutionary collaboration with the bourgeoisie.

3. World War II is over. Our prediction that during the course of the war the Soviet Union would either be regenerated or would become capitalist proved erroneous. It is far better to recognize our error than to insist on our previous prediction and thus be led to the fantastic position of denying that the war is over, as Comrade Cannon has done.

4. Likewise it is better to recognize the erroneousness of the prediction of a great revolutionary wave emerging in the course of the war. A correct understanding of the slow tempo of the class struggle today in Europe provides a correct selection of the tactics necessary for today, particularly the extreme importance of such democratic demands as the republic in Belgium and Italy, the Constituent in Italy, immediate elections in Holland and Belgium, the adoption of a democratic constitution by the French Constituent, etc. Without these democratic slogans as points of departure, demands for nationalization of economy today become empty propaganda. But if Comrade Cannon's line is followed -- that the war isn't over and out of it is coming the revolution -- then we would have to go back to the line of the November 1943 Plenum resolution which predicted a speedy revolutionary tempo in which democratic demands would play an entirely subordinate role. But to do so would be to abandon everything which the European parties of the Fourth International have painfully had to learn during the past two years concerning the central importance today of democratic demands.

In view of the publication of the full text of Comrade Cannon's speech in the press as if it were party policy, an editorial shall be published in The Militant stating that the speech was not party policy and correcting the errors made by Comrade Cannon.

November 30, 1945.

Motion lost; Morrow voting for.

COUNTER-MOTION TO MORROW'S "MOTION ON
COMRADE CANNON'S SPEECH ON THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION"

Adopted by the Political Committee

Comrade Morrow's motion on Comrade Cannon's speech on the Russian Revolution is factionally motivated and the object of it is to "outlaw" any public party advocacy of our policy of defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack. It is designed to serve the minority faction as a basis for a political rapprochement with the Shachtmanites, which they have been seeking so desperately.

While the resolution of the 11th Party Convention pushed to the fore "the defense of the European revolution against all its enemies," it also stated that "our policy of unconditional defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack retains all its validity. . . ." From this point of view Comrade Cannon's speech was entirely within the framework of party policy.

If Comrade Morrow wishes to "re-evaluate" the Russian Question, as he indicated in his speech at the New York membership meeting, and to challenge the principled position of the party from the viewpoint of Shachtmanism, as he indicated in private conversation, let him quit playing hide and seek with the party and write a resolution and submit it to the party for discussion.

December 4, 1945.

Motion Carried; Morrow voting against.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE PARTY'S ATTITUDE TOWARD
THE UAW ARBITRATION PROPOSAL OF NOVEMBER 19

A Statement to the Political Committee

By Felix Morrow

At the November 21 staff meeting of The Militant, I proposed that the next (December 1) issue carry on the inside pages an educational article which would (a) criticise the November 19 UAW arbitration proposal and (b) go on to explain the class-struggle attitude toward arbitration.

I proposed to criticise the November 19 UAW proposal for the following reasons:

1. That the arbitration proposal was made before there had been a test of strength, i.e., even before the strike was called. There are exceptional cases -- primarily to get out of a strike which is doing poorly -- when we would accept arbitration. But this was not on November 19 nor is it yet one of those exceptional cases. Therefore our general principle of opposing arbitration applies to this situation.

2. The progressive points in the arbitration proposal -- that the hearings be public; that the company open its books to union inspection; that any wage-increase shall not result in a price-increase -- do not change the essential fact that it is an offer of arbitration at a time when the UAW leadership should be concentrating the workers' minds on all-out struggle. The progressive points can be propagandized for by the union without linking them to the non-progressive arbitration proposition.

3. Tremendous pressure is being developed to force the unions to capitulate to a system of arbitration of one kind or another; that is one of the main points on the agenda of the Labor-Management Conference. Whatever good will the UAW may have gotten from the public by its arbitration proposal is more than outweighed by the harm done in yielding to the pressure for a system of arbitration. Today the UAW leaders offer arbitration with progressive points attached; tomorrow they are more than likely to accept arbitration without the progressive points. This is the real situation, in which the November 19 proposal is thus an impermissible concession, which will lead to further ones of the same kind.

My proposal was rejected. Comrades Dobbs, E. R. Frank and M. Stein spoke against it. Their main arguments were as follows:

1. The party should not commit itself as to whether this particular arbitration proposal is good or bad. Comrades Dobbs and Frank emphasized the progressive points of the arbitration offer. Comrade Stein went further, saying the offer was a good proposal.

2. The first issue of The Militant after the strike begins should not criticise the UAW leadership; it will look as though we're throwing cold water on the strike strategy. Instead we should concentrate all attention on the strike and assume that it will be fought to a finish.

If argument No. 2 were seriously meant, then a later issue of The Militant should carry a criticism of the arbitration proposal. However, the next staff meeting -- that of November 28 -- showed that the main argument of the staff against my proposal boiled down to the original position of Comrade Stein: that the November 19 proposal for arbitration was good. Comrade Stein reiterated this position amid general approval.

And Comrade Stein's position is in fact the position reflected by the December 1 Militant which reports without comment the November 19 arbitration proposal. The editorial on the strike urges the workers not to accept "any phony government arbitration scheme" (my italics) -- a formula which obviously absolves from criticism the November 19 UAW arbitration proposal.

I believe that The Militant should have criticised the November 19 arbitration proposal quite independently of the mood of the auto workers. For, even if the auto workers were completely sold on it, it would still be our task to explain to the workers why they are mistaken.

But in addition, it is clear, there are a considerable number of militants who are critical of the November 19 proposal. This is indicated by a letter of November 25 from Comrade Jerry Kirk of Flint to the National Office, in which he reports that a campaign is underway against "any form of arbitration", that Plant No. 3 policy committee has already issued a statement to that effect, that resolutions to that effect are being introduced in the locals and will be adopted, etc. Obviously such a campaign could not be conducted in Flint without considerable sentiment among non-party workers.

It was after and in spite of these events in Flint that the auto fraction Leadership sent in from Detroit the Militant editorial of December 1.

Thus, this is a case not only of tail-ending the militant elements, but of insisting on soft-pedaling the issue raised by the November 19 UAW offer after a considerable section of the militants had declared themselves against it.

Today we have before us the unanimously-adopted documents of the Labor-Management Conference. They show how the trade union bureaucracy is edging toward a system of arbitration. They show that arbitration may become general now, not as a government-initiated system but as a "voluntary" one. They show that we must explain to the workers that there is no real distinction between government-initiated arbitration or a system of "voluntary" arbitration.

I therefore make the following MOTION: That the Political Committee accepts the line of Morrow outlined in the above statement.
November 30, 1945. Motion lost; Morrow voting for.

STATEMENT

By M. Stein

One must view the arbitration proposal as presented by the UAW leadership on the eve of the strike in the context of events leading up to the strike and the strike itself, and not deal with it as an isolated action. This arbitration proposal was presented as an ultimatum to the company after 97 days' negotiations during which the union sought correctly to place the responsibility of the strike on the company and to popularize the demand for the company to open its books. From the beginning it was obvious that the arbitration proposal would be rejected by the company precisely because it was coupled with the proviso that the company open its books. I, therefore, viewed this proposal as an additional propaganda medium to emphasize all the more strongly the demand to open the books.

Anybody who knows anything about strikes in this period realizes that there will be sufficient opportunity during the strike to discuss the issue of arbitration more concretely and more realistically in which our point of view could be made known.

The reference to Flint in Morrow's statement is especially unfortunate for him in his attempt to prove that we are tail-ending the militants. As a matter of fact, the attitude of the worker-militants toward arbitration in the given instance is one of the most important factors we have to take into consideration in determining our own position. Furthermore, as far as I know we are not tail-ending the militants, but we are organizing them and giving them direction right on the spot, which is the right way to do it. The campaign that was started in Flint against arbitration was intended as a preventive barrage which would indicate to the leadership of the union not to sell the strikers short.

December 4, 1945.

MINORITY REPORT ON THE PLENUM TO THE NEW YORK MEMBERSHIP MEETING

By Felix Morrow

Comrades, in our July 12 resolution favoring unity, we of the minority said this question will be a touchstone indicating the direction in which the party will henceforth move. We said that opposition to unity means a tendency toward a monolithic party and away from a Bolshevik party.

Our proposal for unity was not merely because unity would add a few hundred members and remove a rival party, though such gains are important enough.

More important than these gains, unity would mean support for the idea that comrades with political differences, even deep-going ones, can live in one party. Support for the idea that differences are inevitable among revolutionists; Trotskyism would be sterile indeed if in its twenty years of new problems it did not produce several tendencies which nevertheless remain equally revolutionary. Unity would mean support for the idea that differences can be discussed and settled in all honesty and comradeship; that the party lives and thrives on free exchange of ideas, on hospitality to attempts to find what is new in a situation, on striving to add something to what has already been said. Unity would mean support for this concept of the party.

Unity would be a blow against the concept of the party embodied in the expression of E. R. Frank -- repeated by him interminably as spokesman of the majority during the dispute on Europe and in his letters to co-thinkers -- that "we have a finished program."

Unity would be a blow against those who label every political difference as "fundamental" and fight it in the spirit of war to the death. A blow against those who start every discussion by denouncing their opponents as class enemies.

Unity involved all these things and that's why we said this question was a touchstone indicating the future of the party.

Over a period of years I have been driven to conclude that the Cannon tendency is moving toward a monolithic party. I didn't want to think so, I tried to think otherwise, I hesitated a thousand times -- and was denounced for my hesitation by those of the stripe of Warde, Clarke and Wright who say that he who hesitates in a faction fight will betray the workers on the barricades. But all evidence has driven me to the conclusion that the Cannon tendency is toward monolithism, its attitude to unity being but one more proof.

Comrades, please understand that I am not saying that all opposition to unity would be monolithic. No, a comrade could be for a really Bolshevik party and still be against unity. He could say: "I am against unity because there is not sufficient agreement between the SWP and the WP on programmatic fundamentals to make unity possible and desirable." That would be a perfectly reasonable position. But if put forward, its proponents would have to be quite precise about

what programmatic positions held by the WP make unity impossible. The main difference, as we all know, has been on the Russian question. If somebody said that made unity impossible, we could have a clear-cut, honest difference of opinion, we could study, analyze and debate it and come to a conclusion that the Russian question was or was not a bar to unity.

Had we had that kind of dispute, I would rest content with a verdict of the majority against unity. I would rest content because it would be an honest dispute which would help the education of the membership. I would rest content because such a verdict would be subject to a scientific test later -- namely, whether the different positions on the Russian question led to tactics sufficiently different to justify disunity. A year or two later we could re-examine the question and see who was right. In reality, even if the WP position on the Soviet Union were to lead to profoundly different tactics, that is no argument against unity once the WP has agreed to abide by discipline in action: that's why we told them to stay in the party in 1940. But even ignoring that fact, I would be content with a majority decision which opposed unity on the ground that the Russian question (or any other question) leads us too far apart. Because later we could test that decision.

But we have not had that kind of honest dispute. Instead, the majority leaders resist unity by evading giving an answer to any of the key questions connected with the dispute over unity. They don't dare answer any of the questions because their answers would be subject to the test of events and analysis in the next period -- and their opposition to unity can't face that test. To keep on resisting unity but without committing themselves on any of the questions connected with unity -- that was the purpose of their Plenum resolution.

What does their resolution say? Its principal proposition is that the question of unity "can only be answered with sufficient concreteness after the most thoroughgoing discussion and probing of all differences to the bottom."

And how is this to be done? The resolution is "implemented" now by a Political Committee motion that articles on differences with the WP be published in the FI. In plain English, a Hansen, a Warde, an E. R. Frank, will write some articles -- and, to stretch a point, maybe Comrade Cannon will write something on the organization question.

Now, please, will there be anything in those articles that the majority leaders don't already know? Will there be anything in the articles which the WP leaders will write in answer in their magazine which the majority leaders don't already know, in substance, in advance?

This is the question I kept asking at the Plenum, without getting a reply. Hansen and others tried to shift the issue, saying that the purpose of "probing the differences to the bottom" is to educate the party membership. That is another matter, and I would be the last one to deny its necessity. It is all too true that our membership has not been educated properly, has been miseducated during

this dispute and has to learn now what the real differences are between the SWP and the WP. But if the education of the membership is desired, what do you propose as the aim of that education? For unity? Against unity? The leaders, who do know what the differences are with the WP, and whether sufficient agreement despite differences exists to justify unity, must take a position before they can educate the membership on this question.

I have repeated and continue to repeat, and nobody dares deny it, that anyone who assumes to play any role as a leader in our party knows what are the theoretical, political and organizational differences between the SWP and the WP. For Cannon to say that before he can say yes or no to the question of unity he must first "probe the differences to the bottom" is simply a way of saying he doesn't know what the differences are. But he does know, and quite well, and can't seriously pretend he doesn't know.

Three months ago Comrade Cannon said he knew. Ridiculing the minority's proposal to send a committee to negotiate for unity, Cannon said in his July 25 speech:

"We don't need to send a committee to meet them in order to find the answer to these questions, as Goldman has proposed. . . . 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." (Internal Bulletin, August 1945, pp. 18-19.)

And then Cannon went on to tell what he had read in the WP press. Among other things he unhesitatingly predicted that the WP's theory of a bureaucratic class, so far restricted to the Soviet Union, would be extended to other countries as well. With one thing and another from the WP press, Cannon filled out a picture of theoretical, political and organizational differences making unity absurd. And then, with annihilating wit, Cannon turned to Goldman and said: "Should we, perhaps, send a committee to inquire if this was a typographical error in their paper?"

So, three months ago, Comrade Cannon and his associates knew all they had to know about the WP program; and primarily on the basis of that program and their knowledge of it, they were against unity. What has happened since then? Has the WP changed its program? Has Comrade Cannon's memory blurred? Does he want to find out if it was a typographical error?

What has happened since then -- what has really happened -- is that the majority leaders have realized that they dare not persist on the line of Cannon's July 25 speech. Now just as much as then they are against unity, but a little thought has brought home the impossibility of defending the proposition that the differences on the Russian question bar unity.

They themselves had to relegate the slogan of defense of the Soviet Union into the background, already last November. Not one of them dares challenge the far, far sharper formulation of Comrade Natalia, who says that the slogan of defense of the USSR has "fallen

away." In his speech Comrade Cannon prejudiced you against the WP by reading its September New International editorial which called for doing away with the Fourth International's position on the Russian question; Cannon told you that meant a fight when they come into our party and let you think this meant a repetition of the old fight on the Russian question. Cannon was playing on the prejudices of those of you who don't know that the whole Russian question is up for re-evaluation in our party and in the International. Some of you laugh, because you don't know. But Cannon knows -- maybe Warde and E. R. Frank don't know, but Cannon knows. As a matter of fact, there isn't a majority leader ready to swear today that a year from now the party will still have its present position on the Russian question.

So the Cannon group retreated from the position that the programmatic differences make unity impossible. To what did they retreat? To a position of pretending now that they don't know enough about the WP to pass judgment on the question of unity! The same Cannon who knew all he had to know in his July 25 speech said in his September 2 speech:

"We ought to get some exact information about them. . . . Perhaps in one of our next letters we will ask the WP to send us a full set of their Internal Bulletins. . . ." (And now he has read those Bulletins.)

Also, Cannon explained on September 2, that the first letter of the WP "is not a unity proposal. It would not be intelligent for us to discuss it from that point of view. It is an offer on their part to 'discuss' unity with us." And Cannon went on to boast how, in answering the WP letter, he had told Shachtman not to beat about the bush but to get down to concrete proposals. For his part, Cannon promised: "We are not going to play abstentionist politics with them. We will answer every letter."

Then came the second letter of the WP -- no longer proposing merely to discuss unity (actually the first letter too had already declared in favor of unity) but making actual proposals for unity. Now, presumably, by Cannon's own criterion, it was intelligent to answer the question of unity.

Ostensibly to secure an authoritative answer to the WP proposal, the Political Committee on September 21 called a special Plenum for October 6-7.

I made no bones about the fact that I was very suspicious about the real purpose of the Plenum. Before I would vote for it, I wanted to know what the majority leaders would propose to the Plenum. I put a series of questions at the Political Committee meeting to M. Stein, spokesman for the majority (Cannon was absent). Stein's answer was that the first WP letter was probably a maneuver to help our minority; but that the second WP letter went "whole-hog for unity" and hence a Plenum was necessary to answer it. What answer? If meetings with the WP negotiating committee before the Plenum showed they mean what the letter says, the Plenum's answer would be in favor of unity. To my further questions as to the majority's specific proposals for unity, Stein promised to tell me about them, and to show me

their Plenum resolution, during the two weeks between the Political Committee meeting and the Plenum. It was on the basis of his statements that I voted for the Plenum. Had I known that all the majority would propose is a Plenum resolution saying we have to learn more about the WP, I would have voted against the Plenum as a fraud and a waste of party time and money. The first I knew about the majority line for the Plenum was when the Plenum opened and I saw the majority resolution for the first time.

Perhaps, however, there is a legitimate explanation of the difference between what Stein said at the September 21 Political Committee meeting and what he and Cannon said at the October 6-7 Plenum? Stein claims there is such an explanation: that, yes, on September 21 he hoped meetings with the WP negotiators would provide a definite basis for unity, but that the meetings didn't provide it.

Comrades, this so-called explanation is a very, very significant admission. It admits that what happened at those meetings decided the question of unity. Very well, then, what was discussed at those two meetings with the WP negotiators?

M. Stein's own report to the Plenum showed they spent most of the time on the WP proposal to be granted the right of a tendency bulletin within the united party,

You comrades of the majority are disturbed about that? Good, that's your privilege. But in that case, say openly and honestly that the tendency bulletin is the issue now. Put it in your resolution, where instead you have one impartial sentence merely reporting the fact that the WP asked for such a bulletin. Put into your resolution just where you stand on this proposal of the WP. That's what we of the minority did in our resolution. We declared the right of a tendency to have a bulletin of its own within the party; urged the WP not to exercise this right, for the sake of unity; proposed to leave final settlement of this question to the period when the party, after taking a position in favor of unity and after the very necessary period of preparing the membership of the two parties for unity, proceeds to actually consummate unity; and declared that the tendency bulletin, if at that time the WP comrades insist on it, shall not be a bar to unity. It ought to be obvious that once the party takes a stand for unity, and we prepare the membership for it, the question of the tendency bulletin will appear in a very different light than it does now. At that point, the WP comrades may not insist on it; but if they do, we should grant it.

Thus we of the minority took a position on this question in our resolution as we took a position on all the questions concerned.

But the majority leaders evaded a position on this, as they did on all other questions concerned. What kind of politics is this? On September 21 you're presumably for unity. You claim you changed your mind because they asked for a tendency bulletin. But your Plenum resolution does not take a position on the tendency bulletin question which led you ostensibly to change your mind on the whole question of unity! I know why -- you were afraid that if you made

the tendency bulletin the issue, the WP negotiators might drop the proposal for it, and then where would you be?

Your whole Plenum resolution revolves around the proposition that you must probe all the programmatic questions to the bottom -- why, then, didn't you, Comrade Cannon, in your meetings with Shachtman, discuss the Russian question? The national question? Or any other political question? You yourselves say that you hoped to come out of those meetings with a definite basis for unity. So, apparently, a definite basis for unity didn't require discussion of or agreement on the political differences.

You were right in not wasting time in the meetings with the WP representatives on the political questions, since you know very well what the WP position is on those questions. You were right -- but why don't you tell the membership frankly and honestly in your resolution that there is no need to discuss the political questions with the WP as a condition of unity? Why don't you tell the membership that the only question which requires discussion with the WP is ways and means of assuring harmonious relations after unity? Why, instead, did you bring in a resolution which will make the party members think that unity is dependent on the political questions?

In spite of all our protests, and the questions posed to you by the WP, you have persisted in fostering this ambiguity as to what unity depends on. And we have to begin to draw some conclusions from your persistence in this deliberately false course.

These conclusions are inescapable:

1. You are against unity. But you cannot defend your real position in the face of the public opinion of the international movement.
2. What reasons could you give against unity? The political differences? If you did that, you know, you would be politically defeated in the end -- not so soon I fear in the American party but politically defeated in the eyes of the politically mature comrades everywhere.
3. The organizational differences? But the WP too believes in the organizational principles of Bolshevism, accepts democratic centralism, implicitly concedes its mistake of 1940 by pledging now to abide by majority decision. So what organizational differences remain? Very real ones, but not the ones you pretend when you claim in your speeches that the WP does not accept Bolshevik organizational principles. There remain the very real differences: your hostile attitude toward differences of opinion, your blindness to an understanding that differences are inevitable among revolutionists who still remain equally revolutionists, your monolithic conception of a finished program, your readiness to conduct war to the death against those who differ with you in the party, your polemics based not on reason but on amalgams. In a word, all the methods you used against us in the disputes on the European questions, including your refusal to admit your mistakes, your changing your line without admitting it, your coupling your hidden change with redoubling your abuse against

those who forced you to change your line. I refer especially to the notorious case of your post-convention issue of Fourth International, the December 1944 number, which politically mature comrades everywhere recognized for what it was without even having seen the pre-convention documents. These methods of yours are the real differences on the so-called organizational question between you on one side and we of the minority and the WP on the other side. You don't want the spotlight to center on these real differences. You need the cover of keeping always open the question of whether or not the political differences are or are not a bar to unity so that the spotlight won't center on the real differences.

4. You are against unity but can't give your real reasons. That's why your Plenum resolution has to resort to the crass absurdity of pretending you have to study further questions to which you already know the answer.

You have two lines. One in your resolution. Another in your faction meetings and those speeches which you don't write down and publish.

Of all kinds of politics, the most soul-destroying is the politics of two lines. When you make comrades say publicly that the party leadership must study further the differences, and these comrades know perfectly well that the party leadership knows today all it will ever need to know about the differences with the WP, you are sowing the seeds of corruption in the souls of these comrades.

The politics of two lines is the politics of monolithism, of bureaucratism, of all those who cannot defend their real line. That the Political Committee majority represents such a monolithic tendency -- this is the conclusion to which I have been driven over a period of years and which is confirmed by the conduct of the majority leaders in the unity dispute.

October 22, 1945.

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SUMMARY FOR THE MINORITY AT THE NEW YORK MEMBERSHIP MEETING

By Felix Morrow

Comrades, I will stake the whole case for unity on the quotation from Lenin which Cannon used in his September 2 speech and has now repeated here. It is from Lenin in the Iskra period. Let me repeat it: "Before we unite, and in order to unite, we must first draw sharp and definite lines of demarcation." IN ORDER TO UNITE! Lenin had already declared in favor of unity. What has this in common with Cannon's "probing the differences to the bottom"? Nothing! If Cannon will put in his resolution that the probing of the differences is to be done in order to unite, I will vote for it. For then the purpose of the discussion of our differences with the WP will be -- unity. Whereas now the purpose is -- disunity.

I asked Cannon what is the purpose of educating the party membership on the differences with the WP. For unity? Against unity? Cannon answers that we must educate the membership in Marxism generally. Is that an answer to the perfectly legitimate question posed not only by me but by the whole situation?

No, it is another one of Cannon's evasions.

Cannon speaks of wanting organizational guarantees from the WP to assure no repetition of the faction fight. Good! Name the organizational guarantees that you want, put them in your resolution, so that we and the WP will know what you want.

(CANNON: I spoke also of moral guarantees.)

And put in your resolution too the fact that you want moral guarantees. Put something in your resolution!

Cannon tells us the minority must not dare to tell the majority what to do. We do dare to demand of you a political resolution, a Plenum resolution which does not dishonestly evade the questions posed by the minority, legitimate questions which must be answered.

Cannon said he wants you to know all the facts. Let him explain, then, why he has rejected our proposals for giving the membership the relevant material:

1. He has made much here of the organization ideas of the WP, has he not, but the Pol. Com. majority voted down my motion to publish in the Internal Bulletin the principal organizational documents of the WP -- just those documents to which he refers.

2. The Plenum voted down the minority proposal for a joint discussion bulletin with the WP. The majority says it will write in Fourth International and the WP will answer in the New International. Not one party member in ten will see the articles in the New International, obviously. I therefore made a motion that the Political

Committee make available to party members through party channels those issues of New International containing replies to the SWP articles. This motion was voted down.

3. What articles in Fourth International do the majority leaders plan, in what order do they propose to take up the various questions, in a word what schedule is proposed for "probing the differences to the bottom?" This is a legitimate question, for without some plan of work this probing may well drag out until my twelve-year old son may take up where we leave off. With a straight face Cannon says he doesn't want a rigid schedule. Good, let's have a non-rigid schedule, but let's have some idea of the plan of work. This motion too was voted down.

4. The Plenum rejected the minority proposal for joint SWP-WP membership meetings as part of the discussion. I therefore proposed an alternative in the Political Committee: that as each subject is scheduled for "probing," we invite a representative of the WP to address our membership on it, and vice-versa. This motion too was voted down.

The same Political Committee meeting which voted down these motions also removed me from the Secretariat, which conducts party work between Political Committee meetings. Were the majority leaders even remotely considering unity, they would not dream of removing me; their real hostility to unity is revealed in this step. Here, too, however, there are two lines. Laughable is the ostensible reason for my removal: a "reorganization of the Secretariat on functional lines" which by coincidence excludes me. The real reason of course is that the Cannon group is dead-set against unity and therefore considers me an agent of the WP.

Comrade Cannon now concedes that it is true that we shall have to re-examine the Russian question, "but within the boundaries of Marxism." Naturally. But he tries to make you think that that means that we shall not move closer to the WP on this question.

(E. R. FRANK: We won't call it a bureaucratic state.)

Exactly, Comrade Frank! That is your idea of Marxism. Trotsky taught us to examine without prejudice the further degeneration of the Soviet Union. You, on the other hand, begin with your factional prejudices and rule out in advance answers which do not serve your factional interests. But suppose the unfolding reality in the Soviet Union compels us to give an answer which brings us closer to the WP? You start with a dogma instead of with the reality, and try to force reality into your dogma. In that case you will end up with the line of J. R. Johnson's faction in the WP which, in flagrant violation of reality which offers no evidence of capitalist restoration, calls the Soviet Union a capitalist state. That kind of approach is not Marxism, it is religion, which uses the previous writings of the movement as a Bible in which it is only necessary to find the appropriate quotation. That is your method, but it is not Marxism.

To prejudice you further against the WP, Comrade Cannon quoted copiously their criticism of the inadequacies of the Fourth International leadership during the last five years. What, in essence, did that September New International editorial say on this question? It said the center of the International didn't function politically during the war. Isn't it true? The center issued two or three manifestoes on questions to which the answer was very clear, but didn't touch a whole series of questions vital to the European movement. It wasn't a political center during the war. Isn't this a fact?

In any event, that WP editorial on which Cannon now leans so heavily doesn't raise a single new question. It simply restates some of the differences between the SWP and the WP -- the same ones you have known about for a long time.

Cannon pictures all the horrors of a party of factions. It is true, a party of factions is bad. But there is something worse: a monolithic party. Given these two alternatives, it is far better to have a party of factions, for that would still be a living movement whereas a monolithic party means the death of the movement as a revolutionary factor. In reality, however, there is a third alternative: a party in which differences of opinions will be so handled as to obviate hardened factional lines. Comrades, except for an occasional remark in a speech for a festival occasion when it doesn't count, I have never heard Cannon speak for the democratic element in democratic centralism; always he speaks for centralism, never for democracy.

Cannon asks whether we have re-evaluated the 1939-40 fight. Yes, we have. Goldman has already explained in what sense. He and I made a very bad mistake in 1939. There was a moment then where it was clear that we should separate ourselves from the Cannon group. Goldman and I broke faction discipline, voting in the Political Committee with Shachtman for publication of the political documents in the dispute in the party magazine. Goldman and I, then as now, were convinced that political discussions should be conducted openly in the public. Our difference with Cannon on this question was in reality the core of our present differences. Had we understood completely the logic of our position, we should have organized a third faction, which would have made a bloc with the Cannon faction against the opposition on the Russian question and unity, but would have taken no responsibility for Cannon's organization methods and would have fought those methods on concrete issues. Had we organized such a faction in 1939, it may well be that we could have succeeded in persuading the WP comrades from splitting. In any event, there would be infinitely more clarity today in the party concerning the organization questions at issue. We of the minority are paying dearly for our mistake in 1939, more accurately the party is paying for it and will long continue to pay for it.

Cannon demands that we write a resolution on the organization question. In reality, we have already written it, and in a more valuable form than a general resolution. On this question we have a very different method than the 1939 opposition. Then Trotsky was

still alive, and still served as a curb on the majority leadership: there were no Hansen build-ups of the leadership then! Shachtman made the mistake of writing organization documents in 1939 which could not refer to the written record, and which as a result read like 90 per cent gossip and psychologising. We, on the other hand, refused to begin with a general resolution on the organization question -- what Cannon thinks is the "fundamental" approach. We proceeded to write a series of documented case histories. Goldman wrote one on the Hansen build-up, another on the Cannon letters on James T. Farrell, etc. I wrote a case history of the conduct of the majority leadership in the European dispute -- my "Balance Sheet of the European Discussion" published in May, some five months ago. The majority leaders haven't answered that yet, and show no signs of doing so.

The Plenum resolution evades a political estimate of the WP as it is today, in order the better to pretend that the majority has not yet passed judgment on the question of unity. But at the time Cannon was writing the Plenum resolution, there was already on his desk an article by William F. Warde which does give a political estimate of the WP. Warde is a Political Committee member and under Cannon faction discipline and I predict that the majority will not dissociate itself from the article, which will appear in the next Internal Bulletin. Warde characterizes the WP leadership as centrists more pernicious than the British ILP leadership, more pernicious because their attack on Trotskyism is "more masked," i.e., more pernicious because they are closer to us. Zinoviev began this doctrine that those who are closest to us are most pernicious, Stalinism took it over, and now the Wardes espouse it. It was on Cannon's desk before he wrote the Plenum resolution; why didn't he put that political estimate of the WP into his resolution?

The majority leaders are against unity, but that does not mean that they will oppose unity under all conditions.

In their talks with Shachtman, they would have been happy to find him in a capitulatory mood. But the minute Cannon found the WP leaders firmly defending their ideas, he wasn't interested in unity.

Cannon doesn't hope to be able to oppose unity indefinitely. He knows that the time may come when he may have to yield to the pressure of the International. He wants to put it off as long as possible, hoping that the WP may commit some blunder to make unity impossible. If that doesn't happen he wants to hold off until the SWP will have, say 3,000 members and the WP, he hopes, will have as little as 300 members, so that the WP comrades will be overwhelmed 10 to 1. Cannon boasts of our supremacy over the WP, but the real trouble to him is that the WP isn't small enough for unity. This is his arithmetical approach to the question of unity.

(WILLIAM F. WARDE: Is there anything wrong with that approach?)

Your faction, Comrade Warde, has a perfect right to adopt that arithmetical approach -- but on one small condition: PUT IT IN YOUR RESOLUTION. End this corrupting practice of two lines, one for your faction and another for the record.

But you didn't put it in your resolution, because you cannot defend it politically.

I don't think very much of Cannon's arithmetic. He assumes the WP will stand still or lose -- the WP claims now about 600 members to our 1200. I believe the WP will grow, not so well as the SWP, but in proportion -- and that will make Cannon want to put off unity still further, by his arithmetical approach. Having oriented toward unity, the WP now has a perspective which it didn't have before; this bolsters the morale of its members; gives them an approach to contacts -- the WP Internal Bulletins report they have had to answer always the question why they are not united with the SWP -- which they didn't have before. They were harder hit than we were by the draft and their boys are coming back now.

More important, however, than the question of whether the WP will grow or not, we of the minority are AGAINST the victory of the Cannon tendency over the WP tendency. We don't believe such a victory would serve the interests of the party. The real interests of the party -- the party of the American revolution, the party which must develop in order to be able to make the revolution -- are not at all the same as the interests of the present majority leadership. The interests of the present majority leadership would be served by preventing or delaying unity indefinitely. The interests of the party would be served by unity as soon as possible after the membership had been prepared for unity.

There are three Trotskyist tendencies in the United States: that of Cannon; the WP; we of the minority. In our July 12 resolution we called the WP a revolutionary tendency; since it has accepted unity and agreed to abide by majority discipline, we can go further and call it a Trotskyist tendency.

What united our tendency with that of Cannon as against the WP in the recent past was the defense of the Soviet Union and Unity. The original cement of the defense of the USSR, linking us to Cannon and separating us from the WP, has dissolved. On unity, Cannon and Shachtman have changed places. On the now-crucial question which Cannon calls the organization question but which might better be called the question of attitude toward difference of opinion, the question which dictates our position in favor of unity and the Cannon group's opposition to unity, obviously we are closer to the WP than to Cannon.

So that on two critical questions -- unity and the organization question -- the minority tendency is closer to the WP than to the Cannon tendency. There are other political questions (don't forget that unity and the organization question are political questions) on which we agree with the Cannon tendency against the WP, and on which we and Cannon would stand together in a united party. We might, indeed, vote more often with Cannon than with Shachtman. But the present importance of the questions on which we agree with the WP signifies that we of the minority are closer to the WP tendency than to the Cannon tendency.

If the Cannon tendency succeeds in preventing unity for a long time, I believe that the minority will find itself outside the SWP and consummating a bloc with the WP to continue the fight for a united Trotskyist party. Whether this would happen by Cannon expelling us, or our leaving, I cannot say in advance.

Meanwhile, however, we want to stay in the Socialist Workers Party and continue the fight for unity. In order to do so, it is necessary to abide by party discipline. We submit to party discipline. We deny, however, that party discipline includes non-fraternization with the comrades of the WP. If Cannon had wanted to educate you instead of prejudicing you against us, he would never have accused us of disloyalty because of our fraternization and discussion with the comrades of the WP. Cannon knows very well that this is a political question, and not a question of disloyalty. Nor is it a question of Goldman and me being petty-bourgeois litterateurs who are irked by discipline, as Cannon pretends. Goldman and I are not as old as Cannon, but proportionally at least we have served the movement as long as he, with as much discipline as he. We are all revolutionists, the leaders in each case professional revolutionists, despite our differences of opinion. I am sure that I have never said anything to question the fact that Comrade Cannon is a devoted professional revolutionist --

(CANNON: And a bit of a faker)

Yes, Comrade Cannon, when you put in a resolution what I know that you know isn't true -- that you have to find out more about the WP before passing judgment on unity -- then it is very difficult to characterize your conduct within polite boundaries.

Comrade Cannon knows well enough that this is a political question and not one of disloyalty. Considering the WP comrades as fellow-Trotskyists, we cannot carry out Cannon's line toward them. If the majority leaders prohibit us from continuing our relations with the comrades of the WP, that is another matter. To do so they have to adopt a rule which does not now exist. Comrade E. R. Frank, with his usual adroitness, reminded us at the Plenum that there also is no rule prohibiting party members from crossing picket-lines. Rule or not, however, I will make a motion to expel any member who crosses a picket-line. If Comrade Frank took his analogy seriously, he would move to expel us; his explanation that such a motion must await conclusion of this dispute is a little lame: disloyalty should be punished immediately like scabbery. If the majority leaders should adopt a rule prohibiting our relations with the comrades of the WP, we would obey it, or have to leave the party. When they adopt such a rule we will be compelled to decide which to do.

Comrade Cannon has made much of the small numbers of the minority. This is a bureaucratic argument, and not a new one. What do our small numbers prove? Cannon tries to make out that we blame the membership for it. It's simply not true. We do not blame the membership for the crimes of its leadership. Our small numbers prove only that the majority leadership has succeeded in hardening the minds of the membership against our ideas. Nothing more.

We were about as small during the European dispute too. We were voted down by an overwhelming majority. But the majority's leaders had already retreated, adopting without admitting the fact the principal disputed propositions of the minority, sneaking them into the convention resolution at the last minute under the guise of "literary and clarifying amendments." To this day the membership does not understand what happened, but that does not change the reality that the majority was politically defeated in the European dispute. More important than what happened in this country is what has happened in Europe, where the questions we disputed are vital to the future of the revolution. There the SWP minority's ideas have prevailed, and unlike the SWP majority leaders the European comrades will tell you that our ideas prevailed. More than anything I have ever done in the movement, I am proud of my contribution to the reorientation of our movement in Europe. What price Cannon's denigration of the smallness of the minority in the face of its contribution to the European movement?

Least of all in the Trotskyist movement is there place for the argument that the smallness of a minority reflects on the correctness of its ideas.

October 22, 1945.

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OUR DIFFERENCES WITH THE WORKERS PARTY ON MILITARY POLICY

By Felix Morrow

One of the reasons given by Comrade Cannon in opposing unity with the Workers Party, and to buttress his argument that the comrades of the Workers Party have moved further away from us since the split, is their position on our military policy. "They condemned our military policy," says Cannon, "in a spirit of pacifist abstentionism."

What precisely are the differences between our party and the WP on this question? Comrade Cannon does not say. He leaves the impression that they oppose our slogan "Military Training of Workers, Financed by the Government, but Under Control of the Trade Unions."

This is not true. The arguments of the WP were not directed at this slogan, which is the formulation which we have employed in recent years, but against some of the first formulations made in our press during the Fall of 1940 when we first were feeling our way in expounding the demand.

The principal document of the WP criticizing our formulations was an article by Max Shachtman in the New Internationalist for January 1941. In that article, Shachtman supports the proposition "that the trade unions and other workers' organizations should take the initiative in organizing their own training camps, their own armed and trained forces, entirely under their control and democratically run by the workers themselves." I think that this proposition of his is essentially in agreement with our slogan of military training as we have carried it on the masthead of our press during the past few years.

Shachtman went on to oppose the idea "that the trade unions should demand of the government that they be put in control of the United States Army." Shachtman claims that some of our formulations tended to mean this. Actually, we never proposed trade union control of the United States Army, so this argument was irrelevant.

Shachtman further went on to oppose the idea of "compulsory military training under trade union control." He did not make entirely clear the nature of his opposition. Apparently he was opposed to the idea of our introducing a bill in Congress which would give the trade unions the right to compel all trade union members to undergo military training under trade union control. He equated this idea with conscription by the bourgeois state.

Shachtman was mistaken. A revolutionist in Congress would always vote against conscription by the bourgeois state, but he would vote for a bill which would give the trade unions the right to compel all workers to undergo military training under trade union control. The possibility of getting the bourgeois state to adopt such a bill is, of course, unlikely, but we would certainly be in favor of such a bill. Shachtman's identification of such a bill with conscription by the bourgeois state was false.

In our polemics with Shachtman on this question, we never made this distinction between conscription by the bourgeois state and a law passed by the bourgeois state empowering the trade unions to control compulsory military training. In the course of clarifying our differences with the WP, it will now be necessary for the WP to say whether or not it recognizes this distinction. Until the WP speaks further on this question, we can say that its position comes down to this:

1. The Workers Party is for military training of workers under the control of trade unions.

2. It is apparently opposed to voting for a Congressional bill which would make such training compulsory.

If this latter statement is correct, then the WP is wrong on this question.

But one should note how limited is the difference between us. The polemics of 1940-1941 on this question did not revolve around this actual difference between us and the WP. It revolved instead around certain ambiguous formulations in our press, especially one by Comrade Cannon and one by Comrade Joseph Hansen.

1. In his September 1940 Plenum speech, Comrade Cannon sought to make a distinction between the previous way in which we had answered social-democrats who asked, What will you do if Hitler attacks us, and our present way of answering them:

"Well, we (previously) answered in a general way, the workers will first overthrow the bourgeoisie at home and then they will take care of invaders. That was a good program, but the workers did not make the revolution in time. Now the two tasks must be telescoped and carried out simultaneously." (Socialist Appeal, October 26, 1940.)

To which Shachtman replied:

"This 'new' position -- that the workers should be for 'national defense' while the bourgeoisie is still in power, and 'simultaneously' fight against the bourgeoisie -- (is)... a concession to social-patriotism and a corresponding abandonment of the revolutionary internationalist position."

If Shachtman were correct in saying that Cannon meant what Shachtman attributed to him, then it would be true that Cannon had made a concession to social-patriotism. But, in the same article, Shachtman had to admit that he knew very well that Cannon was not a social-patriot. He demanded, however, that Comrade Cannon explain or retract his formulation that "the two tasks must be telescoped and carried out simultaneously."

It must be recognized that Comrade Cannon's formulation, about telescoping and carrying out simultaneously the fight against imperialist invaders and the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, was unfortunate. Comrade Cannon used that once and never repeated it. Both Comrade Goldman and I at the time felt it was a bad formulation, but let it

pass. I think we made a mistake in doing so. It would have been better if we had been less diplomatic, and asked Cannon to correct his formulation and if he had refused to do so, dissociated ourselves from it.

I am sure that Comrade Cannon will agree with us that one must first overthrow the bourgeoisie before one can conduct a revolutionary war. No matter how closely together these tasks would come, they would still never be simultaneous. First would come the overthrow of the bourgeoisie.

2. Shachtman also took polemical advantage of an article by Comrade Joseph Hansen in which, in criticizing conscientious objectors, Hansen said:

"These pacifists who oppose military training must be rejected with the utmost contempt by the class-conscious worker, just as he would reject with scorn and hate a scab who said: 'Unions? No, I will have nothing to do with them. They lead to tear gas! I choose independence!'" (Socialist Appeal, November 23, 1940.)

One must admit that Comrade Hansen was not expressing the Marxist attitude toward conscientious objectors. The analogy of scabs is altogether false. Comrade Cannon and I discussed Hansen's article at the time. Neither of us liked it. Comrade Cannon spoke of the high moral courage of conscientious objectors whom he had known, and agreed they could in no way be equated with scabs.

We have had a general method of letting such things pass in diplomatic silence. I think it would be better if we got into the habit of openly correcting such blunders, particularly when an opponent tries to use them against us.

Had we done so in the case of Hansen's article, Shachtman would not have had a leg to stand on when he insisted that Hansen's article wasn't accidental but part of a trend. Taking advantage of Hansen's false analogy between conscientious objectors and scabs, Shachtman wrote:

"Roosevelt's army is like -- a union! Whoever refused to go along with the army-union must be treated by the workers like a scab. And what about the Fellow-worker Judge who sentenced the eight pacifist-student scabs of the Union Theological Seminary to a year and a day in prison -- doesn't he deserve a kind word for the thorough promptness with which he administered justice?"

This was a thoroughly unfair polemic, but Cannon's replies to Shachtman's articles on our military policy, and for that matter, Goldman's -- and mine on other questions -- were also not a little unfair. If challenged on this, I shall cite chapter and verse. The essential point is that in the 1939-40 fight and the split and afterwards, perhaps inevitably, came polemical exaggerations on both sides.

But time has elapsed, and it is necessary to cold-bloodedly analyze on each question just what are our differences. On this particular question, the SWP and the WP are agreed on the need for military training of the workers under trade union control and on the basic slogans in the Transitional Program for a workers' militia and a people's army. The one point of difference is the apparent refusal of the WP to make a distinction between conscription by the bourgeois state and the idea of supporting a Congressional bill which will make military training compulsory under control of the trade unions.

In a word, the difference is very narrow and can in no way seriously be asserted to be a bar to unity. Far, far greater differences than these have harmoniously lived together in one bolshevik party.

August 8, 1945.

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