

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
January 31, 1977

No. 4

To Leninist Trotskyist Faction Coordinators

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed are the following items:

1. Correspondence between Dave Frankel of the Intercontinental Press staff and Mikado of the LCR of Israel.
2. A December 13, 1976, letter from Galois for the United Secretariat Bureau to the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, together with enclosures: (1) a December 10, 1976, letter from Robs for the French LCR to the United Secretariat, and (2) a reply to the LCR Political Bureau from Galois for the United Secretariat Bureau.
3. November 17, 1976, letters from Otto for the Bureau to Joseph Hansen and to John Benson with the enclosure of a motion passed at the November United Secretariat meeting; a copy of a correction printed in the December 6, 1976, issue of Intercontinental Press; and a December 26, 1976, letter from John Benson to the International Majority Tendency members on the United Secretariat.
4. Correspondence between the League for Socialist Action/Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière, the Revolutionary Marxist Group, and the Socialist League of Canada.
5. A report on the fusion of Tendencies A and C in the French LCR, by Elizabeth.
6. A letter from members of the Internationalist Marxist Group (GMI) of Colombia to the Socialist Bloc of Colombia.
7. A December 15, 1976, letter to John McCarthy from the Steering Committee of the International Majority Tendency.
8. The first section of the Vol. 4, No. 4 issue of the internal discussion bulletin of the Socialist Workers Party of Australia.

Comradely,

Caroline Lund

Caroline Lund

TRANSLATION

Israel
December 13, 1976

Dave Frankel
IP

Dear Comrade Dave,

I have just received the last issue of IP, and though I think it's a good interview, which reflect correctly the Israeli CP positions, I have, nevertheless, some remarks to add. [For interview see IP, Vol. 14, No. 47, December 13, 1976.]

The reformist positions of the CP and its conciliation with the Zionist state are clearly and correctly stated. Your critique of Langer and Ziad's "realistic" arguments and their acceptance of the state of Israel's existence, using the false, pseudo-Leninist argument about the rights of nations to self-determination, is absolutely correct; so is the rejection of the Palestinian state as it is put forward by the Israeli Communist Party and as it is presented today in this region.

What must be explained more concretely, and perhaps differently, is the revolutionary Marxist position. This must be composed of three elements:

--Rejection of the state of Israel and the fight to destroy it, as well as unconditional support to the struggle to liberate Palestine, all of Palestine;

-- The revolutionary Marxist struggle for the class independence of the Palestinian workers for a united struggle of Jewish and Arab workers against the state of Israel, and for a united socialist Palestine, integrated into an Arab Socialist Union, with recognition of the national rights of national minorities such as the Jews;

--Envisioning, in the context of a Palestine liberated from the Zionist yoke, the right of the Jewish minority to self-determination-- within the limits of respect for the rights of the Palestinians, of course -- in other words, a solution that is mutually agreed to, not forcibly imposed by imperialism.

Because of the fact that the CP and the left Zionists place an equal sign between the state of Israel and self-determination, we refuse to uphold such a slogan today, centering our propaganda around "destruction of the Jewish state," "liberation and unification of Palestine." But we cannot exclude the hypothesis that it is then, upon the ruins of the state of Israel, that the question will arise of self-determination for the Jewish masses, who will have ceased to be the oppressors and will have become a national minority in a liberated Arab part of the world.

Briefly: your correct criticism of the positions of the Israeli Communist Party is lacking, first of all, in a class alternative around a slogan like, "For a socialist Palestine" (which in no way contradicts the support that revolutionary Marxists must give to nationalist leaderships and to the bourgeois democratic aim of a democratic and secular Palestine); secondly, you have a static, and thus non-Marxist and ineffective conception of the "Israeli-Jewish" or Hebrew national question, reducing it to a question of "oppressed minority versus oppressor minority" rather than looking at the dynamic of the problem, namely, the place that Jews will occupy in a liberated Palestine. Without a clear answer to this question, we are unable to debate the traitorous and social-chauvinist positions of the capitulationists in the OLP, the CP, or the left Zionists.

Fraternal greetings,
s/Mikado

New York
January 19, 1977

Mikado
Israel

Dear Comrade Mikado,

Thanks for your letter of December 13 -- I'm a little late in answering it, I know, but I don't read French. As you probably know, I do hope to come to Israel this spring, and I am looking forward to meeting you and talking with you and the other comrades there.

I read your remarks on the interview with Langer and Zayyad with interest. In 1971, we in the SWP had a discussion on the Middle East in which many of the questions that you raise came up, and I was aware at the time of the position of the Israeli Trotskyists. However, I had the gotten the impression -- erroneously, it turns out -- that you had dropped the position in favor of self-determination for the Israeli Jews following the destruction of the Zionist state.

In any case, I think we are in agreement on most of the points that you raise. It is true that not all of them were included in the article, such as the demand for a united socialist Palestine integrated into an Arab Socialist Union, but we in the SWP are certainly in favor of that demand. I simply chose to limit the scope of the article on the CP, concentrating on their position in favor of Israel's right to exist. (The article was three pages as it was!) Of course, had I been attempting to give a rounded presentation of the Trotskyist position on the Middle East, I would have had to include much more.

I am also in agreement with you on what the immediate axes of our propaganda in the Middle East should be. But your point on the right of the Jewish population to self-determination in a liberated Palestine seems very abstract to me. I believe that a section of the Jewish population will be convinced in the course of the struggle for the liberation of Palestine that the maintenance of a separate Jewish state is not in their interests. If this section of the Jewish population agrees that it does not want a Jewish state, why should we expect that it will change its mind after the liberation of Palestine?

Others, of course, will never be convinced on the issue of the Jewish state. But as long as they feel this way, they will support Israel, not the promise of a state of their own some-time in the dim future. We have to ask: In a liberated Palestine, who would demand a separate state, and why?

We could speculate on whether the Jews who remain in a liberated Palestine would suffer oppression for some reason. If this happened, then the demand of self-determination could be appropriate. But what is the point of raising this question at the present time--especially as one of the basic points that should comprise a revolutionary position on the question of Israel and the Palestinians?

I do not believe that the demand for self-determination has any progressive content in and of itself. What determines its progressive character is the context in which it is raised. It is progressive if the demand is a rallying cry for a people fighting against oppression, and it is reactionary if, as in the case of Israel, it is raised by those fighting to perpetuate national oppression.

If the question of self-determination for the Jews should become an issue in the liberated Palestine of the future, then revolutionists will be required to handle the problem at that time. There is no reason to predict today that this question will arise, and even less reason to insist that anybody should take a position on a purely hypothetical possibility.

Finally, if the issue should arise, then I think that the Marxist approach depends not on the assertion of the universal democratic right of self-determination of nations, but rather on the question of whether this right can be applied in the specific circumstances without violating the rights of another people. When the demands of two nations are in conflict--which sometimes occurs--then I believe it is necessary to support the oppressed over the oppressor. In the case of Israel, I doubt very much that the mere abolition of the Israeli state will immediately lead to a situation of equality between the Arab and Jewish communities there. It will take a long time to overcome the historical legacy of Zionist oppression. From that point of view, it seems to me more likely that it is the Palestinians who will require guarantees for their rights, not the Jewish population.

Gus Horowitz treated this question in greater detail in the SWP Educational Bulletin on Israel and the Arab Revolution. (Pages 30-35 especially.) Perhaps if I get to Israel we can discuss this some more. Anyway, thanks again for your letter.

Comradely,
s/Dave Frankel

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Brussels
December 23, 1976

Political Committee
Socialist Workers Party

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed is a copy of a letter we received from the Political
Bureau of the LCR and a copy of our reply.

Revolutionary greetings,
s/ Galois
for the Bureau

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TRANSLATION

Political Bureau of the Ligue Communiste
Révolutionnaire, French section of the
Fourth International
Montreuil, December 10, 1976

United Secretariat

Dear Comrades,

A few days ago we received IIDB Vol 13, No. 5, November 1976.

We are surprised to learn that an article appears as an appendix on p. 22, entitled, "Reply by Matti to the ICR Political Bureau motion of July 23."

This calls for several clarifications:

1) This "reply" has never been published by us, neither in mimeographed form nor in an internal bulletin of the French section, nor have we brought it to the attention of any leading body of the International. By what means has it now gotten into this bulletin, which is published with the authority of the United Secretariat? This is the first question to which we would like a clear answer.

2) The question of the position taken by the ICR Political Bureau on the SWP convention was taken up at our Central Committee meeting at the end of August, and a written summary of this discussion was published in our internal bulletin (Cahiers d'Etudes et de Recherches socialistes No. 47, pp. 10-11). It was upon the request of Matti himself that his "reply", which we had at first intended to publish in mimeographed form, was not included in the internal bulletin containing the summary of the Central Committee meeting. Its publication in the IIDB, therefore, is all the more regrettable.

By the way, why doesn't the resolution passed by a majority of the Central Committee appear in the appendix?

What criteria were applied in the choice of documents on this question that the United Secretariat was planning to bring to the attention of the entire International? We think it would have been better to consult beforehand with the leadership of the French section, or at least to have informed them within a reasonable amount of time of the decision taken.

3) In view of this, we are asking that the next IIDB include a rectification, as well as the resolution passed last August by a majority of our Central Committee (attached).

We are hoping to receive a speedy reply to this letter.

Fraternal greetings,
s/Robs for the Political Bureau

cc: SWP Political Committee

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Brussels, December 22, 1976

Political Bureau
Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire

Dear Comrades,

We have received your letter of December 10, 1976 inquiring about the publication in IIDB, vol. XIII, no. 5, November, 1976 of the item entitled "Reply by Matti to ICR Political Bureau motion of July 23."

This item appears in the bulletin as appendix no. 5 to a statement of the SWP Political Committee, dated July 29, 1976.

The SWP Political Committee statement with six appendices was published in SWP Internal Information Bulletin, no. 9, 1976, July 1976. The statement, plus appendices, was submitted for publication in the international internal discussion bulletin at the United Secretariat meeting of September 11-12, 1976. At that meeting, the SWP Political Committee statement was accepted for publication by the United Secretariat, but a decision on the publication of appendices was postponed until the October meeting. At the October 16-17, 1976 meeting of the United Secretariat a motion was adopted "to publish in the IIDB all the material presented to the USec prior to or at this meeting and still pending for publication." The six appendices to the SWP PC statement were among the material covered by this motion. Thus the publication of the above item in the IIDB, vol. XIII, no. 5 was in conformity with a decision of the United Secretariat.

Concerning the motion voted by a majority of the ICR Central Committee at the end of August. On your request, it has been approved for publication in the international internal discussion bulletin.

Concerning the statement by Comrade Matti. This was appended to the statement of the SWP Political Committee by the SWP P.C. We are forwarding a copy of your letter to the SWP PC. If the ICR Political Bureau wishes to submit a statement concerning this, then it will be accepted for publication in the international internal discussion bulletin.

At the October 16-17 United Secretariat meeting the United Secretariat, as a body, had not been informed that Comrade Matti had withdrawn his statement at the August meeting of the ICR Central Committee.

Revolutionary greetings,
s/ Galois for the Bureau

cc: SWP Political Committee

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Brussels
November 17, 1976

Joseph Hansen, Editor
Intercontinental Press
New York

Dear Comrade Hansen,

Attached please find a copy of a motion adopted by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International at its meeting of November 13-14, 1976.

Comradely,
s/ Otto, for the United
Secretariat Bureau

* * *

Brussels
November 17, 1976

John Benson, Secretary
Leninist-Trotskyist Faction

Dear Comrade,

Attached please find a copy of a motion adopted by the United Secretariat at its meeting of November 13-14, 1976.

Comradely,
s/ Otto, for the United
Secretariat Bureau

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Motion by Walter adopted by the United Secretariat, November 13-14, 1976.

"The United Secretariat strongly objects to the IEC Minority Faction's having submitted their resolution on Angola for publication in Intercontinental Press. This resolution was published in the issue of IP dated October 11, 1976, under a heading 'Draft resolutions' and with the following introduction:

"The following resolution has been submitted by the Leninist-Trotskyist faction for discussion by the ranks of the Fourth International in preparation for the next congress of the worldwide Trotskyist organization. A resolution presenting the International Majority Tendency on the situation in Angola was published in the April 12, 1975 issue of Intercontinental Press.'

"The United Secretariat states that the public appearance of this document in IP is a violation of the right and responsibility of the leading bodies of the FI to organize the pre-world-congress discussion and internal debate in general as they are mandated by the statutes. This resolution was not presented to the United Secretariat for inclusion into the international internal discussion bulletin, but instead was made known to the leadership and ranks of the FI through its unprecedented public appearance in IP. This action jeopardizes our ability to carry out a democratic internal debate, organized by the leading bodies in order to safeguard that democracy. Any public discussion which may be appropriate must be under the control of the United Secretariat.

"The United Secretariat objects to the formulation 'A resolution presenting the IMT on the situation in Angola was published in the April 12, 1976, issue of IP.' This resolution, passed at the February 1976 meeting of the International Executive Committee, is not a presentation of the positions of the IMT, but it is the expression of the Fourth International's political position on Angola as determined by a majority vote of its highest body between world congresses. This formulation denies the right of leading bodies to speak for the FI as a whole, and reduced their function to that of a platform for tendencies and factions to express their points of view.

"The United Secretariat requests that the IEC Minority Faction respect the normal democratic centralist procedure for the organization of the pre-world-congress debate. The inauguration of the rubric 'Draft Resolutions' in IP points up the need for full clarity on these norms, in particular the fact that only the leading bodies of the FI can authorize the external publication of draft resolutions submitted to the internal discussion if they deem this necessary and constructive.

"The United Secretariat decides to request that the editor of IP should print a correction of its introduction to this document centered on the following point: that the IEC resolution on Angola published in the April 12, 1976, Intercontinental Press was not a resolution reflecting the views simply of the International Majority Tendency, but was a statement by the Fourth International as determined by majority vote of its leading body."

Vote on Walter motion:

For: 8 (Aubin, Claudio, Domingo, Duret, Jones, Frej, Walter,
Werner.)

Against: 1 (Adair)

Consultative vote: Against: 2 (Calois, Johnson)

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Copy of Correction printed in the December 6, 1976 issue of
Intercontinental Press.

"The United Secretariat of the Fourth International has called our attention to an editorial note accompanying a draft resolution entitled "Minority Resolution on Angola," which was published in the October 11, 1976, issue of Intercontinental Press.

"In the opinion of the United Secretariat, the editorial note could be taken to imply that a resolution on Angola adopted by the International Executive Committee last February, and published in the April 12, 1976, issue of Intercontinental Press, represented the views of only the International Majority Tendency rather than the Fourth International as a whole as determined by a majority vote of its leading body.

"Such an implication was not intended in the editorial note in question, and we hope that this correction will clarify the point."

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Brussels
December 26, 1976

To: IMT Members of the United Secretariat

Dear Comrades,

This is in answer to your November 14 motion, forwarded to us by Otto. Your statement that the Leninist Trotskyist Faction "submitted their resolution on Angola for publication in Intercontinental Press" is not accurate. The LTF did not submit its resolution to Intercontinental Press. The LTF submitted it to the international internal discussion bulletin at the November 1976 meeting of the United Secretariat.

Thus your request that the LTF "respect normal democratic centralist procedures for the organization of the pre-world-congress debate" is based on a false assumption. The LTF is respecting democratic centralist procedures as it always has.

The most important condition for organizing the pre-world-congress debate is that all factions, particularly the one given responsibility for the leadership, should uphold the resolutions passed unanimously at the October United Secretariat meeting, which opened the door to a united center and the preparation of a democratic and authoritative world congress.

Comradely,
John Benson
for the LTF Coordinating Committee

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LSA/LSO Central Office,
334 Queen St West,
Toronto.
November 13, 1976

Gord Cleveland,
RMG,
Toronto.

Dear Gord:

Here is a draft of the joint public statement of our two organizations which we discussed together.

I have written it to express clearly the point of view of our Political Committee, understanding that the RMG PC will want to make some alterations to it in the light of the RMG's position on relations with us.

I'm sure that the comrades of the RMG will agree that any public statement made on attempts to improve relations between our organizations would be much more powerful if it were a joint statement of the two groups.

comradely,

Art Young.

PROPOSED JOINT PUBLIC STATEMENT OF RMG AND LSA/LSO

1. Since 1972-73, the forces in Canada adhering to the Fourth International have been divided in different public organizations. The 1974 World Congress of the Fourth International gave formal recognition to this situation, recognizing, in addition to the pan-Canadian section of the International, the LSA/LSO, two other sympathizing groups, the GMR in Quebec and the RMG in English Canada.

2. In the light of subsequent experience, and without attempting to apportion responsibility for the events which produced the split, we can now state that the split which led to the formation of the RMG was not politically justified.

Important differences continue to separate our two organizations today on key political questions. But both organizations uphold the program of Trotskyism, as component parts of the Fourth International. None of the current differences between us are of such a nature as to preclude the possibility of working together in a common organization according to the norms of democratic centralism.

Furthermore, experience has shown that both the RMG and the LSA/LSO are established as stable and experienced organizations intervening

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in the class struggle. Whatever the political errors that each group may be making, neither is in the process of disappearing as the result of the competition of the other group. The existence of two rival groups of the Fourth International in English Canada weakens the political authority of both groups, and diminishes their capacity to win new forces.

The rising curve of class struggle in English Canada, shown most graphically on October 14, places a special responsibility on us all to work to overcome existing divisions.

3. The present state of disunity among English-Canadian Trotskyists can only be overcome by a process of rapprochement leading to the fusion of the two groups.

4. The fact that fusion is our common goal does not mean, however, that it can be accomplished instantly. There remain many obstacles which it would be irresponsible to ignore. We intend to lay the basis for a durable, lasting reunification. The way to do this is to begin a process which can reduce existing frictions, increase collaboration, narrow the areas of disagreement, and ultimately convince the members of both organizations of the possibility of working fruitfully together in a common organization.

5. The first step is to begin discussions between the central leaderships of both organizations, with a view to clarifying what are the present points of agreement and disagreement, and working jointly to seek a common approach to the new challenges facing Canadian Trotskyists. Combined with this, the RMG and LSA/LSO will systematically search out opportunities for collaboration and joint intervention in the class struggle. Regular joint leadership meetings will be organized to this end.

6. The Fourth International has opened the period of discussion preparatory to its coming World Congress. In English Canada, the RMG and LSA/LSO will conduct this discussion jointly.

7. The overall goal of this process is to overcome the existing differences sufficiently so as to permit the principled unification of the forces of the two groups in a single organization, the Canadian section of the Fourth International. Such an action would mark an important step forward for Trotskyism in Canada; it would also advance the cause of our world movement.

8. We agree with the decision of the LSA/LSO and the GMR in Quebec to begin a process of regular discussion and collaboration in order to explore the possibility of achieving a principled fusion of the two organizations.

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Socialist League
53 Gerrard St West
Toronto.
October 26, 1976.

League for Socialist Action.

Dear comrades:

Arising out of the discussion between the organizational secretary of the League for Socialist Action, Art Young, and Abie Weisfeld, the organizer of the Socialist League, we have discussed the proposal from comrade Young that the Socialist League and the League for Socialist Action open up a discussion towards the goal of collaboration in certain work areas to culminate in the fusion of the two organizations.

At this time we are unaware of any substantial reasons to cause us to consider such a situation is opening up although we in general favor a regroupment of Trotskyist forces on the basis of common perspectives arising out of concrete experiences and assessments. However we are prepared to consider any case you might be prepared to present to us.

Fraternally,
Abie Weisfeld for the
Socialist League.

Socialist League.

LSA/LSO,
Toronto.
Nov. 23, 1976.

Dear comrades:

In his Oct. 26 letter to us, Abie Weisfeld, the organizer of the Socialist League, asks why the LSA/LSO has expressed the desire to see what can be done to overcome the divisions between our two groups--what has changed since the split from the LSA/LSO which produced the Socialist League?

In our opinion, this is the wrong question to pose. We have never considered that the differences between us in 1974 justified the split. After you left the League, we appealed to you to reverse course and rejoin the LSA/LSO. Experience since then has confirmed the correctness of that stand. Neither the Socialist League nor the LSA/LSO has abandoned Trotskyism. No decisive political test has enabled the Socialist League, our group, or any other Trotskyist organization to grow qualitatively and outstrip the other groups in membership or influence. Of all these groups, the SL remains the smallest.

We remain unconvinced that any of these divisions is justified by the political differences. And the present divisions

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among the Trotskyist forces impedes the growth of all groups.

However, to respond to comrade Weisfeld's question, there has been a big change in the framework in which we are all operating, as shown by the October 14 general strike and the election victory of the Parti Quebecois. These developments cast old differences in a new light. Such events can often produce a narrowing of differences between groups, providing a basis for political discussion and collaboration in practical work which can open the door to a principled fusion of Trotskyist forces. Don't you agree that in the light of these new and historic events, this possibility is worth exploring?

I am enclosing copies of the Political and Quebec resolutions adopted by the convention of the LSA/LSO last December. They set out the official positions of the League on the Canadian class struggle as it had developed to then. We would like to know your evaluation of these documents--where you agree with them and where you differ. (If you have any documents expressing the positions of the SL on these questions, we would appreciate receiving copies of them.) This would allow us for our part to better appreciate our respective political positions. For your part, you could assess whether your differences with us are of such scope as to justify the separate existence of two organizations, and if so, why.

In addition, we would like to meet soon with leaders of the SL to explore whatever possibilities there might be for collaboration in areas of the class struggle where both our organizations are present-- the NDP, York student movement, and trade union movement.

I will be out of Toronto for a number of days starting tomorrow. But if you agree that such a meeting would be useful, please telephone Samantha Anderson at 363-9618 to arrange a suitable time and place.

Comradely yours,
Art Young
Organizational Secretary
LSA/LSO.

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January 6, 1977
Toronto

Central Office

Art Young
Organizational Secretary
LSA/LSO

Dear Comrades,

Thank you for your letter of November 23 and the enclosed documents.

We are always open to the possibilities of collaboration, even on a continuing basis on matters of common concern. However neither the documentation, your press, nor the argumentation in your letter convinces us that there is any basis for considering the possibility of unity at this time.

To be sure the new radicalization in the working class of Canada poses new challenges and opportunities for Trotskyism. But the regrettable isolation of Trotskyism would not in our opinion be overcome, nor significant intervention be realized by unification of the Socialist League with any of the Trotskyist groupings even though as you point out the SL appears to be the smallest.

Since we left the LSA-LSO, already bereft of the RMG/GMR, we have had no cause to reconsider this action as having been in any significant respect erroneous. On the contrary its correctness has been constantly confirmed by innumerable differences which, while they could not be said to involve basic principles of Marxism-Trotskyism, do not point to a harmonious collaboration in a common organization, and things do not appear at this time to be moving in that direction.

comradely,

Abie Weisfeld
Socialist League

Report on Fusion of Tendency C and Tendency A in the French LCR

by Elizabeth

At its December 11-12, 1976, national meeting, Tendency C, initiated by the members of the French section who are members of the Leninist Trotskyist faction, voted to call on its supporters to vote for the theses written by Tendency A, initiated by Comrade Matti, a longtime member of the Political Bureau of the French section. The call to vote for the Tendency A (TA) theses was accompanied by a call to Tendency C's (TC) supporters to dissolve TC and join TA. (In France the theses are the final documents presented for a vote at the congress by each tendency.) In addition to agreement on the theses, the two tendencies wrote three documents together prior to TC's dissolution on work in the trade unions, the women's liberation movement and the youth movement. The line of these three documents is summarized in the TA theses on mass work. Thus, the fusion was a principled one, based on political agreement on the major political questions in the debate in the French section.

TC will call on the delegates at the LCR congress, scheduled for the end of January, to vote for about six amendments to the theses on questions of a secondary nature. These amendments were included in a statement written by the TC leadership and published in the bulletin, in which the TC explained both its fundamental agreement and its secondary disagreements with the TA document.

The combined tendency has 460 members so far, of which 350 were originally from TA and 110 from TC. This probably represents 20-25% of the membership of the French section at this time.

* * *

The formation of the united tendency was the result of a long process begun last June. At the June 26-27, 1976, Central Committee (CC) meeting of the French section, Comrade Matti announced that he and other CC members were forming a "work group" to begin writing documents for the next congress and to seek signatures for the formation of a tendency. At that time, he asked several other members of the CC, including Comrade Nemo of the LTF, to join together in one united tendency of the "opposition."

Matti's proposal sparked a long discussion in the LTF about what our perspectives for the congress were, and what approach we should take to collaborating with comrades who were reconsidering the positions of the International Majority Tendency and beginning to weigh the stand of the LTF in an objective way. From the outset we were faced with important political and tactical problems. Most of the LTF's leading members in France had joined the faction only a year before, on the basis of the international LTF positions. We did not have a body of documents that clearly expressed our ideas on French political questions. Comrade Matti had agreed with the LTF on some of the most important political questions in the Portugal debate, but said he disagreed with

our slogan concerning the Constituent Assembly, our evaluation of the committees, and what approach to take in regard to the SP membership in the July 1975 period. He and Comrade Nemo had agreed on other questions in the course of some CC meetings, such as the need to call for a CP-SP government in France, opposition to the French section's "revolutionary unity" policy with centrist groups, discussions with the OCI (Organisation Communiste Internationaliste - Internationalist Communist Organization) and IO (Lutte Ouvrière - Workers Struggle), etc. Nevertheless, in June Matti was still a member of the IMT, and it was not clear what kind of positions he intended to develop in the French preconvention discussion.

We decided that it would be incorrect to begin discussions for the formation of a tendency with forces other than the LTF without having available clear documents so that we would be able to see what the agreements and differences might be. The LTF comrades wrote a political resolution on the main political questions up for debate, and urged Matti to do the same. (Our political resolution was our first document, and was not completely developed on every question, of course, but it did set down our ideas on some of the main questions. Many of our points were further developed later on.)

Our proposal for political clarification and agreement before the formation of a common tendency represented a break from the traditions for pre-congress debate and the formation of tendencies that have been developed by the French section since 1968. The section's bylaws state that anyone can call for the formation of a tendency at any point in the discussion before a congress, but that to be recognized as a tendency you must have at least thirty signatures. Moreover, tendencies get special "rights." This year, for instance, each tendency was allocated 17,000 French francs (about \$3,450) for budgets to be used to finance materials for internal tendency discussion documents, travel for representatives to speak in general assemblies throughout France, and attendance at national meetings (that is, the travel expenses for out-of-towners; it is the tradition in France that all travel be paid). Most of the money is used for travel. Each tendency was allowed a total of 280,000 characters in the bulletin (equivalent to about 42-45 pages in the English language International Internal Discussion Bulletin), while individuals not affiliated to tendencies received only 50,000 characters each (about 7.5 pages). This is the total for the whole discussion period, which this year was five months long. All the minorities opposed these limits. The limits were justified by the majority on the ground that activist comrades and workers cannot read many bulletins.

What these regulations mean in practice is that comrades feel pressured to organize themselves into tendencies early in the debate in order to get the right to develop and present their ideas to the section. Thus, in the scramble to get thirty signatures, tendencies are usually organized on the basis of vague positions and are often very heterogenous. Much of the real debate takes place inside the tendencies rather than in the bulletin in front of the entire membership. And since tendencies are not based from the outset on clear political documents or a longer discussion in the bulletin,

but begin as groupings made up of everyone in the same "bag," it is a free-for-all to see which documents get published as the line of the tendency. Every tendency settles this question by votes, a sort of discipline applies, and comrades who abstain or vote against a tendency's majority documents can nonetheless remain members of it and present amendments to the documents. As a result, the final documents are also rather vague, because usually compromises are made to hold onto the people who are trying to amend the line. And even when comrades disagree with the final line, they stay inside the tendency in order to conserve their strength and carry on the battle.

In this context, our proposal to form a tendency on the basis of a clear political resolution that we all agreed on from the beginning was not in the "normal" tradition. We further proposed that in case political agreement emerged and a united tendency was formed, our political resolution and all other preliminary documents should be published in the internal bulletin so that everyone in the organization, and not just those inside the tendency, would be able to see what the agreements and disagreements were. We proposed that there be no discipline in the tendency, and that all contradictory documents on secondary questions be published. This was the basis on which TC was eventually formed in August.

TA, like the other tendencies, was begun differently. A "call" for the formation of the tendency was circulated beginning in July. But in our view this document was so vague as to leave open the possibility that comrades in the IMT could agree with it. Although it proposed agitation around the CP-SP governmental slogan, the call did not characterize the Union of the Left as a popular front. The perspectives for mass work were reduced to the vague formula, "one united trade union tendency, one student movement, one women's movement, one movement to support soldiers' struggles, and one soldiers' trade union." (In France, the word "movement" frequently means organization, but it was not clear from this document what the concept was.) The TA leaders said they thought agreement on this was enough to provide the basis to develop line documents on mass work.

During the five conversations we held with TA leaders in this period, we were not able to convince them that we should have a political resolution that included characterizing the Union of the Left as a popular front, calling for a break with the IMT's European document, or clear perspectives on mass work. For us, these were minimum political preconditions for a united tendency. The TA leaders, on the other hand, posed no political preconditions for us to agree with before entering their tendency. So, what we were faced with was an offer from the TA's leaders to form a united tendency of the opposition, but without political agreement in advance.

So, we decided at the time of the late August CC meeting to organize our own tendency based on our political resolution, but we left open the possibility that through further political discussion in the bulletin we would be able to form a united tendency. We presented

34 signatures and were recognized as the TC. Matti and the other comrades presented over 100 signatures and were recognized as the TA. A third group of comrades calling for the formation of a tendency around the "analysis of social formation" were recognized as Tendency B. The majority of the IMT comrades were deeply divided among themselves at this point, with the divisions somewhat parallel to those that had appeared between the ex-Tendency 2 and ex-Tendency 3 at the last congress. But they were under a lot of pressure (in their view) to form a united IMT tendency because of the prospect that TA and TC were going to grow. So no majority tendency was formed at this point and their negotiations continued. TD, led by the CC majority, was finally formed toward the end of September. But it continued to be plagued by deep disagreements throughout the discussion.

A significant change took place at the late August Central Committee meeting where the tendencies were officially recognized. Matti and two other TA CC members, Griot and Thalou, resigned from the IMT because of disagreement with the IMT line on Portugal and the IMT document on Europe. [For statements by these comrades on why they resigned, see the LTF mailing #2 in 1976, December 23.] This was a big step forward on the road to political clarification.

At the same time, the TA political resolution appeared in the bulletin. It was very good in many ways; it left no doubt that a deep break had taken place with the method and politics of the IMT, and showed convergence with some of our positions. So TC decided to put an open letter to TA in the bulletin, centered on the need for a clear characterization of the Union of the Left as a popular front, the need for the tendency as a whole to be explicit about a break with the IMT's European document, and the need for further clarity on mass work. We said that agreement on these questions would give us the political basis for the formation of a united tendency.

In the meantime, a group of thirteen comrades around CC member Krasno wrote a statement in the bulletin announcing that they were joining TC. This group was accepted into TC on the basis of their stated agreement with the TC document. At this point, three weeks into the discussion, the TC had about 80 signatures. However, while Comrade Krasno and the others said that they agreed with our political documents on France, their letter contained an attack on the international LTF, and worse, a sentence that implied that the LCR was in danger of becoming a centrist group like the MIR of Chile and the POUM of Spain.

Our open letter to Tendency A stirred things up quite a bit at their national meeting in mid-September. In fact, TA was still heterogeneous politically. It included a minority that was opposed to some of the TC political positions, and that, in addition, was very reluctant to work together with comrades of the LTF. This minority in the TA fought against characterizing the Union of the Left as a popular front.

(TC considered this to be an important question for achieving clarity in the debate. The LCR majority, for example, says that the

Union of the Left is a class-collaborationist front that still does not have the support of a significant wing of the bourgeoisie; this is one of the things that enables them to call for a Union of the Left vote in the upcoming municipal elections in cities of more than 30,000, where ticket splitting is not allowed.) The main leadership of TA initially favored a formulation on the Union of the Left that would gain the support of this minority in TA, even if such a formulation was not precise. Some of the TA leaders also thought it was not pedagogical to say clearly that the Union of the Left was a popular front. A third wing of the TA agreed with the TC on the need to stress the importance of this question; this wing was also moving towards positions of the LTF on many other questions.

TA was in the position of having to respond clearly to the political questions that had been posed by TC. As a result of their discussions, they amended their political resolution to include a clear characterization of the Union of the Left as a popular front. A resolution calling for a break with the IMT European document was also presented, but not taken into consideration at that time. The leadership of TA was delegated to respond to our letter. The result of these further discussions in the TA leadership was the adoption of a letter in response to TC that clearly characterized the Union of the Left as a popular front, and that broke with the two IMT European documents, but that left other international questions open for discussion.

* * *

In fact, it wasn't (and still isn't) clear what all the agreements and disagreements are on an international level. One of the leading TA comrades published a document on Portugal that contained a sentence criticizing the PST and the rest of the LTF for having found more "progressive virtues" in the SP than in the CP. The TA answer to our open letter raised questions about our policy toward the SP in the summer of 1975 period, the appreciation of the "committees," and our slogan on the Constituent Assembly. However these were only passing remarks, not yet developed criticisms. It seemed possible that the differences were very narrow.

On other important questions, like the IMT's "sovietism," the need to raise democratic and economic slogans, the call for a CP-SP government, and opposition to the vote for Carvalho, the document contained correct positions. Eventually we decided that we had to leave clarification of the international questions aside for the moment, and take them up later in the world congress debate. We thought that the agreements over Portugal were deep enough to justify going ahead at this stage with collaboration on French political questions. The question of Portugal was not to be voted

on at the LCR congress, in any case, and is not part of the platform of any of the tendencies.

By the time of the mid-December meeting of TA, the ambiguity in the TA position on Portugal had been largely removed; the TA document was adopted with all the criticisms of the LTF deleted.

The TA letter gave us the opportunity to clarify our position on the characterization of the LCR. We did this in two ways. First, the LTF members of TC published an answer to the Krasno group's attack against the LTF, and at the same time polemicized against the ambiguity in their characterization of the Ligue, affirming that the LCR is Trotskyist. This characterization was then included in the second TC open letter to the TA ("A New Stage in the Debate"). But in our TC discussion on the content of this second open letter to the TA we had a long discussion over the rate of our process of clarifying politically and possibly unifying with the TA.

The situation now was that the amended TA documents characterized the Union of the Left as a popular front, called for a CP-SP government, and broke with the new mass vanguard orientation of the European document. In the course of the discussion, the TC had adopted (but not yet published) a clear line on the women's liberation movement and was in the process of writing documents on the youth movement, the national question, work in the teachers unions, and balance sheets on the Ligue's trade-union work. TA had published no documents on mass work, but some contributions internal to their tendency had been written.

We still maintained the idea that we had to have basic agreement on work in the mass movement as the basis for the united tendency. This was important to further clarify the differences with the IMT's approach in the mass movement.

Many comrades in TC were now convinced that once TA had taken a clear position on the character of the Union of the Left and the IMT European documents, a correct policy for work in the mass movement would automatically follow. Some comrades raised the consideration that if we went into TA right away we could combine with the wing closest to our positions to win the votes on mass work perspectives. But this would have been a mistake. Our approach to the comrades closest to our positions was really the same as for the rest of TA--to continue the process of clarification. It would have been a mistake for us to have entered TA at this point and to make a bloc with the comrades closest to our positions, because we would have then run the risk of alienating a sector of TA by imposing a majority vote on mass work perspectives through an organizational move. The result would have been unnecessary friction with many TA comrades.

The correct approach was to let the discussion inside the TA unfold naturally through continued discussion with the TC, so as to clarify the political line with all of the TA. So, in the same

open letter ("A New Stage in the Debate"), we proposed that we begin immediately to explore the possibility of unification, but that the process would have to include writing common documents on mass work.

This was acceptable to the TA. The women's and youth commissions of the two tendencies began meeting to write common documents, and several leading comrades from both tendencies wrote a document on work in the trade unions. At the same time the two leaderships began meeting together regularly to work out the process for publication of documents and to map out the work that would have to be done to obtain a common position for the congress.

In the three weeks that followed, common documents on trade-union and women's liberation work and perspectives were published. A youth document was written but could not be published in the bulletin because of lack of space. The two tendencies sent observers to their different meetings. TA gave copies of its draft theses to the TC leadership at the same time as they were given to the TA national council and rank and file. The agreed-upon process was that we were to present any amendments that we had in the period leading up to the final national meeting of the TA and these would be integrated if they were not contradictory to the draft.

* * *

At this point, the big majority of TA had the same positions as TC on the key questions. But during this final process--the publication of the common documents and the discussion around the theses--some difficulties arose. Essentially what happened was that a minority of TA comrades who were either against unity with the TC or in disagreement with the TC and the majority TA line tried at various stages of the process to present amendments to the documents or to the theses that were contradictory to the line that had been developed previously by the TA majority and the TC. Other comrades in TA tried to meet these objections by presenting amendments that blunted some of the TA positions.

Thus, there had been some disagreements over the common document on the women's liberation movement. But those amendments presented that were contradictory were rejected by both the TA and TC women's commissions.

Then there was a big struggle to amend the theses of TA at the TA national meeting of December 11-12. Over 100 amendments were presented. In large part, it was not a matter of amendments in outright contradiction with the first draft of the theses, but of amendments that introduced vagueness on various points. However, the comrades fighting for a clear political line won on all the important points, and the theses remained clear on the characterization of the Union of the Left as a popular front, a clear call for "CP-SP government without bourgeois ministers," a break with

the IMT European document, and a clear line on mass work based on the three documents written by TA and TC in common. In the end, when the vote was finally taken on the whole theses, about 20 comrades abstained (it was a delegated meeting, with one delegate for every three supporters). For TC, the fact that the TA theses were politically acceptable was the key.

The fight around the political line in the theses inside the TA was then extended to the fight around whether or not there would be unity. First there was a small group of delegates who argued that two of the amendments that had been accepted into the theses were in total contradiction to the TC's line, and therefore unity was excluded. In fact this was not the case, for one amendment was correct, and the other, though incorrect, was on an analytical point that was not a central question. The majority of TA voted that it was up to the TC to decide whether or not these points were contradictory.

Second, there was a fight around what organizational procedures would be used to carry out the fusion. The majority of TA was somewhat inflexible here. We had proposed that it would be more correct to dissolve both tendencies and reconstitute a third new tendency on the basis of the three documents and the theses. The TA leadership proposed that TC should dissolve and enter TA. We had proposed that a general assembly of the two tendencies be held at the end to elect a united leadership for the united tendency. The TA leadership proposed that the TC separately elect its representatives to the leadership, as well as its delegates to the congress and possible CC members, all on a proportional basis (with the election for congress delegates and CC members to take place separately after the fusion). The vote on these procedures inside TA was for the TA leadership's proposals, but was decided by only one vote, as many of the TA comrades felt that the procedures were unnecessarily sectarian toward us.

The TC decided not to let the differences over organizational procedure stand in the way of unification based on political agreement.

After discussing the theses and the organizational proposals voted by TA, the TC leadership drew up a declaration to be put into the bulletin that called on its supporters to vote for the theses, to dissolve the TC, and to join the TA. The declaration put the emphasis on the basic political agreement, but at the same time announced several amendments that the TC comrades would present at the congress to the theses. These say that it was premature to launch a daily newspaper, that the ICR's call for a soldiers' trade union is wrong, that the OCI and IO are Trotskyist organizations; several other amendments are of a more analytical nature. The vote on this perspective was unanimous in the TC.

At the same time, several comrades who had been in TA resigned with a statement in the bulletin saying that TA had evolved far beyond what they had originally had in mind. They stated that they still intended to remain in the IMT.

* * *

This process of unification stands in contrast to what is happening inside the majority IMT tendency, the TD. After formation of their tendency at the end of September, a series of groups have split from it or refused to join it, though they say they politically agree with the TD or IMT documents. Two groups organized by leading comrades in Rhone-Alpes and Brest refused from the outset to join the TD, and organized "work groups." Then a group of comrades sympathetic to the ideas of the ex-Tendency 3 quit the TD. This group is pushing for fusion with the PSU [Parti Socialiste Unifié - Unified Socialist party] and the creation of an organization that is "neither PSU nor LCR," nor affiliated to the Fourth International (their proposal is similar to the one Pablo made to the United Secretariat in his letter to Ernest). [For this letter, see International Internal Discussion Bulletin, Vol. XIII, No. 5.] The group from Rhone-Alpes has started to work with this group, but thus far they have not formed a tendency. Their main disagreement with TD seems to be that the leadership of the organization, mostly composed of comrades who were in the Tendency 2 at the last congress, has not drawn up a balance sheet on its performance since the last congress.

One of the most telling signs of the majority's troubles is the reluctance of many in the organization about getting into the TD and carrying out the debate. The TD probably does have a big majority in the debate, but it appears that only somewhere between one-third and one-half of the comrades are organized into tendencies (closer to one-third). It appears that many comrades are simply not interested in the discussion, whether it concerns the majority's ideas or those of the minority. This may reflect the general malaise in the organization as a whole. This feeling of malaise or crisis is a publicly stated concern of the LCR leadership.

Where does the LTF stand in all this now? First of all, we are in a tendency based on the political theses and the three documents on mass work (women's liberation, youth work, work in the trade unions), with which we agree. We think that these documents are compatible with the LTF's line as applied to France. Some IMT leaders have expressed the same appreciation of the line of the TA documents. But a big majority of the common tendency does not consider itself to be LTF supporters at this time. There are many more points that have to be clarified, particularly on international questions and on organizational matters. This is a process that will be speeded up once the international debate opens up (though we haven't discussed just how we will carry this out).

Second, the LTF comrades have won a lot of respect for what they did in this process, and from wider circles than just the TA and TC. Even many majority comrades respect us (if grudgingly) for what we did.

Finally, the views of the LTF are gaining wider support, and this will certainly speed up after the congress, when comrades have more time to spend in studying the international questions.

* * *

(#6)

Bogota, December 18, 1976

Committee of the Bloque Socialista [Socialist Bloc]

Dear Comrades,

With this letter, the undersigned--all members of the GMI [Grupo Marxista Internacionalista--Internationalist Marxist Group] are again formally applying for acceptance as members of the Socialist Bloc. At the present time, we are complying with your suggestions that this should be done on an individual basis, i.e., we are requesting that the members of the GMI be integrated into the ranks of your party.

We who make this request affirm that we are members or sympathizers of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction of the Fourth International. We support all the positions of this international faction, particularly those regarding Portugal and Angola which have been presented for discussion preparatory to the XI World Congress. LTF discipline for us will not be above the discipline of the BS. We do not believe that it is necessary to describe these positions and documents since we assume they are sufficiently well-known within the BS. On Colombia, we are in favor of the GMI's positions on two points: trade-union unity and the Lopez Constituent Assembly.

We hope that these differences, which are of a completely tactical nature, will not impede our entry into your ranks. We are ready to discuss particulars, if necessary, but these are of public knowledge since we pointed them out in what was our organ -- Gaceta Socialista.

With respect to the suggestions that the Atlantic Coast Region of the BS made to some of us in a letter dated November 22, 1976, to "make our position on your letter in GS, no. 10 explicitly clear" and "clarifying (your) position on the initial request to join as members of the LTF," we can only reply that we stand by our letter in GS, no. 10 with the sole exception that we shall individually apply to join as you require and that we will accept that the Bolshevik Tendency exists within the FI.

Regarding the latter point, our clarification is in the sense indicated above, that is, the undersigned continue belonging to the LTF of the FI. We enclose an outline of our observations on the codification of your program with the hope of developing them later as members of the BS. We earnestly trust that none of the undersigned will be excluded from joining.

With revolutionary greetings, From Bogota: Sonia C., Janeth M., Eduardo M., Gonzalo P., Orlando Q., Julio Mario R.

From Barranquilla: Guillermo B., Janeth H., Ledis M., Juan P., Adalberto R., Ismael S., Manuel T.

(#?)

Brussels
15/12/76

To: John McCarthy
cc to IMT caucus of the Communist League

Dear comrade John,

It was with some astonishment we read in the November 25, 1976, issue of DIRECT ACTION the statement concerning "fusion" between the SWP and the three ex-members of the Communist League.

The IMT is, of course, deeply committed to the unity of forces supporting the Fourth International and is working to overcome divisions of our forces at a national level. It was on this basis that we informed you of the proposal for comrade Peterson to visit Australia to assist the unification process. We note that there was no reply from the Political Bureau of the Communist League to our letter on this question.

It is very important to ensure that the action taken by you and the two other comrades doesn't create any obstacles to a wider unification between the forces of the SWP and the CL. In this respect, it appears to us to be surprising that in an article under your name in the same issue of DIRECT ACTION one can read "sabotage of adopted perspectives by a minority" and "a course of dead-end factionalism which could have only led to the sectarian degeneration of the organisation".

We have not received from you your assessment of your perspectives and the events in the CL which led you to take your course of action. In particular, we are interested in the evolution of the discussion on unification within the CL because the unification process remains our basic aim.

It is only on the basis of an examination of this kind of information, plus that submitted by the comrades of the CL, that we could form our own assessment of these events.

Yours fraternally,
IMT steering committee

Socialist Workers Party

DISCUSSION BULLETIN

Vol. 4, No. 4

January, 1977

MATERIAL ON THE SPLIT IN THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE AND THE FUSION OF EX-CL MEMBERS WITH THE SWP

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MATERIAL ON THE SPLIT IN THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE AND THE
FUSION OF EX-CL MEMBERS WITH THE SWP

1. Letter from Jim Percy to the United Secretariat .

Socialist Workers Party
Australia

November 26, 1976

United Secretariat
Brussels

Dear comrades,

This is to inform you of a fusion that has taken place between our party and three former leaders of the Communist League.

The ex-CL group was made up of IEC member John McCarthy, Peter Robb and Marcia Langton.

The resignation of these three from the CL may well be followed by other comrades with whom we will attempt similar fusions.

Enclosed is a copy of the fusion statement and an article by John McCarthy from our paper Direct Action.

Of course we will send you copies of the draft resolutions adopted unanimously at our plenum as soon as they are available.

Comradely,
s/Jim Percy
National Secretary

2. The following letter from the PC of the CL was sent out to a wide layer of CL members and periphery, by the remnants of the CL leadership after the resignation of cdes. McCarthy, Robb and Langton. It seems however that it was sent out in a factional way since CL cde Dave Armstrong, who later resigned and fused with the SWP was not sent a copy. Cde. Armstrong was a member of the CL National Committee. A reply to this letter will be submitted soon to this bulletin by cdes. Jim Percy and John McCarthy.

LETTER FROM THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE November 27, 1976.
(SYMPATHISING ORGANISATION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL)

TO MEMBERS, CANDIDATE MEMBERS, AND OFFICIAL SYMPATHISERS.

Dear Comrade,

In this letter we wish to outline details of the resignation from the Communist League of John McCarthy and Peter Robb and their and Marcia Langton's joining of the Socialist Worker's Party, the other sympathising organisation of the Fourth International in Australia.

On November 2, comrades McCarthy and Robb resigned from our organisation. They left their letters of resignation in the National Office; these letters read:

"I resign from the Communist League on 2.11.76
John McCarthy."

"I resign from the Communist League on 2.11.76
Peter Robb."

We immediately sought to arrange discussion with the 2 comrades; they had given no reason for leaving the organisation, and we wished to clarify what questions the comrades felt were involved in their decision to take the step of leaving the Communist League. It was, and still is, our opinion that the comrades hold an obligation, not only to the Communist League and the Fourth International, but also to themselves as conscious revolutionaries, to pursue the principled course of articulating and fighting for their positions, inside our organisation. This is an ABC of Leninism. As well as this, to leave an organisation at the beginning of pre-conference discussion conflicts with the norms of our world movement.

Despite repeated attempts on our part, the comrades would not engage in discussion. At one stage, both comrades had indicated a time and date for discussion, but one of the comrades cancelled the arrangement and the other comrade did not arrive. Our attitude was, and remains, that these comrades remain inside the ranks of the Communist League. Not only were the internal differences of a tactical nature (and therefore able to be resolved within the framework of one organisation) but also the Communist League is the only organised expression in Australia of the general political line of the International Majority. By leaving the Communist League they were automatically placing themselves outside the Fourth International.

In a telephone conversation with a P.C. member on November 8, John McCarthy stated that it was "no use" having a discussion - he had decided to "have a rest" and also planned to write a book on Australia. He stated clearly that he had no plans to join any other organisation (except the ALP); that he did not consider the C.L. degenerate, and would encourage any revolutionary in Australia to join the C.L. as it was the best organisation; that he was still a supporter of the Fourth International and that the F.I. could be built in Australia; he also wanted to make it clear that there was "no personal vindictiveness involved" in his resignation.

As was reported to the meeting of C.L. members during the recent Cadre School in Melbourne, we were prepared to make any compromise that would clear the way for an internal political debate. That, if necessary, the Control Commission could be convened to consider any charges that were being made against individuals or branches (e.g. "sabotage", "strike"). This would enhance the possibility of a thorough-going political discussion on the objective reasons for the crisis in the organisation, and would also allow the whole C.L. to discuss specific failures of the membership on the basis of a report drawn up by the Control Commission after its enquiry. We would seriously consider that or any other proposal which would ease much of the tension that exists over our organisational problems.

We wish to make it clear that we continued such a perspective even after we were informed by Jim Percy (at the C.L./S.W.P. Parity Commission meeting of November 14,) that he had seen John McCarthy and had proposed that they fuse with the S.W.P. We did this for several reasons:

1. We value the three comrades as Trotskyist cadre.

2. Their general political positions on both national and international questions places them completely within the framework of the C.L. - both as a national organisation and as the recognised organised expression of the F.I. majority in Australia;

3. Our overriding consideration is that the most fundamental question is to maintain the continuity of our group as a political organisation. It is our right and duty to demand of these comrades that they carry out their duty to participate in the internal debate - it is political clarity which builds and sustains the revolutionary organisation. Lack of clarity leads to the loss of cadre and, ultimately, to the destruction of an organisation. Even if an organisation is considered degenerate it is the OBLIGATION of of bolsheviks to struggle, to clarity and eventually, to characterise.

It is our considered opinion the comrades' resignations and their refusal to discuss their resignation constitutes the first step in the abandonment of an elementary Leninist responsibility in building the party.

On this question we are firm - the comrades left the CL in an unprincipled manner. Not only do the resignations carry no political explanation, but their departure also implies that there were no avenues for a struggle, that there were no possibilities for a struggle. It should scarcely need suggesting that the comrades had the option of forming a tendency or, if ultimately necessary, a faction this is the course that has always been used in the world Marxist movement. If the comrades consider that they were continually faced with obstruction, they should look a little further and see our comrades of the Internationalist Tendency (USA) who have valiantly struggled, despite actions of the SWP (USA) leadership which verge on being bureaucratic, despite the LTF's plan to systematically annihilate the I.T. The F.I. majority supporters in the USA are still struggling against terrific odds-surely the comrades who left the C.L. don't consider they faced such odds?

THE "FUSION" OF THE THREE COMRADES WITH THE SWP.

The November 25, issue of Direct Action contains a "Fusion statement of SWP and ex-CL Group". Jim Percy requested and we agreed to convene a meeting of the Parity Commission on November 25. We were of the opinion, and still are, that the C.L. entered a new situation with this "fusion". The course chosen by the three comrades not only hindered the necessary process of political clarification of C.L.'s internal differences, but it also opened the way for the Percy leadership of the SWP to begin a systematic operation against our organisation.

But, before we say more on this, we want to make one thing perfectly clear: There were never any differences inside the CL between the "majority" and the "minority" over the question of our relations with the SWP.

This systematic operation by the SWP, under the screen of what Percy calls "an ongoing split.....a bleeding process", is designed to stampede members individually into their ranks. Hence the fusion statement makes the call on "remaining members of the CL to join the fusion as the only way forward at the present time." The Percy leadership of the SWP has offered justification for this on the basis that the CL and the SWP never made any agreement not to recruit each others' members.

The factional warfare, which the statement argues can only weaken the forces of Trotskyism in Australia, has in fact been started by the SWP's operation - neither organisation having mounted any serious public attack on the other previously. It is ludicrous to imply, as the statement does, that the continued effort to build the CL is to continue this so-called factional warfare. Let us be clear - the CL ranks must stand solid against the factional warfare initiated by the SWP leadership.

Clearly the SWP's intention is to not only build the SWP by destroying CL but in the process also dispersing the IMF in Australia. Members should consider the way in which the individual reintegration of Internationalist Tendency members into the SWP (USA) meant their virtual destruction as a political force.

The Percy leadership of the SWP has also tried to drive a wedge into the ranks of the CL (facilitated by the actions of the ex-CL group) e.g. by dropping the names of their source of information inside CL and by trying to use that information to generate an atmosphere of suspicion and even a witch-hunt.

These provocations by the SWP must be rejected outright. The leadership of CL is for a calm political debate, one which has already been launched in pre-conference discussion, and one in which comrades can put forward their political positions without fear of recriminations.

However there are several serious questions concerning the resignations and subsequent entry into the SWP to which comrades need to address themselves.

*Have John, Marica and Peter changed their position, or has the line of Direct Action changed on the Australian situation?

*Were the founding members of the Communist League wrong, not only to split from the SWL, but also for the last four years building the CL as a separate political and organisational entity?

It is unquestionable that the way forward in the immediate period is to use our intervention and pre-conference activity to build the Communist League. This remains within a perspective of the necessity of the unification of all forces supporting the Fourth International in Australia on a principled basis. The CL's orientation not only to propaganda and agitation, but also to initiatives in action (which has set the CL apart from the rest of the far left) gives us a firm basis for the strength of our political position whatever its vicissitudes. The successful initiatives of the past several weeks in Sydney, drawing a layer of politicised and active sympathisers around the branch despite its numerically weakened state, are a powerful testimony to the possibilities of building the Communist League.

The way forward is to fight for the possibilities of the politics of the Majority of the Fourth International in Australia through building the Communist League.

Fraternal Greetings
Political Committee of the Communist League.

3. Statement printed in 'Militant' no. 66 December 1976.

STATEMENT OF THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE

Militant prints below a reply by the Political Committee of the Communist League to the "Fusion Statement of SWP and ex-CL Group" published in the November 25, 1976 issue of Direct Action.

The November 25th issue of Direct Action, newspaper of the Socialist Workers Party, carried a fusion statement between the SWP and three ex members of the Communist League. This so-called fusion must be regarded as unprincipled in several respects.

Firstly, comrades McCarthy, Robb and Langton resigned without any political statement whatsoever during the period of pre-conference discussion in the CL, despite the fact that these comrades had a majority on all leading bodies of the organisation. This is unprincipled from the standpoint of Leninism, upheld by the Fourth International. It is a principle that members of a revolutionary organisation are obliged to fight for their political positions inside the organisation even if it is considered to be politically degenerating. To ignore such a tenet of Leninism is grossly irresponsible on the part of leading cadre. The decision making process of a Leninist organisation relies on such full and free discussion.

Secondly, the so-called fusion was not with any politically defined group but with three individuals. The recruitment of these individuals by the SWP was only labelled "fusion" in order to legitimize the call for "remaining members of the CL to join the SWP."

Thirdly, the political basis of the so-called fusion was described as "agreementwith the general line of articles in Direct Action on the Australian situation." While the statement admitted that tactical differences still remain, there are still questions that all militants need to ask themselves in respect to such a "fusion".

*Is it the position of the ex-CL comrades or of Direct Action which has changed to such a degree that they now find virtually unanimous agreement. For example - what has become of the severe differences between the SWP and the ex-CL comrades over the call for expropriation of the bourgeois media under workers' control - a demand which the SWP appears to reject on principle in the name of freedom of the press.

*What are the ex-CL comrades attitudes to the whole history of the Communist League since the 1972 split with the Socialist Workers League? Was it a mistake then to undertake the separate decision of the Tenth World Congress of the Fourth International mistaken in recognising two sympathising organisations, the SWL and the CL, in Australia?

The political reasons for abandoning the Communist League, which the three ex-CL members have arrived at after their departure are that the CL "was no longer progressing towards the building of a revolutionary party capable of uniting all the forces of Trotskyism in Australia." Yet if any action has placed obstacles in the way of a serious clearheaded and principled fusion of Fourth International supporters it has been the unprincipled pragmatism of the SWP and the ex-CL group.

The comrades claims of "sabotage of the adopted perspectives" of the June '76 CL conference by an oppositional minority - if these charges had any substance, should have been backed up by a political struggle for the line and for Leninist discipline, by the incumbent leadership. Instead they preferred to silently resign. In any case the remaining leadership of the organisation was prepared to have such serious charges investigated by an internal independent control commission and to abide by such a commissions evaluation.

Once in a process of "fusion" with the SWP, these comrades then re-evaluated the oppositional minority and the CL as pursuing "a course of deadend factionalism which could only have led to the sectarian degeneration of the organisation". We believe this characterisation to be totally erroneous. Sectarianism arises in the relationship between party and class when an organisation begins to place its own interests over those of the class which it seeks to represent. A sectarian relationship to other organisations is thus a secondary manifestation of the main aspect - an organisation's sectarianism to the working class. It is not a contradiction that sectarianism is often accompanied by its opposite - opportunism if the defence of sectarian interests takes a conservative direction.

The Communist League has throughout its history sought to avoid the twin pitfalls of sectarianism and opportunism. This has been through the constant orientation to achieve unity in action around any demands not in contradiction with our revolutionary programme, alongside an ideological struggle to convince others of our political positions. We believe that through our propaganda, agitation and initiatives in action that the Communist League will play a leading role in constructing the future revolutionary party of Australian workers.

It is apparent from the SWP's orientation towards fusion (that of a numerical accumulation of forces to the ranks of the SWP on the basis of its written program) that it conceives itself as the one and only revolutionary nucleus in Australia. If this is the case, then it can only lead in a sectarian direction with regard to fusions. While this linear and undialectical view of party building is maintained it would fail to utilize fusions as a means of making qualitative leaps in the building of the revolutionary party, particularly by making any such political advances the property of a wider vanguard, attracting militants on a sound political basis to a strengthened and more mature revolutionary nucleus.

The upsurge of class struggle which is presently occurring on a worldwide basis and within Australia increases the desirability of regroupments and fusions in the eyes of the militant vanguard - an undoubtedly healthy orientation to overcome the fragmentation of the far left. This pressure by the class struggle towards fusion is undoubtedly reflected in the reaction of the ex-CL group, once finding themselves outside the Fourth International, to rejoin the other sympathising group. It is unfortunate that such a move by itself can only mislead class conscious militants by calling it a principled fusion.

Suspensions by revolutionaries that such political questions were opportunely discarded in the "fusion process" could only be heightened by the fact that seeming agreement was reached rapidly and behind closed doors! Such a fusion can only create cynicism amongst the vanguard over the vital question of regroupment.

Moreover it must be stressed that the political differences inside the CL alluded to by these comrades never included any formulated disagreements over the principled orientation to fusion of the two sympathising organisations of the Fourth International in Australia.

However, this can only come about through a process of fusion in which the major political questions are visible to all revolutionary militants. To make the political aspects of fusion the property of the vanguard in this way can only confirm such a fusion as a qualitative step in building the revolutionary party. Both in terms of the increased maturity of membership and leadership in the ensuing organisation and in terms of the clarified political understanding of the broader vanguard about what is entailed in any principled fusion.

The experience of the hasty and politically unclear fusion of the Labor Action Group and the Socialist Review Group to found the Socialist Workers League is instructive here. Within months, the unclarified political differences had re-emerged in the form of the CL SWL split. To fail to clarify all important political differences, can only undermine lasting unity.

In a principled fusion, there must be agreement over the historical and theoretical acquisitions of the working class entailed in the principles of revolutionary Marxism and codified in the program of the Fourth International. While differences of a tactical and even of a strategic nature can exist in a principled fusion, these must not be hidden from the vanguard. Of course it goes without saying that a fused organisation would if of a healthy Leninist character welcome such continuing debate within its ranks provided that this is subordinated to complete unity in action externally.

Any such fusion process, would not only need to clarify political principles in discussion but also through a period of common activity. Any fusion agreement reached on paper must also be able to be translated into common action.

The Communist League reaffirms its perspectives of the necessity for a principled fusion of all the supporters of the Fourth International in a united Australian section.

To this end we call on all revolutionary militants seriously interested in the perspectives and revolutionary programme of the Fourth International and who share the goal of unification of revolutionary forces to participate in discussions on this question.

4. Invitation to CL to attend SWP Conference.

December 16, 1976

Communist League,

Dear comrades,

The Political Committee of the SWP has decided to invite the CL to observe our fifth national conference to be held in January 1977.

This invitation extends to all members, candidate members and sympathisers of the CL.

We would like to specially seat a delegation of leading comrades one of whom should be prepared to bring greetings to the conference. One half hour will be allocated for hearing these greetings.

Enclosed is an informational leaflet and registration form. Let us know how many of these you require. The venue is the same as our conference this year.

Comradely,

Jim Percy
National Secretary

4. Letter from Comrade Sakai to Political Committee, SWP.

December 29, 1976.

To the Political Committee, Socialist Workers Party, Australian Sympathizing Organization of the Fourth International

Dear Comrades,

After I had a meeting with cdes. Jim Percy, John McCarthy, Marcia Langton and some other comrades at your national office on December 22, 1976, I read the Fusion Statement of SWP and Ex-CL Group (Direct Action, No. 144, November 25, 1976), Three Former Leaders of Communist League Fuse with SWP (ibid.) by John McCarthy and More Communist League Members Join SWP Fusion by Alec Martin (Direct Action, No. 147, December 16, 1976). The followings are some remarks on the Fusion Statement and the two articles on the question.

1. First of all, the Fusion Statement states, "We appeal to the remaining members of the Communist League to join the fusion as the only way forward at the present time." That is, the Fusion Statement is not calling on the Communist League as an organization, but on individual members of the Communist League to join the fusion with the Socialist Workers Party.

More Communist League Members Join SWP Fusion by Alec Martin states, "On Friday December 10 the fusion took place of two further leading members of the Communist League with the Socialist Workers Party. They are David Armstrong and Mike Keenan.Their joining forces with the SWP followed the fusion on November 20 of the three former leaders of the CL...and the joint call to remaining members of the CL to participate in the fusion process as the way forward to unite the Trotskyist movement and build the revolutionary party in Australia. David Armstrong and Mike Keenan endorse the fusion statement published in Direct Action No 144 on November 25.As militants of the SWP they (the five former members of the Communist League) call on those members of the CL who remain to continue the fusion and work in the most effective way toward the Australian revolution."

At the December 22 meeting between the SWP comrades and me, cde. Jim Percy stated in the effect that the SWP called on individual members of the CL to join the fusion process, that the SWP and the CL had not made an accord not to recruit individual members of the both organizations, that, at least after the first

three ex-CL members joined the SWP, there was a split which had not completed in the CL, that the SWP would carry on the present fusion process with other possible members of the CL, and that, after having completed the present fusion process, the SWP would take a new approach to the then remaining CL.

Thus your whole fusion approach toward the CL is consistent and clear in that the SWP as an Australian sympathizing organization of the Fourth International calls on individual members of the CL as the other Australian sympathizing organization of the Fourth International to join the fusion made by the five former members of the CL with the SWP. The Fusion Statement does not call on the CL as an organization, but calls on "the remaining members of the Communist League to join the fusion as the only way forward at the present time". At this stage, I will not argue on whether there was a split in the CL or not, when those comrades of John McCarthy, Marcia Langton and Peter Robb resigned from the CL in November 1976. In any case, as cde. Jim Percy stated at the December 22 meeting, the SWP considers that there is a split in the CL at least after the first three ex-CL members joined the SWP, and that the split process has not completed in the CL. That is, the whole fusion approach of the SWP toward the CL is a straight and public split operation toward the Communist League as another Australian sympathizing organization of the Fourth International. On this point, the SWP is very much frank and straightforward.

2. The Fusion Statement appeals "to the remaining members of the Communist League to join the fusion as the only way forward at the present time". And the same Fusion Statement presents this fusion as "a principled one in that it is based on the agreement of the former members of the Communist League with the general line of articles in Direct Action on the Australian situation." That is, the SWP calls on "remaining members of the Communist League to join the fusion", which has taken place "based on the agreement with the general line of articles in Direct Action on the Australian situation", "as the only way forward at the present time". Two more ex-CL members joined the fusion on December 10, 1976. "Their joining forces with the SWP followed the fusion on November 20 of three former leaders of the CL...and the joint call to remaining members of the CL to participate in the fusion process as the way forward to unite the Trotskyist movement and build the revolutionary party in Australia. David Armstrong and Mike Keenan endorse the fusion statement published in Direct Action No 144 on November 25."

It is quite clear that the SWP is calling on "the remaining members of the Communist League to join the fusion", which is "based on the agreement with the general line of articles in Direct Action on Australian situation", "as the only way forward at the present time". This is nothing but an ultimatum to the CL and its membership to accept "the general line of articles in Direct Action on the Australian situation". Due to this ultimatum attitude of the SWP toward the CL, the SWP cannot call on the CL as an organization but call on individual members of the CL to "join the fusion". That is, the Fusion Statement is a call to individual members of the CL to make their splits along the "general line of articles of Direct Action on the Australian situation" in order to join "the fusion" with the SWP.

When I posed this question on the nature of the fusion at the December 22 meeting, cde. Jim Percy replied that the fusion process would not necessarily mean the same fusion as based on the agreement with the general line of articles of Direct Action on the Australian situation. But there is no statement as such in the Fusion Statement and the two articles by John McCarthy and Alec Martin.

3. The whole fusion operation of the SWP toward the CL is a crude attempt to utilize the internal crisis of the CL, deepen the crisis and create a split of the CL from the outside of the CL. This kind of a public split operation by an Australian sympathizing organization of the Fourth International toward the other Australian sympathizing organization of the same International does not contribute for an unification of the both organizations, but creates new obstacles, and worsens the internal situation of the Fourth International as a whole.

4. There are public accusations against the CL on its internal organizational life in the two articles by John McCarthy and Alec Martin on the Direct Action; such as "the sabotage of the adopted perspectives of the Communist League by a minority of the organization which had opposed the line of the June 1976 conference of the Communist League, and which had pursued a course of dead-end factionalism which could only have led to the sectarian degeneration of the organization" (John McCarthy) and "the breakdown of democratic centralism inside the CL" (Alec Martin).

Yes, we can have public political debates on political issues in the general framework of the Fourth International; those public political debates can clarify the consciousness of advanced elements of the working class movement and can contribute for building of the Fourth International and its sections. However, those accusations by cdes. John McCarthy and Alec Martin in the Direct Action are on the internal organizational life of an sympathizing organization of the Fourth International; that is, on the internal question of the Fourth International. Further more, the charges themselves are very much grave for a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International.

This kind of public accusations and charges does not contribute for an unification of the both organizations, and they must be withdrawn from and stopped on the public pages of the Direct Action. Or, is the SWP saying through the public pages of the Direct Action that the SWP cannot take a fraternal attitude toward the CL and has no other choice but to call on individual members of the CL to leave it and to join the fusion with the SWP, due to the "sectarian degeneration" of and the "breakdown of democratic centralism" inside the CL? However, those charges should not be addressed to the public, but to the higher bodies of the Fourth International.

5. The facts that the SWP has accepted its fusion with those members who resigned from the CL and that the SWP has nominated some of them as members of its National Committee mean that the SWP has accepted the responsibility for actions of the five former members of the CL in relation with the CL in the Fourth International as a whole.

In this context, in fact, the SWP supports and takes the responsibility for the charges by cdes. John McCarthy and Alec Martin against the CL. Why does the SWP call on individual members of the CL to join the fusion, but not call on the CL as an organization on the question of unification "at the present time"? Why does not the SWP call on the membership of the CL to fight for a SWP-CL fusion based on "the agreement with the general line of articles of Direct Action on the Australian situation" inside the CL? There is only one possible explanation; that is, the SWP considers that the CL is now in a situation of the "sectarian degeneration" and the "breakdown of" internal "democratic centralism".

The SWP must take the whole responsibility for the grave charges against the CL and the actions of the fused ex-CL members in relation with the CL in the whole Fourth International. The SWP must prove the charges to the whole Fourth International, or it must withdraw the whole fusion operation against the CL and take disciplinary actions on those fused members.

Fraternallly yours,

(Sakai)

cc: PC/Communist League, Bureau/Usec.

5. Letter from Jim Percy to Political Committee, Communist League.

Socialist Workers Party

January 10, 1977

Political Committee
Communist League

Dear comrades,

At parity committee meetings of our two organisations held in October and November 1976 it was agreed to pursue discussions aimed at achieving a fusion between the Socialist Workers Party and the Communist League.

The process of split in the CL and the subsequent fusion of ex-CL comrades has obviously cut across this discussion to an extent. But we on our part feel that it is a discussion that needs to be pursued.

Let us recapitulate what was agreed on at the parity committee meetings.

At the first meeting in October it was agreed that the CL would draw up a document on relations between the CL and SWP. John McCarthy who was assigned to draw up this document on behalf of the CL subsequently resigned and at our first meeting in November, the CL agreed to prepare a document anyway to be available to us after your NC had discussed it in mid-December. Your NC was subsequently postponed 2 weeks.

At our 2nd meeting in November it was also suggested by cde. Boland on behalf of the CL that "preconditions" for fusion with us was agreement on two points; namely the Fourth International and the "strategic line of march of the Australian revolution". Subsequent discussion clarified that the first point referred to the

relationship between national sections and the international as a whole, the rights of minorities in national sections who support majorities in the international as a whole etc. etc. By the second point was meant something more than the tasks and perspectives of a section in the immediate period ahead, i.e. 1-2 years.

We stated that our views on the first part were contained in two documents, a world movement report adopted at our last conference and our draft resolution on organisational principles for our coming conference. We agreed to make these available to the CL as quickly as possible. We also agreed to make available our Political Resolution (and all other bulletins and documents) to at least go as far as we could in outlining our views on the second "precondition."

Since our last parity committee meeting we have also issued an invitation to CL members to attend our upcoming conference. Since your NC should have met by now we would like to hear your response to our invitation to attend our conference and any document or resolution coming out of your NC in regard to relations with the SWP and discussions to fusion or any other written views by your leading bodies or comrades. Alternatively we would like to arrange a parity committee meeting where you could verbally communicate your views to us.

We would like to arrange such a meeting or receive documentation well before our conference on January 27 so that we can put your views and our response to our conference for their consideration.

Comradely greetings,

Jim Percy
National Secretary.

6. Letter from Jim Percy to United Secretariat.

Socialist Workers Party
January 10, 1977

United Secretariat
Brussels

Dear comrades,

This is to inform you that five more members of the Communist League have left that organisation and have fused with the Socialist Workers Party. The basis of fusion was the same as for the first three former members.

The comrades include three former full national committee members of the C.L. These three are David Armstrong, Mike Keenan and Gaelle Scbbot. Five of the nine full NC members elected at the last conference of the CL have now left the CL and fused with the SWP.

The other two comrades who have fused are Chris Wilder and Tony Dewberry.

We will keep you informed of any further developments in this matter.

Comradely,
Jim Percy National Secretary