

*Robert Hauer* 404

# INTERNAL BULLETIN

Vol. VII. No. 8

September, 1945

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

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## REPORT ON THE LOS ANGELES ANTI-FASCIST CAMPAIGN

By Murry Weiss

The first stage of the anti-fascist campaign launched by the Los Angeles Local on June 21st has been concluded. Now it is necessary to sum up a body of extraordinarily valuable experience. This experience is all the more precious in view of the inevitable development of the struggle against fascism on a broader scale in the period that lies immediately ahead.

American fascists, such as G.L.K. Smith, are already busy preparing for large-scale operations. They scurry up and down the country seeking concentration points. Their natural arena are the large population swollen industrial centers such as Detroit and Los Angeles where monopoly capital is harried by present and future "labor troubles". In these areas they try to build a mass base among the dislocated and discontented middle-class; the old age pension movement, veteran groups, religious sects, etc.

In our analysis of the Smith movement, we must avoid exaggerations and strive for the most precise estimate. To overestimate Smith's present strength or to exaggerate his ties with big business in Southern California is in some respects as dangerous as the soft-headed evaluation of Smith as a lunatic and an "inconsequential rabble-rouser."

G.L.K. Smith, a typical product of the pioneer American fascist movements, came to Los Angeles to persuade big business in Southern California that he could be useful to them in settling accounts with the labor movement. For this purpose he had to show strength, dynamic abilities, a large movement. Has he succeeded in doing this? No doubt powerful elements among the rich farmers and capitalists toy with the idea of utilizing Smith. But it is obvious that Smith has not yet been given the go-ahead signal and the necessary finances to accomplish his purpose. Our analysis of Smith's campaign and his tactics must proceed from this premise -- he seeks to make a show of strength. He seeks to impress the big powers with his potentialities as an organizer of anti-union combat forces and with his skill in manipulating race antagonism and provoking race riots.

The ranks of labor in Los Angeles are swollen with new recruits from the deep South, both Negro and white. Large masses of reactionary middle-class elements are mobilized in and around Los Angeles by the very process of the war. The zoot suit riots, carefully studied by the fascists, gave an indication of how soldiers and sailors could be incited against racial minorities and how a pogrom atmosphere can be created in an American city. Smith's activities constitute a mortal threat to the working-class. This was and remains our starting point. Smith's movement is not the isolated German-American Bund, wearing storm troopers uniforms and meeting in the Deutsches-Haus. He moves behind a heavy defensive covering of "Christians Unite" and "against Fascism and Communism!" He works through the churches, the old age pension movement and every other possible defensive

camouflages. Thus when we formulated the policy of our anti-fascist campaign, our central thought was to force the organized working-class into consciousness of who Smith was and the necessity of fighting him. In the first period this was the main need.

The line of the campaign was to mobilize the organized forces of the working-class for a struggle against Smith. We reasoned as follows: Smith is here to build a mass movement; to win financial support from influential capitalists, to organize combat groups, to unite all reactionary forces under a single banner; to explode the tinder box of racial tension into riots and pogroms; to turn it all into an attack on the labor movement and on the unemployed who tomorrow will struggle for jobs and security. But Smith is only in the initial stage of his campaign. Therefore, we must not allow him to gain time and a foothold but we must smash back with great power and boldness, with overwhelming preponderance of force. This was the objective need. This was the message our party would bring to the workers organizations.

When the Section Executive Committee first opened the discussion on our tactics in the struggle against Smith, the leaders of most sections of the labor movement were completely passive to the fascist threat. Others were following a feeble and cowardly policy. In the Stalinist movement and its periphery a great deal of pressure to "do something" against Smith was to be observed. The Jewish organizations were feeling the pressure of the alarmed and apprehensive masses of worker and middle-class Jews.

The policy of those labor leaders who showed at least an awareness of Smith (the Stalinists and the Jewish leaders) contained two main elements. One, was what has since been termed the "hush-hush" policy; "Smith is a lunatic crackpot; ignore him, leave him alone and he'll kill himself." When the rising tide of pressure from the militant workers, the Jewish people and other racial minority groups became sufficiently acute, the Stalinists and the Jewish leaders developed the second element of their policy: "Pressure on the existing law-enforcement agencies and auditorium owners." A large scale telephone and letter-writing campaign was organized. Auditorium owners were petitioned to refuse Smith access to their halls. At one point an "anti-lunatic fringe" committee was formed with a few prominent Stalinist trade unionists at the head. This Committee died still-born and is interesting only as a symptom of policy that was being followed.

With each new successful meeting of Smith, hammer blows were being struck at the policy of "hush-hush". Cowardly silence and petitions to auditorium owners proved their ineffectiveness to the hilt. More and more workers were being drawn into the movement for anti-fascist action. We learn later of pressure being applied by various militant CIO unionists all along the line.

It is on this background that the Section Executive Committee considered the basic aspects of the campaign and worked out its policy.

At the meeting of the SEC on June 21st, the discussion at

first revolved around the question: Shall we picket Smith's Philharmonic meeting of June 25th? We had before us a proposal from the Shachtmanites for a united front picket demonstration on the 25th (Appendix A). The proposal of the Shachtmanites served one purpose. It forced us to seriously consider the whole question of the fight against Smith -- something we had not done previously. As the debate on this question developed, it became clear to all the comrades that a much broader question was involved: the need for an energetic long-term campaign against Smith was agreed upon; the main tactical orientation of propelling the labor movement into action was likewise agreed.

The letter from the W.P. was addressed to the Socialist Party, Socialist Labor Party, Industrial Workers of the World and the Socialist Workers Party. Their proposal stemmed from the main line of the policy they followed throughout the campaign. Draper expressed it clearly when he told us, "We expect nothing from the labor movement at this time in the struggle against the fascists. It is up to the socialists to act." All the SEC members, including the comrades who favored a picket line, were and remain in agreement in appraising the policy of the Shachtmanites as sterile and adventurist. If it is true that Smith is a fascist bent on destroying the labor movement, then obviously what is needed is a resolute and persistent campaign to organize the united front of all the powerful workers organizations. Clearly this is the force that will crush fascism! Leaving aside for the moment the question of a given picket line, how can a serious revolutionary policy fail to orient from the basic consideration of a united front tactic towards the Stalinist organizations? Why did the Shachtmanites appeal to the SLP for a united front and not to the CPA? Why did they fail completely to see the need for a united front campaign in the labor movement? It will be seen in the future development of the events how the Shachtmanites miscalculated the entire situation ("we expect nothing from the labor movement at this time"), based themselves primarily upon a heckling attack on us, provided comfort to the fascists, and were overwhelmed by the real course of events which we predicted and prepared for.

Comrades Weiss and Tanner were absent from the June 21st SEC meeting because of illness. They proposed in a memorandum to the Committee "that the Los Angeles Local should immediately open an anti-fascist campaign" and outlined a proposed plan of attack. This proposal will be found as Appendix B (see Internal Bulletin) to this report. The Committee adopted the proposal for the campaign as a whole; dividing on the question of the tactic for the June 25th Smith meeting, a majority in favor of the tactic proposed in the Weiss-Tanner document.

### We Launch the Campaign

The comrades of the Section Executive Committee were fully aware of the pressure the Shachtmanites would attempt to exert on the party when we adopted our policy. If we had considered the question from the point of view of factional pluses and minuses, of "getting the best" of the Shachtmanites in a petty narrow sense, we would most certainly have gone out and picketed. This would have

particularly facilitated our work of getting next to a few workers the Shachtmanites had recruited and were carefully hiding from us. The Shachtmanites put on a campaign of pressure. At two Sunday night lectures on Stalinism conducted by our party, their leading speakers took the floor and presented their policy; called for party members to participate with them in the picket line. At our anti-fascist mass meeting at which we presented our program for the struggle against Smith, three Shachtmanite speakers dominated the discussion period.

Individual comrades were contacted to work with them. The congenital Abernite, Max Sterling, presented himself to a group of our youth as a "raw worker" undecided between us and the Shachtmanites, but inclining towards them because of their militant position on the anti-fascist struggle. In a word, they threw everything they had into a campaign to shake the party. We anticipated this and took it into the bargain. We had the fullest confidence that the correctness of our line would be confirmed in the test of struggle. Our new members and our workers' cadre would learn from the first-hand experience with Shachtmanism, with the petty-bourgeois adventurers, in action.

With each passing day the ranks of the party grew more and more confident of our policy. They had every opportunity to observe both lines in discussion and in the test of action. As our anti-fascist campaign deepened and took hold, they could see in practice the contrast between petty-bourgeois and Bolshevik politics. New members who had read about the Shachtmanites in the books told us over and over again how striking a confirmation they saw in this experience of our appraisal of the Shachtmanites.

We can state with absolute certainty that as regards this aspect of the question, that is, the Shachtmanite "offensive", it netted them exactly zero in influence or gains in our ranks. On the other side of the ledger, we succeeded in inoculating the relatively new party members against the old virus of Shachtmanite disease and in developing contact with a few workers who had accidentally joined the W.P.

We opened the campaign with a whole series of record moves. We sent telegrams to all labor bodies, racial minority groups, the Communist Political Association, etc. Naturally we had no illusions that this would bring results in and of itself, but it provided the basis for the effective agitational campaign we developed during the following weeks.

We struck out along three main lines. Within the framework of the general united front tactic we developed a special united front maneuver towards the Stalinists. We regarded the Stalinist movement as the key to the situation. The Stalinists control the apparatus of the CIO; the Stalinists have a large Jewish following; there was considerable sentiment in the Stalinist ranks for "action"; and finally, the Stalinist ranks were in the midst of the crisis of their turn, manifesting a greater susceptibility to our ideas than we have witnessed in many years. We decided to place as much power as we could behind the united front campaign directed towards the Stalinists.

The evidence shows that we were very successful in driving our slogans and our appeal for the united front deep into the ranks of the Stalinist movement. Our open letter was distributed widely at Stalinist mass meetings, at the Hollywood Citizens Committee meeting (CP), at the CIO Council and in the garment center. It was mailed to our contact list as information.

Most important of all, it became a weapon in the hands of our comrades in the shops and unions. In a great number of cases, the open letter became the occasion for an approach to Stalinist shop-mates. Everywhere successes were recorded in this work. Even a number of leading Stalinist workers, members of the Section Committee of the CPA, were contacted in this way and made favorable comments. In one case, our comrade presented the open letter to a Stalinist worker in the shop, a die-hard anti-Trotskyist, who declared he was convinced we were right on this point. He then showed the open letter to two other Stalinist workers in the shop, one of whom asserted that the Trotskyists were "certainly sincere in their struggle against fascism." Among the militants in the CIO and in leading Negro circles our united front tactic towards the Stalinists made a good impression. A prominent feature of this campaign was the political work in the shops. When we observe how our campaign, our tactics and slogans are being carried into the factories, we can mark it down as a new stage of our development. Here, in the shops, we have the greatest testing ground for our slogans, and here is where we are strongest.

The second line of action was developed around presentation of resolutions in the unions. We started modestly, but quickly realized the extent of possibilities and tried to step up the introduction of resolutions and the content of the resolutions accordingly. At each union meeting we observed that the temper of the workers was relatively hot on this question. The ease with which our resolutions passed prompted us to work on the idea of proposing that one union body, for example, the Auto Council, shall take the initiative in calling for the formation of a Trade Union Committee to Combat Smith. We envisaged this as the next step in making the united front a reality. Now we are convinced that this would have been entirely possible and a trade union committee would have taken shape "from below", so to speak, i.e., from the action of various local unions in meeting together.

In the meantime, however, the accumulated pressure from a number of different directions, ours not least of all, had forced the Stalinists into a more serious move. The fascists planned to hold a mass meeting at the Shrine Auditorium on July 20th. It was clear that all of the previous efforts of the official leaders to stop Smith had fizzled. The pressure of the workers had also forced the AFL and Railroad Brotherhoods tops into stirring. The united front took shape "from above". Our tactics in the resolutions campaign were accordingly adjusted to this new situation, and we shifted over to resolutions endorsing the united front and calling for support to the united front mass meeting, a counter-demonstration to the Smith Shrine meeting, at the Olympic Auditorium on July 20th.

Although the full effectiveness of our resolutions campaign

cannot be measured by the list of unions in which we passed resolutions, the score is nevertheless impressive. In all cases the unions forwarded the resolutions to other unions with a "snowballing" effect. Through the direct initiative of the party, we passed resolutions characterizing Smith, condemning him and calling for militant united labor action against him, in the following unions: Marine Firemen's Union; the Consolidated Steel Local of the USWA; the Joint Board of the ILGWU; the United Auto Council, UAW-CIO, Local 9 of the Shipyard Workers Union-CIO (the largest CIO union on the West Coast); an IAM Local at Lockheed Aircraft and the San Pedro Longshoreman's Union. In a number of other unions resolutions were slated to go through, but further developments made them unnecessary. The key character of the union bodies listed will show why we can realistically state that our resolutions campaign played an important role in mobilizing sentiment for action, putting pressure on the bureaucrats and in developing the anti-fascist united front of the Los Angeles labor movement.

The third main line of our campaign was work among the racial and national minorities organizations. We very quickly utilized our excellent relations with the Negro press to publicize the party's campaign and its united front slogans. Three of the local Negro newspapers published our press releases. In our discussions with the editors of the Negro press and various Negro worker leaders, our policy was warmly received and approved. The Sunday before the Olympic Auditorium demonstration the party mobilized forces to go into the Negro neighborhood and the Negro churches. One comrade spoke before 1200 Negro youth in a large church.

Thus far we have no connections with Mexican organizations. In the course of the campaign we hope to correct this deficiency. The Mexican comrades recruited during the election campaign will of course prove invaluable in this project.

Our contact with the Jewish organizations has been very fruitful in at least one instance. Mr. Gatch, the editor of the California Jewish Voice, has taken a militant position on the struggle against Smith. Before the news of the United Front Olympic Auditorium demonstration was announced, he proposed in a lead article that 10,000 anti-fascists picket the Shrine meeting. Smith has printed photostatic copies of this article as evidence of the violent Jewish plot against him and his "Christians Unite" campaign. Our relations with this editor and a number of other Jewish organizations around him promise to develop into a bloc within the united front.

Recently it has come to light that fascist vigilante elements are organizing, in the agricultural valleys, rifle clubs with anti-Semitic slogans. Gatch has indicated that he is planning to demand from the authorities decisive action against this ominous move, and if immediate action is not forthcoming, he will call for the formation of Jewish youth "health" clubs. There are other small signs that such sentiment is developing among the Jewish, Mexican and Negro population. We will of course be in the forefront in raising the slogan of Defense Guards. In every case we will try to deepen the effect of the slogan by linking it to such concrete events or threat as the valley rifle clubs. If the Jewish Voice calls for the

formation of Jewish Youth clubs for defense, we will advocate joint Jewish, Mexican, Negro youth and workers defense groups.

Later in this report we will return to the question of the Negro, Mexican and Jewish organizations in connection with perspectives of the campaign.

### Two Smith Meetings

Let us return to the Smith meetings at the Philharmonic auditorium on June 25th, and at the Ham'n Eggers Hall, on June 28th. These two meetings were organized on an ostensibly closed basis, admittance by invitation only. Both were overflow meetings of thousands of people. The Shachtmanites called for mass picketing at both meetings. They issued leaflets and conducted a publicity campaign. In our opinion, separate and apart from the question of whether the SWP should have called a picket demonstration, the Shachtmanites' picket demonstrations, taken in the context of the whole situation, were puny and ineffective. At the Philharmonic Auditorium, they mobilized from the street a hundred and fifty people. Very few of these came down in response to the call, but were obviously anti-fascist passerbys who joined in the picket line for a short time.

Can this demonstration, which was called to "stop the fascists", be considered effective? Can it be compared with the Madison Square demonstration or the Los Angeles anti-fascist demonstrations of 1938? When the party called the workers to demonstrate against the fascists at the Deutsches Hause in Los Angeles in 1938, we had 2,000 workers outside to a few hundred frightened fascists inside. We had unions and factories represented officially in the demonstration, speaking over our sound truck loudspeaker. We held siege on the fascist meeting so that they didn't dare leave the meeting till long after midnight. Many of them were then severely beaten by Mexican workers from the Dura Steel factory, who had been called out to demonstrate by the party. In New York comrades know what a mass outpouring of working-class strength there was in response to our call.

If there remains a shadow of doubt over the question of the estimate of the Shachtmanite tactic on the basis of the results of the July 25th picket line, this is completely eliminated when we examine the results of their picket line organized three days later! Here the Smith meeting was conducted in an off street with very few passersby. The real drawing power of the Shachtmanites and a test of the mood of the workers, their willingness to respond to a call from a small organization, could be observed more accurately. Instead of maintaining their 100 to 150 pickets, the second picket line dropped to from 25 to 50, according to the most generous estimates!

At both meetings Smith made great capital out of the feeble showing of the Shachtmanites. "We are thousands and they are 25 or 50 at the most, and they talk of breaking up our meeting. If we went out and said 'boo' they'd run. Even the left-wing CIO is not represented out there." In general, he employed the occasion to raise the morale of his meetings, to picture his movement as unconquerable and the opposition as disorganized and feeble.



The Shachtmanites, however, proclaimed these demonstrations as "victories". How a "Picket Smith's Meetings" movement, which records a sharp decline from its first to its second action, can be depicted as a victory is very hard to grasp. Overflow fascist meetings are successfully held. They aren't to the slightest extent shaken from enthusiasm and confidence, but, on the contrary, draw strength from observing that instead of a mass demonstration of workers' strength, a small handful of "radicals" parade before their meeting. This can be proclaimed an anti-fascist victory only by irresponsible braggarts who are deaf, dumb and blind to the teachings of Bolshevik tactics.

After the two Smith meetings we held a general membership meeting at which the party policy was discussed. A number of comrades opposed the line we had followed, but the discussion proceeded on the soundest and most loyal basis. In the opinion of the leading comrades of the majority, a reasonable tactical difference existed here, not to be confused with our common appraisal of the false orientation and tactics of the Shachtmanites. The question of whether the SWP should call out a demonstration in Los Angeles is vastly different than the question of the Shachtmanites attempting it. At this general membership meeting we continued to develop our policy of "into the labor movement", "attack the Stalinists with our united front proposal", "action against the fascists, but mass united action, effective action."

Shortly after their second picket demonstration, the Shachtmanites again proposed to meet with us to discuss joint activity in the struggle against Smith. Our Section Executive Committee decided to authorize the organizer to meet with them. In accordance with our traditional policy we were ready to act jointly with any group or individual in the labor movement. We were ready to bloc with them on any question of action that could be commonly agreed upon. We didn't think there were many such actions but we were ready to listen to any proposals. We met with the Shachtmanites, and they presented a united front proposal in a number of variations.

A. That the SWP and the WP and perhaps the SP shall set up a joint Labor Committee for the fight against fascism. This "Labor Committee" they did not envisage as a trade union body. It was at this meeting that Draper, their representative, stated, "We expect nothing from the labor movement at this time. The Socialists will have to act alone." Of course we rejected this, explaining that our orientation was toward forming a united front of unions and other large working-class organizations.

B. A united front mass meeting of both parties. We explained that this was unrealistic since it simply meant a proposal that we provide them with a platform and we preferred to speak from our own platform in party meetings and could see no benefit from a joint mass meeting.

C. A united membership meeting to discuss the anti-fascist struggle. Again we explained that they had been provided with ample opportunity to remain in the party and have full rights in discussion as an opposition faction. Since they treacherously split the SWP, it was unreasonable for them to demand the rights of members within

our organization.

D. United front picket lines against any future meeting Smith may hold. We gave them the same answer; that we were orienting to the formation of such a united front with the working-class organizations that really represented the mass of workers in the city and thereby the power of the workers in the city. As regards future demonstrations of Smith, we would appraise the question of purely party demonstrations on the basis of the relationship of forces at a given time.

E. They proposed blocs to pass resolutions in the unions. Here we agreed to consider such blocs on the basis of any concrete situation that offered possibilities along this line. They could cite only one, Local 9, Shipyard Workers. We could think of no other. In this union we had formed a bloc with a Negro militant, the vice-president of the State CIO, a former Stalinist, who had agreed to present our resolution. Nevertheless, we agreed to refer the question to our fraction with a recommendation that our fraction consult with their fraction; mainly because we were concerned with restraining them from any blundering interference with the arrangements we had made. This is precisely what occurred. Our fraction representative met with theirs. They arrogantly insisted on proposing their own resolution with their own speaker. We finally persuaded them to refrain from doing so until a far more effective arrangement could be put through. This was the extent of our bloc with the Shachtmanites in Local 9.

#### The United Front is Formed

Smith announced plans for his final rally for July 20th at the Shrine Auditorium at a small secret meeting in Clifton's Cafeteria. We had observers present at this meeting and were the first to spread the alarm throughout the labor movement and Jewish organizations. We called up representative individuals and appraised them of the plans of Smith. Immediately the movement for anti-fascist action was spurred forward. As we reported before, one Jewish newspaper called for a mass picket demonstration. A Jewish workers cultural organization pledged its 300 members in support of a picket line at the Shrine meeting. The pressure of our campaign was developing considerably in the CIO. The Stalinist rank and file and periphery were dissatisfied with the official policy.

The first news we heard of the development of a United Front and a counter-demonstration for July 20th, came from Slim Connally, a Stalinist CIO leader, who told one of our comrades that the CIO was calling a counter-demonstration at the Olympic Auditorium on the same night as Smith's Shrine meeting. He told our comrade, a Negro trade unionist, to spread the word among the Negro people. Our comrade immediately came down to the Central Branch meeting of the party and announced the news. Comrades greeted the announcement with real enthusiasm. Everyone felt that a profound development had taken place. The leading comrades immediately worked out a tentative campaign of action.

At the same time we heard that a meeting of all anti-fascist organizations was to take place at the Royal Palms Hotel on Tuesday,

July 17th, to lay the plans for the final buildup for the Olympic Auditorium demonstration.

The Tuesday meeting proved to be an extremely representative gathering of the trade unions, racial minority organizations, religious and Hollywood groups. A sprinkling of bourgeois politicians decorated the occasion with the typical Stalinist attempt to distort a united front into a peoples' front masquerade. Official representatives of the CIO, AFL and Railroad Brotherhoods were present. This in itself was of enormous significance. A good number of local unions, mostly CIO, were also represented. A mystery of sorts surrounds the question of precisely which organization took the initiative in calling this United Front. Attorney-General Kenney and Assemblyman Albert Decker were assigned the roles of official chairman and convener. Our first information led us to believe that the CIO had called for the Olympic meeting and the Royal Palms United Front gathering. This accounts for the fact that The Militant characterized the Olympic meeting as a CIO demonstration rather than a United Front demonstration, at which the CIO, AFL and Railroad Brotherhoods participated, together with racial minority organizations and other "Community" groups. It is possible that the Stalinists started with the CIO as sponsor and then obscured its role when they found such widespread support from other organizations and individuals. In our opinion, organization control of the Olympic Auditorium meeting and the initiative in calling the Royal Palms meeting lies with the Stalinists. The question of which organization was officially responsible recedes into the background once it is clear that the Stalinists were the most powerful force which controlled the apparatus of both meetings. What then is our analysis of this set-up? Is it a genuine United Front?

There can be no question that it was a real united front, but as is always the case with institutions that arise out of the reality of the struggle, as distinguished from text-book definitions, this concrete united front had its peculiarities and its own special character, determined by the entire situation. The ground swell of workers anti-fascist sentiment for action was sufficient to jar the official apparatus of labor and of the Stalinist party into action. This workers sentiment, when combined with the state of excitement and anxiety of the Jewish organizations, proved sufficient to bring together in one Council an extremely wide representation of the labor movement and the racial minority groups. However, the movement of the workers from below has as yet not reached the point where it could express itself in a united front of action which would be representative of the labor organizations from top to bottom. What was striking at the Tuesday Royal Palms meeting was the inordinate importance and weight held by political shysters, Hollywood stars, accidental figures and the summits of the labor movement. There were too many religious quacks and too few factory workers. This signifies an early stage in the united front struggle against fascism. The Stalinists are working might and main in this early stage to derail the movement; to switch it on to the path of peoples' frontism, to stifle the initiative of working-class ranks. This is the characteristic element of their policy at the Royal Palms and Olympic meetings.

## The Party in Action

How did the party participate in this movement? We immediately declared our full support to the idea of a counter-demonstration against the fascists. Our leaflet calling for the workers to pack the Olympic Auditorium was the first announcement of the demonstration on the streets. The campaign that was organized during that one week in some respects surpassed the election campaign. As Jean Blake, the director of both campaigns, puts it: "In this struggle we stand on the shoulders of the election campaign." The party moved into action with extraordinary swiftness. The SEC declared a state of full mobilization, and that proved to be no idle phrase. It was understood by the overwhelming majority of the party membership to mean an extraordinary demand on their time and energy and they acted accordingly. Within the general period of the anti-fascist campaign to date, this week (from the Friday night Central Branch meeting where the news was first received to the next Friday Olympic Auditorium meeting) is outstanding in the unity of all activities around a single objective, in the incomparable devotion, initiative and sheer backbreaking work contributed by the membership.

As in all our great campaigns the enormous acceleration of external activities did not paralyze the internal life of the party, but on the contrary, raised it to a higher level. The mid-point of the week, on Wednesday, a general membership meeting occurred at which the experiences of the Tuesday United Front meeting were debated in a heated but comradely manner and the tasks of the party at the Friday Olympic demonstration outlined and agreed upon. The week was notable for our utilization of a long unused medium of agitation, the open air meeting, which has now become a regular feature of our campaign. We decided to launch a new series of radio broadcasts, and attempted to arrange the schedule in time to announce it to the workers gathered at the Olympic Auditorium; but we were blocked in this by the refusal of the broadcasting companies to sell us the time.

The first part of the week was concentrated on getting out the leaflet, beginning its mass distributions, preparing a mailing to 4,000 subscribers and contacts and in preparation for the Tuesday meeting. All our fractions were instructed to work every possible angle to represent their unions at the Tuesday meeting. In most cases the shortness of time prevented the democratic election of delegates and thereby cut down our own representation. Union officials would, as a rule, appoint one of their group to attend. Yet we had four trade union delegates at the United Front meeting. We had three delegates from the party, and about thirty comrades participated as individual observers.

There were approximately 400 present at the Tuesday meeting. The night before at the SEC we had elaborated a three-point policy to be followed by the party caucus. (1) Continue the united front after the Friday meeting as an organ of struggle against fascism; (2) For a preponderance of representatives of the labor movement on the speaker's rostrum instead of Hollywood celebrities, let's have the leaders of the labor movement, Green, Murray and Lewis, fly out here and speak at the meeting; (3) We proposed the Olympic Auditorium demonstration should have a brief program and should then be

transformed into a giant parade to march on the Shrine. The Olympic is one mile from the Shrine. Our proposal was to march the parade past the Shrine in a peaceful display of anti-fascist strength and to demobilize a few blocks past the Shrine.

At the SEC meeting, Comrade Cappy, the organizer of our West Side branch, who had been invited to sit in at our meeting, expressed disagreement with the third point in the policy. In his opinion, the idea of a parade against the fascists was premature and not justified by a sufficient development of a mass movement against fascism among the workers. On Wednesday this question was debated at the membership meeting. On Tuesday we had two speakers get the floor at the United Front meeting. Following a speaker from an Italian organization, who stated that if workers had organized in time and fought back, fascism would never have triumphed in Italy and Germany, Comrade Cappy got the floor and presented the proposal for adjourning the Olympic meeting early and parading to the Shrine. Then Comrade Tanner was recognized. She spoke for fifteen minutes, outlining the proposals of the party. Her presentation was extremely effective and the party proposal for a march became the pivotal point for all further discussion. Her speech was received with considerable applause as well as some subdued heckling from the Stalinists. The People's World reported the next day that "speaker after speaker" came out against Myra Weiss, leader of the local Trotskyites who had proposed a parade pass the Shrine after a brief meeting at the Olympic.

In the course of the debate at the Wednesday membership meeting, Comrade Cappy developed the idea that our proposal for a march was adventuristic and represented a succumbing to the pressure of the Shachtmanites. The reporter for the SEC, Comrade Weiss, held the view that it was precisely this proposal which had marked off the left-wing of the United Front; that the proposal was entirely realistic; that it was feasible to call for the organization of an anti-fascist parade when the forces we were addressing this proposal to represented all the official organizations of the labor movement; that taking into account the real strength of the fascists, such a parade would have the effect of a powerful sledge-hammer attack. It would weaken Smith immensely. As for the comparison with the Shachtmanites, it was held that our difference with them was over the question of proceeding with a tiny force in an ineffective display of weakness against the fascists; whereas we were appealing to the strong workers organizations to act against the fascists. Although it was not disputed that many tens of thousands of workers were still unaware of the character of the Smith movement; there were other tens of thousands, still in the minority, true, who were ready to take militant action once they saw a realistic possibility of doing so. An official decision of the labor movement to act, parade past the Shrine, would call forth a tremendous burst of enthusiasm and action from tens of thousands of militant workers in this area. Furthermore, to underscore that we were not proposing a march led by us alone, we had stressed in our formulation of the proposal that if the majority of the United Front opposed such a parade, we would be bound by that decision.

The Wednesday discussion proved highly instructive to the party membership. In the clash of opinions, during the heat of a

struggle in which tactics were tested from day to day, we were able to teach more about Bolshevik methods and about the theory of the United Front, the Stalinist Peoples' Front conception, etc., than we could through many classes and lectures.

### Events of the Week

Let us briefly recapitulate the schedule of the week. Friday night Central Branch meeting heard the news of the proposed Olympic Auditorium meeting and passed a motion suggesting that the SEC mobilize the whole party for support of this demonstration.

Saturday, after confirming the news of the Olympic meeting, the Staff met, drew up a plan of action for the week, formed committees, drafted the leaflets, and in general set the machinery in motion for calling out the party membership in a sustained campaign of action for the rest of the week.

Sunday, comrades were mobilized at 9:30 A.M. and dispatched to Negro churches and the Negro neighborhoods to spread the news of the Olympic Auditorium meeting. They spoke before a total of 1400 Negro people. All day squads of comrades were busy in work preparing the mailing and helping in the hundreds of details that had to be carried out.

Sunday night was the final lecture in the "What is Stalinism" series. The hall was packed with 100 workers -- 13 Negroes and 35 outsiders. The International Solidarity Fund was collected, \$365 in cash and another large sum pledged. A complete announcement of the anti-fascist campaign and the tasks of the week was made by Comrade Blake, and the meeting adjourned to a social affair. The whole evening was full of enthusiasm and campaign spirit. Contacts were literally drawn to the party and some joined in the next few days.

On Monday, the distribution of leaflets was under way. Squads were dispatched to factories, union meetings and the garment center, returning with glowing reports of the reception workers had given them. Monday night the SEC meeting, at which policy was formulated for the Tuesday and Friday meetings.

Tuesday continued distribution of leaflets, letters to the entire mailing list went out, special letters to our close contacts asking for help in the campaign; and in the evening at 6:30 a brief caucus meeting of all comrades who would be present at the United Front was held, and then the United Front gathering already reported. After the Royal Palms meeting comrades returned to the headquarters with contacts and discussed the results of the meeting informally. The only Negro who spoke from the floor at the Royal Palms, in favor of maintaining the United Front and "bringing it to the common people" returned with us to the headquarters and discussed what could be done in his union to further the campaign.

Wednesday was a particularly heavy day of distributions, culminating in the membership meeting.

Thursday the party swings into the highest point of action. The party mobilized at two open air meetings in the evening: one on

the East Side (Jewish and Mexican workers district, stronghold of the Stalinists), and one in the Negro Central Avenue district. Eight comrades spoke at open air meetings for the first time! We discovered a few with outstanding ability.

The East Side open air meeting was attended by 150 people who followed with the greatest interest the remarks of the speakers. The crowd applauded the speakers, silenced disturbers. It was compact and unchanging. This is a tremendous achievement in view of the previous hostility of this area to our propaganda attempts. Towards the end of the meeting the police drove a car into the crowd and attempted to disperse it. Our speaker (on her first street meeting assignment) continued to speak and without panic or haste announced that we would be back next week. The crowd was furious with the police and displayed open hostility. They threatened to march in protest on the police station. The comrades exploited the situation magnificently to get contact names and addresses and mix with the crowd. In Central Avenue the comrades developed a small but likewise compact audience of 50 Negro workers who listened with great interest and gave enthusiastic support to the ideas expressed. The comrades were happy to discover a nucleus of friendly support in three Militant subscribers in the crowd. After the meetings broke up, comrades returned to the headquarters again with contacts; a few young Stalinists from the East Side came up to the headquarters and discussed with us for hours. On Friday the final distribution of leaflets took place and we spent the day preparing for the distribution of the party's greetings to the Olympic demonstration. Our plan for Friday night was for the comrades to sit with their unions and friends wherever possible. Twenty comrades were involved in the distributions plan. Instructions were to return to the headquarters with contacts for an "open house" after the meeting.

Before going over to the Friday meeting, the money raising work of the week should be reported. Utilizing the experience of the election campaign, we noted the danger of becoming so involved in the details of the work as to lose sight of the very important question of finances. When we first decided to launch the anti-fascist campaign, we meant to follow a conscious policy of raising money from sympathizers and other sources. We put a strong finance committee on the job and talked up the question of raising money from sympathizers in all the branches. In addition, we made some ventures in raising some money from well-off Jewish anti-fascists. The results of this are important to note for all future activity along this line. Money raised in this manner covered a large part of our expenses in the campaign. It would have been very easy to neglect these sources and place an additional heavy burden on the already strained party finances. As it is, we stepped up activity enormously without disrupting the regular financial budget of the Local. We consciously kept in mind the problem of how can the campaign pay its own way?

One "sympathizer" gave \$100; another \$50; another \$30; and a few gave \$10 and \$5. One hostile political opponent gave us \$25 "just for the anti-fascist work". In the period that lies ahead, we will be extremely watchful for money-raising opportunities in the anti-fascist campaign. Our brief experience already indicates that although the big money is still going to the Stalinists, we can make significant headway in this field, particularly when the party is



engaged in a broad campaign.

### The Friday Meeting

The attendance at the Olympic Auditorium meeting revealed the depth of the movement that had been aroused against Smith's activities. The anti-fascist workers, the Jewish, Negro and other racial minority groups, were obviously looking to the Olympic meeting as a great force in the struggle to crush the fascists. The Auditorium was packed to the rafters with a huge overflow crowd of 5,000 on the outside. 17,000 would be a very safe estimate of the total attendance.

Across the platform of the meeting was paraded the usual Stalinist handpicked assortment of phony politicians, religious leaders, Hollywood stars, etc. However, the heads of the AFL and CIO Los Angeles Councils spoke. The greatest ovation was received by Philip Connally, the head of the CIO Council. The most spirited applause occurred when the speakers struck a militant note. When Connally said: "We do not believe in free speech for the fascists", the enthusiasm of the audience reached its height. What was most characteristic of the whole program of the meeting -- and it went to about 11:30 -- was the fact that not one speaker told the workers what they should do in the struggle against Smith. Attorney General Kenney painted the picture of the war boom industries threatening to collapse, the danger of unemployment, the sharpening of a social crisis as a result of it; and cited this as the reason for Smith's activity in this area. He said: "The way to fight Smith and other fascists is to keep industry going at capacity with full employment." All he failed to do was to tell the audience how.

The Stalinists pushed to the fore the question of Rankin's forthcoming investigation of Hollywood. It became apparent that they are utilizing this united front, both at the Olympic meeting, and at future meetings, to shield themselves from the red scare attack that the reactionaries are trying to whip up in Hollywood.

The Olympic meeting was the product of a real stormy movement from below. The Stalinists are not capable of calling such meetings at will. When Philip Murray came to Los Angeles in 1943, the Stalinists, who were then trying to impress Murray, tried to gather a large meeting together at the Olympic with Hollywood stars featured and an enormous publicity campaign. However, the meeting was poorly attended with a very low level of enthusiasm.

It is hard to say what the composition of the Friday meeting was. The Stalinists and their periphery were there in full force. There was a strong middle-class professional grouping. Without doubt there were many thousands of industrial workers present and quite a large number of Negroes. Some comrades believe that the largest percentage of workers were turned away in the overflow crowd; those who couldn't arrive early enough due to working hours.

We distributed our leaflet in over 8,000 copies. The four proposals are the pivotal points around which we propose to agitate in the shops and the unions during the coming period. The slogans



for anti-fascist shop committees we regard as extremely potent in possibilities. There, the initiative will more and more fall into our hands. In the last analysis, the united front that has emerged represents all the weaknesses of the existing state of the labor movement; the union tops disconnected from the workers in the shops, the Stalinist political and trade union apparatus, the heavy middle-class element. As the struggle sharpens, the party will bring the slogans of the left-wing of the united front into every factory where we have contact. At a certain point the formation of anti-fascist factory committees will provide the medium for the organization of vital combat forces. One of the possibilities of the formation of workers defense guards is linked up with the factory committees, although it is not excluded that the workers defense guards will have an initially neighborhood, or even racial minority, origin.

The third point of our proposals is obviously the most immediate. It is our opinion that if we follow the right tactic with sufficient energy, we can meet the next wave of fascist activity with labor demonstrations and mass picketing. It is not a question of can we "get by" with some small picket lines of the "radical" parties. It is a question of how to mobilize masses of workers for struggle, without ignoring the reality of their existing organizations and leadership. Every party venture, every party tactic must be calculated to further this end.

The fourth point has become particularly timely after the results of the British elections and is now prominently lifted to the place of an independent and immediate campaign of agitation for the party as a whole.

All the comrades at the meeting reported that our leaflet was read carefully by those they could observe around them. Not one leaflet was found thrown away; this despite the fact that tremendous amounts of literature were being distributed at the entrances. Before the meeting our distributors succeeded in contacting a few new Shachtmanite recruits, who have since been followed up and look to be very promising. One of our comrades asked a new Workers Party member why the Workers Party split, and she told him: "We didn't split, we wanted to discuss and they expelled us." When he informed her of the real nature of the discussion, it was all news to her. The distribution squad was caught outside with the thousands of workers who couldn't get in, and engaged in many fruitful discussions in the street. After the police dispersed the crowds, we filled the available cars with contacts and brought them to the headquarters. When the others returned after the meeting, it was as if we had a mass meeting in our own hall. Although it was after midnight, the new workers contacted were anxious to hear a word from the party speakers. Our observer at the Shrine meeting reported how Smith ascribed the poor attendance at his rally (5,000) to "the Communists and the Jews who had packed the street-cars en route to the Shrine and Olympic Auditoriums." Comrades Tanner and Weiss spoke. They announced our determination to continue the open air meetings on the East Side and our plans to develop a free speech fight if the police interfered again. Since then we have held three successful street meetings on the same corner without any further difficulties.

### Summary and Perspectives

The campaign is in a moment of lull. Smith has left town for speaking engagements in the East, promising to return soon. His threat to make Los Angeles a national headquarters was not carried out. It is not even a West Coast headquarters. For the moment he is working under the surface once again. How long will this last? Will he start a new campaign of meetings? Will someone else of the same calibre raise a new threat? These questions cannot be answered in detail. We base ourselves on the inevitable development of further fascist activities. The reported rifle clubs in the valleys can become the point of departure for a new offensive in the anti-fascist campaign. We are investigating the activities of local supporters of Smith. Generally speaking, there is no lack of vigilante and fascist activities in Southern California. The party then prepares for a new big push in its campaign. What better preparation can there be than the assimilation of the lessons of the first stage of the campaign?

The contrast between our policy and the Shachtmanites had an exceptionally clear and finished character. The two lines of policy were submitted to the test in a short time. It is very useful and instructive to draw up a balance sheet.

The Shachtmanites proceeded by a superficial analogy to the Madison Square Garden demonstration of 1938. They "expected nothing from the labor movement at this time", and they thought that a mere signal from anyone was sufficient to bring a mass of anti-fascist workers into the streets. If one is serious about summoning masses to action, it must be conceded that they miscalculated on both counts.

The anti-fascist masses would not in these circumstances move against the Smith type of fascist movement without first exhausting the possibility of utilizing the defensive covering and power of their own mass organizations. In this they display a far better grasp of the difference between the Smith fascists and the German-American Bund than the Shachtmanites do. The militant workers did not answer the call to picket because they felt the need to move with and through the unions. Moreover they estimated that it was possible to get action from their organizations and proceeded to apply pressure. That is why we found that we were not alone in our efforts to push for the United Front and for anti-fascist action in the unions. Everywhere other militants were following the same line.

Our tactic was fully confirmed by the course of events. The objective implications of Smith's activity were so ominous in the setting of the present economic and political situation, that the trade union officials, the Stalinists, the Negro and Jewish leaders could not fail to be alarmed. Our task was to hammer home the meaning of the fascist threat and to organize the pressure of the workers to force the organization of labor onto the road of struggle.

It is necessary to understand clearly that the Shachtmanites did not simply add to the tactics we carried out, by organizing a picket line. They followed a totally different course. They could not see the reality or effectiveness of a struggle for the united front in the unions and they had no conception whatsoever of a united

front tactic with the Stalinists. They complain: "You claimed you had no time for preparing a joint demonstration with us, but you were ready in the available time to act jointly with the Stalinists." Of course! In uniting with the W.P. we could calculate mainly on our own forces to act. For this we lacked time and the necessary relationship of forces. If we could unite with the Stalinists instead of the W.P. this would signify an enormous change in the relationship of force and the time factor would alter accordingly. The Shachtmanites cannot understand that this is the reason why we fight for the united front with the Stalinists. It is not because we hate the W.P. worse than we hate the Stalinists, or because of our natural bureaucratic affinity for the Stalinists. It is because in one direction a mass of workers are concentrated; in the other, little more than a handful of renegades from Marxism.

This is not the place for an estimate of the anti-fascist campaigns of 1938-39. Certainly the demonstrations in New York and Los Angeles were of great significance. However, in my opinion the model of anti-fascist activity for the party is to be found in Minneapolis. The relative weight of their anti-fascist tactics as against the other ventures of the party is much greater precisely because they operated through the mass movement of the workers. It is this aspect of the Minneapolis experience that should be assimilated by the party now.

The question remains: Could anything have been lost by joining in a picket demonstration with the Shachtmanites at the Philharmonic on June 25th? Yes! A great deal would have been lost. Adding a few hundred to such a picket line would not have raised its effectiveness qualitatively. What was needed was a demonstration of the overwhelming preponderance labor possessed in the contest. Even the Olympic Auditorium demonstration accomplished this. By mobilizing seventeen thousand in a counter-demonstration to the fascist five thousand, a demoralizing blow was struck at them.

But could anything have been lost? In following such a tactic we would have become divorced from the main-stream of militant workers who were pressing hard on the lever to lift their organizations into action. By concentrating on helping them press this lever, we solidified our connection with them. Many workers were irritated and contemptuous of the policy of a "show of weakness". Had we followed that course we would be arguing to this day with the Stalinist workers about the question of whether the Trotskyists are "hot-heads" and "ineffective". "Look how small their demonstration was. Why do they jump the gun?" As it is, we decisively reject responsibility for the W.P. antics. We point to our record of struggle for the united front and we propose action to the workers' organizations.

The perspective of the anti-fascist campaign is very broad and converges with other campaigns. This distinguishes it from the more narrow party campaigns with their succinct objectives and delimited time. We compensate for this by introducing into the broad campaign the element of organization objective whenever possible. When there is a lull we exploit it for analysis and preparation, rather than for artificial campaign mongering. Right now campaign activity is confined to open air meetings. At the same time we are searching for an opening that will allow us to lift the struggle to a higher

level. There is a possibility for organizing a meeting with a number of Jewish groups who hold a militant position on the tasks of the United Front. In a bloc with them we could present our proposals for militant action at the next United Front conference, which will occur on August 26th. If we mobilize the forces of the party and its sympathizers in the trade unions we can have a large group at the United Front meeting. The same tactic can be developed toward Negro and Mexican organizations, who are keenly aware of the threat of fascism, with its physical violence and terror.

In the solidification of such a bloc lies the possibility of, in the next immediate period, calling United Front demonstrations and picket lines.

In the next stage of the campaign, through the radio, through demonstrations, through the deepening of our United Front tactics, we shall draw even closer to our banner the sympathetic periphery of Militant readers and contacts. We will recruit many of them. The party will grow stronger.

We want the comrades nationally to know that when the Los Angeles Local raised the slogan of "No headquarters for Smith in Los Angeles," we did so in deadly earnest. We are committed to this slogan to the marrow of our bones. For the Socialist Workers Party the struggle against fascism is to the death.

August 7, 1945

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APPENDICES:

Letter from W.P. to Los Angeles Local

July 1, 1945

Dear Comrades,

We understand through your representative that the Socialist Workers Party is planning a campaign on the Gerald K. Smith invasion of Los Angeles.

As you already know, from our previous appeal to you for a United Front demonstration at the last two Smith meetings, we are very much concerned with the problem of fighting Smith and the fascist forces he hopes to corral.

We believe that the meetings Smith held are not merely isolated events, but rather the beginning of a planned attempt to organize the fascists in Los Angeles into a unified organization.

We propose that the SWP and the WP plan a joint campaign on this issue. We believe that such a joint campaign would strengthen the possibility of involving the labor movement in the struggle.

We hope that you will take this proposal under immediate consideration.

Fraternally,

R.S. Saunders  
Organizer, Workers Party  
Los Angeles Local

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Open Letter of Los Angeles Local, SWP

July 17, 1945

Dear Friend:

The time for action in our Anti-Fascist Campaign is here!

Up to now the campaign of the Socialist Workers Party has aimed at getting the local labor movement to organize a united front of action of all working class and minority organizations to combat the attempts of Gerald L.K. Smith to organize a fascist movement in Los Angeles. We sent wires and letters to the representatives of labor, Negro and Jewish organizations and to the Communist Political Association calling their attention to the need for such action against Smith. We introduced resolutions which were adopted in a number of unions in this area. We issued a news release which was published in three of the local Negro papers.

As the enclosed leaflet indicates, organized labor has taken the first step by calling a mass anti-fascist demonstration at the Olympic for the same night as Smith's meeting at the Shrine. We pledged our support to such action in our first communication to the labor movement and are prepared to do our share and more to pack the Olympic Friday night.

We mobilized our membership on Sunday for intensive work throughout the week. Our speakers spoke to over 1500 workers at Negro churches, conducted a telephone campaign and worked on a huge mailing the very first day. We will reach thousands more during the week through meetings, leaflet distributions, telephone, mail and sound trucks and radio if possible.

We urge you to pitch in this week. Phone us if you can help in any way. Tell all your friends, relatives and neighbors. Most important -- come to the Olympic Friday night!

Fraternally yours,

Myra Tanner Weiss, Organizer  
Socialist Workers Party

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Text of Leaflets Issued by the Workers Party

Workers of Los Angeles!  
STOP THE FASCISTS!

Picket the Philharmonic Auditorium  
427 W. Fifth Street, Los Angeles - Monday, June 25 - 7:30 PM

Gerald L.K. Smith, the foremost spokesman for American Fascism, is holding a meeting at the Philharmonic Auditorium Monday night.

G.L.K. Smith has been a Silvershirt, an American Firster, a follower of Father Coughlin, and now hopes to found a "Nationalist-Fascist" organization here.

His slogans "Americanism is Nationalism", "For God and Country", "Fight Fascist-Communism", cloak anti-union, anti-Negro, anti-Semitic poison which he hopes to spread in Los Angeles.

Stop this Super Promotor for American Fascism! Show these American Fascists that the workers of Los Angeles refuse to sit by peacefully while the Fascists organize at will!

No Concentration Camps here! Let's Fight Fascism at Home! Act now!  
On to the Philharmonic Auditorium, 427 W. 5th Street, Los Angeles,  
7:30 P.M. sharp, Monday, June 25th.

Issued by the Workers Party. Address Labor Action, P.O. Box 1246,  
San Pedro, Calif.

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Workers of Los Angeles -  
Picket with us to Stop the Fascists! This Thursday,  
June 28, 7:30 P.M. sharp.

Last Monday, at the call of the Workers Party, several hundred workers turned out to picket the Philharmonic Auditorium where the notorious Gerald Smith was rallying his Fascist outfit. Now Fuehrer Smith is meeting at the "Ham & Egg Hall", at 1204 So. Hill, as his next step in promoting Hitlerism here. Show Gerald (Nazi) Smith that we want no fascists here! Picket the fascists at 1204 So. Hill, Thursday, 7:30 P.M. sharp.

And this coming Monday. . . 8 P.M. Hear: "The Truth about America's No. 1 Fascist -- Fuehrer Gerald Smith" and about his sinister campaign to make Los Angeles the base for his fascist ambitions.

Who is behind "Fuehrer" Smith? How does he aim to put Fascism across here? What is his anti-labor, anti-Negro, anti-semitic program?

Labor Action Forum -- East 21st St. & Naomi Ave. (1 block E. of Central Naomi Ave. entrance to St. Paul's Church.

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ANTI-FASCISTS!  
JOIN OUR RANKS!

Picket Fascist Smith's Meeting Thursday  
1204 S. Hill St., Los Angeles - Thursday, June 28 - 7:15 P.M.

150 Anti-Fascists picketed G.L.K. Smith's meeting last Monday night.  
500 sympathetic spectators lined the street.

Gerald L.K. Smith, the leading spokesman for American Fascism, has been a Silver Shirt, and America Firster and a follower of both Huey Long and Father Coughlin.

His slogans "Americanism is Nationalism", "For God and Country", "Fight Fascist-Communism", cloak anti-union, anti-Negro, anti-Semitic poison which he hopes to spread in Los Angeles.

Smith has hurled another challenge! The answer must be a thousand pickets! Stop this Super Promoter for American Fascism! Show these American Fascists that the workers of Los Angeles refuse to sit by peacefully while the Fascists organize at will!

No concentration camps here! LET'S FIGHT FASCISM AT HOME! ACT NOW!  
JOIN THE PICKET LINE!

1204 S. Hill St., Los Angeles - Thursday, June 28 - 7:15 P.M.

Issued by the WORKERS PARTY      Address Labor Action, P.O. Box 1246  
San Pedro, Calif.

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Text of Leaflet Issued by the Los Angeles Local  
Socialist Workers Party

The Labor Movement is on the March Against Fascism!

PACK THE OLYMPIC AUDITORIUM  
THIS FRIDAY, JULY 20TH AT 8:00 P.M.!

Gerald L.K. Smith, America's leading fascist, has grown arrogant and boastful because thus far his campaign of race-hating, union-busting fascist propaganda in Los Angeles has not been seriously opposed by mass workers' action.

Smith now dares to call a meeting on Friday at the Shrine Auditorium with a seating capacity of 7000.

Organized labor has taken the first important step by calling for an anti-fascist demonstration at the Olympic Auditorium, 18th and Grand, at 8:00 P.M. the same night. The Olympic seats 10,500.

Every unionist -- CIO, AFL, Railroad Brotherhoods -- all Negro, Jewish, Mexican, Filipino and other minority peoples must pour out in a gigantic demonstration of anti-fascist power on Friday. Make it the biggest labor demonstration in the history of Los Angeles. Build the solidarity of all working people against fascism.

Build the United Front of Action Against Fascism!

The Socialist Workers Party, Los Angeles Local, hails the action of Organized Labor in calling this counter demonstration.

ALL OUT TO THE OLYMPIC (18th and Grand) FRIDAY NIGHT!

Issued by the Socialist Workers Party and The Militant



Letter from Los Angeles Local to C.P.A.

July 10, 1945

Los Angeles County Committee  
Communist Political Association  
124 West 6th Street  
Los Angeles 14, California

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

We should like to call your attention to the stepped up activities of Gerald Smith who now, on the basis of the three packed house meetings he has already held in Los Angeles, is planning one for the Shrine, which holds 7,000, on July 20th.

The failure of the type of protests and pressure campaigns employed thus far to prevent Smith from meeting indicates the necessity for more serious massing of forces to stop his movement from securing a base here. A united front of action of all labor and minority groups is necessary.

We urge that you call for such a broad united front of action and we repeat our invitation to you to discuss with us the possibilities of joint action in fighting the local fascist movement.

Fraternally,

Myra Tanner Weiss, Organizer  
Los Angeles Local, Socialist Workers Party

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OPEN LETTER

TO ALL MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF THE LOS ANGELES  
AMERICAN YOUTH FOR DEMOCRACY

Dear Friends:

On Monday, June 25th, Gerald L.K. Smith held a Fascist meeting which was attended by an overflow crowd. Again, on June 29th, a second meeting of Smith's was held and again it was attended by an overflow crowd.

The Youth of Los Angeles must realize what this means. Smith has boasted that he would set up his national headquarters here in Los Angeles.

Only the organized labor movement can prevent the Fascists from establishing a foothold here in Los Angeles. Working class youth organizations, students, the youth organizations of racial minorities must all unite in action with the labor movement.

We invite your organization to discuss joint action with us in fighting the local Fascist movement. Join with us, The Socialist Youth Club of Los Angeles, in a united front against the threatening menace of Fascism.

NO HEADQUARTERS FOR GERALD L. K. SMITH IN LOS ANGELES!

Fraternally,  
Socialist Youth Club of Los Angeles

BOLSHEVIK TACTICS OR IRRESPONSIBLE ADVENTURISM

By Murry Weiss

Comrade Goldman's article, "Wrong Policy and Falsification", could not have been written by a responsible party leader. It is saturated with disloyalty and factional recklessness. It is full of guesswork, designed to put the party in the worst light and the Shachtmanites in the best. It is a product of laziness in gathering facts plus energy in distorting them.

If Comrade Goldman were concerned with steering a correct course in the anti-fascist campaign, his whole conduct would have been different. Weeks ago the Political Committee had before it an outline of our policy. At that time anyone who differed with us and wanted to seriously influence the course of the struggle should have availed himself of the opportunity of making motions and helping to shape the policy of the Los Angeles Local. In the Political Committee Comrade Goldman was silent. Much later, after a considerable experience had been accumulated in the campaign (experience of which Comrade Goldman is obviously unaware) he raises the question of the anti-fascist campaign in order to prove a completely unfounded and preconceived notion.

Comrade Goldman's case stands as follows: The comrades of the majority are opposed to working with the Shachtmanites because of an "attitude of grudge and personal hostility." The Los Angeles Local is presented as a horrible example. The Shachtmanites proposed a united front picket line against the fascists, which was rejected for only one reason: "the fact that the Workers Party took the initiative in proposing a united front... thereby destroyed any desire on the part of the responsible comrades in Los Angeles to have the party do any picketing." The result of this "shameful" policy is contained in the following judgment: "The verdict must be that due to the efforts of the alert and militant members of the W.P. and in spite of the sabotage of the leaders of our Los Angeles branch, a successful picket line surrounded the fascist meeting. All the more terrible was the criminal conduct of those responsible for our failure to participate, because with our participation there would undoubtedly have been three and possibly four times the number of pickets."

Let us observe the seriousness of the charges Comrade Goldman has made. It is in sharp contrast to the nonchalant air and method adopted to prove these charges. From a great distance, Comrade Goldman has observed not simply an error or a deviation but deliberate sabotage of the anti-fascist struggle, as a result of the most unworthy motives a revolutionist could have -- "grudge and personal hostility." Surely, a responsible party leader would have carefully gathered the evidence before recklessly hurling such a charge.

Comrade Goldman, apparently from past habit, feels the need to substantiate his accusations with some evidence. Here his efforts are truly deplorable. There is only one piece of "evidence" that

Comrade Goldman advances to prove the entire welter of slander charges contained in his article. The evidence and the argument is as follows: The Los Angeles comrades claim they could not organize an effective joint demonstration with the Shachtmanites in the available time. However, Comrade Goldman argues, in another part of their document they say they would join with the trade unions in a demonstration, despite the shortness of time. And then Comrade Goldman makes his clinching argument: "If there was sufficient time for the party to mobilize its forces had the trade unions called the demonstration, why was there not sufficient time to participate with the W.P.?" From this "contradiction" Comrade Goldman deduces the conclusion that obviously our argument for not participating with the W.P. is unfounded, and therefore we are only trying to cover up our policy of "grudge and personal hostility."

For a detailed report on the Los Angeles anti-fascist campaign I refer the comrades to my article in the Internal Bulletin. Here I will confine myself to the task of replying to Comrade Goldman.

In the first place, let us establish that which Comrade Goldman has deliberately omitted. The Shachtmanites had launched a movement to "stop the fascists" by means of mass picket demonstrations. They called upon the SLP, the IWW, the SP and us to unite with them for this purpose. They did not at any time address the mass organizations of the workers, either political or trade union.

They held two "picket lines". The first one was at the Philharmonic on a downtown thoroughfare, and had a maximum of 150 on the line during the entire evening. The fascists had 3,000 in the hall with a large overflow crowd. No one has been so brash as to claim that the picket demonstration had the slightest effect on the attendance of the fascist meeting or its morale.

Three days later, flushed with the "success" of their first adventure, the Shachtmanites held another picket line in front of another fascist meeting. Here was a chance to observe how much their tactic was taking hold; how many workers they were grouping around them; how much confidence the advanced workers were placing in their method of struggle. At this demonstration they had from 25 to 40 picketing, according to accurate observers, as well as their own claims.

Comrade Goldman is completely silent about the second demonstration! He makes no attempt to evaluate the Shachtmanite tactic as a whole in contrast with our tactic. We in Los Angeles regard both demonstrations as adventuristic fiascos. The serious workers were contemptuous of the policy of a "show of weakness". As I explained in the report, the main-stream of the workers' anti-fascist movement was developing within the mass organizations of the workers in an attempt to force the leaders to act. This is proven by the whole course of events during the last month. The organization of the Anti-Fascist United Front and the Olympic Auditorium demonstration were the direct result of this mass pressure.

Let us now take up Comrade Goldman's clinching argument: "If there was sufficient time for the party to mobilize its forces had

the trade unions called the demonstration, why was there not sufficient time to participate with the W.P.?" Why? Because the trade unions are the organizations of the masses of workers. We lacked time and the necessary relationship of forces to call out a mass of workers in the name of the party. Certainly the Shachtmanites had no masses at their beck and call. If the trade unions did act then the whole relationship of forces would be altered. Comrade Goldman's argument is incredibly stupid and formalistic. To participate with the Shachtmanites, this means a party demonstration plus small additional forces. To participate with the trade unions would signify a tremendous change in the whole situation, including the factor of time.

Comrade Goldman sneers: "It is indeed gratifying and extremely heartening that Comrade Weiss assures us that if the trade unions take part he would be willing to tag along. What greater boldness can one demand?" This is twisting and distorting in order to prove a feeble point. Comrade Goldman wants to convey the impression that we rejected action with the W.P., announced our determination to act only with the masses to whom we forwarded our telephone number, and then sat awaiting their call. But this is not what happened! We began a vigorous campaign to force the Stalinist trade union leaders and all sections of the labor movement into action.

We did not wait and "tag along". We initiated and passed resolutions in the following unions: Marine Firemen's Union; the Auto Council-UAW; the Joint Board of the ILGWU; the San Pedro Longshoremen's Union; the Consolidated Steel Workers Union; the National Maritime Union; the Shipyard Workers' Union Local 9 (the largest CIO local on the West Coast; the International Association of Machinists (two of the largest union locals in the country); and a number of other unions. This resolutions campaign was simply one form of our campaign of agitation in the shops and unions. Through leaflets, open letters and discussions we became a central factor in making felt the rising pressure of the militant workers.

This was totally unexpected by the Shachtmanites. Before the events, Draper told us: "We expect nothing from the labor movement at this time." If now, after the events, the Shachtmanites claim they were working for the united front of the labor movement they simply lie, as testified by the absence of any move on their part to raise the slogan of a united front of all working-class organizations. But Comrade Goldman writes his article after the united front was formed. That is, after our slogan was realized (imperfectly of course) in life. Is it ignorance or incurable skepticism which prompts him to say, after the event, substantially the same thing Draper said before the event: "Undoubtedly it would be wonderful if we could get all of these organizations to unite with us in a demonstration. But did it not occur to our far-sighted leadership that these organizations might be slow to move and might even throw our proposal into the all-consuming waste basket, just exactly as we do with the proposals of the W.P.?" Truly, a remarkable degree of ignorance of most of the facts is necessary to allow such a remark after the events of these last weeks.

The Los Angeles Local based itself on the perspective that the labor movement must act against Smith, and that it was possible

to get action. A comprehensive plan of action was accordingly worked out. Were we successful? We least of all claim that we have realized our slogans to the full extent of their meaning. But one must be blinded by a factional frenzy to fail to recognize that it was along the path of our line and our line alone that tremendous progress was made in the struggle against Smith. Our tactic of united front towards the Stalinists became an enormous factor in the situation. Likewise, the resolutions campaign in the unions. Comrade Goldman calls this "vain boasting." We submit our report to the judgment of the party. We ask the comrades who have an honest interest in drawing the lessons from this vital experience to weigh the testimony. Are we boasting, or is Comrade Goldman unworthily denigrating the work of the party?

Comrade Goldman falsifies, and, notwithstanding his moral preachments, he has made a habit of falsifying. He covers up the falsity of the Shachtmanite line; he disparages our work and fails to mention facts of importance. And he does all this in the name of the struggle...against falsification!

According to Comrade Goldman, Comrade Cannon estimates the Shachtmanite line as reliance on the Party alone while we rely on the masses. Comrade Goldman says: "This, of course, is completely baseless and demagogic. Where does he derive the proposition that the W.P. wants to rely only on the party? From the fact that the W.P. did not wait until the trade unions acted?" The W.P. did not simply fail to wait until the trade unions acted; they never tried to get the trade unions to act. Answer this question, Comrade Goldman! Why did the Shachtmanites refrain from adding the Stalinists to the list of organizations to whom they addressed their united front appeal? Why did they fail to appeal to the trade union bodies? Is it not obvious that they had no idea of the possibility of effecting a broad united front? (Not only was this revealed in their course of action, but this was their openly avowed position: "We do not expect anything from the labor movement at this time.") A central feature of our campaign was the united front tactic towards the Stalinists. The Shachtmanites carefully avoided approaching the Stalinists. Which line was correct, Comrade Goldman? Which line could yield greater results in the struggle against fascism?

It is Comrade Goldman who distorts and falsifies, just as Labor Action does. Despite Draper's and Comrade Goldman's skepticism, a united front conference, broadly representative of the trade unions and racial minorities movements was called. At this united front conference, Comrade Tanner, in the name of the party, proposed that the Olympic Auditorium demonstration be developed into a mass parade past the Shrine Auditorium where the fascists were meeting. This became the central point of discussion at the united front conference. It will again be the central point of the united front conference to meet on August 26th. Does Comrade Goldman mention this? Of course not! It would refute Comrade Goldman's cynical insinuation that the whole Los Angeles campaign was a maneuver to hide our fear of meeting the valiant Shachtmanites in a common picket line.

Comrade Goldman has wrenched the question of a picket line out of the context of two fundamentally conflicting lines. He makes no effort to evaluate either our policy or theirs. Everything is

chopped up eclectically and stewed in the broth of malicious factional insinuations. This method has already become the hall-mark of Comrade Goldman's contributions to the internal life of our party. Without waiting to learn the facts, he jumped into the famous "Case of the Four" in New York. While falsifying some facts and hiding from others, he attempted to extract, as if with a forceps, the question of "to fraternize or not to fraternize" from both the concrete situation in which the "Case of the Four" developed and from a fundamental Marxist approach to such a problem. The same on the question of a proposal to bloc with the Shachtmanites in the trade unions; the same, in his treatment of the Hansen article, the New York elections, etc.

Comrade Goldman unwittingly develops a theory of mass action which should be incorporated in the text-books of Marxist tactics in the chapter on "Rules of What to Avoid" or "Recipes for Catastrophes". Nervously anticipating his just due, Comrade Goldman sighs: "It can be presumed that we shall be given a lecture on the united front and we shall be informed that a united front is intended to set large masses into action. That is perfectly true but it is also true that a united front on a small scale is not excluded by the fact that a united front on a big scale is better than one on a small scale." Elsewhere he says: "That we should get the labor movement to act is to be taken for granted. But let us not utilize that correct idea in order not to act until the labor movement acts. One of the methods of getting the labor movement to act is for our party to act even when the official labor movement does not act."

There is no getting around the worthlessness of eclecticism as a tool of thought. In matters of fusion Comrade Goldman operates on the marble theory: each marble representing a point of agreement or disagreement. If there are more agreement marbles than disagreement marbles -- fuse! In matters of mass movements Comrade Goldman's prescription is just as "simple". Big movements are good, small ones less good, but even very small ones are not to be sneezed at. From this follows an ineluctable conclusion: regardless of the relationship of forces, of which Comrade Goldman takes no trouble to inform himself, don't hesitate to act on your own; little actions can do no harm, bigger ones will come later. The whole thought is expressed in the words: "The Workers Party correctly took the chance of calling for a picket line without the cooperation of any other party. It could have been a failure but it was worthwhile taking a chance." We will leave aside Comrade Goldman's false conclusion that the W.P. picket line was a thumping success, and examine the thought. Why was it necessary to take such a risk? Does Comrade Goldman understand the demoralizing and disorganizing character of putschist tactics? Has the working-class passed through decades of experience with ultra-left adventurism only to leave not a trace on Comrade Goldman's factionally inflamed mind?

What is risked in such an action? From the standpoint of a small political shopkeeper mentality, very little indeed. They reason, "If it is not so good no one will hear of it, and we mark it down to poor advertising. If we should happen to hit the jackpot then it is all to the good. It is a good gamble!" A revolutionary party weighs the problem with more accurate scales. Hasty and precipitous action, such as calling out the masses to act at a time

when they cannot but fail to respond, can yield a number of disastrous results. The enemy against whom the action is aimed gains in morale; the more backward strata of workers who are grouping around the more advanced are disheartened and repelled. They lose confidence in the struggle. The bureaucrats gain additional arguments for their policy of do-nothingism. Finally, the revolutionary vanguard, which is delicately geared to the strata of militants in the shops and the unions, disrupts this relationship with the militants and alienates itself from their confidence.

All these negative results do not express themselves with equal force in every given situation, but that is the end result of the politics of irresponsible adventurism which is closely akin to petty-bourgeois prostration and fright in the face of big struggles. It is not at all unusual that the ultra-radicalism of the W.P. in this action was coupled with their deep-going skepticism regarding the ability of the mass of workers to struggle. Comrade Goldman reflects this mood of the Shachtmanites in his article, and such a mood is fatal to the revolutionary anti-fascist struggle.

Comrade Goldman puffs and snorts a great deal about the "Stalinism" that is revealed in the omission of mention of the W.P. picket line from the Militant article. His indignation would be more convincing if he directed his researches in falsification (through omissions and otherwise) to Labor Action articles, as well as our own press. Note, for example, the Labor Action article reporting the United Front Conference. Why is Comrade Myra Tanner's proposal to the Conference omitted from this report? Even the Stalinist People's World reported our proposal for a march on the Shrine and indicated that it had become the main topic of discussion at the Conference.

For my part, I consider the omission of the Shachtmanite "picket line" as a case of serious negligence on our part. We had intentions of dealing thoroughly with this picket line as an example of completely false and harmful tactics in the struggle against fascism. This is the way we handled it at our anti-fascist mass meeting in Los Angeles. Rather than desiring to conceal the role of the Shachtmanites, our line was to expose it. In public discussions we thoroughly annihilated their position. The Los Angeles comrades, contacts and sympathizers, from the newest to the oldest, received an education in the character of petty-bourgeois adventurism as demonstrated in the recent struggle. We welcomed the opportunity to expose the Shachtmanites in the test of action. Unfortunately, the pressure of the campaign caused us to neglect this important chore for the press. In general, the failure to write sufficiently is one of our weaknesses, which we intend to diligently correct.

Comrade Goldman, of course, will shrug his shoulders and say: "a likely story." But, if the truth is told, this article is not written to convince Comrade Goldman. Comrade Goldman writes like a man who has burned his bridges behind him, who has abandoned his post as a responsible party leader, in factional flight from our traditions and program. Comrade Goldman's article, sad to say, is not a contribution to clarity in the struggle against fascism. It is only another example of the failure of any type of subjectivism

to serve as a yardstick in the analysis of political problems.

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A separate article can be devoted to the last paragraph of Comrade Goldman's polemic. An excellent word to describe Comrade Goldman's and Morrow's answers to forthright questions would be -- "queasy."

"I had no negotiations with anybody," Goldman tells us without blushing. I only meet with Shachtman, Carter, Gates, Johnson, etc. "They refused to commit themselves."

When this disgraceful game of hide-and-seek is called by its right name, Comrade Goldman whines: "Under Lenin and Trotsky there were no rules requiring a party member to be loyal."

Indeed? Have you read the statutes of the C.I. under Lenin and Trotsky, Comrade Goldman? Have you read Lenin's 21 points? There is no use adopting an air of injured indignation or outraged virtue. The proletarian party has a right to demand 100% loyalty from its leaders as well as its rank and file. Our party has displayed the greatest patience with your most brazen provocations. Please remember that you are accountable to the party in all your political activity.

In my opinion you strain the patience of the party to the breaking point when you carry on negotiations with the Shachtmanites and, when called to account, declare that you have been insulted and propose to open factional warfare in the party!

No, Comrade Goldman, Lenin and Trotsky did have rules against disloyalty and so do we.

August 14, 1945

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WHERE I STAND

By Felix Morrow

Rumors are circulating concerning my relation to our faction. It is being said I never did agree with Goldman on the "organization question" and that I now wish to abandon the fight for inviting the WP to return to the party. I take this opportunity not only to set the rumors at rest but also to indicate in brief my basic views on the situation in the party.

In Trotsky's lifetime, one felt free to try to make contributions to the ideas of the movement. I well remember with what a sense of freedom I wrote my Spanish pamphlets. If I were wrong on one question or another, I was assured that when Trotsky would examine it he would do so in all comradeship and seek to prove I was wrong without impugning my motives, character or revolutionary integrity. Trotsky created an atmosphere of free exchange of ideas, of hospitality to attempts to find what is new in a situation, of striving to add something to what has already been said.

After his death, however, the PC majority tended more and more to create a very different kind of atmosphere. Comrade Cannon calls it a conservatism justified by the fact that our resolutions since 1940 "stand up". But, as I demonstrated in "The Balance Sheet of the Discussion on Europe", repetition of formulas in the face of new events leads to flagrant violations of the traditions of our movement. The fact that the PC majority sincerely thinks it is clinging conservatively to the "fundamentals" of Trotskyism does not prevent it from throwing overboard much of the political methodology of Trotskyism. I think that Logan, Goldman and I have demonstrated that in our articles of the past year.

I shall not repeat here a summary of the political errors of the PC majority. My point is that more important than these errors is the attitude which causes them, which also leads the PC majority never to admit its errors, and which leads it to resent bitterly all differences of opinion. It is this attitude which is the foundation-stone of the false conception of the party held by Comrade Cannon and his associates.

Their attitude can be summarized as follows: to refuse to consider any difference as being a legitimate difference of opinion as between comrades who remain equally revolutionary; to dub the difference "fundamental" and fight it in the spirit of war to the death; not to argue by reason against the ideas of the opponent, but to try to discredit him by amalgams which equate the opponent with renegades and class enemies.

It is true that at times they are compelled to retreat from this attitude. Thus after more than a year of fulminations against the minority's ideas on the European situation as being fundamental differences, revisionist, etc., the PC majority switched to saying that the differences were secondary, matters of emphasis, etc. But within a few weeks, the PC majority reverted to its fulminations, this time against the slogan of the republic in Italy and Belgium. At this moment again we are witnessing a partial retreat of the PC majority, in connection

with the minority proposal for unity negotiations with the WP, which yesterday the PC majority was condemning as conciliationism with Menshevism, disloyalty to the party, etc. But it is all too clear that the PC majority considers such retreats as tactical maneuvers and has not changed its attitude toward opponents in the party.

I consider the method of the PC majority as alien to the conception of the party of Lenin and Trotsky. Trotsky taught us that "It is in contradictions and differences of opinion that the working out of the party's public opinion inevitably takes place." Trotsky taught us that "there should be no oversimplification and vulgarization in the understanding of the thought that party differences, and this holds all the more for groupings, are nothing but a struggle for influence of antagonistic classes...It frequently happens that the party is able to solve one and the same problem by different means, and differences arise as to which of these means is the better, the more expeditious, the more economical. These differences may, depending on the question, embrace considerable sections of the party, but that does not necessarily mean that you have there two class tendencies."

Where Trotsky sometimes, after the most thorough discussion and after the most indubitable evidence, finally concluded that an opponent reflected the pressure of alien classes, Comrade Cannon practically always and at the beginning of a dispute, sets the tone by declaring it is a class struggle and then, logically enough, conducts the "discussion" with the opponent in the spirit of civil war. Comrade Cannon is guilty precisely of the "oversimplification and vulgarization" that Trotsky warned against and Cannon has carried it so far that it has become a veritable system alien to the Bolshevism of Lenin and Trotsky.

I have agreed in all essentials with Goldman's criticisms of this Bolshevism-a-la-Cannon. The one point on which I disagree with Goldman is his use of the terms "Stalinist germs" and "Stalinist attitude" to describe Cannon's attitude toward differences of opinion. These terms are too easily manipulated by the Cannon group, who pretend that they could not object to our speaking of a false tendency but that they object to the term "Stalinist" because it confuses phenomena belonging to very different causes. Imputing to Goldman and myself the idea that we are saying that this is a Stalinist party, they claim that we of course will not remain in a Stalinist party and that we are making our farewell speeches to the party. Both imputations are untrue. We do not believe this is a Stalinist party, but that Bolshevism-a-la-Cannon is a false tendency which is making dangerous inroads into the authentic Bolshevik traditions of our party.

Goldman and my other associates, just as much as I, are ready to join with the PC majority in any reasonable ways and means of guaranteeing the maximum functioning of the party during this dispute. But it takes two to make such a bargain. The Cannon group, instead, embarked on the hoary but still-useful trick of creating a crisis atmosphere in the party and then blaming the minority for precipitating a crisis which interferes with the functioning of the party.

As part of this trick, the Cannon group shouted that the minority means to split, and refused to discuss the question of unity with the WP on its merits until the "split danger" is warded off. In my

debate with Comrade Collins in Detroit, I stated that the minority would find ways and means to assure the party membership that we are neither splitters nor agents of the WP. In order to attempt to get the Cannon group to discuss unity with the WP on the merits of the question, I was ready to go to the length of dissolving our faction.

Upon reflection, however, it is all too clear to me that such a step would not serve the interests of the party.

It would not succeed in its immediate aim of getting a calm and conscientious discussion of unity with the WP. It was before we formed our faction that Comrade Cannon had already denounced Goldman and me as agents of the WP. Had we dissolved our faction, Cannon's fire would then have concentrated on our talks with Shachtman. Had we stopped talking to Shachtman, Cannon's fire would have concentrated on the "anti-Bolshevism" of Morrow and Goldman -- in short, on anything but rational discussion of the resolution on unity. We would have dissolved our faction without gaining the aim of a conscientious discussion.

Far more important, however, is the fact that dissolution of the faction would only lead at best to a postponement of the question of which our resolution on unity with the WP is only a part: the contending conceptions of a Bolshevik party. Our resolution on unity is merely one example of how a really Bolshevik leadership would conduct itself. Our resolution flows from our basic conception of a Bolshevik party as one in which differences of opinion, such as those between us and the WP, are compatible with membership in one party; our conception of the party as a broad unity of the proletarian vanguard and not a tight-knit faction as the PC majority conceives the party.

It is better to accept this fight for what it is, a single fight in which all disputed questions are interrelated.

I now see that one of the most important of these questions is the nature of a faction and the right to form a faction. The Cannon group has made this question important by distorting it beyond recognition, and the minority has the duty to pose it correctly and explain it. Here I limit myself to recalling what, Trotsky warned, is the end-result of such a hue and cry against factions as the Cannon group is now conducting: "If factions are not wanted, there must not be any permanent groupings; if permanent groupings are not wanted, temporary groupings must be avoided; finally, in order that there be no temporary groupings, there must be no differences of opinion, for wherever there are two opinions, people inevitably group together." Cannon's fight against our having a faction is in the last analysis a fight against any right of differences of opinion in the party. To dissolve our faction would tend to give credibility to Cannon's conception, and would go a long way to fastening Cannon's conception irrevocably on the party. This result would be a hundred-fold worse for the party than any possible immediate gain for the discussion of the unity resolution which would result from dissolution of our faction.

To conclude, I repeat: it is better to accept the present dispute for what it is, a single issue in which all questions in dispute are interrelated. What kind of party do we want, That is the issue, and on it I was and remain in complete solidarity with my associates in our faction.

August 29, 1945

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

August 28, 1945

TO ALL LOCALS AND BRANCHES:

Dear Comrades,

CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE WORKERS PARTY

Enclosed herewith we are sending you a copy of the letter and statement forwarded to us by the National Committee of the Workers Party and the answer of our Political Committee.

This can be considered as material for discussion in the branches.

Yours fraternally,



National Secretary

JPC/sc  
Encl. (4)

LETTER FROM WORKERS PARTY ON QUESTION OF UNIFICATION  
OF THE WORKERS PARTY AND THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

August 22, 1945

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

Dear Comrade:

I am enclosing to you a copy of a statement, adopted by the unanimous vote of our National Committee at its recent plenary session, on the question of the unification of the Workers Party and the Socialist Workers Party. As instructed by our Committee, I request that you bring its statement to the attention of the Political Committee and National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party so that they may be able to consider it at the earliest possible moment and arrive at a decision on the question of unity which will promote the growth and consolidation of the revolutionary Marxian movement in this country.

Fraternally yours,

Max Shachtman, Secretary  
Workers Party

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STATEMENT ON THE UNIFICATION OF THE WORKERS PARTY  
AND THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

1. The National Committee of the Workers Party takes note of the fact that a minority group of the Socialist Workers Party, led by Comrades Goldman, Morrow and Williams, has presented a resolution to the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party in favor of the unification of that Party with the Workers Party. The principal ground given in the resolution for unification of the two parties is that the main political question in dispute in 1939-1940, which led to the split in the Socialist Workers Party and the formation of the Workers Party, namely the difference over the slogan of "unconditional defense of the Soviet Union" is today no longer as acute and topical as it was when the dispute first arose; and that the two Parties today have a similar position on the main task in Europe, namely, defense of the European revolution from the threat of Stalinism and Anglo-American imperialism.

2. The National Committee also takes note of the fact that the Socialist Workers Party itself has officially taken the view

8/27/45

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that the slogan of "unconditional defense of the Soviet Union" does not, at the present time occupy the prominent position it was given at the beginning of the war, that it has receded into the background.

3. The Workers Party stands for strengthening the forces of the Fourth International in all countries, the United States included. Therefore, it also stands for the unity of the Fourth Internationalists in this country in a manner and on a basis calculated to give the greatest assurances of healthy progress.

4. We are obliged to record our disagreement with the motivation for the modification of the Socialist Workers Party's position on the defense of Russia in the war. It is also well known that we still have important differences with the Socialist Workers Party on a number of political and theoretical questions. However, the range of these differences do not go beyond what is permissible within the ranks of a single revolutionary party. Furthermore, our estimate and criticism of the official regime maintained by the representatives of the majority in the Socialist Workers Party has not been changed. The fact that these representatives are now so categorically opposed to unity with the Workers Party, as well as their opposition to any united action with the Workers Party, is confirmation of our estimate. Nevertheless, the interests of uniting the Fourth Internationalists in the United States on a sound foundation are more important than the regime in the Socialist Workers Party.

5. The Workers Party is therefore prepared to discuss the question of unity with the Socialist Workers Party.

6. However, our National Committee proposes that, in order to test the practical possibilities of living and working together harmoniously in one united Party, as well as to promote the common cause in the working class and the labor movement, the Workers Party and the Socialist Workers Party, through their National Committees, should arrange for joint consultation and cooperation in all fields -- trade union, political, defense, etc. -- where it is possible, necessary and fruitful.

National Committee, Workers Party

Max Shachtman, Secretary

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REPLY TO WORKERS PARTY

(Adopted by Political Committee, August 27, 1945)

Max Shachtman, National Secretary  
Workers Party  
114 West 14th Street  
New York 11, New York

Dear Comrade:

Your letter of August 22 with the enclosed statement of your National Committee "On the Unification of the Workers Party and the Socialist Workers Party" has been received and discussed by our Political Committee. We especially note your declaration, in Point 5 of your statement, that the Workers Party is "prepared to discuss the question of unity with the Socialist Workers Party." We are in favor of such a discussion and will so recommend to the next Plenum of our National Committee.

In view of the sharp conflicts which resulted in the split between us and the formation of your own organization five years ago, and in view of the deep differences which have separated us since, we believe that the National Committee's consideration of the question will be facilitated if you will indicate more precisely and more concretely your view of how the unification is to be brought about and what form it should take.

We have always proceeded from the point of view that programmatic agreement on the most important and decisive questions is the only sound basis for unification; and that, when divergences of opinion occur, unity can be maintained only by the scrupulous observance of the democratic principle of the subordination of the minority to the majority and strict discipline in public activity and action.

If, in the course of the discussion, it appears that we are approaching agreement on the most important political questions, as well as upon the organizational principle referred to above, and that unification is a realistic perspective, then systematic joint consultation and plans for the cooperation of the two organizations for the carrying out of practical work pending the formal unification, would follow as a matter of course. But to attempt to begin with such practical cooperation, prior to a definite approach to unification, would seem to us to put things upside down and lead to a sharpening of conflicts over secondary questions rather than to their moderation. In our view, "the practical possibilities of living and working together harmoniously" flow naturally and inevitably from a basic agreement on the fundamental questions, not vice versa. Friction and conflict arise from political disagreement rather than from personal incompatibility. In the long run, the latter is always subordinated to the former.

In our opinion, the question of unification must be discussed with complete frankness and seriousness. The aim must be to effect a genuine unification on a firm and long-lasting basis. We, for our part, believe that unity would be a good thing if it is firmly based and leads to the strengthening of the party and the building up of the party. On the other hand, a unification followed by a sharp faction fight and another split would be highly injurious to the party.

The views set forth above are designed to give a concrete basis to the preliminary discussions between us. Naturally, we are perfectly willing to hear and consider any different form of preliminary approach which you may wish to make. If you think that an exploratory verbal discussion would facilitate the preparation and organization of the agenda for a thorough-going consideration of the whole problem of unification in all its aspects, a sub-committee of our P.C. is prepared to meet with you for such a preliminary discussion. Such a meeting can be arranged on short notice by a telephone call to Comrade Stein, Organizational Secretary, at the National Office of the S.W.P.

Yours fraternally,

J. P. Cannon, National Secretary  
Socialist Workers Party

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EXTRACTS FROM POLITICAL COMMITTEE MINUTES OF AUGUST 27, 1945

Letter from Workers Party

Reading of proposed letter to be sent to the W.P. in reply to their letter and statement "On the Unification of the W.P. and the S.W.P."

Motion by Stein: That we accept this draft as the letter to be sent out in the name of the Political Committee by the National Secretary.

Amendment by Morrow: That the letter be amended to the effect that we consider that the political differences are compatible with membership in one party.

Discussion on motion and amendment.

Vote on motion and amendment: Motion by Stein -- Carried unanimously.  
Amendment by Morrow -- Lost. (1 for;  
9 against).