

# DISCUSSION BULLETIN

A-14

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### TROTSKYISM VS. FALLOISM

Correspondence between  
George Breitman and Ernest Germain

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November 15, 1953

Dear George:

Unfortunately your letter of August 22 reached me only yesterday, when I returned home from my journey to the East. Unfortunately so many sad and unbelievable developments have taken place in the meantime that it may look odd to answer now this letter of yours. I'll do it anyhow, be it only for friendship's sake.

Nobody was happier than I and all of us in the Center about what happened at the one but last Plenum. We all were as enthusiastic as you were about the maturity shown by the majority leaders at that occasion. We hoped sincerely that a period of calm and positive discussion would set in. That's why we wrote our letter, meaning every single word of it (but it's quite difficult to convince of that people who start looking for "duplicity" behind every move you do). That's why we were shocked in the rudest manner by reading comrade Cannon's letter to Tom, written 24 hours after the Plenum, letter which convinced anybody who isn't a babe in the wood that not only was there going to be no truce but that the war was going to be introduced immediately from your party into the whole international movement (the word "war" being no exaggeration because the very word "military discipline" was used).

I think this fact, as well as comrade Cannon's speech to the majority caucus before the Plenum on "Internationalism" of which the minority got hold only after the agreement, turned the tables. I am not responsible in any way for the minority's attitude after the Plenum and neither is Gabe nor anybody else in Paris. I don't know what they did and if they really broke the truce. But if they did it, the only real cause was Cannon's speech and Cannon's letter. What you say about the events in Seattle may have been a minor cause, but it certainly was not decisive. Bigger issues were now at stake, and the minority could not fail to notice them.

I had not much sympathy for the minority's point of view on questions of American policy; it is quite possible that some nervousness got into their leaders. But it seems to me clear as day that after the majority openly attacked the International's line, the minority had no interest whatsoever to leave the party, at the contrary! That is why I cannot accept the charges made, at least not to the extent they have been advanced. The minority had now finally succeeded, through no merit of their own, to get into the position where it had been willing to be since two years, and where finally Cannon's actions had brought it; to appear before the membership as the defenders of the International, in political association with the International, against a tendency, which was brutally and violently attacking and insulting the International's line, leadership and discipline. Under such conditions, the minority had every interest to stay in the party and to let a political discussion develop. Under such conditions, the majority had every interest to break any discussion prematurely by organizational means. The answer to the question: who is responsible for the split, is easy when we start from the old method of asking "Cui prodest?" -- "In whose interest was it?"

And this brings me to the crux of the matter: the unbelievably lightminded, irresponsible way in which the leaders of the majority, in which I have had for many years the utmost respect and confidence have started an international faction fight which, to all intents

and purposes, can only result in a major split from the international movement.

In comrade Cannon's speech before the majority caucus on Internationalism there was not one word expressed on matters of political differences. Even in comrade Cannon's letter to Tom, instructing him to build an international faction, the point was stressed that there were no political differences with the International's line. Suddenly in August comrade Stein sprang on the movement his political thesis, obviously written in agreement with the other majority leaders, which I cannot interpret otherwise as deliberate and cynical attempt to find some political justification for an organizational "struggle of power" launched upon the International leadership.

Comrade Stein's document is written in such obvious bad faith, and overthrows so obviously established points of policy commonly accepted by the American comrades and ourselves not only since 1951 but since 1945 that it is hard for me to see how anyone can escape that conclusion.

Is it necessary to enumerate once again for you the innumerable points which show that bad faith? Do you really believe that we are "capitulating before Stalinism," we who have been busy building the Trotskyist movement, not without success, all over the world? More concretely: do you believe that I, who have predicted perhaps alone in the whole world what would happen in Russia and the rest of the Stalinist sphere of influence this year 12 months ago, have "capitulated before Stalinism"? I am the author of the first draft of "Rise and Decline." How can you hope to convince anybody in the movement with such incredible slander as that saying that this draft proposes to do away with our orientation toward political revolution in the USSR and puts instead the perspective of "self-regeneration" of the bureaucracy, when in the most explicit way the opposite is stated in the document? When we explicitly warn the movement against any illusion as to the possibility of regenerating the Soviet Union in a "reformist" manner? When over and over again we identify socialist regeneration and political revolution? When we try to awaken the movement to the huge possibilities opened up by the new objective situation in the USSR for a reappearance of our movement and the beginning of the mass struggle against the bureaucracy?

Who is rendering Stalinism a service: those who try to mobilize our movement for profiting from the crisis of the bureaucracy in order to launch our movement again in the countries where it actually disappeared, who try to reassemble forces for Trotskyism in Eastern Europe and look for means for doing the same thing in the USSR, those who want to organize for helping the masses overthrowing the bureaucracy, or those who concentrate in exactly the same conditions upon launching their forces not against Stalinism but against the FI leadership?

Is it necessary to insist once again upon the fact that since 1944 we have been telling Shachtman, Morrow, the IKDists, Geoffroy, Haston, etc., over and over again: the fact that the FI is weak is not an argument to deny the objective rise of world revolution we are witnessing. The strength of the revolutionary movement is a necessary precondition for revolutionary victory, but not a necessary

precondition for the unfurling of mass revolutionary struggles. At the contrary, these struggles, which originate in the objective historical process, must create favourable conditions for solving the crisis of revolutionary leadership. And now comrade Morris comes along and throws at us the same kind of accusation about "revolutionary romanticism" which we heard from all these sceptics, and that after China, Korea, Malaya, Iran, Egypt, North Africa, Bolivia, Eastern Germany, Ceylon and the literal spread of world revolution -- naturally not world revolutionary victories -- "from continent to continent"!

Is it necessary to tell you that we have come out for the withdrawal of occupation troops from Germany in the QI, in the German review, in the resolution on Germany published in the IS Internal Bulletin? Anybody can read it for himself! If this slogan was not put in the first appeal of the IS, it is only because we wanted at that time when the struggle was still going on to concentrate on the slogans the fighters in Berlin had used themselves (where no one had used that slogan and for good reasons! Did the people come on the street in the February revolution with the slogan: Withdrawal of the Cossacks? When you are busy making a revolution, and not only writing about it, the winning of the troops wherever it is possible becomes task Nr. 1, not the deliberate provocation of these troops into hostile actions. Even the correspondent of Shachtman's review understands this simple basic truth). How is it possible that a member of the New York City committee writes this unbelievable slander that "the international Pabloites refuse (!) to call for the withdrawal of the Russian troops"? Who has whipped up such a hostility towards the International that such kind of hysterical lies can be spread and believed?

The basic thing, dear George, is that for reasons of wrong suspicions and unjustified fears, the majority leadership has launched a preventive faction fight against the International, and this faction fight having acquired now a political basis will develop with all its internal logic, with the immediate threat of a major international split.

The challenge that the majority leadership has thrown at the International is a challenge of the very principle of a democratically centralized world party, with one line and one discipline applicable to strong as well as to weak groups. It is a challenge to our whole line, worked out in many years of efforts, to break away from sectarian isolation and sterile dogmatism and to build in practice -- not in talk -- groups intimately linked with the mass movement of their countries and capable of applying revolutionary Marxism to all new events and phenomena. All the successes we have obtained, in Britain, in Bolivia, in Ceylon, in Germany and elsewhere, are exclusively due to this "new course" of Trotskyism which was unanimously adopted at the 3rd WC. To try and turn back the wheel of history, and re-establish a kind of movement as that which existed in 1939 is suicide for the FI. We shall never tolerate such an attempt to destroy our movement. We shall oppose it with all means at our disposal. And we shall gather the overwhelming majority of the International in this fight.

Make no mistake about it, dear George. Our movement is now passing through its worst crisis since its inception. We were proud

of the SWP, its achievements, its "regime," whatever it stood for. I was proud to be called a Cannonite by all the hostile elements and deserters of our movement. I have been traveling up and down Europe for 7 years defending Cannon and Cannonism without any feeling of bad conscience. I knew, as all of us knew, that Cannonism stood for principled politics. Till we received Stein's document, I would have never tolerated any intervention of the International in the SWP conflict, convinced as I was of the principled way the SWP leadership acted in the past in party conflicts. But our confidence is now completely shattered. Our main allegiance is not to a person, or a cadre, but to program, principles and a world organization. Nobody will blackmail us into abandoning ideas which we know to be correct, the only ideas on which our movement will be really built. We wanted to build the movement in the closest collaboration with Cannon. We shall build it, if necessary, without and against Cannon. And we "petty scribblers," as these people now suddenly say, will succeed building this movement, because the correctness of our ideas, confirmed by huge historical events, will bring to us everywhere the best people from the entire labor movement.

The kind of arguments which are now used everywhere against the International have a very particular smell to anybody who knows the history of the communist movement, dear George. One should be very very prudent throwing about accusations of "capitulation before Stalinism." You will have read -- the Militant wrote a fine story on it -- Silone's anecdote about the manner in which the Old Man was expelled from the 3rd International. When Stalin wanted the EKKI to condemn the Old Man's letter about China, the members were asked to vote without having read the document. The Italians refused. The meeting was adjourned and old Kolarov came to see Togliatti and Silone, telling them: "What do you want to see that document for? What's going on here is in reality a fight for power between Stalin and Trotsky in the Russian party. You have to line up with Stalin who is winning that fight, because without the support of the Russian party it is impossible to build the International, etc." In the last weeks I have heard many people repeat this kind of argument. As much as we understand the importance of cadre and leadership, we can have nothing but contempt for such arguments. Surely, Trotsky and the Trotskyists didn't break with the Soviet State in order to repeat the same type of unprincipled bankrupt politics on a petty scale. We shall never stand for it, never, never.

Among the many correct things comrade Cannon has been saying for a great many years was that beautiful sentence on the party becoming suddenly a prison for people with wrong ideas or under pressure of hostile forces. When that happens, every petty incident, every misunderstanding is used to kick up constant violent fights. I ask you, comrade George: why has the International suddenly become a prison for the American majority? Why do they suddenly attack in a ruthless, disloyal, unpolitical and slanderous manner a leadership with which they have been associated in the closest manner, with which they have been so intimately collaborating, and to whose construction they contributed more than anybody else? The International has neither provoked, nor attacked, nor threatened the SWP majority in any manner whatsoever! Why did this majority feel itself suddenly like in a prison in that International? Why do they undertake one step after another to break out of that prison? It will be difficult to answer

that question without noticing a grave danger to the future of the SWP and its leadership, for anybody who is a principled Trotskyist.

All political differences which may have been arising on matters of interpretation or tactics toward the events in the USSR since Stalin's death could have been discussed calmly and easily without even leading to a faction fight, I'm quite convinced of that. Because in as much as there are real differences -- not cynical slander -- they are yet of a minor nature. Such a discussion could have been useful if it had been first led in such a manner as to prevent premature crystallization. Even after that crystallization it would have been a lesser evil. But with organizational measures, reprisals, threats and ultimatums, the International will not compromise. Our movement, which is still very weak, will collapse before bigger enemies, if its leadership will not uphold the basic principles of its discipline and political cohesion. To the surprise of some clever despisers of "scribblers," we shall show the movement that we shall be quite able to defend it in an efficient manner against any attempt to disrupt it.

I'm still ready for any initiative or any move which could eliminate the threat of a major split in the International movement. If you could suggest anything useful in that line, I'm willing to listen to any suggestion, to undertake any action, privately or officially, as long as it is not a betrayal of our organizational and political principles. If anything can be done to avoid the catastrophe, it would be criminal not to attempt it. But you will believe me that I have little hope left after what happened.

Warmest greetings,

Ernest

A LETTER TO COMRADE GERMAIN

Dear Ernest:

December 3, 1953

Thanks for your letter dated Nov. 15, the same date as the letter to the leaderships of all sections by the IS Bureau, to which you also signed your name. I answer your letter, and in part that of the Bureau, not only out of friendship's sake, but also because I have always felt closer to you politically and methodologically than any of the other European comrades and because I have always highly valued your contributions to the movement and want you to avoid making a terrible mistake. If this reply is poorly organized, it is because I have so much to say and so little time to say it in, and I hope you will make due allowances. If what I say is offensive to you, you will know that is not my intention. If you do not care to answer me, I still believe that you will ponder what I write here, and I hope that you will do so objectively.

The first differences we had with Clarke, and the first signs we had of an unhealthy development in the IS, appeared at the beginning of 1951, at the start of the 3WC discussion, when Clarke wrote to us that it would be necessary to crush and maybe even expel the majority of the French party, Frank and you because of the incipient differences around the discussion. (You then were the "Stalinophobes.") Knowing Clarke, and knowing his close affinity with Pablo, we realized that he was not expressing a personal opinion. We were alarmed by the ultimatum, bureaucratic conception that it expressed about the international leadership, and Stein, on our behalf, wrote him a sharp letter, warning him that the view he expressed was ruinous and would destroy all possibilities of collective leadership. This marked the beginning of Clarke's break with us, as he told us at our May plenum: our reproach to him was a "stab in the back." Evidently, however, it had a restraining as well as an embittering influence, because although he wrote us back a hot letter, he decided he had to be more careful. We were all happy to see a united IS leadership emerge from the discussion. But we could not help wondering what was going on in Pablo's mind that would enable him to even tolerate the course that Clarke had projected.

Then, after the 3WC, came the fight in the French party, ending in the intervention that removed the leadership from direction and the split. Before the split occurred, we heard a report from Warde. We were appalled by what the IS had done. No one denies the right of the international leadership to suspend or even expel the leadership of a party, or even the party itself. But this is a power that must be used with the greatest care and discretion -- when a leadership is betraying or muffing a revolutionary situation, for example, and not over tactical questions. Lightly used, or abused, as it seemed to us was done in this case, the movement can degenerate grotesquely. We told Warde of our view, and urged correction. We went along with the IS on the particular issue involved, because we agreed with it on that issue as we understood it. But we were against the organizational measures that had been so lightmindedly applied, and disturbed by the split. We saw no evidence that the French majority was Stalinophobic (and the year and a half since then, in which time and experience have had opportunity to confirm or refute this charge, has certainly not demonstrated it to us; on the contrary). Pablo's periodic boasts about how the International is growing bigger and better all the time struck us as rather hollow after the loss of the majority of the French party and of the workers in the party.

When Clarke returned, it was not to collaborate with us on the line of the 3WC, which we welcomed and accepted although the Congress had never acted on our amendments because Clarke, in consultation with Pablo, had burned them (hardly an act of the maturity and principled conduct that Pablo claims), but to fight us in the same way that he had fought the French party. As you say, the Minority has for two years been trying to put itself in the position where it would appear to be the defender and representative of the International (rather the IS, and still more precisely, Pablo). (I don't claim to be the first to recognize what Clarke was up to; on the contrary, I was among the last.) He proceeded to form an unprincipled combination of those who blamed our difficult objective situation on the leadership, those who were looking for a bridge out of the party, and those who had become so disoriented by the new situation in the world that they took the 3WC line to mean that Stalinism is the wave of the future, everywhere, including countries like the US, Ceylon and Bolivia. Knowing Clarke, both his limits and his strong side, some of us began to wonder about the source of his arrogance and assuredness as he set out to divide the party over a line that all of us had agreed on. And when he began to recruit people on the ground that he really "represented Pablo" and that the party leadership did not really accept or understand the line it had voted for, there was a growing uneasiness as to just where Pablo did stand. When a member of the Minority broke away from it and informed us of what basis he had been recruited on originally, we felt it necessary to let Pablo know about it, in order to clear the air. But Pablo refused to give us a clear answer. He refused to say that Clarke's claim was a lie. His reply was evasive and weasel-worded. To us this was not the behavior of a principled collaborator.

Abe Lincoln was fond of the story about the backwoodsman engaged in a struggle to the death with a bear, and the man's wife who watched the struggle and showed her "impartiality" by shouting, "Go it, husband! Go it, b'ar!" In the American view, this is not real impartiality, considering the relation of the woman to the man. Throughout its history our party has been accustomed to getting the support of the International against all revisionist developments that arose in our ranks. We always got it from Trotsky, that is sure. But perhaps the IS, not as experienced as Trotsky and not as well acquainted with our Minority as we are, did not yet recognize its revisionist character? Good -- or at any rate if not good, then at least understandable and permissible temporarily. But under the circumstances if the IS was not to help us against the revisionists for whom our party had become -- yes -- a prison, then the least that we could expect of its members was that they should not give backhanded help to the Minority -- which was what Pablo was doing when he refused to disavow the Minority's claim of his support. Was this too much to expect from one with whom we had collaborated in the most loyal fashion? Against our wishes the conviction began to grow that apparently it was too much to expect. Try to put yourself in our position, Ernest -- wouldn't you have been put on guard by all this?

At the May plenum we defeated the Minority, and extracted from them a pledge to abide by majority rule. Put on our guard by Pablo's evasions and feeling that the truce in the party could last only if the Minority did not see a chance for help from outside the party ranks, we decided to investigate Pablo's attitude. Read non-factionally, that was the purpose of the Tom letter: to discover the reason for

Pablo's attitude in the past, to be alert to his moves in the future. I do not have the letter before me but it (or the speech on Internationalism and the SWP) explicitly stated that we had no intention of making the first hostile move on the international field. How then was this a declaration of war against Pablo or anyone else? No, it was a declaration that we were on our notice -- and after what had happened, we would have been fools to take any other attitude. Meanwhile, we intended to remain in a state of military discipline in our party -- just as the Minority was -- until either the differences were resolved or the fight broke out anew. This is the simple truth. The Minority's different interpretation was factional from beginning to end, the pretext (not the reason) for breaking the truce and renewing a fight that could only end in split.

I turn now to the charge that our course has been unprincipled in this fight (in contradiction, as you admit, to our entire past). "Their 100% about-face of today dates only a few months back. How then to explain it? When were they sincere: when they affirmed their total solidarity with the line of the Third World Congress, or when they today affirm, with an unheard-of cynicism, that we are quite simply Stalinists and even agents of the GPU?" (IS Bureau letter, Nov, 15.) This is what we call a "have you stopped beating your wife?" question. Has it occurred to you that it is possible both that we were sincere then and are sincere today (I leave aside the tendentious way in which the quotation is phrased?" At any rate, please consider the possibility.

About our sincerity and the principled character of our support of the general line of the 3WC, there never was any doubt. I can assure you of that personally, Ernest, because I was among the last to understand and come to agree with this line, and I was aided in this not only by the general correctness of the line but by the patient, persistent and helpful persuasion of most of the Majority leaders. What reason was there for them to do this if they secretly did not accept the line or had so many reservations about its correctness? It wouldn't make sense, and it flies in the face of our whole tradition. We were all sure that the 3WC line was not the real basis of our differences with our Minority, and that is not involved today either. No one will profit except factionally in trying to rewrite this section of our movement's history. As to our relative understanding of the line, we did not interpret it to mean a turn to the American CP, and could not. The Minority did, despite their protestations to the contrary because it was so flagrantly in conflict with the text of the documents, and that will be proved now in action, and already has been proved by their first independent activity -- an influx into the ALP as their major point of concentration in New York.

At the same time, we could not help realizing that there were some important deficiencies in the 3WC documents when it could be interpreted so differently by groups which both claimed adherence to it. At best, therefore, it suffered from some ambiguity. This was not a mere suspicion: real life in our party demonstrated it. This was the first time in the history of our movement that such a thing had happened. It pointed to the possibility that the documents straddled two different conceptions. In that case, two different views had converged around the line of the 3WC, and it was going to take time to determine how different they were.

Murry Weiss has recalled to us that in 1924 Trotsky and Stalin signed the same resolution on the need to promote democratic centralism in the party. Later Trotsky could be reproached for this, perhaps was, as insincere and unprincipled. That is an unhistorical view of political development. They signed the same resolution, and then real life illuminated the fact that they had different conceptions. This should not surprise us. As you well know, all splits begin in identity at one point or another; in fact, split presupposes previous identity. That is the dialectical conception of development, isn't it (although of course not all identity leads to split in a given situation)? Why then should the fact that there was identity in the past and split now necessarily lead to the conclusion that there was something unprincipled about either the identity or the split? (Even in the case of Shachtman, we had unity of views on the defense of the Soviet Union at our July 1939 convention. Yet we had to break with him two or three months later and split with him the next April on that same question when certain events took place that showed he placed a different construction on our previously common position. Yet there is no doubt in my mind that he was sincere and principled on this issue in July.)

As our fight here developed, it became evident that our common line meant different things to different people. Yet we were extremely careful not to leap to conclusions of a drastic character about the IS, and Pablo especially, because we know that not every difference becomes basic and develops all the way to the point of irreconcilability. This responsible approach guided us in our attitude to Pablo; we refused to declare differences that we were not sure existed in reality; we moved slowly, extremely slowly, not lightmindedly suspicious, but ready to give Pablo the benefit of every doubt, despite his peculiar attitude toward us. The fact that we now see vital differences is cited against us as a sign of lack of principle since "only a few months back" we didn't or weren't prepared to declare them. Does that really make sense to you? Would we be principled to suppress differences now because we did not see them, or because they did not exist, a few months back?

Great events took place in these few months, and they tested the differences and showed that they were not minor. (I refer to the events in East Germany, France and the conceptions about the political revolution in the SU.) Could this have been foreseen a year or two ago? I don't think so. At any rate we didn't foresee them. Ah, but it was foreseen! So says Shachtman. So too now say the Cochranites. But Shachtman's premise was all wrong (the premise that defense of the SU leads to Stalinist conciliation) and the Cochranite premise was no more correct. (Anyhow, we know that even a correct conclusion or prediction is no proof that the reasoning employed to reach it was necessarily correct.) We still hold to the main line of the 3WC, but new events have shown that we have different conceptions of the analysis to be made today. To us the entrust conception of the 3WC is only that -- a method for building our own movement. To the Minority and Pablo it is a bridge to liquidationism (maybe that's what the 3WC was to them two years ago too -- but that's not certain, maybe it wasn't that to them then; but anyhow it is a secondary question). And there is a third tendency, which I am not sure but I think you represent, which has failed to understand what the real issue in the International is today, and makes the mistake of accepting the Cochranite interpretation of the relation between the 3WC and the present struggle.

Try to get it clear, Ernest: this is not a fight over the 3WC. We have been angered by the devious and miseducational campaign of the Minority to make something sacrosanct of the 3WC. A WC is only a WC -- it's not for all time. That's our attitude to all the congresses of our movement -- the first, the second, and the third. Time tests all the predictions and prognoses they contain. We must retain what is still useable, and replace what is not. We hold to what is good in it, but we're not bound by every word for all time, any more than Lenin felt bound by last year's resolutions. Otherwise, we become truly sectarians and fossils. We must review everything in the 3WC documents, and we will -- the imminence of war, the effects of revolutionary upsurge in Europe on war, the possibilities of an American depression before a war, despite Washington's wish to have it otherwise, etc. We no longer will permit our movement to be frozen in its thinking by our Minority's campaign around the 3WC. To us the 3WC documents as written contain no support for liquidationism or conciliation -- not when they were written, not now. And if it did (which I deny, although I admit it's a valid question for examination in view of certain ambiguities in the text) then it's our job to correct it now. What's unprincipled about that?

The same criteria apply to leadership. The fact that we supported Pablo up to a certain point and don't after that point is no proof that we're unprincipled (unless it can be shown that he hasn't changed -- and that can't be shown). We went along with him at the 3WC for one reason -- we agreed with him, or thought we did. We broke with him for one reason -- we found ourselves in disagreement with him on basic issues. What's unprincipled about that? We weren't liquidationist or conciliationist then, and as far as we could make out he wasn't either. We aren't liquidationist or conciliationist now, but the test of events shows that he is today. What could we do but break with him? Wouldn't it have been unprincipled if we hadn't? (I must add here that a genuine Pablo cult has been developed by the Minority in this country. The mere idea that we would dare to differ from Pablo on any question brought a scream of anguish and even astonishment from the Minority -- sincerely from the Clarke wing, and for factional purposes from the Cochran wing. We're not cultists, and I hope never will be. No one is immune from criticism in our movement -- Pablo, or Cannon, or anyone else. Our attitude to leaders is based on what they are and do as well as what they were and did. The hand-raisers are not on our side, despite all the slander to the contrary, as you will find out yourself if you choose to associate with the Cochranites.)

But I've been wandering a little, and I want to get back. As you state it, your view is that we "launched a preventive faction fight against the International" and are guilty of "a deliberate and cynical attempt to find some political justification for an organizational 'struggle of power'." You evidently regard this not only as cynical but unprincipled.

We have different ideas over who launched the fight; you think we did, we think Pablo and Clarke did. But who launched it is really secondary if the issues are fundamental. Far more important and revealing is the relationship between politics and organization struggle, and I'd like to go into that a little in connection with this fight.

I think you're making a mistake in the way you view the relationship in this concrete case. Let me put it another way. Suppose your-

self in our position. You have just endorsed the 3WC line, and a most vicious campaign is opened up on you by a faction in which you recognize all the earmarks of revisionism and which attacks you as an opponent of the line you have voted for. This faction derives its strength not from its own views but from its claim that it represents the International leadership with which you have worked in honest collaboration. You present the claim to the IS secretary, and he refuses to disavow it. The party heads for a split. You prevent it for the time being and create conditions of truce in which party work can go forward -- a test for the minority. They accept, and then break the truce at the first pretext. You become convinced then that the minority no longer wants to be in the party, it feels stifled, it wants to break out. Then you begin to detect signs that the IS secretary is not only continuing, but deepening his collaboration with this minority -- all the while (to use the phrase used against us) that there are no apparent political differences between you and him; for the truth is that he has never up to this point expressed a single difference with the policy you follow. What do you do then?

If you are a responsible leader, then you ask yourself: "Why is he behaving in this fashion? Why does he ally himself with a revisionist faction in our party, though he does not yet do so openly? Is it merely that he finds Clarke's character more charming than Cannon's?" And you are forced to a different conclusion: "No, it must be more fundamental than that, it must be that he has an affinity for Clarke's politics and a distaste for ours. If faction fights have any meaning -- and they generally do -- there must be a political basis for his behavior." And unless you are something other than a Bolshevik politician, you begin to search to find the answer to the puzzle. What's unprincipled about that? Isn't that what the Nov. 15 IS Bureau letter also purports to do?

Yes, faction fights, if they are deepgoing, have a political basis, even though it may not be fully clear to everyone involved at the start. And organizational practice has a meaning in such a context -- a political meaning -- and one can go very far astray if he overlooks this fact. When a faction begins by challenging organizational tradition, by departing from democratic centralism, by resorting to intrigue and deception, then you can be sure, if the history of the Bolshevik movement means anything at all, that behind it or at the bottom of it revisionist politics is also being hatched. The way the Minority faction was formed, the way it conducted itself, was even more revealing than the political arguments it found it expedient to put forward at the start -- half-way arguments, half-presented arguments, the traditional method of revisionists, who naturally cannot begin by fully presenting their own real views at the beginning. What applied to the Minority also applies to its behind-the-scenes ally and protector, Pablo. There is, there must be, some political basis behind his role, we concluded.

But even so, when the IS resolution on "The Rise and Decline of Stalinism" arrived, we did not leap to rash conclusions, and we weighed the matter carefully. I don't mind telling you my initial reaction: I thought it was on the whole an excellent document, despite some deficiencies and ambiguities I wanted to question you about (as I said in my letter to you). There were others who shared this view. We began to discuss our attitude toward it. There were those who thought that we should prepare a number of questions to be submit-

ted to the IS to clarify ambiguous or uncertain sections, with the thought that depending on the replies we would either vote for the document as it was, or propose amendments, or prepare a counter-document. One thing we were sure of -- we did not again want any document adopted unanimously, after which we would be confronted with the same situation that arose after the 3WC, when we were told we did not know what we had voted for, that we were not carrying out the line, etc.

We had barely begun the discussion among ourselves when Clarke put out the FI, without showing it to the majority of the editorial staff, which contained his new thesis about the "sharing of power" between the bureaucracy and the workers as an alternative to the revolutionary upheaval of the masses against the bureaucracy. This revision he labeled as "political revolution" and, he assured us, it was in full accord with the resolution on Stalinism. Is it hard to understand that this decided to make us take a second, third and hundredth look at the resolution?

The text of resolutions is important but I need not tell you that we have learned that in the hands of unscrupulous people the text itself alone is not enough to indicate the real line intended. And it soon became clear to us that whatever you, the author of the resolution may have meant by it, and whatever we thought it meant, Clarke -- and Pablo -- clearly meant something else. Such a resolution, whatever merits it may have, is inadequate under such circumstances.

Then came the IS letter of Aug. 10, signed by you, Frank and Pablo. I don't have the documents before me, but I recall that you said you had seen Cannon's speech and letter and were distressed by their false implications, etc.; you also said twice that you did not intend to do anything about it. Because of the French strike, we did not receive the letter until Aug. 31. We began to compose a reply. Before we had finished it, and without waiting for the reply, the IS three days later sent another letter. (This one was not signed; I assume and hope that you had left on your trip by then.) The tone of this was altogether different, although nothing new had happened in the meantime. Pablo denounced us for "the latest issue of the FI." What was this issue? It was the one in which, in the most guarded language, we let the readers know that we repudiated the conception on "sharing of power" that Clarke, in violation of his post, had smuggled into the previous issue of the FI. (In addition, we reprinted without comment Pablo's own article on the post-Stalin period, despite our strong opposition to much of it.)

What did this mean? One would have to be blind not to understand it. Pablo, instead of congratulating us for repudiating a revisionist article, was condemning us for doing so. To us that spoke more clearly than a thousand resolutions as to where he stood in the fight against revisionism.

Furthermore, he demanded that we stop printing what we were saying about the Soviet Union, Germany, etc., because our articles were not in line with what he was saying. This -- mind you -- in the midst of a pre-world congress discussion, on new events on which the International had not yet adopted a position.

And to make his attitude clearer yet, he attacked us for distributing our bulletins directly to sections, instead of through the IS.

In other words, he wanted us to publish Clarke's line and held over our head the threat that if we didn't we'd be acting in violation of the 3WC, which never even took a line on these questions, and he threatened us because we were distributing bulletins in a way we have been doing ever since our movement was formed, with the knowledge and approval of the IS. To us, it was clearly an effort not to promote an international discussion on a correct and objective basis, but to strangle the discussion by creating an atmosphere of organizational threats which could only muddy up the political discussion.

This was followed by his organization of a faction in Britain, and an attempt to intimidate and throttle Burns and prevent him from participating in the international discussion on an equal basis.

And this was followed by what for me was the final straw. He had asked us to meet with either you or him. As soon as we heard that your trip, unlike his, was actually going through, we accepted. On the same day that we got your letter saying that for financial reasons you might not be able to complete the trip (to which we replied in a wire you may not have received that we would raise the money for the completion), we got a letter from Pablo informing us that it would not do for us to meet with you because you were not an "official" representative. What had changed your status from Ceylon to here he did not explain. But it was plain enough that something had changed.

All this, plus the political issues clarified by East Germany and France which I do not go into here because they are in our Letter, which by this time you have seen, cleared away the last doubts. We were dealing with a revisionist opponent who did not scruple to use his post for the most devious maneuvers and deceptions. He was bent on splitting the British party because the majority there opposed him, just as he had done in France. Turning minorities into majorities, while the real majority is expelled, is his forte (also known as great advances on all fronts). He was bent on splitting our party too, and that was what his allies proceeded to try to do here.

Perhaps we were late in recognizing this reality. Perhaps we did not recognize it in the ideal order -- from theory to politics to organization -- but in another order. But we have recognized it now, and we will fight it to the end. Lenin, you may recall, failed to recognize the revisionist ulcer in the Second International until the war showed him what Kautskyism was. This took him a long time. But it did not take him long to recognize revisionism in his own party, and he fought it from the beginning. We too recognized Pabloism in our party fairly soon (although we did not know its full name at the start) and it was only as the fight developed that we recognized its kinship with the International revisionist leadership. But our slowness, if that's what it was, does not overshadow the fact that we did catch on before it was too late. We hope you'll do the same.

Your method of determining who is responsible for the split -- find out "Cui prodest?" -- is interesting, but rather limited. In some splits (politically unmotivated) it's in no one's interest. In others it can be shown (and I think this is the case most of the time) that it's in the interest of both sides.

You say, "Under such conditions (where the Minority appeared to be the defenders of the International politically and organizational-

ly) the minority had every interest to stay in the party and to let a political discussion develop." That sounds reasonable, I admit. If I was in such a situation as you describe, that's probably what I would do: I'd not only want to remain in the party, but I'd fight to remain in, and I'd subordinate every other consideration of an organizational character to stay in just so long as I'd have the right to continue to present my political views. But the question then arises: Why didn't the Minority do that? Why, on the contrary, did it follow precisely the opposite course?

Why did it start sabotaging party work? Why did it insist that it was bureaucratic for the Majority to publish its Plenum resolutions in the magazine unless it also published the Minority resolutions? Why did it discontinue daily activity? Why did it withhold party funds? Why did it insist that there could no longer be educational discussions in the branches but only debates ("even on The Origin of the Family")? Why did it refuse to accept the offer to run Bartell for Mayor in New York? Why did it refuse to allow a debate on East Germany? (With regard to your explanation on the slogan of withdrawal of the troops in East Germany, I don't find it very strong. The fact is that in action the masses were demanding such a withdrawal, whether or not they raised it vocally -- and while I won't dispute that point, we have considerable evidence that they did -- and it was our job not only to repeat what they were saying but to go beyond that and raise the slogans that were needed, even if the masses were not in position to voice them then. This whole business of East Germany, which I can't go into properly here, was most revealing to us. When the news came, we were happy, elated; the faces of the Cochranites became grim and moody; it was evident even physically that the news was not welcome to them: they no longer wanted to learn from events. And one of their top leaders (not a rank and filer) told us that it was correct not to demand the withdrawal of the Soviet troops because that would play into the hands of US imperialism! That was how the American Pabloites were educating their followers, not along the lines of your explanations.) And why did they impose faction discipline on all their members, subject to expulsion from the faction, not to attend the 25th Anniversary meeting in New York? Is that the behavior of people who think they have every interest in remaining in the party? Is that the kind of behavior that supports your theory?

The truth is that there was nothing in the world that could keep them in our party any longer -- at least not on a basis acceptable to the practices of democratic centralism. They were eager to go, they were wild to go, not even a brick wall would have kept them from going, and as they left they heaved a sigh of relief. (Only five of them were suspended by the plenum; the others could have remained by simply repudiating the anti-party boycott, and without giving up any of their rights as a minority, including the right to differ on the suspensions of the five. But they didn't even respond to this possibility; they fled.) This is the only revolutionary party in this country; the only one that has a generally correct position on all the basic questions, but they were acting under pressures that made it impossible for them to remain any longer as a minority within it. There was also another reason, to which I will return.

As for us, we had no intention of trying to do the impossible. Moreover, we had no intention of destroying the party in the process. What kind of party would it be if we surrendered to such a boycott

without any disciplinary measures? If they could get away with that, what couldn't they get away with? It would mean the end of the party as a disciplined organization. That price would be too high to pay under any circumstances, and we certainly would not pay it under these.

There was another reason why they wanted to leave now, and I will tell it to you in case you do not know it. Shortly after Clarke left, the Minority began to take stock of the International situation and, under pressure of questioning of its members, began to tell them that although it had Pablo, that is, "a majority of the ideological leadership in the International," it unfortunately did not have the support of a majority of the International itself, which tended to give the Majority tendency a "mechanical majority" in the International. Simultaneously Bartell and others began to denigrate the size and influence of the International just as he did that of the SWP after it became clear that they had the support of no more than one-fifth of our members. We took stock too, and came to the conclusion that in an honest 4WC our view would be able to win the support of a decisive majority of the International. Note, I said "honest" -- that is, unriggered, on the basis of the real relationship of forces in the International. But that was just the rub.. Neither Pablo nor the Cochranites wanted an honest congress to settle all questions. That was the reason for their raising organizational questions to embitter and confuse the atmosphere. That was the reason for their wanting and organizing a split in our party and in the British party. With such splits, Pablo would use his position to recognize the minority in each case, and thus turn up with a "majority" at the WC -- as he showed he knows how to do by the French split. And that, Ernest, is another reason why there was nothing we could do to prevent the split of the minorities either here or in Britain -- or elsewhere if necessary.

You refer to Cannon's remark about the party suddenly becoming a prison for those under pressure of alien forces. You don't try to explain why that happened to our Minority, or maybe you haven't yet figured it out. But you turn it around and ask why has the world movement become such a prison to us? The answer is that it hasn't. This is our ideological movement and we have no reason or wish to break out of it. On the contrary, we intend to live in and build it, and we are quite confident that we will succeed. But Pablo's regime has become a prison to genuine Trotskyists -- for the reasons given above. We do not trust it any longer, we have no confidence in it politically or any other way. We see an irreconcilable conflict, and we propose the genuine Trotskyists replace the Pablo regime by a Trotskyist regime, free of all trickery and manipulation and guided by a line that will be both orthodox and alert to all the revolutionary opportunities for building the party of world revolution. We hope that you will join in this work. I know that such a step will not be easy for you, but I hope that you too can reconsider and review the past and not hesitate, out of such subjective factors as the fact that you wrote the resolution which means one thing to you and another to the Pabloites who will have the power to enforce it, to take this course if it seems the correct one to you on further reflection.

I haven't touched on everything I'd liked to, but my time is running out, and I want to finish by posing a few questions to you:

1. Why should the SWP leadership, which you acknowledge has always practiced principled politics in the past, suddenly change so radically? (The "explanation" in the IS Bureau letter is hardly worth discussion and I cannot believe you take it very seriously. Why should it be assumed that the SWP Majority rather than the Minority has succumbed to the difficult objective conditions here? One must do more than make arbitrary statements.)

2. Sweeping aside the Pabloite bombast, why is it that the International has suffered so many losses and splits since the JWC? Is "Cannonism" to carry the brunt for this too, and is Pabloism free of the responsibility?

3. Why is it in your letter to me you say you have always considered us to be principled up to now, while on the same date you allow your name to be signed to an IS Bureau letter which repeats every calumny that has ever been directed against us, and applies them not only to the present but to the past?

With warmest greetings,

George Breitman

December 9, 1953

Dear George,

Thank you for your letter of December 3. Frankly, I was quite a bit astonished by it. If I am to follow your representation of events knowing persons, facts and thoughts on this side of the Ocean as I do, I should arrive at the conclusion that the most serious and deep-going crisis in the history of our movement is nothing but a tragedy-comedy of errors and misunderstandings. Pablo failed to write explicitly to Cannon that Clarke was not his agent and that he had neither instigated nor advocated nor even supported the minority's faction fight (a fact which stands established not only from what I know but from the very letters of the minority itself!). The second IS Bureau letter of August 1953 -- which, it is true, I did not sign because at that time I had already left -- destroyed the positive effects of the first letter. The IS failed to express its disagreement with the idea of "sharing of power" in the USSR, with which it most certainly disagrees. I myself didn't get in time money and mandate to arrive in Canada. . . . If all these small incidents wouldn't have happened, i.e., if Pablo would have given the clear answer asked for, if there wouldn't have been a second August Bureau letter, if we would have published a criticism of the "sharing-of-power-idea" and if I would have succeeded to complete my trip with a clear mandate in hand (by the way: I did not receive your cable) -- then there would have been no international split, no public attacks against the Stalinophile leadership of the FI, no break between the majority of the American cadre and the quasi-totality of the world cadre. . . . Do you really believe that this is the way things usually happen in our movement?

Of course, you were due to say that a posteriori the split reveals "deepgoing political differences," "differences of a fundamental nature, on basic issues," which, again a posteriori, justify the organizational course taken. Pardon me, what are these "fundamental differences"? If one cuts through the obvious slander contained in the paper's Open Letter (that the IS is "revisionist," that it "capitulates before Stalinism," that it is "working consciously and deliberately to liquidate the FI"), one sees differences in appraisal of the events following Stalin's death in the Soviet Union and the glaxis countries; one sees differences in policy toward the workers' uprising in Eastern Germany; one sees differences in estimation and approach toward the public servants' general strike of August 1953 in France. That's all. Even to arrive at that sum, it is necessary to stretch things quite a bit. I myself have failed to grasp till today the differences in approach to the Eastern German events, for example. Surely, by repeating a thousand times that the IS "capitulates before Stalinism," "is in reality opposed to a political revolution in the Soviet Union" or is "revisionist through and through" (what part of our program we are charged with "revising" nobody yet bothered to tell us), you will not change the fact that these charges are untrue and slanderous, which is proved not only by resolutions, articles, speeches, appeals, but also by practical action.

Now all the differences which are till today actually revealed are of course of a tactical nature. They don't put a question mark on any of the basic principles of our estimation of Stalinism and the USSR. They are, in fact, slighter than the differences between the French majority and minority in 1951-52, differences which involved the whole of the practical work of that section and which, nevertheless, in your opinion remained "purely tactical." They are certainly

slighter than the differences between the 1940 majority and minority in the USA, differences which, in the Old Man's opinion, wouldn't have necessitated a split even if the Shachtmanites happened to find themselves momentarily in a majority at the convention.

Yet on the basis of such tactical differences you go ahead and break publicly with the International, attack publicly its leadership, call publicly for a world-wide extension of the split, in short disregard completely all established organizational rules and behavior of discipline and act like our movement acted not even in 1928 but in 1933 toward the Komintern, like Lenin acted not in 1903 but in 1914. This is a principled difference, the main and only fundamental difference which I see at the present stage of the fight: the overthrow of the principle of one World Party in a manner which, I regret to have to repeat this, I cannot characterize otherwise as criminally lightminded, irresponsible and cynical.

I don't know if you understand how we -- and I don't say this for five IS members but for the great majority of the World movement's cadres -- felt about this action of yours. For us it denotes a basic break with the principle of the World Party which is the only organizational framework in which our movement can be built. One doesn't break with an International for tactical reasons. One doesn't break with an International because, hypothetically, it is wrong on the issues of your own country. One doesn't break with an International even when the first basic, principled differences develop. One sees in an International a whole epoch of world history and of the development of the labor movement. One breaks with an International when it has finished its historical mission. Remember when Lenin and Trotsky broke with the Second and Third International: after the betrayals of 1914 and 1933. Historical betrayals of such a dimension as the capitulation toward the imperialist war or the fascist dictatorship were necessary to convince our principled masters that the International they lived in till that time had become hopeless and couldn't be reformed any more from within. Even when such grave events happened as participation in a bourgeois government and acceptance of this betrayal by the Second International, Lenin didn't break with it, not because he "underestimated" or "misunderstood" the gravity of the event but of course because he rightly thought that one had to correct these deviations from within. When such grave events happened as the betrayal of the General Strike in England with the co-responsibility of the Third International or, worse, the betrayal of the Second Chinese revolution, Trotsky did not break with the Komintern, did not bring the conflict out in public, did not attack in the public press a single time the criminal leadership of the Third International. He didn't even do that when mass expulsions of Left Oppositionists had already started, and he and his followers were ready to accept discipline even after 1927 if only they would have received the right to defend their positions inside the movement. Was this course wrong? Did it prove, like Shachtman and other neo-Mensheviks today have discovered, that Trotsky "underestimated" the degree of degeneration of the Komintern? Not at all. This course was the only principled course to be taken, i.e., the only course which corresponds to the Marxist understanding of the meaning and the role of the Workers' International.

Now compare with this principled attitude of our masters on the basic question of international democratic centralism the attitude of

you people. Let us admit one minute that all your suspicions and misgivings about "Pablo" -- in fact the IS myself included -- were correct. Has the IS betrayed any revolution? Has it done anything comparable to participation in a bourgeois cabinet or allying itself with counter-revolution in the midst of a growing revolution? Have we lived our 1923 or our 1927, not to speak about our 1933? Surely the very question sounds so incongruous that no one can hesitate one second how to answer it. Surely, all differences should then be exposed first inside the movement, probed and discussed inside the International. Surely then the correct course to follow was to attempt reforming the movement misled by Pablo from within. Surely then the correct course to follow was to come to the normal leading bodies of the International, to bring the differences before these bodies, to wait for the verdict of these bodies and, in case this verdict would be negative, to start patiently convincing the rank-and-file of the incorrectness of the leaderships decisions, culminating in a proposal to the next WC to do away with that leadership. But what you did was in fact to pick up the characteristic Shachtmanite-IKD sentence of 1947-8, "to disregard all IS, IEC, WC" and to address yourself to the "real movement." Which is this mysterious "real movement," outside of the normal sections and the normal leading bodies of the International?

You say you don't want to quit the International, you want to live in it and to build it? You say only the "Pablo regime" has become a prison to you? Pardon me: haven't we heard that before? Didn't all the people who run away from us use the same subterfuge? Didn't they always claim in the States they ran away not from the Trotskyist organization, but from the "Cannon regime"? Doesn't Shachtman claim even today to be a genuine representative of the "real Trotskyist movement"? Unfortunately, Lenin -- and Cannon! -- have educated us to be very suspicious of people who love "the movement" a lot but just hate "the regime" and therefore betray the organization. You think the "Pablo regime" is bad? That is your full right. You want to fight that regime? We may disagree, but we certainly will not deprive you of your rights to do so within established rules of organizational behavior. But when, under the pretext of "breaking with the regime," you publicly break discipline and trample down with heavy boots of "military factionalism" the normal framework of international democratic centralism, anybody with some experience will tell you: "Please drop these silly pretences and speak out openly that you broke with the FI as an established organization, with its established leadership and statutes, whatever may have been the reasons which led you to do such a thing." The Old Man never played around with the fact that Stalin succeeded in precipitating a split between the Left Opposition and the Komintern -- not just a break of the Left Opposition with the "Stalin regime." That split he considered at that time historically unjustified. You, by your action, consider today the break between your part and the FI -- not the "Pablo regime" -- as inevitable and justified. That's where you act in the most cynical and unprincipled manner imaginable.

You say you have the support of the world movement, but that this would not find expression in a "rigged world congress." This is again a subterfuge too cheap to be used in our movement. Either you consider the FI your organization, whatever may be the "regime" and its tactical mistakes. In that case, surely, you could find or at least propose some organizational device for rigid guarantees of internal democracy. Why, even Shachtman found them as late as 1947, and God

knows he had more "fundamental differences" with the FI than you people have. We could get together any time and draft rules of representation of sections which would satisfy everybody, e.g., give voting rights to all sections or expelled groups of sections which were members of the movement at the time of the Third WC, or any other expedient. If you were really eager to have a democratic WC with all members expressing their opinions, there could be no difficulty in finding such a device. If you thought you had the slightest chance to get a majority or even a strong minority under such circumstances, you would have rushed forward with such proposals, as in fact you intended to do first if I'm not mistaken. You would have sent your criticism to the IEC, prepared a strong plea for the WC and fought it out in that forum. But that precisely is the course you have not taken. You have acted implicitly on the presumption that the FI is no more your organization, that you don't want to abide to any discipline regardless of the fact that you are minority or majority, that whenever the movement puts you in a minority you will grandiosely "disregard" the movement. That is the meaning of disregarding IS, IEC, WC, etc. That is the meaning of this new talk about a "rigged WC." In that frame of mind, any WC is going to be declared a priori "rigged" if it places you in a minority.

This opinion was already clearly expressed in Cannon's speech on "Internationalism." Suddenly he discovered that, in opposition to what had been his practice in his own party and his advice to us in the past, one had to be extremely liberal in the International. Suddenly he discovered that the International was composed of "weak groups," that the International leadership was even "weaker" and especially "young and unexperienced," and that under these conditions it should limit itself to ideological work and "advice," i.e., it should dissolve the movement as a World Party and keep only a federation of national sects, "an international letter-box" like the Old Man used to call contemptuously similar set-ups of the pre-war centrists. What else was the meaning of this sudden revision of our basic organizational principle -- democratic centralism on a world scale -- if not the fact that your party's leadership was not going to recognize any discipline towards international bodies in which it happens for once to be in a minority? What else was the meaning of the mechanically theoretical justification Cannon tried to give to this behavior -- "The American revolution will decide world revolution; the SWP will decide the American revolution; the present leadership will have to lead the SWP if it has to fulfill its role; therefore the fate of world revolution hinges not on the building of the FI as an organization but on the permanency of the SWP leadership; therefore, the basic allegiance of the world Trotskyist has to be not to the FI as an organization (it's much too weak!) but to the SWP leadership" -- ?

The same opinion is even more clearly and naively expressed in your own letter, dear George. You write about Pablo's letter in answer to Cannon's request concerning his dissociation from the minority, that this answer was not "the behavior of a principled collaborator (!)". You write that "throughout its history our party has been accustomed to getting support of the International against all revisionist developments that arose in our ranks." You write: "Was this too much to expect from one (!) with whom we had collaborated in the most loyal fashion?". In other words: you only saw a relationship of friendly collaboration, with an individual, not a relationship of

organizational allegiance to a world organization! What do all your sentences mean but one single thing: that your adherence to the world movement is subordinate to complete and full endorsement by the international leadership of every single move of your party's leaders? That, in other words, your basic organization is the SWP and not the FI, and that the FI is only accepted, tolerated and helped with "freedom of criticism" as long as it "goes along" with the SWP leadership?

Can't you visualize how the world movement reacts to opinions like these? Don't you see this is exactly the same thing Stalin asked for the Russian party in the mid-twenties from the Komintern, and got away with it, and destroyed the International for that reason? Can't you visualize a situation in which, not because of sordid maneuvers, but for valid -- even if you think incorrect -- political and organizational considerations the International leadership may disagree with your party, may want to end a faction fight by a compromise and not by a split, may have misgivings about the political turn the fight takes, without therefore either "aiding and abetting" that fight or becoming ipso facto "pro-Stalinist," "revisionist" and "liquidationist"? If you can't visualize such a movement, in which its leadership takes a principled stand on matters in dispute following its own convictions and not always and automatically supporting the SWP leaders' actions, then really the building of the FI was a big misunderstanding on your behalf right from the start. You will never build a Trotskyist International with people ready to act in that way -- real agents in the worst sense of the word. You will only build an international clique. Is that what you want?

Perhaps it is not unnecessary to repeat once again that it was never in Pablo's or the IS's or the IEC's intention to "remove from office" the present SWP's leadership -- only a mind grotesquely distorted by fear can conceive such a ridiculous proposition. Even if we thought, and wrote, that Hansen's article on Stalinism was not very good or that we didn't like the harsh tone of the discussion, this surely does not imply such diabolic intentions. Isn't it the right of an International leadership to judge things in their own merit? But I'm afraid Cannon himself did not believe the story that Pablo wanted to remove him from office. What he feared, with some reason indeed, was that the IS was not ready to accept passively any form of bureaucratic expulsion of the minority. You may think this wrong. But frankly is it a principled and justified reason to split the International?

In the mass movement, the masses themselves put a check on all irresponsible factionalists and splitters. These drift away or are driven out, and when they represent no historical necessity of any kind, just wither away; in any case, nobody cares. In our movement, unfortunately, the check of a strong mass basis does not yet exist. Irresponsible people can start all kinds of fights and splits and think, at least temporarily, they can get away with it. Given a minimum material basis, they can put up quite a show for a certain period. Even today the Shachtmanites continue to exist on a level which is not qualitatively different from ours, and so do even the De Leonists. Under such conditions, in a movement like ours where every talented cadre looks upon himself as a Lenin or Trotsky in being and where sad experiences of the past have taught everybody to be over-sensitive for ideological nuances, there would be an uninterrupted series of brawls

and splits without some basic loyalty which checks such people. This basic loyalty cannot be only the one to the program, although, of course, this is a fundamental one. It is well-known that a common program has never prevented a periodic appearance of tactical differences and will never do so. Therefore, there is only one basic loyalty possible to keep our movement together: the loyalty to the International! One has to penetrate oneself in one's most intimate consciousness with the conviction that the International, not only as a program or a body of ideas but as an organization with a given structure, represents all hopes of mankind in our epoch. Thousands of people have died, not for Cannon or Pablo or the SWP nor even for the Old Man, but for that International. To split the International before it has demonstrated its inadequacy in events of colossal historical scope is a real crime against the labor movement. It is a 1,000 times preferable to find some organizational modus vivendi and to have confidence in the ultimate lucidity of our world cadre, a healthy cadre, which in due time will correct all mistakes it occasionally makes. As long as everybody does not adopt such a rule of behavior, any national section or faction of a national section will be liable to split away lightmindedly on the basis of some occasional difference or organizational dispute. We shall never be able to build the movement as long as people show such an attitude. And that is precisely the attitude your leadership has shown in an extreme manner during the final stage of the present dispute.

Surely these ideas are neither new nor surprising for you. You yourself express the very same principles -- when you think of your party on a national scale. You write that if you would happen to find yourself in some tactical difference with your party, but would be sure of the support of the majority of the world movement -- isn't that what you claim today for the SWP majority? -- you would then act in the following manner: "I'd not only want to remain in the party, but I'd fight to remain in, and I'd subordinate every other consideration of an organizational character to stay in just so long as I'd have the right to continue to present my political views." I am therefore justified to ask: Why didn't you people act in this same way -- on an international scale? Why on the contrary did you follow the opposite course, to rush out and denounce the whole outfit as "pro-Stalinist" and "liquidationist"? Don't tell me you were afraid Pablo would have you expelled because you sent Internal Bulletins to all sections, or that you feared to be confronted with a "rigged WC." If one really wants to stay inside an organization, one always finds organizational expediencies for such kind of problems. So the question remains: Why has the International suddenly become a prison to you? Because the IS wasn't ready to approve the expulsion of the minority, didn't give Cannon "loyal support" in his fight against the minority? But isn't this utterly unprincipled and cynical? Isn't this destroying the basic principle of internationalism, of democratic centralism on an international scale, of the meaning and mission of the FI?

Need I add that what you think to be "stages of Pablo's intrigue" against the SWP leadership are mainly misunderstandings indeed? Need I add that Clarke most definitely was not "Pablo's agent," that Pablo urged him in many letters not to attack the party's leadership, to stop the fight, to accept every reasonable organizational truce? We shall publish the letters and you will be able to see for yourself. Need I add that our June 1953 IEC letter to your leadership was a

genuine expression of satisfaction with the truce, that all of us were sincerely convinced this was going to work -- except of course Burns who already had information to the contrary from Cannon? Need I add that the second IS-Bureau letter of August was a natural reaction upon the Stein document and all other many indications that you were rapidly heading for an international split? Need I add that Pablo wrote to you about my trip in the sense you indicate only because I had not yet received the information about the latest developments and was therefore unable to represent IS opinion after these developments? Need I add that even given all these misunderstandings, some organizational compromise could have easily been found at the eve of your last Plenum? Really, the organizational procedure we have followed in the past should have warranted that to you. Didn't we discuss with the Bleibtreu group for over two years, notwithstanding repeated and open breaches of discipline (recognized by Cannon himself as late as his May speech on "Internationalism")? Haven't we cohabited with the Swiss section, which violently disagrees with us on every major political issue which cropped up since the end of the war? Even if you were so afraid of Pablo's "apparatus," haven't we got a world cadre of fine comrades who think and judge by their own mind, their own convictions? Your party's action implies in fact a terrible contempt of the real world movement, which is only the sum of our sections. The break-away from the movement is a logical outcome of that contempt. The political nature of that contempt is unprincipled through and through. As for its social nature, what name can you give it?

Faction fights and splits have a logic of their own, dear George. This logic has already brought you in few months' time to a radical change of opinion on our "Rise and Decline of Stalinism." Yesterday you thought it "on the whole an excellent document." Today you accept Stein's view that it is "the most revisionist (!) document ever written in the history of our movement." To justify your retreat, you write: "The text of resolutions is important, but I need not tell you that we have learned that in the hands of unscrupulous people the text itself alone is not enough to indicate the real line intended (!)". You certainly need tell me that, for it is the first time I hear about it in our movement. The Stalinists used to tell us that all our theses, resolutions, articles, books, speeches, were of no importance. Important, you see, were only the hidden intentions of that arch-traitor, Trotsky. You try to get away with the same method in our movement, by simply substituting Pablo for Trotsky? You won't succeed, I can tell you that in advance. I told Bleibtreu the same thing three years ago. Ours is a principled, serious movement, a conscientious cadre. If you have misgivings about a document, you present amendments or counter-documents, and everybody will judge them for their own merit. But if you use the smear-tactic, if you don't discuss what people say and write but what they intend and hide, i.e., what they don't say and don't write -- you won't get the support of any serious principled revolutionist. Cannon, not so long ago, wrote the very same thing to Renard. Have you already forgotten this serious lesson?

It will not be possible to convince the movement that "fundamental issues" are involved in the "suppressed sentence in the quotation of the Transitional Program" or in one wrong sentence in Clarke's article (sentence with which we disagree, I repeat once again). We shall put the "suppressed sentence" back in our document this very

minute. We shall dissociate ourselves in the same document from any "sharing-of-power-ideas." You can't go on living just on "intentions." You need more substantial nourishment. It will come, don't worry. The behavior of the Bleibtreu group, since it split away from the International, is a clear example of this; sad to say, this group is now in the process of becoming the political advisor of your paper! You have already completely modified your position on the Chinese revolution (I remember vividly, like all IEC members do, Manuel's excellent speech on that subject!) for the purpose of an unprincipled bloc with Peng, who doesn't represent the Chinese section but just his own egotistic warped personality. Suddenly you discover that Peng always followed a "principled course," the principled course of calling for a truce and "elections for a Constituent Assembly" late in 1947, after the decisive offensive of Mao Tse-tung had already started, the principled course of calling as late as 1951 the Chinese CP a "peasant party," the Chinese government a "coalition government with the bourgeoisie," and the conquest of power by Mao as "instructed by the Kremlin diplomacy." Thank you for these principles; they are certainly not ours nor Trotsky's! For a short time you'll have to satisfy yourself by playing around eclectically with all kinds of conflicting hypothesis, like Hansen did in his latest series. That too was a sad sign, to see a Trotskyist paper which had nothing else to say on perspectives than "perhaps this is going to happen, perhaps this is not going to happen, let's just wait and see." But it won't stop there. Worse will come. You'll have to swallow the Bleibtreu-Swiss line hook, line and sinker. That will really give you some "fundamental differences" with the FI: the idea that not a revolutionary upheaval but capitalist restoration is brewing in the USSR; that not world revolution but world reaction is on the move; that as long as "we" don't lead the masses, there will be no change in this trend of events (nobody yet explained how "we" can capture the mass movement if world reaction grows stronger and stronger as in the pre-war period); and that therefore the danger of barbarism grows from day to day. These ideas will transform your party into an inept, sterile sect. They will cover you with ridicule, like they covered with ridicule the Bleibtreu group which has replaced Marxist analysis by fantastic stories, like the one that Stalin has been secretly poisoned; that Beria and the GPU leaders of all people represented the left, i.e., Reiss wing of the bureaucracy; that Malenkov wants to send the workers back to the farms because he is afraid of the numerical strength of the proletariat, etc., etc. It is a sad perspective for me, who felt closer to the SWP than to any other Trotskyist organization in the world. But it is the price one pays for a political and organizational break with the FI, the only revolutionary organization on a world scale, the price one pays for unprincipled politics.

As you certainly did not lose your capacity for sober thinking like the Bleibtreu group has, it won't take you long to have a second look at the International situation and to "take stock" a second time. You will have found out by then, on the basis of the answers to your Open Letter which will pour in from all sections, that you did not just break with the "Pablo" regime but with the FI organization and nearly all its sections. Perhaps that will give you some food for thought, and many things you don't grasp today on the basis of illusions as to the recruiting possibilities of Cannon's prestige in the International, will become clearer at that time. You will have to ask yourself over and over again if it was justified on principle to break with the FI on the issue you broke with it. You'll

also take a look at some of the fancy people you certainly will attract: all the kibitzers and splitters who broke away in the years since the 2nd world war, all kinds of people opposed to the defense of the Soviet Union, all types of hopelessly ossified sectarians, in which you yourself won't have any confidence whatsoever. Perhaps some of you, all of you, will reconsider then their organizational attitude and come to the conclusion that it has been wrong. We on our part will always keep the door open for any group agreeing with our program and willing to function within the normal framework of our statutes and organizational tradition.

I shall answer presently your questions:

1. The immediate reason why the SWP leadership changed so radically its course of principled politics in the past is the fact that for the first time it was confronted with a situation in which it was not sure of the International's support for its actions. This was a test of the seriousness of its international allegiance -- and in this test it failed miserably. Underneath there is a reaction of self-consciousness and self-delusion towards the growing objective difficulties -- an escape from reality of a sectarian type. I would add that objectively this is a result of alien class pressure, without saying that your party has already succumbed to that pressure. (But breaking away from the FI definitively would certainly be a very bad sign indeed.)

2. You are profoundly misinformed about the International situation if you think we have suffered "so many losses and splits" since the 3rd WC. Until the crisis your party started in the International, I know only of 2 splits, the one in France and the one in the Indochinese group (where we lost 1/4 of the membership in France but gained important forces in Indochina itself); much less than in the period between the 2nd and 3rd WC when there was no question of the "Pablo regime". In Ceylon we didn't have a split but an epuration of the party which was due for a long time given the character of that party. In most cases, as in Ceylon itself, there have not been "losses" but big organizational gains, as in South America, in Germany, in Britain (till Cannon ordered Burns to repeat Operation Killer on the "Pabloite" majority of that party. Do you know that between 2/3 and 3/5 of that party remain with the International?), in Italy, etc. The only serious crisis that existed at the time of the 3rd WC, the split in Austria, has been healed in the meantime. And the one important section which had been much weakened, the Indian section, has greatly recovered since.

3. I consider the FI the only organization I owe allegiance to. When my organization is attacked in the most unprincipled and slanderous manner, I'm not going to squabble about words with my comrades who defend my organization. Isn't that the way you also act -- on a national scale?

It is now my turn to ask some questions:

1. Why should Pablo, Frank, Germain and the other "followers of Pablo", i.e., 17 or 18 of the 23 members of the IEC unanimously elected by the 3rd WC, comrades in whom you always had the fullest confidence, after having faithfully built the movement for many years, suddenly transform themselves into criminals who "are working

consciously and deliberately to liquidate the FI", i.e., into Stalinist agents and spies, for what else can be the meaning of that formula?

2. Is it true or isn't it true that the basic reason why your Plenum wrote the "Open Letter," i.e., called publicly for a split of the FI, was the fact that you had become convinced that IS and IEC wouldn't approve the expulsion of the minority? Is it tolerable from a principled point of view to break with the International on such an issue?

3. If you really don't want to break with the FI, but only want to "fight the Pablo regime", are you ready:

(a) To participate in a WC of our movement representing all the sections at the stand of the 3rd WC, on the basis of the representation modus adopted at the 2nd and 3rd WC or any other basis usual in the revolutionary movement and acceptable to both sides?

(b) To declare at the beginning of that WC, like we ourselves would do without hesitation, that you would abide by its decisions, regardless of the fact that your proposals would be adopted or not?

(c) To accept an organizational compromise for reestablishing the unity of the world movement, e.g., the reunification of the British section and the recognition, both in France and the USA, of both groups as affiliated to the FI with certain forms of non-aggression agreements, based on a functional division of labor?

(d) To call publicly (in forms adapted to security), on the basis of an agreement with points (a), (b) and (c), upon all sections of the FI to participate in the 4th WC regularly convened by the regularly elected leading bodies of the movement (in which, if you wished, you could of course occupy the position you always occupied in the past), while keeping all your rights to defend your political views in the pre-Congress discussion, with the clear understanding that any public attack on the international leadership would be answered publicly by that body?

To accept such proposals would have been of course normal procedure for all groups, tendencies, parties or individuals who recognize the principle of democratic centralism not only on a national but also on the international field. Allow me to repeat what I already wrote in my last letter: on the basis of your friends' actions of the last months, I do not have much hope left as to your and their answer to these questions.

Fraternally yours,

E. Germain

January 15, 1954

Dear Ernest:

Your letter of December 9 was painful to read. I had hoped that a meeting of minds was possible. Instead, you have so far chosen to misunderstand, employ debaters' tricks and ignore most of what I wrote you. You evidently feel you must defend "the International" against us, and this has led you to indefensible statements. I asked why you had signed your name to the November 15 IS Bureau letter containing numerous gross slanders against us, applied to our past as well as present course, when in your letter to me you said you did not consider our past course ever to have been unprincipled. In the December issue of the French Pabloite paper, which I had not seen when I wrote you, you claimed among other things that our minority represented "more than a third of the members" and that they committed "no public act of indiscipline." Do you know how ridiculous this makes you appear here, where everyone knows they represented only 18%? Do you see why no one can give the slightest credence to your equally inflated figures about the British Pabloites? And don't you feel silly, writing there was "no public act of indiscipline" at the very same time that Cochran, weeping on Shachtman's shoulder, publicly refutes you by explaining that his faction deliberately organized the boycott of our 25th Anniversary celebration? By the way, what do you think of this boycott? Why do you evade all mention of it? Are you, like the real Pabloites, an enemy of our 25 year struggle and all that it represents? If you had been in New York, would you have joined the boycott?

Your answer to the question I asked you last time is, "I'm not going to squabble about words with my comrades who defend my organization." Does this mean that you will sign or write anything, no matter how far from the truth, just so long as it is conceived as a defense of the IS? What kind of defense is it, and what is being defended, that requires lies? How can I have confidence in what you write when you tell me in advance that you will not "squabble about words" with slanderers because they are on your side, or because you are on theirs? How can I tell what part of what you write is actually your opinion of the facts, and what part is concession to your slanderous allies?

Nevertheless, I want to try again to reach through to you -- for your sake, for ours, for the sake of the International.

You make a joke of my letter when you ask if I think the present situation is the result of "nothing but a tragi-comedy of errors and misunderstandings." No, what my letter tried to do in good faith was answer the charge that our course was unprincipled by reciting the events and the evolution of our thinking under their impact. What we reached was not a misunderstanding, but an understanding. An understanding (1) of the profound political differences that separate us from the Pablo faction, which are set forth in our Letter and to which I shall return. An understanding (2) of the new slogan, "Junk the old Trotskyism," not as an expression of a desire to bring our program up to date, correct our errors and adjust our tactics to new needs (although that is how it was represented), but as an expression of a desire to junk Trotskyism itself as outmoded and to replace it with

an opportunist orientation to Stalinism as the channel through which the revolution will pass everywhere in the world. And an understanding (3) of the necessity to determine who the real Trotskyists in this International are.

You condemn us for openly publishing our Letter in which we broke politically with the Pablo faction, an act which you claim represents "a break with the International." The reasons why we published the Letter have already been stated by Cannon in the December 28 paper. What do you mean when you accuse us of "a break with the International" by publishing a defense of orthodox Trotskyism against deliberate public attacks on it? Didn't Clarke publicly violate our program by forecasting the possible self-reform of the Soviet bureaucracy in the magazine behind the backs of its editorial board? Have 'nt the new Pabloite conceptions about Soviet development, to which we object, been published? Didn't the French Pabloites publicly defend the Stalinists against the criticism of the French Trotskyists of the Majority in a public leaflet? Is it "loyalty" to the International to defile its program and tradition in public, but "a break with the International" to defend this program and this tradition in public? The members of the SWP don't think so, and no pontifical pronouncements, factional expulsions, excommunications or "removals" will change our opinion. I agree that, as a general rule, internal disputes in our movement would perhaps better be discussed internally, although a public discussion is nothing new. We conducted a limited public discussion before the 1940 split in the SWP, and Trotsky did not hesitate to attack in the public press the capitulationist position of Roman Weil and others in the German section in 1932. Trotsky's polemic against Urbahns, in the formative stage of the International Left Opposition, was also published in The Militant. In any case, we will never agree to a one-sided rule whereby revisionists enjoy the right to attack the program in public and the orthodox have no right to defend it in public.

And I urge you: Please don't pretend that the publication of the Letter marked a qualitative change in the relations between the IS and us. Because on November 15, before you had even heard of the existence of our Letter, the IS Bureau, writing to the leaderships of all sections, had already excommunicated us (and without even waiting to hear of the circumstances under which we had disciplined the organizers of the boycott, had already pledged to "never permit the expulsions effected by Cannon").

Elaborating on "the main and only fundamental difference which I see at the present stage of the fight: the overthrow of the principle of one World Party," you write many things about international discipline and democratic centralism that we would never quarrel with. But many of these things are also beside the point. I said we want to know who the Trotskyists in this International are. With Trotskyists we always have found and always will find agreement on organizational procedure. With Trotskyists we are willing and eager to discuss. But we want to be sure that they are Trotskyists, and not something else. Stalinists and apologists for Stalinism we will fight as enemies, not engage in discussion on the basis of democratic centralism. This is not a difference of nuance; it is the first condition of democratic centralism. (The American Pabloites understood this and that was why they refused to be bound by democratic centralism.) The selection is now taking place in the International. Far

from having contempt for the majority of the International, as you charge, we have the greatest confidence that a decisive majority will understand the real issues and show themselves to be Trotskyists.

I would make a second condition. When someone talks to us about democratic centralism, we want to make sure we are talking about the same thing. Tell me, do you think democratic centralism is possible internationally where an international leadership does not recognize and defend democratic centralism on a national scale? I don't believe it is, and I think this question is most pertinent to our discussion.

Here we were in the SWP, contending with a minority that blatantly violated discipline in the name of a "higher allegiance." The Pabloite faction in England were doing the same thing at the same time. This, you will recall, was what happened first, before there was any disciplinary action against them, before there was any letter. What, in your opinion, were we supposed to do -- grit our teeth, smile and console ourselves with the merits of democratic centralism -- as applied internationally? Oh, you tell us, "some organizational compromise could have easily been found at the eve of your last Plenum." Really? Such as what? Without anyone else's help, we found the means for a truce at the May plenum. But it wasn't worth the paper it was written on as soon as the minority saw it could not survive a truce. Why should we have your faith in "some organizational compromise" when we could see that the minority was driven by fundamental political pressure that made them feel we were incompatible? Does your conception of international democratic centralism require the leadership of a national party to permit it to be wrecked as the price of international democratic centralism? It's not our conception anyhow.

As I say, the minority violated democratic centralism. Here then was an excellent opportunity for the IS to show how devoted it was to this principle. Did it do it? On the contrary, Pablo directly instigated and encouraged the deliberate violations. (You may not know the whole American story, but you certainly know that this was what happened in Britain.) Is that how you expect to create devotion to this principle on the international field? Instead of joining us in our defense of democratic centralism in our party, the Pabloite IS attacked us for bureaucratism and brutality and degeneracy and pledged that it would "never" permit the violators of democratic centralism to be disciplined. And after that you expect this IS to be taken seriously when it preaches the necessity of democratic centralism on an international scale?

I am not sure, because I don't know all your ideas on the subject, but I have the feeling that your views on the International suffer from a tendency to regard it as a sort of collective substitute for national parties. I know that is the real Pabloite conception; that is why the Pablo faction is so eager to break up the solid national cadres who assert independence of judgment. Without the International, in our view, there can be no national parties worthy of the name of Trotskyist. But that doesn't mean that the International can substitute for them, for their organic development, for their selection of a leadership that really represents them, for the experiences they must pass through if they are to be fit for their

historic role. Against these truths, which must be accepted as the necessary basis for a healthy relationship between parties and International leadership, we are offered a caricature of Cannon's remarks, according to which the International must be a "letter-box," exercising no discipline, having no common line. Will it really surprise you to learn that we reject this caricature. Don't you know, or have you forgotten, that we got along with the International for 25 years? At the same time we flatly reject the genuinely bureaucratic -- to speak plainly, the Stalinist -- conceptions and practices of Pablo, which enabled him to dispose of a critical majority in France by disposing of the majority of the party, and which supplied him with the gall to issue his ultimatum that we'd better abandon our revolutionary anti-Stalinist line on Germany and the Soviet Union because they didn't conform to his private line, or else! We reject the caricature of Cannon's views and the tested reality of Pablo's views, and demand a healthy relationship between parties and International leadership, which will permit the parties to grow, and the International leadership, expressing the positions of the majority, to guide, coordinate and where necessary discipline -- all this, of course, being possible only on the basis of a common general (that is, Trotskyist) line.

On the basic point in your letter: You emphasize "loyalty to the International...as an established organization, with its established leadership and statutes," while our main emphasis is on loyalty to Trotskyism, that is, the program, the body of doctrine and the tradition that the International had up to and through the 3rd World Congress. Where we see fundamental political differences between ourselves and the Pablo faction, you see only differences of a "tactical nature," none of which "put a question mark on any of the basic principles of our estimation of Stalinism and the USSR." That, in our opinion, is where you make the biggest mistake of all. You will end in a blind alley, totally unable to influence the development of this struggle in a revolutionary fashion, unless you probe the already visible differences to the bottom and take your stand on the basis of the political lines that are tearing the International apart, rather than on the basis of an organizational loyalty, and an essentially abstract organizational loyalty at that.

I won't repeat what has already been written about these differences in our Letter, resolution and press. But I am forced to return to the German question when you say, "I myself have failed to grasp till today the differences in approach to the Eastern German events." (I believe you when you say this, but that amazes me all the more. Why don't you ask Pablo? He grasped it sufficiently to use the authority of his post -- without any protest from other IS members -- to try to bludgeon us into substituting his approach for our own. Instead of accusing us of "inventing" differences, why don't you find out from Pablo why he regarded our differences on this issue so important that he felt he had to resort to the heavy hand to try to stifle our views?)

I don't know what Pablo would tell you, but here is what we think: There was a fundamental difference between him and us on the omission from the IS manifesto of our demand for the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from East Germany in June. I know what you wrote me on November 15 -- that it was omitted "only because we wanted at

that time to concentrate on the slogans the fighters in Berlin had used themselves (where no one had used that slogan and for good reasons! Did the people come out on the street in the February revolution with the slogan: Withdrawal of the Cossacks? When you are busy making a revolution, and not only writing about it, the winning of the troops wherever it is possible becomes task nr. 1, not the deliberate provocation of these troops into hostile actions)."

Fundamentally this explanation strikes me as a lawyer's argument. (1) As I told you before, the evidence we have collected shows that the demand for the withdrawal of the troops was raised; but let that go -- I will agree that it probably was not raised as widely as other demands. (2) But must the raising of such a demand necessarily constitute a provocation of the troops into hostile actions? Not necessarily; in fact, such a demand, linked with appeals and acts of fraternization, etc., could have just the opposite effect and win the troops to friendly actions -- it all depends on the way it's done. (3) Let's distinguish a little. There well might be situations in which the masses in the street could not raise such a demand, no matter how much they wanted to. But the IS statement was not written in the street. If it is true that the masses didn't raise this demand because they couldn't, then it all the more became the duty of a Trotskyist IS to express the demand for them, to voice it in their behalf, to use the occasion to drive home the lesson that the withdrawal of the occupation troops is an indispensable necessity for the successful completion of the revolution they had begun (I don't think your comparison of invading, occupying troops with Cossacks is a helpful one in this situation). (4) Don't say that the IS wanted to concentrate on the demands that the Berlin fighters had used themselves -- say why it wanted to do only that. Since when are we constrained to limit ourselves only to those demands already raised by the masses -- isn't that called tail-ending? (5) And finally, in support of my opinion that you have given us a lawyer's argument, I want to remind you that the IS statement was dated June 25 -- more than a week after the Soviet troops had already engaged in hostile actions, that is, had saved the regime from almost certain overthrow by shooting down and jailing revolutionary workers. How could the omission of the demand in the IS statement on June 25 have had any effect in warding off the counter-revolutionary actions of the Soviet troops?

"But," you can say, "even if this was a mistake, couldn't it be a mistake in tactics?" It could, and that was why we were slow to draw conclusions, and why I wrote to ask you about it last summer. But when we began to hear the arguments of the American Pabloites, we saw that it went far beyond tactical differences. For their basic point in support of the IS's omission was that to demand withdrawal of the Soviet troops from East Germany while imperialist troops remained in West Germany would be to play into the hands of imperialism. Ask yourself: Is that an expression of a mere tactical difference? Since the Soviet troops are the chief obstacle to the political revolution in East Germany, doesn't such a line of reasoning itself become an obstacle to that revolution? Doesn't it raise at least a question mark over our attitude to Stalinism, particularly to our traditional positions that the way to defend the Soviet Union is by extending the revolution and that the defense of the Soviet Union is subordinate to the extension of the world revolution. Those who refuse to recognize

such a line as a danger signal pointing to the growth of sentiments conciliatory to Stalinism will probably never recognize as a danger signal anything short of a proposal to dissolve the International.

Now the rotten thing and the infuriating thing is that those who hold these ideas refuse to express them openly, confining them for the present to verbal discussion and private correspondence while they build a faction around them. And when we see what is really at the bottom of their "tactical" proposals and how much damage it is causing in terms of morale and when we want to bring the thing out into the open, we are met with evasion and duplicity and denial -- and you reproach us as users of the smear tactic for wanting to discuss what people "don't write." The procedure they follow is the infallible hallmark of revisionists: unable to present their full position at the start because then they could make no headway, they nibble away at things, putting out a feeler here and a feeler there, retreating when they have gone too far and exposed their real hand, refusing to discuss the real orientation behind their tactical proposals, furiously denying any intention of abandoning principles, and vilifying those who want to come to grips with them as sectarian, ossified, helpless in the face of changing reality, etc.

You are wrong if you think the troops-withdrawal issue is the only important one involved in the dispute over Germany; the conception in the IS statement that the bureaucracy can't stop half-way on the road of concessions is a wide open bridge to the theory of Deutscher. You are wrong when you say there is only "one wrong sentence" in Clarke's article on Stalin's death. The only thing exceptional about that sentence, which mislabels the harmonious sharing of power between a section of the bureaucracy and the workers as "political revolution," is that there Clarke slipped and let too much out of the bag. But the entire article is drenched with Deutscherism and could easily have been written by Deutscher if he were a member of our party and under the compulsion of unfolding his revision of Trotsky's analysis of Stalinism cautiously and step by step. I really am surprised that you didn't see that, and I urge you to reread it, noting among other things the new terminology: Stalin, you see, may have been "anti-revolutionary," but never, God forbid, must we say that he was counter-revolutionary because all the time he was an unwitting and blind instrument of the revolution, etc. And because we dared to differ from this article, Pablo condemned us as not expressing the International's line. There was a time not too long ago when Pablo and Clarke both considered Deutscher the most adroit apologist for Stalinism; but that time is past, and they fight us because we don't want any concealed Deutscherism in our press or in the International. And it isn't Deutscher who has changed, I assure you.

But, you say, you'll dissociate yourselves from any sharing of power ideas, you'll put back the sentence on the Soviet revolution dropped from the Transitional Program, you'll reaffirm that you really wanted the troops withdrawn from Germany -- in short, you'll clear up all the "misunderstandings" on these and other questions we have raised. Again, I don't question your sincerity. You want to do these things, and they may even be done. The Pablo faction is now up against the wall; they need all the help they can get from people with prestige as orthodox Trotskyists who are foolish enough to give

it to them; tactically, it may serve their factional interests to retreat until the present crisis is eased for them; they may not only permit you to add or alter these sentences, they may even ask you to do so.

But it won't solve anything because it will be at the expense of blurring actual differences, of covering up their real orientation. The Pabloites won't mind such a thing happening if it will help them to maintain their control over the International apparatus, because with that control they will be able to interpret as they see fit whatever resolutions are passed. But you would regret contributing to such an evasion as long as you lived. To lend yourself to such an operation would be shameful because it would obscure differences which you know exist even if you think them tactical -- and when has the revolutionary movement ever been helped by the suppression of differences? That was the role played by Shachtman in 1939-40. Burnham was breaking with Marxism but Shachtman covered up for him, softened his sentences, helped him to conceal his departure in the interest of their factional alignment at least until the factional fight was over in our party; and that was the beginning of Shachtman's ruin as a revolutionist. We called Shachtman Burnham's advocate. I hope you won't serve as Pablo's advocate.

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On a few other matters handled in your letter:

I asked why you think the SWP leadership, whose principled conduct in the past you voluntarily affirmed, has now become unprincipled. The IS Bureau letter in the French Pabloite paper of December, which I presume you endorsed, talks about our "complete degeneration," resulting from our "prolonged isolation from the masses and from the terrible pressure exerted on all social milieux in the United States by American imperialism preparing its counter-revolutionary war" and says our leaders are "really adapting themselves to the atmosphere prevailing in the citadel of imperialism and camouflaging under 'extreme left' language their own buckling under this reactionary pressure." You yourself, in the same paper, write that our leadership "has lost its principles under the pressure of the reactionary atmosphere imperialism imposes on its country." (In your letter to me, in slightly more restrained fashion, you say that "objectively this is a result of alien class pressure, without saying that your party has already succumbed to that pressure.")

As I said last time, you must do more than make statements, you must support them concretely. The only concrete attempt you make goes like this: The SWP has "broken with the International" (to use your words) -- ipso facto, it is and must be buckling to the reactionary pressure of imperialism. But I repeat: We have not broken with the International, we have no intention of letting anyone drive us away from the International; we are fighting its anti-Trotskyist faction precisely because we don't want to break with the International.

There is a terrible pressure exerted on the revolutionary party in this country, and its results are extremely harmful. But you don't understand its results because you don't see how they manifest them-

selves; you have the thing upside down. How is the pressure manifested concretely? By a desire, an instinct, a hysterical drive to get out of the line of fire. That is, by a movement to get out of our party, which is branded subversive, hounded, persecuted, threatened with legal prosecution. Those who are buckling under the pressure feel uncomfortable in our party. They want the party to stop resisting the pressure -- to discontinue activities that can result in casualties (in Michigan the Pabloites were bitter about our election campaign in 1952 because, according to their reasoning, "they might not have gone after us under the Trucks Act if we had not been running an election campaign that forced us to their attention"). The last thing in the world they wanted was the line of the Third World Congress that in this country we should act as an independent revolutionary party. And when they see that they can't persuade our party to try to escape persecution by playing dead (that's their concept of "propaganda activity"), then they want to get out of the party. Leaving our party also has certain attractions for opportunist elements in the unions: It is dangerous for party members to run for union office today because if elected they run the risk of being indicted and jailed for perjury under the Taft-Hartley Act, which requires an oath that you do not belong to any "subversive" organizations. Those who leave the party and thus can swear that they don't belong to any group on the "subversive" list can run freely for union office, regain a position of respectability in the eyes of the union bureaucracy, etc.

In other words, the way in which buckling under the pressure manifests itself is by a tendency to find pretexts to get out of this party, membership in which entails serious risks. But what about the International? Since we are not formally affiliated to it anyhow, our relation to the International does not and cannot play the same kind of role in this process I have described. Whether or not we actually do break with the International (and not merely with the Pablo faction) does not affect the status of the SWP on the "subversive" list because the SWP remains on it and the International does not. That is why I say your easy little formula stands everything on its head. It is the Pabloites here who have buckled under the pressure and are driven by a desire to duck, not we. Your abstract explanation about us applies to them perfectly in the concrete. If you really believe what you have written, you must think it over again in the light of the Pabloites' uncontrollable frenzy to get out of our party as soon as possible and under any pretext. Surely their sigh of relief as they left us must have been audible over the Atlantic.

Determined to shut your eyes to the political differences that motivate our conduct, you seek another explanation. Only one has suggested itself to you, and you recur to it at least nine times in your letter. Here is how I would summarize your explanation: We never would recognize any discipline in the International when we happened to be in a minority; we denied the IS the right to reach its own conclusions on matters concerning the SWP; what we wanted was a clique in the IS that would obediently raise its hands whenever Cannon gave the signal. These are hypotheses, and nothing else; you know very well that nothing ever happened in the past 25 years to give them the slightest shred of confirmation. Now, however, you contend that they are supported and even proved by one thing: We

resolved to put through a brutal and bureaucratic expulsion of the minority and demanded that the IS passively accept it, and when we saw that that was not forthcoming, we decided to "break with the FI," wrote the Letter in order to "justify" the break politically, etc.

According to this conception, everything would have remained harmonious if only the IS had acquiesced in the alleged bureaucratic expulsion. But first we must ask: Why should the SWP leadership want to expel the minority, bureaucratically or otherwise? What reason could they have? Merely because the minority expressed differences? But that had never happened before in our party. It didn't happen now with the Marcy group, who also had differences and also expressed them. How could the leaders justify a bureaucratic expulsion to the members, who you admit have not been trained in such a school? What would the leaders have to gain from such an expulsion when everyone understood that the 18% minority could not hope to win the party leadership for a long long time, if ever?

Your entire explanation, you see, rests on one assumption -- that a bureaucratic expulsion, or an expulsion of any kind, was wanted and needed by the leadership so badly that everything else must be subordinated to it. But this assumption had no validity.

The SWP leadership had neither the need nor the desire to expel the minority -- it had contained them, contained them so successfully that the minority began to disintegrate right after the May plenum and would have disintegrated further if the minority leaders had not resumed all-out factional warfare in order to whip up and hold together their followers. You say the May truce could not work; your proof -- that Burns "already had information to the contrary from Cannon." This is not true. He had no such information, and neither did anyone else. We regarded the May truce as workable, and expected it to work if the minority wanted it to work and if Pablo did not encourage it to wreck the truce. We told the party we expected it to work. We wrote it in the press. Do you think the members of our party are so blind that such a double game can be played on them?

No, you've got it all wrong, as I explained at some length in my last letter. We didn't want to expel them, we did everything we could to keep them in the party on the basis of democratic centralism. If they had wanted to remain in the party, nothing could have removed them. They wanted to get out and away, and there was nothing we could do to prevent them from going except to make an unconditional surrender and a shambles of our party. So your simple explanation falls to the ground. It explains nothing because it evades the question of why the minority left our party, of what pressure was driving them. It substitutes psychological speculation for political and organizational analysis. It answers no questions and raises many. Either your previous estimate of our party was completely wrong, or your present one.

The truth is that we were not interested in expelling the minority, but in keeping them in the party, if possible. That this was not possible. That we were not greatly concerned about what the IS thought about the minority split because we knew that no one claiming to speak in behalf of democratic centralism could possibly get away

with a defense of their provocations. That our opposition to the Pablo line, expressed in the Letter and resolution, had crystallized before the minority's boycott action and before our decision to take disciplinary steps against them. That we were determined to break with Pablo and go to the International with our appeal for his removal even if the minority had remained in the party.

Believe this or not, as you please. But don't deceive yourself into thinking that your explanation rests on anything but thin air. It has no more foundation in reality than the American minority's charge that the SWP leadership has suddenly become "mad," "irrational" and "senile," which they offered in our fight to explain so many otherwise unexplainable things. But the charges against Pablo that I outlined to you last time are based on solid fact: He did prepare and was on the verge of expelling you and others before the Third World Congress because you dared to resist the orientation that was evidently at the bottom of his proposals for that Congress. He did succeed in bureaucratically getting rid of the overwhelming majority of the French party. He did foment a split in the British party by directing his faction to ignore its discipline and by trying to oust the majority leadership without having even the feeble pretext that is employed against us. He did encourage and support the American minority in their violations of discipline that could only end in split. These are not hypotheses, conjectures or "misunderstandings" -- they are facts, facts with the most sinister implications for the future of the International. How much longer are you going to refuse to look them in the face? How much longer are you going to tell yourself that such acts are motivated by merely tactical differences?

You have made some dire predictions about what is going to happen to us. I want to touch on only one of the points you raise -- our attitude to the French and Chinese parties. For over two years the Pabloites here (and I imagine elsewhere) have made them the whipping boys, the bogeymen and the horrible examples of what we would become if we didn't follow Pablo's course without deviation. The French were denounced as incorrigible Stalinophobes, capitulators to imperialism and hopeless sectarians who refused to participate in the real mass movement. The Chinese were condemned and ridiculed as "refugees from a revolution," including, I presume, those who were murdered at their posts inside China. Whenever anyone would say anything about the need for an independent party, the answer hurled at him was: "Look at China. Wasn't the revolution made there without our party? Keep on talking that nonsense about the independence of the party and you will end up the way the Chinese did, unable and unwilling to see the revolution before your eyes, blinded by old schema, running away from the revolution." When someone would question the correctness of a major orientation to American Stalinism, he would get hit over the head with the French example of "Stalinophobia," etc. At first we didn't know what to make of all this. But we began to catch on. Real life helped us.

We watched the French closely for evidences of Stalinophobia as our own internal fight developed. We never found any. The policies followed by the two groups in the French general strike clinched the matter for us. In that test the majority unquestionably acted as revolutionists, which is more than could be said for the Pabloites. Whether or not they actually have shown traces of sectarianism, which

is harder to detect from afar than Stalinophobia, two things are sure: this is a matter on which we will no longer be content to take Pablo's word; and the French majority have shown themselves to be Trotskyists, and therefore people with whom we can discuss and work. Similarly with the Chinese. That they made errors during the révolution we know; these were errors that were at the time shared to one degree or another by everyone else in the International, including those who now try to make them scapegoats for our common errors. But we also know now that the claim that they have refused to recognize the Chinese reality or learn from past errors is a lie. Their letter of last January, which we never saw until a few months ago because Pablo suppressed it -- and this was not the least scandalous of his bureaucratic crimes -- convincingly refutes this lie. They have recognized and adjusted themselves to reality, they have adopted a generally correct attitude to the government and the CP. We can work with them too, and not on the basis of any wrong position on the Chinese question, which they have corrected and are correcting. So we are no longer impressed by horror tales slanderously directed against the French and Chinese comrades, or predictions that collaboration with them will inevitably drive us to fall into errors that they have already corrected or never actually committed in the first place. And we're not going to tolerate any longer the Pabloite campaign to discredit, isolate and excommunicate them.

While we're on the subject of predictions, maybe you'd better devote some thought to the future of the Pablo faction and your relations to it. First of course there will be a period, during which the undecided will be wooed, when the Pabloites may find it imperative to blur the distinctions, protest their orthodoxy and screen the course they are contemplating. But that will be only an interim period. When the dust has settled and all the anti-Pabloites have been expelled, what will there be to restrain them? They will be indisputable masters in whatever is left of the Pabloite house; their need for you will be diminished; freed of the restraints imposed by the presence of the orthodox wing of the International, there will be nothing to stop them from proceeding at a greatly accelerated pace along their opportunist, impressionist road toward Stalinism. You know Ceylon: if you want an image of the future of the Pablo faction, look at what happened to both the groups that broke with the Ceylon party after they were released from the pressure of the real Trotskyists. And make no mistake -- at best you will be a captive, and sooner or later an unwelcome one, because these people will want nothing to do with those who are unwilling to accompany them all the way down the road of the junking of Trotskyism.

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At the end of your letter, you ask some questions about our readiness to accept "an organizational compromise for reestablishing the unity of the world movement," which, if I understand it correctly, is aimed at ending or restricting the public struggle that is going on between the two factions in the International. It seems to me, however, that such proposals should be addressed first of all not to us, but to those who started the public struggle. If you are serious about these proposals, are you willing to and will you:

1. Demand that the Pablo faction discontinue all public announcements of political positions not authorized by orthodox doctrine and previous congresses, and submit their revisions of such positions for discussion in the internal bulletin?

2. Demand that they cancel all summary expulsions and "removals" of elected leaders of the national sections?

Don't you recognize that these are necessary conditions for the consideration of your proposals, especially since it was the Pablo faction that started the "expulsion" game? Without these conditions your proposals cannot fail to have the appearance of an unworthy maneuver.

You have made important contributions to the movement, which we all have valued greatly. But now you are at a crossroads -- or rather, you have already taken a first step down a road that will be fatal for you as a revolutionist. I urge you: Reconsider what has happened. Subordinate all subjective considerations. Rid yourself of all fetishistic conceptions about the International. Restudy the political differences, and where they lead. Recognize that a historic selection, overriding all secondary issues, is now taking place in the International. I earnestly hope that you will take your place on the side of those who want it to remain a Trotskyist International, and against those whose political and theoretical disorientation is driving them inexorably to conciliation with Stalinism and other alien forces. If you do, we will be ready to discuss a common line of action with you. Organizational accommodations are not now, and never have been, a primary consideration for us. What we are concerned with, first of all and above all, is political agreement.

Comradely,  
George Breitman