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STATEMENT ON THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE RCP

(Submitted to the Central Committee, 8th, 9th, January 1949)

By J. Haston, H. Atkinson, R. Tearse, V. Charles

In preparation for the forthcoming Conference of the Party, it is necessary to review the prognosis and perspectives we adopted in 1947, and to consider anew our orientation and tactics in the light of the evolution of the organization. After a lapse of nearly 18 months we must sum up our experiences and the practical results of the tasks we set ourselves.

In opposition to the theses of ever deepening economic crisis, we declared in our 1947 theses that despite the grave economic conditions in which the Labor Government took power and the tremendous difficulties which lay before it, given continued aid from American imperialism it would be capable of expanding production and achieving a high level of employment and stable economic and political relations. This economic prognosis is being amply confirmed by events. Industrial production is higher than at any time in Britain's history and will undoubtedly continue to rise for the next few years. The unstable position of British finance and currency has been so transformed that outside of the dollar zone sterling is now a hard currency.

Confirmed also, is our estimate of the main political trends within the population. The tendency, as reflected in by-elections, for a political move towards the right has increased; but the broad mass of the working class and especially the organized workers, continues to support the traditional mass organization -- the Labor Party. No real movement has appeared from within the Labor Party critical of the Government's policy, nor has any development taken place resulting in the beginning of the growth of a mass Labor League of Youth. There is no process of differentiation within the existing youth organizations; they continue to be largely social societies. The rightward trend within the movement, already visible last year, has deepened. This is indicated by the considerable success which the Labor leaders have had in their anti-communist drive.

On the industrial front, however, our estimate that the policy of the Labor Government would provoke a rising curve of industrial struggle with an increase in the number of strikes thus creating a favorable field of activity for the independent party, has been shown wrong. The working class has been exceptionally quiescent. In this field the situation has been even more stable than in the previous years of Labor's rule.

Wrong, too, was our prognosis that our Party, on the basis of its open work, and despite the generally low level of political activity, would be capable of growing and expanding in influence among the working class. The Party has failed to grow in the past period. On the contrary, the tendency has been one of decline. In certain fields, and in one or two areas we have advanced and made headway in membership as well as in influence, notably Birmingham and Manchester. In our trade union activity we have made some advances and consolidated past work. The N.C.L.C. has offered exceptional opportunities to Party lecturers to put our case to wide sections of workers in the

Trade Unions. But this success, taken with our other gains, does not offset the overall picture of decline.

During the past 12 months, the Party has been forced to make a series of retreats. The full-time staff has been cut. The press has been cut and the circulation declines. The public activities of the Party have been increasingly restricted. In the more recent period the organization has lost a considerable source of income which cannot be replaced. Members' subscriptions alone are not capable of maintaining the existing apparatus. We are thus imminently faced with further restrictions. This means concretely a monthly "Socialist Appeal" at the present reduced size. These restrictions reduce the activities of the RCP to that of a propaganda grouping, since the small monthly paper will not and cannot fulfill the functions of an agitational organ. We must thus say that we have not been able to maintain the organization at its existing level, but have pared down from one Central Committee to the next. On the basis of the economic and political perspectives, we can see no possibility of any change in this process. We can thus offer the organization no perspective for growth and expansion in the coming period. This refutation of our organizational prognosis calls for a serious reconsideration and reanalysis on our part.

In our perspectives of 1947, we clearly recognized that the immediate period of economic expansion, labor reforms, and political stagnation would not be favorable for the transformation of our small independent organization into a large party, or even for a considerable expansion. But we did not fully appreciate the difficulties we would face as a consequence of the transformation which has taken place among the organized workers, on the basis of the reforms which the Government has introduced.

We believed a left turn on the part of the Stalinists was highly possible and argued that such a turn would create a favorable climate in which to win members of the Communist Party to our organization. But events in Czechoslovakia, Eastern Europe, and in China have created a growing confidence on the part of the rank and file members of the CP in their organization and leadership. As a consequence, while we have good relations with the rank and file of the CP it has not been possible to recruit from the Stalinists to offset the stagnation in and around the Labor Party. It is now evident that recruitment from this source cannot be an important argument for the retention of the open organization.

When we discussed the question of entry with the entrists we based ourselves upon the classical approach of Trotsky and argued that conditions for entry did not exist. These conditions were outlined by us as follows:

- 1) That the country has entered, or is just entering a period of pre-revolutionary political crisis;
- 2) That a process of differentiation has begun in the mass Social Democratic Party and is resulting in the creation of a mass centrist current, especially among the youth;

- 3) That the Revolutionary Party is completely isolated from the real elements of working class political life and incapable of growing or influencing events except through the mass reformist organization.

These conditions do not exist at the present time. There is no evidence that a left wing is developing within the Labor Party or League of Youth of any significance. Our economic thesis of upswing in the economy and relatively stable social conditions, and that an economic and political crisis of great importance adversely affecting the conditions of the working class would be necessary before any real opposition develops within the Labor Party, is still the key to a correct understanding of the present and future evolution of the movement. If we retain our old position regarding classical conditions for entry, the only condition which exists at present is the stagnation of the Party. It is now our opinion that it is necessary to revise our old conception and to approach the problem from an entirely different angle. Nationally and internationally the experiences of our movement lead to the conclusion that in the next period there is no possibility of creating a third workers' party separate from and in organizational opposition to the Labor and Communist Parties where they exist as mass parties until the workers complete their experiences of these organizations.

The split of the British party was one of the manifestations of this. In the final analysis, the split would never have taken place had the RCP been advancing with the possibility of rapid growth and development. It was the result of the objective situation in which the Trotskyist movement found itself in the post-war period. While the split released members of both tendencies from the ill effects of a long-drawn-out factional struggle, at the same time it added extra burdens upon the shoulders of an already over-burdened membership of the open party in the effort to make up for what was lost. It undoubtedly had the effect of weakening the independent organization. Had it not taken place, however, it would have not fundamentally altered the present trend.

The most militant and class conscious workers are still to be found in and around the Communist Party. However, the democratic traditions of the British working class are serious obstacles to the development of Stalinism at the present time. Even within the ranks of the CP the totalitarian activities of the Stalinist leadership have a disturbing effect upon many party members. Were it possible to join the Communist Party and agitate half as freely inside the Labor Party for a revolutionary point of view, a turn towards the Stalinist Party would seriously have to be considered. But this is out of the question in the given situation and could only arise in the form of a capitulation to Stalinism.

The Labor Party, despite limitations which it will impose on revolutionary agitation, is the only field from which a mass Trotskyist tendency can arise in the period that lies ahead. Without illusions, and with the perspective of several years of patient work, we can and must gain the cadres for the creation of the party of socialist revolution. Without accepting the economic and political premises on which the Minority evolved their tactic, we foresee a

period of work in the Labor Party extending over several years, given the continuance of the fairly stable conditions now prevailing. In striving to build the Trotskyist movement, we have no choice but to work with the material which is at hand. Recognizing the limitations imposed on us by the mood of the Labor workers, we must as far as we are able, play a role in organizing and creating the left wing, low though its level is at present.

It is our opinion that during the next new years, the energies of our comrades can be better utilized in creating a base for themselves around our program in the Labor Party locally, and where possible nationally, than in striving to maintain the apparatus of an isolated independent organization.

The problems of the British Party cannot be separated from the problems of the international Parties all over the world. If on the continent of Europe our tendency had arisen in one or more countries as a decisive or even authoritative tendency in the life of the working class, this may have aided in the creation of an independent organization. But this has not taken place. The split in France was in itself an outcome of the situation in which Trotskyism found itself in face of the mass support gained by the Stalinist Party after the war.

The post-war period did not result in the exposure and elimination of Stalinism or Social Democracy; nor did it lead to the rise of Trotskyism as a decisive tendency leading masses of workers into action. On the contrary, Social Democracy still plays a leading role in the life of broad sections of the organized workers, especially in the Anglo-Saxon countries or those countries influenced by them. Where Social Democracy has been eliminated in large parts of Europe -- it is Stalinism which has replaced Social Democracy as the decisive force among the working class and peasant poor.

In the colonial countries, Stalinism has risen as the mass party of the toiling masses. In India, our section has entered the Socialist Party. Only in Ceylon has Trotskyism really appeared as a mass leading tendency of the working class in opposition to the Stalinists.

In America where we have our strongest and most influential section, the comrades would welcome the formation of a Labor Party in which they could find a milieu of work.

All the factors on an international scale lead to the conclusion that for the next few years, the sections of the Fourth International have no perspectives of important growth in opposition to Stalinism and Social Democracy. Fresh experiences of a far reaching character will be necessary before the masses break with these organizations. This does not affect the validity of the program of the Fourth International, nor the historic mission and need for the World Party of Socialist Revolution -- the Fourth International. But it does mean that for the creation of mass parties of Trotskyism, patient and systematic work is necessary for many years, especially in Britain, inside the Social Democratic organization.

We propose therefore, to raise as the key question before the Party, the dissolution of the RCP as an independent organization and the entry of our members into the Labor Party.

We propose that the dissolution should be by public declaration. The supporters of our tendency should be prepared by a series of articles and the leadership of the Party should approach the Labor Party with the object of securing the best results from the public entry of the RCP into the LP. It follows that the IS should be informed of the proposed orientation, and if it is accepted by the Majority of the Party, negotiations should be opened with the object of working together with our co-thinkers.

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE RCP (British Section of the Fourth International)

Dear Comrades:

The IS has received from the PP of your section a copy of the "Statement on the Perspective of the RCP" submitted to the Central Committee on the 8th and 9th of January by Comrades J. Haston, H. Atkinson, R. Tearse and V. Charles. Up to the day we are sending you this letter, the IS has not been informed on the debates and decisions of the CC. Only indirectly have we learned that the above mentioned document, though it has been discussed, has not been put to the vote. We consider the situation in the RCP as being very serious. It has come to such a danger point that we see no alternative but to speak very clearly and give the strongest warning.

This document is the expression of liquidationist tendencies (we do not want to hide our opinion in this matter), which, not vigorously fought, would bring the RCP to its complete disintegration and deliver a heavy blow to Trotskyism in England and in the whole world.

Before dealing with the main point, we have to mention, without wishing to start anew the discussions which took place in the past, that we must add that this document contains almost the same old political divergences of the last two or three years. We will only briefly mention some of them.

For example, we cannot subscribe to the idea that the Labor Government has achieved "stable economic and political relations." From Cripps to the last bourgeois or reformist journalist, none in Britain thinks in such terms and, for once, we Marxists cannot disagree with the view set forth by sheer evidence of facts. The "austerity" regime under which Britain is living is not a regime of "stable economic and political relations." Figures of exports and production are important, but they are not sufficient to characterize the state of an economy and its trends. Cripps' four year plan can be achieved only if a certain number of conditions are fulfilled within that period. Among these conditions we have: an increase in the productivity of labor, the maintenance of the present peaceful labor relations, the possibility to keep the existing markets for exports and find new ones, and the absence of a crisis in world economy. Who can imagine that these factors will, up to 1952, remain so favorable as to allow the British capitalism (the decadence of which has been forgotten in their analysis) to keep its present exceptional conjuncture? It would be necessary to ponder over the consequences on British economy, of the re-emergence of the German economy and the present changes in the Far East, before speaking of "stable" conditions.

We also have found once more in this document the old methodological error which you made during past discussions we had with you two years ago. The comrades speak again of a "classical approach of Trotsky," consisting of "three conditions" under which the entry tactic was possible, and if these conditions were not present, entry was impermissible. Then the comrades say that there is now a necessity to revise the alleged Trotskyist "approach" in the matter and to see the entry tactic under an "entirely different new angle." We

have no reason to revise such kind of Trotskyism. Trotsky never adopted a schematic way of dealing with tactical questions as alleged in the document, namely, if the conditions number 1, 2 and 3 are present, we follow one kind of tactics, etc.... This is a recipe alien to Marxist method. The entry tactic has been applied in our movement in various countries sometime when the "three conditions" were present and other times when they were absent (England, U.S.A.). In every case, we started by a general analysis of the situation (which does not consist of "three conditions") and its trends; and on the basis of this analysis we came to the conclusion that the development of our movement would be stimulated by an entry tactic coupled with a correct policy.

Wrong analysis and errors of methods are very dangerous for any organization. But we would not have intervened if the authors of the document had only remained faithful to the old mistakes and not added something new which constitute nothing less than the point of departure from the program of the Fourth International and as such can only bring about catastrophe to them and your organization.

* * *

The comrades who have presented the document have attempted to make a balance-sheet of the activity of the Party since 1947, in view of the forthcoming conference of the Party. As we have already stated, they see no major political errors, nothing wrong in the analysis and the policy upon which you based the activity of the RCP two years ago. But when they deal with the organizational part of the question, they come to one conclusion: stagnation, retreat and decline. The stagnation was already there in 1947 and we, the IS, are not surprised by the present situation in the RCP. The document says also that this situation would not have "fundamentally altered" if the "split" had not taken place. The word "split" is improperly used in the matter. This being said, there is not the least doubt that the independent activity had no chance, no perspective for the British Trotskyists. During the discussion with us in 1946 and 1947, you were arguing that we had a wrong analysis, we did not understand either the situation of Britain or the trends in the working class movement, and so on. In spite of all our alleged ignorance, we foresaw the present situation and we proposed almost three years ago, a change of tactic.

The comrades who wrote the document to your CC forget that they told us at the time that the economic and political situation would not allow a development of the party, and that they would have to wait until the slump comes; suddenly, after months during which nothing essential has changed, they discover the complete decline of the organization, its non-viability, its financial crisis and, only on the above basis, they seem to arrive at the same tactical conclusion with us. We all have been taught that only Marxism enables man to foresee the main developments, while empiricism is characterized by the inability to do so. Of course Marxists can be mistaken, changes may occur which transform situations and developments. During

the last two or three years, there has been no major objective modification in the world situation. Why your "correct" analysis brought you to an impasse? Why our "mistakes" and our "ignorance" enabled us to understand the necessity of a change of tactics?

We do not wish to raise these questions in order to score points or something of the kind; we do it because we must underline that the most pernicious method revealed in this document consists in the fact that its authors ignore completely that the International has a position; it never occurred to them that all their past criticism of our views started from false premises; they also do not seem to have thought that if they were somewhere wrong, the majority of the International, after all, could have at that time, if not a correct line, at least a few correct ideas. The authors of the document forget the International as concerns its line in the past; we will see later that when they mention it, they do not treat it less contemptibly.

Your forthcoming conference will be useful only if it starts from the very fact that the complete failure of the RCP is the result of you being thoroughly mistaken two years ago and if you try to see in what and how you were mistaken. The "correction" made by the comrades who have presented the document we are dealing with will not help the RCP but on the contrary can lead you to even worse.

Refusing to see any major mistakes in the economic and political analysis you have made two years ago, Comrade Haston and the others only find that the working class has not been up to their expectations. "The working class has been exceptionally quiescent," that being due to "the transformation which has taken place among the organized workers, on the basis of the reforms which the government has introduced." What kind of "transformation"? A transformation which has made the working class "exceptionally quiescent," which expresses itself in a "deepened rightward trend" within the working class and which gives no perspective for a leftward development "over several years." All these are obviously the opposite of the development which we all commonly appraised, that is to say the radicalization of the working class manifesting itself in the electoral victory of the LP in 1945. So the radicalization of the working class bringing to power at its first step, the reformist party is transformed into an inward political development of regression in the working class thanks to the "reforms" of the reformist government. Comrade Haston and the others have certainly not carried their thoughts to the logical end, for this transformation, if it existed, would mean a new lease on the historical plane for reformism. Anyhow the views they express on the "transformation" of the "organized workers" are imbued with pessimism in respect to the working class itself.

We all know that more than once in the workers movement, people have refused to see their own mistakes and have placed the blame on the working class and we all know that this was too often the first step towards leaving the Marxist and revolutionary camp. It is not true that the British working class has undergone a "transformation" which amounts to corruption on the basis of the "reforms" of the Labor Government. There are many signs of the desire of the English working class for better conditions, for increase of wages and for genuine socialist solution of all domestic and foreign problems. It

has not resulted in large movements, not because of the lack of militancy of the workers, but partly to the fact that many still have not completely made their experience of the Labor Government, and partly to the fact that many understand more or less clearly that their conditions cannot be essentially modified by some increase of wages, and do not see any alternative program opposed to that of the Labor leaders. The English workers are thinking deeply about the experience they are making. They do not want to play the game of the Tories. They can easily understand by their own experience and by the experience of the workers in many countries in the past years that increase of wages when prices are increasing, is no sufficient solution.

Even the slogan of a sliding scale of wages is not the only answer to the problems they are faced with. They want to have a rounded program answering all questions and they seek it still within the frame of the Labor Party. One must understand that the expectant attitude of the English workers is not due to reformist illusions but to this fundamental demand. There will probably be no great movements so long as an important part of the working class does not see its immediate demands linked up with a full program answering the questions raised by their experience of the Labor Government. The task of the English Trotskyists is precisely, by work in the LP, to give them this program and this political perspective. English Trotskyists must base their policy still on the fundamentally leftward movement of the working class, the first step of which we noticed in the 1945 elections.

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We have already mentioned that the document on which your CC has failed to take a clear position ignores the past interventions of the International, warning you that the independent activity was doomed to failure. This document does not altogether ignore the International. Having brought the organization they lead to a very bad state with as much assurance as they have opposed our policy and with the same empirical and eclectic methods which have determined all their sharp turns in the past on the main political issues independently of the objective conditions, these comrades present a new policy not only for the English Party, but for all the sections of the International. They call for a new policy for the whole International with the exception of the island of Ceylon. That is a tremendous turn, a revision of the decisions of the Second World Congress, but what brings them to this? A change in the international situation? Not at all. A change in the conditions of most of our sections? Not at all. The change comes from the fact that as things have not turned out for the RCP as they expected, they suddenly change their minds on the appraisal of the whole world to which they bring their new truth in a few sentences. Whatever shortcomings there are in our movement, none of us will think of formulating a new policy on the basis of a refusal to look to the true causes of a complete failure and on the basis of impressionism.

To what amounts the policy they propose to the International? Trotskyism has not risen as a "decisive" tendency leading masses of workers into action; in the various countries either Social Democracy still plays a leading role in the working class movement or it has been replaced by Stalinism. "All the factors on an international scale lead to the conclusions that for the next few years, the sections of

the Fourth International have no perspectives of important growth in opposition to Stalinism and Social Democracy." The vanguard of the working class is in the Communist Parties and "were it possible to join the Communist Party and agitate half as freely inside the Labor Party for a revolutionary point of view, a turn towards the Stalinist Party would have to be seriously considered. But this is out of the question in the given situation and could only arise in the form of a capitulation to Stalinism." So there remains only one way out: "For the creation of mass parties of Trotskyism, patient and systematic work is necessary for many years, especially in Britain, inside the Social-Democratic organization." (In the past discussion we were told that it was altogether impossible to defend a revolutionary program in the Labor Party. The Labor Party regime has not changed, but leaders of the RCP suddenly discover that it is possible to do so, despite limitations.)

If our movement would play like that with the policy of our sections, we would wreck them. Let us take an example. In a few words, the document dealing with France says that in this country, "the split was in itself an outcome of the situation in which Trotskyism found itself in face of the mass support gained by the Stalinist Party after the war." That is altogether wrong. The split of the former right wing took place when the hold of the Stalinist Party was already weakening, after the defeat of the 1947 strike movement; it is true that the leaders of the right wing of the PCI, when they led the French section, submitted to the pressure of Stalinism, but on the morrow of their exit they took without a single word of explanation an anti-Soviet attitude, and they did that because they submitted to the pressure of the wind blowing from America. The split was not a break under Stalinist pressure, but the break of a petty bourgeois wing with Trotskyism after a working class defeat. If our French comrades had to follow the policy proposed by Comrade Haston and the others, they would have to enter a French socialist party, the working class base of which shrank to almost nothing and where even petty bourgeois leftist elements have not the possibility to talk left sentences in order to keep some credit among the workers.

And what policy should the American Trotskyist organization follow? Shall it enter the party of Norman Thomas? What have our Dutch, Greek comrades, Argentine and Latin American comrades to do? And our Chinese and Vietnamese comrades? We only mention these examples to show how absurd is this proclamation of an universal tactic without a study of the concrete conditions in each country. Up to now, only Shachtman could be a great strategist building a revolutionary movement in the world on a few general sentences disconnected from the real situation. We are the most vigorously opposed to such dilettantism which can only disorientate the militants and destroy the movement.

This new policy for our movement has for its origin the lack of hope of building Trotskyist parties for a very long period. We have shown that pessimism in respect to the working class and liquidationism permeate this document. This pessimism and liquidationism extend themselves inevitably to pessimism and liquidationism in respect to the vanguard of the Trotskyist movement, the Fourth International and its sections. Of course, in the case of the working class as a

whole or in the case of its vanguard in particular, the comrades have not carried their ideas to the logical end, but they have entered onto a very slippery path.

We do not come to these views on their document by abstract and logical deductions. Our movement has had in the past years many examples of crises which have ended by people leaving the Fourth International. The lessons of these crises are very valuable to us. Scarcely did these crises start with a full rounded program opposed to that of the Fourth International. On the contrary, very often the opponents at the beginning of the discussions used almost the same words as the document which we are criticizing, i.e., that their new opinions did not "affect the validity of the program of the Fourth International, nor the historic mission and need for the World Party of Socialist Revolution -- the Fourth International. But...." There always was a but.

Remember Morrow: "Instead of mass revolutionary parties confronting reformist parties of relatively equal size, our tiny cadres confront two mass reformist parties. In France, our few hundreds confront a Stalinist Party of nearly a million!

"Under these conditions, can we proceed directly to the building of a revolutionary party? Or must we enter one of the reformist parties, constitute a faction in it and work in the direction of a split out of which we will come with sufficient forces to begin seriously building the revolutionary party?"

"The masses are seeking for socialism, they say, in putting into evidence the domination of the Socialist and Communist Parties. They forget one detail: that today disorientated and worn out by the terrible trials which began in 1939, the masses are hoping to gain their socialism thanks to parliamentarism." (Retranslated from the French.)

Remember Demazieres: "The question is not for me to contest the validity of our program, of the program of the Fourth International. But the failure of our policy for a revolutionary regrouping, started in an epoch where the falling back of the working class was already very apparent, must incite ourselves to revise our strategy and to get ready for the very hard period which is opened in front of us. It appears that the isolation of the PCI -- if not that of its militants -- is going to grow in the forthcoming months, if we do not reorientate rapidly our forces and our action, for we are going to pay for failure; and the regrouping of the militants breaking with the PS and the PCF, after beginning under our leadership, will aim to be done without us, if not against us."

Listen to Shachtman, after he lost his last chance at the World Congress to come back to the Fourth International: "The course which we have proposed to the Marxists and the Marxist groups wherever it is possible to pursue it, is well known. 'Abandon all pretense of being a party of the proletariat, including the name "party", and become a part of the proletariat.' In our view, this means that the Marxist groups should everywhere enter the broader democratic political movements of the working class and constitute themselves as the loyal left wing tendency."

In each case the question on which the debate started (Russian question, democratic slogans, regrouping...) proved rapidly to be not the essential one but only a starting point for a departure from our movement. One could detect always in the very first expressions of their policies a lack of faith in the working class and in the Trotskyist movement due to the slow development of our movement.

* * *

You may perhaps think that the above state of things which was true elsewhere, does not apply to England and there is no reason to be pessimistic about the evolution of the RCP leaders who have signed the document. Unfortunately, we have reasons for such apprehensions borne out by the past and the present policies of the RCP leadership.

If the document ignored the past struggle of the International on the question of the British section, we have not forgotten the past struggles in the other sections of the International, particularly in France and in the SWP of America. We remember that, in the struggles against Morrow, against Shachtman, on the unity question, against the French right wing, the RCP leaders have, up to the last moment, when it was obvious to everyone that the program of the movement was in danger, played into the hands of the opponents of the Fourth International by a position of their own. On various occasions we said that this unprincipled politics was only the result of an empirical approach to problems. Now some of your leaders are caught by this pessimism and liquidationism to which succumbed the people mentioned above. The political weakness of your leadership which prevented them from detecting early the real divergences with Morrow, Shachtman and Demazieres, means only that they will be resisting feebly to their own disillusionment.

We do not want to take up the whole policy followed by the RCP, especially since the World Congress. The RCP has not followed at all the line adopted by the majority of the World Congress. We did not raise the matter and did not intervene earlier because, after the separation that took place in the party, we wanted to let you make your experience without any hindrance, so that nobody can argue when the balance-sheet is drawn. Let us take the question of Stalinism. The "Socialist Appeal" dissociates itself from the Stalinists on a biological controversy which cannot move a single worker, but it takes the Stalinist point of view in the analysis of the events of Czechoslovakia and China, which are today the main arguments of the Stalinists.

We all know the importance of these events. The Stalinists are not achieving anything near to socialism, but are strangling the revolutionary movement of the masses everywhere -- even when they make a left turn or use left words or proceed to nationalizations or to partition of the land. The RCP leadership has put all the emphasis in the victories of the Stalinists on the so-called "progressive" side of their achievements. The "Socialist Appeal" hailed Prague as a working class victory. The "Socialist Appeal" says that "in large part the Chinese Stalinists have carried out the agrarian revolution," without mentioning that the agrarian reforms (not revolution) have been made to the benefit of the middle and rich peasants. Without entering

the Stalinist party, this is a capitulation towards Stalinism. We know that the leadership of the RCP maintain that our positions on the glaxis are wrong, but the same leaders of the RCP were stating with as much assurance that we were wrong when they defended the theory of "state capitalism" in the glaxis. They change their position on a fundamental question, but the International remains always on the wrong side.

We say that there is a great danger on the path on which Comrade Haston and the others are walking, because on Stalinism, on the economic appraisal of the situation, on the political trends in the world, on the main questions that have arisen, there has been in the last few months an increasing estrangement between the RCP leadership and the International. We say that there is a great danger because the whole policy of these comrades relies upon nothing: on one hand nothing is to be done because reformism is transforming the working class, and on the other hand nothing is to be done because Stalinism is achieving victories for the working class. They have not much hope to build a Trotskyist organization, they have no hope in the development of the Fourth International. Their proposal of entry looks like a desperate man drowning himself in deep water.

The IS views the present situation in the RCP with concern. The IS -- and we are sure that the whole International will share its position -- cannot discuss entry whilst the program of the Fourth International is threatened. First things first. An entry on such a pessimistic and liquidationist line, as proposed in the document, would only accelerate the process of political disintegration and destroy all perspective for the Fourth International. Before discussing entry, the main task in the RCP today is to stop the formation and the growth of a liquidationist tendency. We want to avoid fatal developments inherent in such conceptions we have already known a few times in the past. The dangers can be avoided, the comrades can be stopped on the road they have entered, only if a firm stand is taken. The whole experience of entrust tactics operated by our international movement has proved undoubtedly that this difficult and complex tactic cannot succeed if it does not rely on a firm Trotskyist program, defended inflexibly by a coherent leadership fully confident in our movement, and by an homogenous organization confident in the success of its work.

We were very much perturbed to hear that the CC did not vote on the document, because that is the only way for bringing out clearly the positions. We were all the more perturbed because we have not forgotten that more than once the leadership of the RCP was very quick to take a position which helped the opponents of the International, Morrow, Shachtman, and we see that the same leadership delays when moods of pessimism and liquidationism in respect to the working class and Trotskyism appear inside itself. The IS asks the CC to reopen the discussion in the shortest possible time and to express a political position by words and by vote on the document. We also ask all members of the RCP to stand up for the defense of the program of the Fourth International. The only way to prevent the loss of comrades with whom we have fought a common battle during many years is not to mince matters: Halt! Out of the road of Shachtman, Morrow, Demaziere and other deserters of the Fourth International!

It will not be easy for the RCP to get out of its present impasse. Isolation, stagnation, decline are unfavorable conditions for working out a correct political line. You cannot do it without the help of the International. To enable the International to cooperate with you in drawing a clear political and organizational balance-sheet of your activity which has ended in bankruptcy, to help you to give clear answers to the present development and trends in the British and the international situation, and to elaborate a concrete comprehensive program of political and organizational action in the LP and to assimilate the experience already made in this party which, in the opinion of the International, is entirely positive, you cannot hold a Conference before having organized a large discussion with the participation of the International. Fully conscious of the stakes at issue, the IS asks you to oppose any hasty decision before the necessary political clarification.

You have fought very strongly against us because you were deeply convinced that you were correct. Confronted with an experience which has by its completely negative results utterly destroyed what was the basis of your activity in the past, you are faced with the danger of throwing away the baby with the water. Do not try to dodge the real issues. You have to make a complete overhaul of the methods, the analysis, the policies you have followed up to now. It is a very big task. We are confident that with the cooperation of the International you will find the strength to achieve this task, rearm yourself, thus enabling Trotskyism in England to march forward again.

The International is confident that every member of the RCP will do his best to stop the development of liquidationist tendencies, readjust the RCP policy vis-a-vis that of the International, and will integrate it closer than ever within the International for the greatest benefit to Trotskyism in England and in the whole world.

Fraternal greetings,

THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

February 5, 1949