

# SWP

# discussion bulletin

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### ON REUNIFICATION OF WORLD MOVEMENT

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29th March, 1963.

Dear Comrade Hansen,

Your letter of March 19 provides us with the opportunity to return in written form to some of the thoughts concerning unification which we expressed in our conversations at the January meeting of the International Committee.

Before going on to these, I would like to say how grateful we are for your thoughtful action in contacting Pierre Frank with the copy of our letter to Ernest Germain. This is the second unfortunate experience we have had with this address. Towards the end of the third week in January, we wrote to him regarding the time of arrival of our delegation to discuss with his comrades. Unfortunately, this letter did not arrive either, so on February 3 our people wasted half a day without being able to contact anybody. It seems clear that some letters posted to this address arrive, and others, especially some of the important ones do not.

Over the last weekend we have had a meeting of our National Committee and you will be pleased, I am sure, to learn that the news that a special commission was at last going to meet in connection with the activities of certain elements in the British movement posing as supporters of Trotskyism was regarded as satisfactory by all the comrades. Of course, now that the commission is meeting, we shall continue with the work on the Parity Committee as in the past.

We called for such an international commission originally at the February 3 meeting of the Parity Committee because we could envisage a situation where incidents such as this might require intervention. We are glad to learn that you will be here in the capacity of "independent observer" since this will enable you to listen to the witnesses and examine the evidence that we produce.

We are all aware of the nature of the serious differences which exist between the Socialist Labour League and the Socialist Workers Party. The fact, however, that these are being at present discussed within the international movement should not prevent us from talking in an objective way about our political and organizational responsibilities. What we have to say now is mainly related to these.

After the end of World War II, we were all part of a unified international movement. At the time of the third world congress in September 1951, we were still all unified and yet by the December of 1953 our movement was split from top to bottom by the activities of Pablo.

There have been comrades who, after the split, suggested that there should have been more discussion at the time. But this was, of course, something that it was then too late to rectify. May I

suggest that it would be equally erroneous now to rush into an early unification without adequate discussion and preparation.

The explosive, unprepared nature of the split of 1953 is only one of a series of similar incidents which have continued within the Pabloite camp. Cochran, Clarke, Lawrence and Mestre resigned, also without much discussion, after the Pabloite fourth congress in the summer of 1954. Last year the Posadas group which included practically the whole of their cadre in South America suddenly broke away, once again without adequate discussion.

There is now another deep-going crisis inside the same organization. You, yourself, reported to us that you had listened to a discussion on their International Executive Committee lasting for 20 hours on their internal situation. You told us this was very heated and that Pablo had announced the formation of a faction.

At this meeting Pablo apparently denounced Germain as the leader of a right opportunist tendency which was guilty of misapplying his theory of "entrism sui generis." He charged Germain with the fact that the majority of one section had succumbed to this deviation.

When the vote was taken, Germain, Frank and Maitan were able to muster a two to one majority against Pablo. According to you this was the first meeting of its kind that had been held for three years, since Pablo was imprisoned. Much of the discussion was heated because, in your opinion, what was really involved was "Pablo's personal methods of leadership." In the course of the same meeting they decided to set up an international control commission to examine the charges on both sides.

This is hardly encouraging soil on which to prepare the foundations for a serious reunification at short notice. We feel sure that many comrades in the international movement will want to read and study all sides of this most interesting development. How can you elect a stable leadership from people who are appearing before a control commission?

Another explosion might well occur at any moment now, the circumstances of which can be just as obscure as the Posadas split.

It would be wrong to hastily involve sections in Latin America into a unification on the grounds that they appear to agree with you over the designation of Cuba as a workers state. This does not at all mean that they agree with Pabloism and its activities in the international movement. The Chilean section, for example, has asked that two main documents be prepared which could be utilized in exploring the possibilities of unification. These will require some time and collective discussion within the ranks of the International Committee.

Replying to the letter from Comrade Capa, the National Committee of the Socialist Labour League unanimously agreed that the IC international congress should be postponed until the last two weeks in August 1963. We are extremely interested in what our Argentinean section has to say. The postponement requested is a bare minimum since we hope to be able to discuss in written form some of their opinions beforehand.

If you rush into a unification now with the crisis inside the Pabloite ranks and confusion over Pabloism in our own ranks, not only will you run the danger of further splits and explosions such as in 1953, but we may very well be saddled with a leadership which will be nothing more than a continuation of the old cliquè of the past. In what way will the leadership of this early unified movement be different from the past so far as political ideas are concerned? If it is necessary for the Pabloites to have an international control commission to sort out their own affairs, then a real case can be made out for a similar commission to sort out some of the happenings from 1953 onwards.

The SWP convention will take place some time in June or July and yet you appear prepared for an interational unification before this convention pronounces on your differences with us. Have we not the right to attend your convention and present our point of view with the hope that some comrades would give it consideration?

We are holding our national conference early in June and we will certainly invite a delegation from the SWP to come and present their point of view on their differences with us to the conference.

There are minorities in the SWP who have opinions on international matters and yet before they can present them to your conference, you want to present everybody with a fait accompli. We say that this is not the way to educate and prepare the international movement for real unification. It is, in fact, dangerously close to the old Pabloite methods that led to the split of 1953.

The Socialist Labour League has always fought for international re-organization and unification. We propose that the first step is to clarify politically the forces of the IC. We have produced a number of internal bulletins and articles towards this end. These have not yet been adequately studied in Latin America, or, for that matter, in the US and Canada. We have exchanged a few bulletins through the Parity Committee with the organizations of the International Secretariat, but this is only a beginning. There is, as yet, no evidence that this material has been discussed in their sections, or for that matter in some of those affiliated to the IC.

You talk about the need for delegates to return home from an early reunification to continue with their revolutionary obligations. But how can they successfully tackle their revolutionary obligations if there is no proper political preparation of this unification conference? Surely, the highest point of all our political work at the moment is the prepara-

tion of this international conference.

For our part, we will find it impossible to agree to unification on the terms set forth by you and the SWP. We will not take the responsibility of again committing the political and organizational mistakes of the past. We do not agree to a reunification congress on the dates you suggest.

We explained all this to you at the IC in January and you assured us that no one on your side had any intention of closing the door on relations between our two tendencies. We told you that if you rushed the question of unification that this may well precipitate a definitive split. Yet you appear to be doing just this.

We, on the other hand, suggest the following procedure.

Let the two separate international congresses go forward with an exchange of delegations supporting a joint resolution urging the organization of the discussion. Let the Parity Committee continue organizing joint work where possible, distributing the material that is available internationally from both congresses and the publishing of the contributions of all comrades.

We suggest that in order to remove organizational and factional disagreements and to allow the groundwork for the most favorable political relations between the tendencies, that the constitution of an international control commission be agreed at the two congresses. This commission would investigate, just as the IEC commission is doing, all charges and counter-charges, thus allowing the Parity Committee to continue with its work of organizing joint activity as well as the discussion.

If this is agreed and the discussion organized thoroughly, we can prepare an international conference of the two tendencies for sometime during September or October 1964, certainly not before. If properly prepared, this conference would be in a position to discuss all the questions affecting the differences between the tendencies and the work of the various sections.

It would not be so much a unification conference, although a unification may very well arise as a result of it. It would be a conference whose prime purpose would be to make a balance sheet of the discussion that had already taken place, and then work out the next steps toward reorganization and reunification.

The Socialist Labour League would leave no stone unturned in its efforts to obtain genuine unification at that conference.

We hope that after further consideration we will arrive at an agreed solution to these problems.

Yours fraternally,

G. HEALY (sgd.)

April 13, 1963

Dear Comrade Healy,

First of all, in response to your letter of March 29, let me express appreciation for your effort at presenting in a succinct and reasoned way your position on the question of early reunification of the world Trotskyist movement. I shall try in a similar way to explain our reactions to the points you have raised.

I take it that you intend your letter to serve both as a rejection of the suggestion that the international conference of the International Committee be held some time in May and as a declaration of your opposition to the March 1 statement by the Political Committee of the SWP "For Early Reunification of the World Trotskyist Movement" which suggests a principled basis on which the world Trotskyist movement could unite in the immediate future. If I understand you correctly, you refer to this statement when you write: "For our part, we will find it impossible to agree to unification on the terms set forth by you and the SWP."

Exactly what items in the suggested basis for reunification you find it impossible to agree to remains unknown to me, since you do not discuss the matter in your letter. The International Secretariat on the other hand considers this set of concrete points to be acceptable.

The rejection by the SLL of the proposed basis for reunification leaves us with a difficult problem. Before indicating a course of action that could lead to an adequate solution in the circumstances, I should like to state, for purposes of clarification, how the reality of the overall situation now appears to us.

On the side of the IC, the available evidence shows that a clear majority are in favor of reunification without any further delays. The Argentinians, Austrians, Canadians, Chileans and Chinese have recently recorded their opinions on this. The Peruvians and Uruguayans, so far as I know, are of the same view. In a recent communication, the Japanese comrades indicate that they doubt that the IS is free from "revisionism" but that the "Political differences between the IC and IS should be resolved through internal discussions after the reunification." While they do not state specifically that they favor "early" reunification, that is clearly the logic of their position and they have accepted an invitation from the IS to attend the IS Congress as observers. As for the SWP, you are well aware of its strong stand in favor of early reunification. It is quite true that differences exist among this majority over tactical procedures. These differences, I am convinced could be resolved in a conference without great difficulty. In any case, it appears that all nine organizations are in agreement on the main question which is the advisability and feasibility of early reunification of the world Trotskyist movement.

In opposition to this stand, the SLL appears to be backed by only the comrades of the "La Verite" group and scattered individuals here or there, including a small group in the SWP. Obviously you represent a minority position in the IC.

On the side of the IS no sizeable group -- since the split of the Posadas tendency -- has expressed opposition to early reunification. At most, some comrades have expressed doubts about certain sectors of the IC, but have not felt that these doubts required postponement of unification. In case you are interested in the bearing such doubts might have on the stability of a reunified movement, the strongest ones relate to past positions on Algeria and to such matters as democratic guarantees for minorities in the British sector in case of fusion of the two sides, a question that is better answered, in our opinion, by participating in common activities in a common international organization than by additional years of discussing, partly in public, whether the doubts are justified or not.

Whatever the existing differences and nuances, both political and organizational, may be on both the IC and IS sides -- and some of these are undoubtedly important -- it is evident that the overwhelming majority of the world Trotskyist movement is in favor of early reunification. In view of this prevailing sentiment it would seem eminently reasonable for that majority to go ahead and unify. As for the minority who oppose early reunification, they clearly confront the problem of defining their attitude toward a united movement and determining whether the wisest course is not to participate in the unification under the rules of democratic centralism.

It may be argued that the remaining differences are of such vital importance as to override the obvious advantages of joining in the unification. Situations have occurred in the history of the Marxist movement where the majority betrayed fundamental principles and it was necessary for a minority to stand alone and conduct war without compromise against all other tendencies. If this is your position, as it may be, judging from certain statements in your documents, then you cannot be much interested in whether the majority unites or does not unite since it would be a fifth-rate question in relation to issues requiring a stand like that of Lenin in 1914. More likely, however, your real position is that a split occurred in 1953 which was not thoroughly prepared; and you are opposed to healing that split if it simply means trying to glue the old pieces together again -- some of the pieces aren't worth the effort and the glue isn't strong enough. Thus everything will just fall to pieces again. At best the project is a waste of time; at worst it can seriously disorient the movement.

However, this leaves you with the problem of explaining why the sentiment for unity has become so strong, why it is expressed from such different quarters and why it has succeeded in gaining such a large majority. Even if you seek to account for it as a case of "betrayal" or of "degeneration" what are the fundamental reasons for such a widespread phenomenon?

We see the reality in quite a different way. The situation of 1953 no longer exists. The same pieces no longer exist. A lot has changed in the past ten years.

First of all, as you yourself note, the wing which showed a tendency to capitulate to Stalinism, and which so alarmed us in 1953, split away. It disintegrated completely. The IS did not follow them but rejected their course. This was completely to the credit of the IS; it became a key factor in preparing the ground for reunification. Since 1954 the IS has gained new forces. I have met typical representatives in various countries. They are genuine Trotskyists, make no mistake about it.

The adherents and partisans of the IC have also changed since 1953. They have grown stronger, have undergone enriching experiences, have brought forward new comrades of leadership caliber. Not least in this respect has been the British sector of the IC.

Thus it should be clear that what we are trying to bring together is not the broken pieces of 1953, but the movement as it has grown and developed since then.

The composition of forces on the two sides, which I have merely alluded to here, indicates that the reunified movement will be far stronger than it was in 1953 and of quite different internal pattern. If new differences appear -- as they surely will in a living movement -- they are bound to cut across the groupings that go back to 1953. Proof enough of this is provided by the internal differentiation which has appeared among both IS and IC forces in the past three years.

As to the political differences that existed in 1953, these, too, in our opinion, have not remained fixed and frozen. On all the main questions of the day the positions of the two sides in the majority have become indistinguishable. It requires no detective work to discover this. The basic positions are stated ones, published in the press, ascertainable to anyone who can read. They have now been codified by the Political Committee of the SWP in its statement "For Early Reunification of the World Trotskyist Movement." If these are accepted as a common platform for unification, the completely principled character of the unification should be self-evident.

Finally -- and this is most important of all -- the two sides have been drawn together by the fact that they find themselves fighting shoulder to shoulder in the Cuban Revolution. Active participation in a revolution is the ultimate test for a revolutionist. It was so in the Russian Revolution of October 1917 and it has been repeated each time that Revolution became extended, the latest instance being Cuba. The majority of the Trotskyists participating in the Cuban Revolution, particularly in its extension in the rest of Latin America, feel that unification would strengthen our capacity to seize the opportunities now open to us -- open not a year from now, or two years from now, or some time in the distant future, but at this very moment.



For all Trotskyists who have reached a common position on the basically socialist character of the Cuban Revolution, the discussion has been completed. Not only has the time come for action, we have already been engaged in action and on a common line since Cuba became a workers state. We are not opposed to continuing the discussion with comrades who are still hesitant about recognizing Cuba as a workers state. But why can't that discussion continue in a unified movement which would also have the advantage of strengthening our common action?

In addition to this there are many openings in the colonial revolution as a whole, in the de-Stalinization process and in the revival of the class struggle in the industrially advanced countries in which maximum gains for Trotskyism could be made by a united movement.

To summarize: as we understand your position, you consider it illusory and dangerous to attempt to heal the split of 1953. Our position is that this objection is irrelevant. We propose to unite the movement that has developed in the decade since 1953 and which stands on common basic principles today, including a common appreciation of a living revolution in which both sides are participating. We recognize that differences will remain but we are convinced that they are of secondary character and that they can be resolved more easily and more fruitfully inside a united movement than by maintaining the division of our forces.

In the light of these general considerations, the series of objections to early reunification which you raise lose force. However, I propose to take them up one by one in order to examine their specific validity.

(1) You argue that some comrades have "suggested that there should have been more discussion" at the time of the 1953 split. As an advocate of the general value of discussion and as a participant in some not unimportant ones, I could agree with the comrades who have suggested this. While the discussion in the SWP at the time was voluminous, it is probably true that on the international plane it was inadequate. I would hold, however, that the final judgment on this and related questions can well be left to the historians; or at least to a later time in the reunited movement.

(2) It does not follow at all "that it would be equally erroneous now to rush into an early unification without adequate discussion and preparation." However, there is not much point to debating the logical consistency between your premise (inadequate discussion in 1953) and your conclusion (that early reunification now is "erroneous"). Nobody, so far as I am aware, has proposed "to rush into an early unification without adequate discussion and preparation." The SWP raised the question six years ago. The IS raised it even earlier. After the first attempt at unification failed, it was raised again. In fact it has been a perennial topic of discussion internally on both sides for a long time, intensively so during the past year. Common work is being carried out in some areas. The experience of the Parity Committee, as you yourself note, has been

fruitful even though limited in scope. If I am not mistaken, in the SLL itself the question of unification is not exactly new. Wasn't it under active discussion as early as 1957, six years ago?

(3) Your argument that splits have occurred in the IS "without much discussion" and that this places early reunification in question remains obscure to me. First of all, I am not familiar enough with the internal history of the IS to determine whether there was "much" or "little" discussion and if there was little whether this was the fault of the IS or of the splitters. You mention two cases, one nine years ago and one last year. The 1954 instance spoke favorably for the IS, since, as I noted above, it was the wing of our movement which went soft on Stalinism that split away. As for the 1962 split of the Posadas group, this involved such key issues as the advocacy by this group of "preventive" atomic war. The IS again took a correct stand. Although the SWP has not taken an official position, the Militant has severely criticized the Posadas position. I have not yet had the opportunity of reading an SLL statement on the Posadas position but I would be much surprised if you should find any merit in it.

It should be added that it seems somewhat one-sided to apply the argument only to the IS. Has the IC existed for ten years without splits or "incidents?" Have all these been accompanied by "much" discussion?

(4) Your next argument, the one about "another deep-going crisis" inside the IS, seems to me to go counter to your previous one. Is a twenty-hour discussion in an International Executive Committee meeting then too much of a good thing?

In my report about the IEC meeting, which I was privileged to attend as an observer, I mentioned that the main discussion was on such questions as the Algerian Revolution, proper appreciation of the relationship between the colonial revolution and the proletarian revolution in the industrially advanced countries, the danger inherent in nuclear war, and so on, and that it was a rich and informative discussion such as might be conducted in the sections of the IC or in the SWP. The possible danger of a rightist deviation occupied some attention and led to sharp polemical exchanges but not to such exaggerated charges as has been bandied about by some of the participants in the current IC discussion.

I do not understand your references to the IEC setting up a control commission. You seem to draw from this bare fact an invidious meaning. You do this without knowing what was referred to the commission, whom it involved or what political importance, if any, might attach to the points in dispute. Does it not occur to you that this may involve nothing more than certain questions of fact related to revolutionary activities in which there was mutual agreement that such matters were better handled in a smaller body, in a leisurely way, and without any polemical heat?

The fact that the IS is now conducting a warm discussion on such questions as the Chinese-Soviet dispute, the problem of nuclear war, the relative role of the colonial revolution, the necessity, difficulties and dangers of entryism in certain countries, etc., is no valid argument against unification. On the contrary it demonstrates the ideological vitality of the IS. The existence of tendencies shows that it is not monolithic. Still more, it should attract the IC forces who are especially appreciative of opportunities to engage in discussion. In a unified movement the possibility of participating in the debate now confined to the IS would be opened -- and under the most favorable circumstances of being heard.

Elsewhere in your letter you express reservations over the slowness with which material submitted by the SLL is circulated among IS forces. Your desire to bring the SLL viewpoint to the attention of the IS comrades, in other words to participate with them in reaching positions, is completely understandable and shared by all of us, just as the IS has similar feelings toward us. But this view speaks powerfully for early reunification!

(5) From the discussion going on in the IS, you deduce that "Another explosion might well occur at any moment now, the circumstances of which can be just as obscure as the Posadas split."

No guarantees can be given by anyone that there won't be new "explosions," including explosions on the IC side. How best can this possibility be countered? By early reunification. How else do you propose to dampen the powder and persuade dead-end factionalists on both sides to stop tossing lighted matches? Both sides should follow active policies of countering fresh splits, of seeking to block them from occurring even on the other side. The most effective way to do that is obviously in a unified movement.

(6) Besides the danger of "further splits and explosions" you argue that in an early reunification "we may very well be saddled with a leadership which will be nothing more than a continuation of the old clique of the past."

Your fears on this point do not seem to us to have any real basis in the new situation as it has developed since 1953. There is not much point to arguing this at length since our estimate and yours, as I indicated at the beginning, are quite different. However, both estimates can be put to the side so far as the practical question is concerned. I call your attention to the following two paragraphs in the March 1 statement by the Political Committee of the SWP:

"Early reunification, in short, has become a necessity for the world Trotskyist movement. Naturally, difficult problems will remain in various countries where the faction fight has been long and bitter. But these problems, too, can best be worked out under the conditions of general international reunification, so that it is possible for the

outstanding leaders of both sides to begin the job of establishing a new comradely atmosphere and of removing fears which have no real basis in the situation in the world Trotskyist movement today. After a period of common fraternal activity in an increasing number of areas, we are convinced that what may appear at the outset to be insuperable local problems will be solved by the comrades themselves through democratic means.

"We think that it should also be possible for a reunified organization to bring in recommendations for subsequent consideration and adoption which, without breaching the centralist side of democratic centralism, would remove any doubts that might still remain as to the guarantee of democratic rights contained in the statutes."

These two paragraphs deserve your most serious attention. The IS for its part will, I am convinced, agree to all the specific guarantees needed to allay any fears about arbitrary interventions in national sections and so on.

(7) In response to my pointing out the need for delegates to return home as soon as possible to continue with their revolutionary obligations, you suggest that this cannot be done successfully if there is "no proper political preparation of this unification congress."

Your premise is, of course, that "no proper political preparation" has taken place. On this we disagree.

On the basis that there has been proper political preparation, I urged a telescoping of dates so that delegates could attend an IC conference; observe the IS congress, if mutually acceptable arrangements can be made; and also participate in a reunification congress if the IC conference so decided. The comrades I had especially in mind were those in Latin America. They happen to be deep in situations of the utmost importance to the fate of the Cuban Revolution, of the revolution in their own countries, and of the world Trotskyist movement. These situations exist right now. The key to a correct orientation in these developing revolutionary struggles is proper understanding of the Cuban Revolution. On this crucial issue all the comrades in Latin America are aware that their position, that of the SWP and that of the IS are identical in all essential respects. This is one of the main reasons why they stand for early reunification. So far as their main revolutionary tasks for the coming period are concerned, the political preparation has been completed. What they need now is the backing of a united world Trotskyist movement -- not an indefinite "discussion" among warring factions for the next year, or two years, or three years, about who was right in 1953, important and interesting as that question may be.

(8) You, of course, have a different opinion and this leads you into arguing, "It would be wrong to hastily involve sections in Latin America into unification on the grounds that they appear to agree with you over the designation of Cuba as a workers state. This does not at all mean that they agree with Pabloism and its activities in the international movement."

Naturally, it "does not at all mean ...". What it does mean is that they have taken a fresh look at the forces of the IS in Latin America, especially after the Posadas split, since they found themselves working side by side with the IS comrades in defense of the Cuban Revolution and on the basis of a common appreciation of that Revolution and the workers state that emerged from it. There is no force mightier than a living revolution in bringing dedicated revolutionists together despite important differences.

In Britain, which is remote from the scene of revolutionary action, the Cuban Revolution unfortunately is seen through insular eyes. Thus a discussion for the next years on the meaning of the 1953 split appears much more important than the problem of properly appreciating and engaging in the opening of the socialist revolution in the Western Hemisphere. The Latin-American comrades are entitled to a more sensitive response to the conclusions they have drawn from experience.

(9) You refer to the scheduling of an SWP convention this summer and to the fact that the SWP appears "prepared for an international unification before this convention pronounces on your differences with us." You raise the question of your right to attend our convention and to present your point of view before the delegates. You also suggest that there are minorities in the SWP who have "opinions on international matters and yet before they can present them to your conference, you want to present everybody with a fait accompli."

But the SWP has strongly favored reunification for six years! In fact, for several years following 1957 we were under the impression that the leadership of the SLL agreed with us on this and that the main obstacle to reunification came only from the side of the IS. Later, in the light of fresh evidence, we reached the conclusion that lack of will for reunification existed on both sides and that so long as this remained the case unification, desirable as it was, was not feasible. We stated this publicly in official resolutions. It is now clear to us, and has been for the past year, that the IS is strongly in favor of unification. It is also now clear that the majority of the IC favors unification. Moreover both sides favor it on the basis of the same general principles on which the SWP was built and on which it still stands.

The majority of the SWP proposes to act in accordance with the basic principles of the party and on an issue which it has advocated for six years. What is undemocratic about that?

Your suggestion, on the other hand, if adopted by the SWP would violate the elementary principles of democratic centralism since it proposes that the SWP majority should not act because a minority or minorities oppose it.

By acting in accordance with its estimate of the situation, the SWP majority violates none of the rights of the minority. They have full right to publish and advocate their views inside the party in accordance with the rules of democratic centralism.

In this particular instance the implication that the democratic rights of the minority or of a fraternal organization would be infringed by taking action is all the flimsier since their democratic rights would be fully guaranteed in a united world Trotskyist movement.

Moreover, even if your argument were correct about the majority of the SWP being morally bound not to take any further action in the course it has followed for six years until it first hears a delgation from the SLL and the representatives of the minorities at its convention, what about the sectors of the IC who have declared for early reunification and who constitute a majority in the IC without counting the SWP? If they go ahead and carry out the policy of unification which they favor, all the SWP convention could do is express approval or disapproval. But this is all it can do in any case so far as their actions are concerned. They are not bound by the decisions of the SWP. Surely you do not suggest that it would be undemocratic if these sectors of the IC go ahead without waiting until the SWP reaffirms once again a position it has consistently advocated these six years!

Finally even if the other sections of the IC were to bow to this thin argument and ask the IS to postpone its congress so that reunification could be co-ordinated after representatives of the SLL and the SWP minorities have been heard at the SWP convention, this would change little. You do not suggest such an arrangement since to do so would imply that the SLL leadership would abide by the decision of the SWP convention or independently consider joining in the reunification immediately following the IS congress. You exclude early reunification under any circumstances. In face of this declared stand, you are quite correct in refraining from suggesting in any way that the IS congress should be postponed. The truth is that in return for acceding to your argument, you offer absolutely nothing to the IC sections who favor early reunification except an effective way of blocking achievement of their aims.

# # #

I come now to your suggested procedure. You readily acceded to Comrade Capa's suggestion that the IC conference be postponed to August. You overlooked the fact that he was also amenable to a June date. You disregarded our request for a late May date, although I think that Comrade Capa would agree to that date if it was the most feasible for all concerned. But in choosing the August date, which Comrade Capa had suggested as being ideal organizationally, you advanced a whole series of political arguments that represent a position completely opposed to the one on which Comrade Capa stands and with an aim completely opposed to Comrade Capa's, who wants to facilitate an early reunification. In accordance with these political arguments, which represent the minority position of the SLL leadership and possibly some "minorities" in the SWP, you propose a procedure which would block early reunification. In fact, anyone studying all the qualifying phrases can only conclude that you view unification at best as merely a remote possibility so far as it concerns the SLL.

First you suggest organization of an international control commission. "This commission would investigate, just as the IEC commission is doing, all charges and counter-charges, thus allowing the Parity Committee to continue with its work of organizing joint activity as well as the discussion.

"If this is agreed," you continue, "and the discussion organized thoroughly, we can prepare an international conference of the two tendencies for sometime during September or October 1964, certainly not before. If properly prepared, this conference would be in a position to discuss all the questions affecting the differences between the tendencies and the work of the various sections.

"It would not be so much a unification conference, although a unification may very well arise as a result of it. It would be a conference whose prime purpose would be to make a balance sheet of the discussion that had already taken place, and then work out the next steps towards reorganization and reunification."

Take another look at the if's, and's and but's. First a control commission is to be set up to "investigate... all charges and counter-charges." If this is satisfactory, it will allow the Parity Committee to continue. "If this is agreed" and if the discussion is organized "thoroughly" then an international conference can be held in the fall of 1964. "If properly prepared" this conference "would be in a position to discuss ..." Out of all this, unification "may very well arise...".

And who is to judge if this series of hurdles has been properly cleared? Let us assume that it will be the majority of the world Trotskyist movement whose decisions will be recognized and accepted. But all the evidence shows that the majority is prepared to render its decision right now. To oppose this with such a series of qualifications is to cling in reality to the perspective of maintaining the split for the next years if not longer.

This perspective of continuing the split seems incorrect to us. In fact from our viewpoint -- which we recognize you do not share -- it is unprincipled. We therefore find the course you suggest to be unacceptable.

By way of exception we do find ourselves in agreement on one point. This is that there should be an exchange of delegations between the two congresses. As you will recall, this was taken up in the Parity Committee and the IS accepted the IC proposal for an exchange of two delegates from each side. The IS, not having the power to make a final decision, said that they would strongly recommend it to the IS congress.

On receiving a letter from the Japanese comrades, I learned that the IS sent a direct invitation to them to attend as observers. I checked about this with the IS representatives. They said that they had been surprised that the IC wished to confine the exchange of delegations to

only two people. They are quite willing to recommend that delegates from all sections of the IC be invited to attend their congress as observers.

In light of this and the situation as a whole, we are now consulting as rapidly as possible with all sections of the IC who have indicated that they favor early reunification. It is quite important, we think, that the delegates have an opportunity to meet the IS delegates personally and to observe their congress so as to be in better position to judge its political positions. This, too, is part of the process of "clarification" and "preparation."

We also think it highly advisable to have a preliminary consultation among the IC delegates before they attend the IS congress. Comrade Peng has suggested that a formal call be made for an international conference of the IC sections who favor early reunification, the conference to be held at the latter part of May. The purpose of the conference would be to consider the situation as it now stands and to decide what steps to take.

It would be excellent if the next date for the regular IC meeting, sometime in June, I believe, were now reconsidered, set for the end of May and converted into a full international IC conference with the question of reunification as first point on the agenda. This would fit in very well with Comrade Peng's proposal which I imagine most sections will respond to, in any case, with a favorable decision.

What we suggest in short is (1) that a meeting be held at the end of May by representatives of all sections of the IC which favor early reunification; (2) that other sections of the IC consider the advisability of participating in this gathering so as to convert it into a full IC conference; (3) that if this is agreed upon, the first point on the agenda be the question of early reunification.

I believe only one more point remains to be clarified. In your letter where you state your opposition to the basis of unification proposed by the Political Committee of the SWP in its statement "For Early Reunification of the World Trotskyist Movement," and your disagreement on holding the IC conference in May, you bring up the question of relations between the SWP and the SLL. You say:

"We explained all this to you at the IC in January and you assured us that no one on your side had any intention of closing the door on relations between our two tendencies. We told you that if you rushed the question of unification that this may very well precipitate a definitive split. Yet you appear to be doing just this."

I fail to see any contradiction between seeking to unify the world Trotskyist movement and also seeking to maintain comradely relations between our two tendencies. In fact, the thoroughly principled way in which we have approached the problem of reunification, excluding all



maneuvers at any one's expense, requires us to seek to maintain friendly relations with all Trotskyists -- and to seek to establish friendly relations where they do not already exist. We are out to help unite the world Trotskyist movement on a principled basis, not to maintain an old split, still less to precipitate new ones. At the same time we understand very well that in some countries an early fusion of organizations is not feasible and that unification on an international scale raises very difficult local questions in such countries although it should bring an immediate amelioration of relations where factional hostility remains unduly sharp. In the case of Britain we have always held the SLL and its preceding formations in highest respect, have prized its achievements and have tried to demonstrate this appreciation in every possible way. We have not changed in this. Despite the recent appearance of deep differences, especially over such issues as evaluation of the importance of the colonial revolution and correct tactics toward it, our policy has been to do everything possible to maintain comradely relations, to avoid a split, and to refrain from taking our differences into public although this was very difficult in relation to the Cuban Revolution where we felt that some of your public statements were very damaging. We see no reason to change this policy. I repeat, we want to help unify the movement on a principled basis, not precipitate new splits.

However, successful maintenance of this policy does not rest solely with us. It requires reciprocity on your part. Doubt is cast on your goodwill by such declarations as "We told you that if you rushed the question of unification that this may well precipitate a definitive split. Yet you appear to be doing just this." A more positive approach would be an assurance -- if your organization is not yet prepared for unification -- that you will nevertheless make every reasonable effort to collaborate despite your differences, that you wish the united movement success, and that you are prepared to continue to work in a comradely way in bodies of mutually agreeable composition and scope such as was tested in the Parity Committee. It appears to me that the united world Trotskyist movement would have every reason to welcome such a declaration of policy and to go more than half way in meeting it.

In closing I cannot help but express once again my conviction that the world Trotskyist movement is now confronted with a decision as important historically as was the founding of the Fourth International in 1938. The leadership of the SLL could play a central role in assuring full success in reunifying our movement. I hope that the SLL will yet help celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth International by sending a full delegation to the reunification congress.

Fraternally yours,

Joseph Hansen.

P.C. ENDORSEMENT OF HANSEN LETTER

The following motion was adopted by the Political Committee on May 3, 1963:

"1. To approve the general line of Comrade Hansen's letter of April 13, 1963, to Comrade Healy.

"2. To endorse Comrade Hansen's specific proposals: (a) that a meeting be held at the end of May by representatives of all sections of the IC which favor early reunification; (b) that other sections of the IC consider the advisability of participating in this gathering so as to convert it into a full IC conference; (c) that if this is agreed upon, the first point on the agenda be the question of early reunification.

"3. To affirm Comrade Hansen's assurance to the SLL of our desire to maintain comradely relations despite differences concerning early reunification of the world movement."

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