

UNITY AND THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Our position on the "unity" question is an integral part of the positions set forth above. This was our original attitude and this remains our attitude. What will be said has not in any basic way been determined by the breakdown in the unity negotiations. Our position was not and is not motivated by what has transpired during the past few months nor by any belief which we held about the probability of getting "unity." The author of this document has made only one change in his position since the first unity negotiations which has any relation to the happenings of this year. That change is a more adamant and a more principled objection to unification. This will be discussed in the proper place.

It is difficult to deal with the unity question without resort to a recital of some of the history of this affair. This will be kept at a minimum in this document and referred to the larger document. What is necessary here is to use the space for discussion of unification itself.

Although I was opposed to unification from the time of the first unity negotiations in 1945, I did not express my opposition publicly in the Party at that time. I only took this position in the PC and in the 1946 pre-convention plenum. It is also necessary to state that I presented a written position against unification to the special plenum, attended by Smith, last February. This statement was not circulated in the Party. I want to say now that in both of these instances I believe I was mistaken. I should have come out in the Party against unification in 1945 and in 1946. One of the reasons that I state this now is that I was taken to task in the N.C. plenum of February 1947 because I had not opposed the unification on the floor at the 1946 Convention. I accept this reprimand. My failure to present my views to the whole Party was irresponsible and inexcusable.

It is necessary to deal with the "unity" question because in my opinion the Party was injured by the "unity" deal. It is necessary to examine the notions of the proponents of unity. The unity question must be examined in relation to the prospects and perspectives of the WP.

When Smith showed up at our February plenum, representing, as he put it, neither the SWP nor any other faction in the CIC, but a "third party," that is, an impartial bloc in the CIC, the opposition to unity said: (1) The proposal of the CIC to the WP is an impertinence. (2) Cannon and the CIC had come to prior agreement on the unification terms before Smith appeared at the WP. (3) That the CIC made the demand that the WP agree in advance to accept the decisions of the EPC in order to guarantee that the political line of the SWP and the CIC would prevail during and after the EPC. (4) That Cannon agreed to reopen unity negotiations primarily because in his opinion, acceptance of the CIC proposal would represent capitulation on the part of the WP. Also that Cannon believed that he would be in position to enforce the "no discussion" clause after the EPC and the merger of the two parties.

This was our position in connection with the CIC proposal as such.

The N.C. disagreed with this estimate and this interpretation. The N.C. had its own interpretation as to why Cannon had changed; as to why this dent had been permitted in the monolithism of the SWP. This became a central point: "the acceptance by Cannon of the principal of unity is a blow at the monolithic organization concepts of the Cannonites." One member of the N.C. felt that the declaration of Cannon for unity should be enthusiastically received. Another comrade expressed his faith in Smith's sincerity. One comrade announced that I was stating my position, on the merits of the WP, in the form of an obituary. McKinney's speech was out of order. The WP would become the majority of the common party after a period of common life. We were not going to a funeral but to a wedding.

The N.C. took the position that one must have sound political reasons to oppose unity. The Party is committed to unification. It is through the unification of the two Trotskyist parties that we will build the revolutionary party in the U.S. Cannon is for unity. The question of unity is not now left to the SWP but is in the hands of the International.

Our positive position against unity was stated as follows: We quote from the statement which was read to the plenum and which formed the basis of my remarks there and in subsequent membership meetings in New York.

"I. The Workers Party should reject the proposals of the CIC, setting forth the terms for the admission of the WP to the Movement and for participating in the EPC.

"The Workers Party should orient toward independent organizational existence and not toward unification with the Socialist Workers Party. The WP should adopt the position that the present concrete situation in the two parties, the past development of relations between the two parties, the real and fundamental differences in the political and organizational concepts of the two organizations and the deep-going antagonisms which have emerged from these differing political and organizational concepts, are of such a nature that no real unification can be effected so long as these fundamental differences exist. Next, the Workers Party can make its greatest contribution to the establishment of an effective Movement and to the development of the revolutionary movement in the U.S. by continuing its independent organizational existence and developing the political and organization notions for which it has become distinctive.

"I shall present motions to this plenum embodying these positions. Such motions and positions, of course, must be clarified and defended. This I shall attempt to do briefly now. Later I shall elaborate what I say here, for presentation to the N.C. and to the Party, at the time the N.C. places the question before the Party.

"II. Against the Proposal of the CIC.

Smith
"1. The CIC-according to the report of Comrade /.- demands that as a condition of entry into the Movement and a condition for full participation in the EPC, the WP must agree in advance that it will accept the resolutions and decisions of the EPC.

"Upon acceptance of these conditions, stipulated by the CIC, the

CIC states that it will use its authority and prestige, in advance of the EPC, in the EPC and after the EPC, if necessary, to effect the unification of the WP and the SWP. Comrade Smith further states that he will use his influence to get the CIC to guarantee or assure the WP that if the WP accepts the proposal of the CIC, on participation in the EPC and agrees in advance to accept the resolutions and decisions of the EPC, that unification of the WP and the SWP will be effected before or shortly following the EPC.

"2. In my opinion, entrance into the Movement or participation in the EPC is not inseparably connected with the unification of the two parties in the U.S. This is only true, "in the long run." That is, it is only true "in the meaning that the Movement cannot have permanently more than one section in a single country. The problem today however is not the simple one of saying that only one section may exist in a single country. Two Trotskyist parties do exist in the U.S. While everyone will agree that this is not the ideal situation, the difficulty cannot and will not be resolved by ignoring any of the significant and relevant realities in the concrete situation.

"The WP has always maintained itself as a Trotskyist Party and also has always maintained that it should be formally a section of the Movement. The Party has resented its bureaucratic exclusion from the Movement. It has applied formally for admission to the Movement.

"In the years between our separation from the SWP and now we have steadfastly maintained the attitude that we belonged in the Movement and have been active in setting for this position and demanding that we be admitted. In the midst of this activity the question of unification with the SWP arose. The WP initiated a movement for unification following the raising of this question inside the SWP by a minority which had arisen in that Party. This proposal was categorically rejected by the SWP. Until very recently the CIC made no intervention on the question of unification. If there had been intervention on the part of the CIC, the WP might today be a formal member of the Movement. There is ample precedent for permitting the existence of more than one section in a single country.

"The existence of the WP in the Movement might itself have been a prime means of bringing about unification in the U.S. It is not out of place to inquire from the CIC why it did not take this position and also what connection, if any, their motivations for not taking such a position have with their motivations for demanding that the WP agree in advance to accept the decisions of the forthcoming EPC.

"3. Whatever the answer to the above paragraph may be the CIC now comes to the WP with a definite proposal: that the WP agree in advance of the EPC to accept the decisions of that EPC. It is necessary first to discuss this proposal, and to discuss it as a demand on the WP. It may be of some importance to discuss the proposal from the standpoint of precedent but this to me is not of any great importance. What is important is that it is a demand coming from the CIC to the WP.

"Our Party separated from the SWP in 1940 after a faction struggle revolving around grave and important political and organizational questions. Comrade Trotsky, the SWP leadership and the leadership of the Movement predicted that since the WP was a petty-bourgeois non-Marxist group it would inevitably succumb to democratic-imperialist pressure when the war came. This did not happen. It would be nearer the truth to direct such an accusation at the SWP, now that the war is over and proper evaluation of the conduct of the two parties can be made.

"The WP beginning under the most trying conditions and with a group of young inexperienced members, who were certainly not proletarian; made its way into the factories and into the class struggle. During the war years the WP refuted, by its theoretical formulations and by its practice, every accusation. Every dire prediction made failed to come true.

"In the face of heavy external difficulties and still harassed by the political and organizational immaturity of its members, the Party not only held its own but grew in membership and influence. These gains were modest but there were gains. The Party right in the midst of a slump in its income and during a period of relatively low employment, increased LABOR ACTION from 4 to 8 pages. We have held this for the past 7 months while the MILITANT was reduced to 6 pages.

"Not only did the WP not disintegrate as had been solemnly predicted, and not only did it gain members from the general working class but it gained members from the SWP. And not only just members but politically educated members, leading members of the leading committee of the SWP. It is significant too that among these comrades gained from the SWP were comrades who were in complete political disagreement with the WP, not only during the faction struggle but for three or more years after the formation of the WP.

"These are brute facts. This is what the WP has done. This is what it is today.

"It is this Party, with this record, to which the CIC directs a proposal that it agree in advance to the decisions of an EPC which has not yet been held.

"One can say with full justification, therefore that such a demand coming from the CIC of the Movement directed to the WP and in the concrete circumstances, is politically false, organizationally stupid, unwarranted and invalid. The demand of the CIC is an impertinence.

"4. The WP should reject the proposal of the CIC that it agree in advance of the EPC to accept the decisions of the EPC.

"The course to be pursued by the WP in lieu of acceptance of the demands of the CIC is set forth in the motions appended.

III. AGAINST MERGER WITH THE SWP NOW.

1. Any responsible person who maintains a position against the organizational unification of the two Trotskyist Parties in the U.S.

bears an exceedingly grave responsibility to justify such a position. On the other hand however, I hold, that those who advocate this step bear no less a heavy burden of responsibility. I do not include among these, those who have a very simple and to me naive attitude toward the question of bringing about the merger of the two parties. There are those who believe that organizational unification of itself would produce beneficial results. Their position is based on general and vague notions, not entirely without mystical content. They ignore entirely the fact that at a certain time and under certain conditions an authority higher body might instruct two parties to remain apart for a season.

"I do not include Comrade Johnson. There are two related reasons for this. a) Comrade Johnson holds the position that the separation on our part of 1940 was politically and organizationally incorrect and invalid. Comrade Johnson also holds that the strictures of Comrade Trotsky concerning the petty-bourgeois nature of the WP were correct. b) Comrade Johnsons holds political views more in consonance with those of the SWP than with those of the WP. c) Evidently basing himself on these two considerations Comrade Johnson, if he is to maintain any political and organizational integrity whatsoever, must accept uncritically any and all proposals coming for the unification of the two organizations. This has been the course of Comrade Johnson up to and including the appearance of Comrade Smith. Also since Comrade Johnson is in total and complete disagreement with the political positions of the WP, he does not and cannot evaluate the Party, and its prospects and the course it should pursue in the same manner as those who agree with the line of the Party and who have been chiefly responsible for the development of and the leadership of the Party.

"The comrades I have in mind are those who are in agreement with the line of the Party and who have been responsible for the leadership, development and administration of the Party. I mean the Party cadre. I am speaking about the comrades who really do not want to be members of the SWP. I say that it is all of these comrades who bear a heavy burden of responsibility also.

"2. The Workers Party has developed a distinctive Marxist political line; particularly in connection with the two outstanding events of our day. a. The nature of the Russian state. I do not say that the line of our Party answers all questions in connection with this complex phenomena. I only say that the Party worked out a plausible theoretical position. It is not politically bankrupt on this question as is the SWP and the Movement. Nor is the Party in the position that Comrade Johnson would have it be. That is the Party does not have to defend the fantastic position that Russia is today the only fascist state in the world.

"b. Of all the Trotskyist parties it was the WP which had a correct position on the question of national liberation in Europe. Neither the SWP nor the CIC was correct on this question as events have demonstrated.

"3. Our Party has developed LABOR ACTION into a unique and distinctive political agitational organ. The superiority of LABOR ACTION over the MILITANT has been demonstrated again and again.

"4. The WP has developed and put into practice democratic organizational concepts and procedures which were and are of tremendous significance in these days of Stalinist totalitarianism and Cannonite bureaucratism.

"5. The intervention of our Party in the labor movement and the programmatic proposals for the trade unions have been and are a significant contribution far beyond and above anything done by the SWP.

"6. To sum up these contentions and claims it can be said, over against Comrade Johnson, that the WP has justified its existence; politically and organizationally.

"7. It is imperative that these things be emphasized not for reasons of pride and the desire for mere separation but because in the world situation today; including the prevalence of Stalinism, the general political backwardness of the American proletariat and the general political confusion and deterioration, it is imperative that there be a full testing of the two political lines in action. It is more than important that the political line and the organizational principles of the WP have the fullest opportunity for further development and testing. This opportunity would be lost if the WP united with the SWP in the present situation and under the conditions specified.

"8. Why should the Movement demand such terms as have been proposed? Neither its line nor that of the SWP has been confirmed by events. The line which has best met the test of events is the line of the WP. And now it is demanded that this line be abandoned before the public. Is this the period for such procedure? I do not believe so.

"9. The two parties are separate organizations. Separation came about for good and sufficient reason. The WP must have the opportunity to continue its separate political and organizational development, and its propaganda and agitation along the lines already in practice. The test must be made in the class struggle and not through internal factional strife between two parties inside one party.

"10. The root question which we are dealing with is the question of how the revolutionary party can be built in the U.S. This question will not be and cannot be correctly answered by any a priori position that the "two Trotskyist parties should be united", "what we are discussing is only the question of unity," "our ideas will make their way in the SWP." The primary place for "our ideas" to make their way is directly in the working class or that section of the working class which we can reach and have reached with our ideas.

"11. For the fullest consummation of this conception and this program, the WP must remain organizationally independent and politically free.

E.R. McKinney
February 5, 1947"

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Our position was amplified in the New York membership meetings, in a debate with Comrade Shachtman in Philadelphia and in subsequent discussions in the PC. We made an important part of our demand for the continued organizational independence of the WP the following which we extracted from the Shachtman article in the NI "Five Years of the Workers Party".

"Perhaps our greatest gain is in the kind of Party we have succeeded in building. Militants and radicals outside our Party know the facts and acknowledge them. It might be said that the kind of party we have built up is our richest possession.

"Our Party, during the war constituted the principle and the clearest CENTER of the militant movement in the trade unions.

"It is not exaggeration to say that in some of the largest working class concentrations in the country, LABOR ACTION is eagerly awaited.

"We have won to our Party some of the best militants in the labor movement...The popularity of our program is an assurance that we will succeed in recruiting more of these militants in the future.

"We had LABOR ACTION... Our Party is exceptionally proud of this paper.

"Far more important than the Russian question is the question of participation in the class struggle in the U.S.

"The WP was the only working class organization, with no exception, which took a forthright unambiguous position, in public, in opposition to American imperialism in the war."

In reply to the statement that if we reject unity today we must say that our policy was wrong, we replied that this reasoning did not impress us. It was our position that the question must be decided not by whether the position of 1945 was correct or incorrect but rather by what was the correct attitude to the CIW proposal and the merits of the present unification proposal. We were not concerned with the contention of some comrades that "Cannon is in an impossible position." Our concern was that the WP not get into an impossible position.

It was our position that the new unity proposal should be rejected because any objective examination of the situation either from the political or organizational standpoint, indicated no justification for unification with the SWP. We said that the WP must go it alone, that the accomplishments quoted from "Five Years of the Workers Party" would be held in abeyance if we entered the SWP...We believe that this program should be continued to be propagated by the WP. There is no other organization to do this. We believe over against the NC that these are substantial political reasons against unification...It is politically imperative that the program of the WP continue to be propagated to the public. It must not be silenced even for one month...We do not live in such times... Comrade Shachtman may reply 'we will get to the public'..but we are getting to the public NOW... We want to struggle directly against Reuther and Stalin,

for example and not get to Keuther and Stalin over the prostrate body of Cannon."

"We do not want above all, to fall prey to the notion that the approach to the masses is a by-product of the prior conquest of the SWP, or must be delayed until another party is captured."

The above quotations are from the position which we took in the discussions in the PC and in membership meetings. They were rejected by the NC, the PC and by the Party. We were somewhat shocked therefore to read the following in the "Statement on Unity..." which appeared in the Party Bulletin for September 19, 1947. "The future of the Workers Party is by no means determined by its attitude toward the SWP nor its relations with it. To convert the Party into an organization which is primarily concerned with the SWP or into an organization whose chief claim to existence is its pro-unity position, would mean to sterilize the Party."

"Our Party will triumph or be defeated only insofar as its program and policies are confirmed and sustained in the class struggle."

These are precisely the representations we made months ago and which were either ignored or rejected outright. What makes this correct today and incorrect 8 months ago?

The PC is concerned and correctly so with those who believe that the Party should be an "organization whose chief claim to existence is its pro-unity position..." There must have been an attitude of this kind somewhere in the Party. In this respect the PC is like unto the Biblical writer who polemicised against fornication. He was dealing with the objective situation.

The PC statement does not stop here. It accepts the whole position (except that it is still for unity) which we put forward. "If the tendency represented by our Party would have an independent role to play even if it were part of a united Party together with the SWP tendency, this holds with multiplied force under conditions when our Party is organizationally independent. (Emphasis mine.)

What were we talking about except just this. We said this almost in the identical language, the same words over and over. These were our reasons for opposing unification. Our position was rejected with a fanfare of trumpets and salvo after salvo from the "16 inch guns."

It was in the ranks however, at membership meetings that the real pro-unity barrage was laid down. We quote a few rank and file arguments for unity. "McKinney thinks the WP is going to lead the revolution." "We don't believe that the WP is going to lead the revolution." "McKinney thinks the WP will lead the revolution in the U.S. That's what Cannon says. (McKinney) thinks movement can be built outside of the Movement. Perspective for us is bleak if we remain independent. If we reject unity we doom ourselves. We can't lift ourselves by our boot straps." "The comrades who oppose unity are not giving their real reasons."

"McKinney is objecting to unity on principle. He talks about the NI which most of the members don't read. Position of the

opponents is based on the burcqucratism in the S/P. Only to a limited extent have we influenced workers. "We have a greater opportunity in the S/P." "If you are going to be political you must be for unity". The comrade who made this remark also warned us against having a split position. One comrade said that the position of the opponents was based on "sentiment". Another felt that the differences between the SWP and the WP were "minor". "Our Russian position and that of the SWP spring from the same source. McKinney's position is idealistic... McKinney is arguing from a practical point of view." Question to McKinney: "Do you want us to sit in the headquarters and talk to ourselves?"

This is a fair and faithful representation of the New York discussion on the unity question. Comrades who were for unity and who might have presented their arguments in a more sober and less ridiculous manner did not speak. I can only guess the reason; they were not as convinced as those who did speak and if they were convinced they had other reasons for being for unity. They apparently did not believe that our Party was doomed if we did not enter the SWP, but they could not compete with the unity shouters; the faction fighters.

It is difficult to ascertain what the attitude of the pro-unity ranks is today. They are very quiet. They were ready to go to the bat for the unity proposal when it was announced but they have not declared themselves with the same fervor for the new resolution on the unity question.

We are discussing this question as we are because we believe that the "unity" discussion revealed that there are far too many comrades in the Party who were ready, at the drop of the hat, to liquidate the Party organizationally. I am convinced also that some comrades need to check up on their political stability. I mean in the sense that I discussed this point in Section B. of this resolution. For its building, the Party must have more, than people who have some vague commitment to socialism. They must be committed to the WP, to our Party. It was a disheartening sight to see so many comrades proclaim their devotion to "Trotskyism" to "the Trotskyist Movement" but who were at the same time ready to scuttle instanter, the only organization which today stands for genuine Trotskyism (Marxism; Leninism), the only Party which could really demand their devotion politically and organizationally, the only Party which can make even a modest contribution today to the building of an international.

It is correct to hold the leadership of the Party largely responsible for this situation. A stumbling leadership will have a stumbling party in its lap. A leadership which can vote against a position yesterday and for the rejected position today without explaining its motivations for the change and without saying what the differences are between yesterday and today, if any, has a lot to learn about the responsibilities of leadership.

The NC adopted a certain position on unity in February and defended this position with argumentation. We rejected the reasoning

but at least there was an attempt at support of the position. A new resolution of the unity question is adopted by the PC. This resolution by more than implication, is an argument against unity. Nevertheless the resolution holds tenaciously to a pro-unity position. We have quoted paragraphs above. In spite of this PC members vote for the resolution as though it contained nothing that they had rejected a few months earlier.

This is not all. There are parts of the unity section of the "Report on the Program of Action" which are not in consonance with the "Statement on Unity..." The PC voted approval of both documents. While the "Report" states that "for all practical purposes the 'unity' between the WP and the SWP is at an end," the "Report" also states that "the coming period will witness a sharpening of the political struggle between the two parties, and this struggle, far from being counter to our perspective of 'building outwardly' is in the very nature of a Party building perspective...individuals and even groups of the SWP membership have been impressed with our program as they have been awakened to the bureaucratic sterility of the SWP. There exists in the SWP a minority faction whose orientation is clearly in our direction...In various sections of the country individual and small groups of SWP members have manifested interest in our party and have shown definite sympathy for our views and organization...It is interesting that in most cases these SWP members sought us out. Once the monolithic shell of the SWP had cracked (however slightly) and its members were exposed to our ideas, it was inevitable that sections of the SWP would respond favorably and develop in our direction... the 'accidental' form of contact would indicate that there must be in the SWP untouched possibilities requiring attention by our Party, especially by the local units."

In the first place the claims made here are misleading. The impression is given that the developments mentioned took place after the opening of the second unity negotiations and were in some relevant manner the result of the unity activities of the WP. Our contention is confirmed by the statement about the breaking of the monolithic shell. Our criticism has nothing to do with any opinion we hold as to whether or not the monolithic shell was ever actually broken. That is a matter of private opinion. What we mean is the fact that there was no claim made that the monolithic shell had been broken until after the SWP's February 1947 declaration for unity. It is a brave PC which declares that the developments spoken of in the quotations given, began after February 1947.

It is a well-known fact, that the present minority in the SWP is the remains of the Goldman minority. This minority began to move in our direction in 1945 on the basis of certain doubts in connection with the Russian question, their experiences with the Cannon bureaucracy and above all, through their unity tactic which they developed independently of the WP. The WP followed the lead of the Goldman-Morrow minority on the unity question and we picked up the slogan in order to aid the Goldmanites in their struggle against Cannon.

The whole trend of the "Report" in its dealing with the unity question, gives the impression that it was the conduct of the WP in the recent unity negotiations which propelled individuals and groups in the SWP toward the WP. Furthermore, this section of the "Report"

gives the impression that the WP has made some appreciable impression on the SWP membership by virtue of the unity negotiations. The "Report" looks so favorably on the possibilities for recruiting from the SWP and influencing the SWP membership, that "The Party, in fact, recognizes this as an integral part of its perspective of party building."

It is an interesting commentary on this attitude also, that when the opposition to unity took the position that it was the business of the WP, as an independent organization, to attempt to penetrate the SWP and to defeat the SWP in the class struggle and thereby win over SWP'ers, our position was received with some astonishment. This could be done only from inside the SWP. This position was taken despite the fact that at that time 40 members of the SWP had joined the WP, and as the result of their being closer politically to the WP than to the SWP.

The "Report" of the PC also discovers that "political assaults upon the program and tactics of the SWP, inevitable in the next period, will mature latent opposition to the line of the SWP among its members, not only in the broad political issues which now divide us and which have come to the fore in the course of the unity developments, but more specifically in the fields of tactical application of policy." (My emphasis). This is really captivating. The broad political issue which divide the WP and the SWP only came to the fore during the unity negotiations. If this is true, then we have a lot of explaining to do. We split in 1940 on the Russian question. We condemned the SWP for its "proletarian military policy". We condemned their trade union line and tactics during and after the war. We condemned their position on Stalinism, on the "national question", and on party organization. We wrote that the political differences had deepened and that the SWP was a "bureaucratic jungle". Most of this was before the first unity negotiations and all of it preceded the second unity negotiations.

The next observation we wish to make is in connection with the statement in the "Report" that the Party must wage a political assault against the SWP which will influence its members in our direction. This was part of the original opposition of the opponents of unity. We said that the WP must remain organizationally independent and combat the SWP in the class struggle and thereby influence its members or a part of them in our direction. This point of view was rejected in favor of the point of view that the only effective way of combatting the SWP was from inside that Party. The PC only discovers the virtues of independence after unity is rejected by the SWP.

The opposition also took the position that it was opposed to the conception of building the Party by a series of entries, faction fights and splits. This is a concept of "party building" which has developed in the movement and to which we are opposed. So far as we know Cannon is the father of this concept and of the concept that the first task of the SWP is to clear the scene of all political opponents. It was our position in February and remains our position today that the entry of the WP into the SWP would be merely the signal for another faction fight, another struggle for power, not in the ranks of the proletariat but inside the Movement in the U.S.

The animation of many comrades in the unity discussions was based on the concept that the way to build the Party is first to get rid of the SWP. How do we do it? We enter that Party and carry on a struggle for "our position". Other comrades were cruder and somewhat more naive: they merely wanted to knock Cannon out.

Our objections were as we stated them: the SWP must be combatted but the most effective way of combatting the SWP is through the clash of the programs of the two parties in the class struggle. The position adopted by the Party was that the best way was from the inside, the SWP. We opposed this conception for the reasons given above and because the entry into the SWP was based on the liquidation of the Party press and all the organs of external propaganda. There would have been no WP. No matter how vociferously we maintained the contrary, none would have known it but the SWP and ourselves. No amount of self-intoxication about the persistence of our "tendency" could obliterate this significant fact.

Now on the question of the crack in the monolithism of the SWP. Again we must report that what we say here is not a posteriori. What we say now is precisely what we said in March. It was the position of the NC that a crack had been made in the monolithic armor of the Cannonites. What was the evidence for this? The SWP had reversed itself and had made a declaration for unity. Cannon had admitted that the two tendencies could live compatibly in one party. But Cannon had already said in the first unity negotiations in 1945 that the political differences were not the primary consideration. He even admitted that nothing in principle could be advanced against a tendency organ, even an external organ. His only concern was "will it work?" We assume therefore that the majority of our Party had come to the conclusion that when Cannon "declared for unity" he had become convinced that it would work.

Comrade N. certainly adopted a far more realistic attitude on this question than the NC when she wrote that the SWP had rejected unity bureaucratically and had reversed itself just as bureaucratically.

We originally rejected the position of the NC on this question and we reject it today. The theory of the "crack" was a myth in March and it is a myth today. It was not a valid argument then in favor of unity position and it is not a valid argument now.

We are in full accord with the following statements of the PC set down in the "Statement on Unity..." "The future of the Workers Party is by no means determined by its attitude toward the SWP nor its relations with it... Our Party will triumph or be defeated only insofar as its program and policies are confirmed and sustained in the class struggle... If the tendency represented by our Party would have an independent political role to play even if it were a part of a united party together with the SWP tendency, this holds with multiplied force under conditions when our Party is organizationally independent."

That is the position which we put forward in Feb and March and which was rejected. That is our position today. In contrast to the

PC however we draw the necessary and relevant political and organizational conclusions. The PC does not. It attempts to ride two horses travelling in opposite directions. The PC has the opinions quoted above but remains committed to unity.

This can only mean that the Party will not and cannot orient itself in the spirit of those quotations, we can not orient in the direction set forth in the "Report" nor can the Party really and effectively launch the Program of Action.

We mentioned at the beginning of this section that we had amended our position on the unity question. This was stated in a meeting of the PC majority caucus in July just after the Johnson split. We are now answering the attack of the comrades who said that we were rejecting unity on a basis of principle. We were not ready at that time to take the position which we take now. This is the only point in the whole unity debacle where our position has in any way been determined by the events since the opening of the second unity negotiations.

We say now: To go through with this unification, on the terms originally proposed by us and on the terms of the CIC, would in itself be a capitulatory act. It would be political and organizational liquidation of the WP. We hold that the organizational maintenance of the WP today is a matter of principle. We hold that the uninterrupted continuation of the political propaganda of the WP is indicated by principled political considerations. To give up our propaganda opportunities and our propaganda organs is to effect the political dissolution of our tendency.

We have motivated this position and the PC in its unity statement has implicitly motivated this position. This is our answer to all comrades who are concerned with the question of "principle" or "tactic". Those who want to argue the question "in general" or who may have various "hypothetical questions" to ask, or who may feel that such an attitude toward "another Trotskyist party" is untenable will not have their lucubrations disturbed by us.

Our Party must make a definite and unambiguous TURN. We cannot continue proceeding by thrusts, and twists, and periods of uncertainty. We must rescind our unity commitment, and formally call off the unity negotiations. We must give the NEW TURN an adequate political motivation. That is not difficult. Even the document of the PC gives this.

If there be those who are inclined to call off the unity because of the failure to achieve unity we will not quarrel with them. That is their dilemma.

The Party must say: "It has been demonstrated that the unification of the two parties is not politically correct and is organizationally unworkable. Unworkable due to the conflict in political line and organizational tenets. The situation in the class struggle in the US demands the widest possible opportunity for the application of the politics of the WP. The WP will not abdicate its place in the working class political arena nor resign from the modest but substantial position it has acquired during the past 7 years."

It is our position that the SWP is a degenerate party.. It prostitutes and degrades the name of Trotsky. It refurbishes Stalinism and conceals its real essence, it parades in the habiliments of democracy while practicing the most cynical bureaucratism. It raises opportunism to the rank of general policy and resorts to the most questionable tactics in its mass work. It compromises with Jim-Crow and consolidates its Jim-Crow compromises through capitulation to backward workers and bureaucratic suppression inside the Party.

The ranks do not revolt against this indoctrination and this regime. On the unity question their genuflections one day are just as nauseating as their aloofness is the next; all reflecting the latest mood of the Party regime.

THE WP AND THE MOVEMENT

This leads to a discussion of the relation between the WP and the Movement.

Much of the unity discussion was based on an assumption: the assumption that there is a Movement in some real and genuine way. That is, much of the discussion assumed that the Movement was in fact a world organization with real parties and having a real international leadership with authority, prestige and political competence. Because this is not the case one could only get the impression that the Movement was being built during the course of the unity discussion. That is, comrades were not taking an attitude toward the actual Movement, but toward an idea, toward something which was a construction and not a reality. They were talking about what ought to be and not about what is.

The real problem is not solved by posing the questions: "what is there outside the Movement?" "Are you for a new Movement?" Neither of these questions makes any sense; they have no content and no substance. Only the intellectually senile and the politically inept could pose these questions in any serious way. They are irrelevant. People who ask such questions are like children in the regalia of hobgoblins, trying to scare adults.

These questions are put with all the fervor of a Jesuit, prodding his victim to confess that the bread and wine are the real body and blood of Christ.

The Movement was born in response to real political necessity. That need is no less real today than it was a decade ago. While its main body of doctrine, as developed by Trotsky, is still alive, it is becoming more and more encrusted with political carrion, organizational bureaucratism and stupidity. It is quite a spectacle to behold a movement projected for the purpose of combatting Stalinism politically and organizationally; itself taking on the coloration of political and organizational Stalinism.

The WP will not be performing its proper function if we compromise with this tendency in the name of "internationalism" or of "building the Movement."

We must wage irreconcilable warfare against the low state of political and socialist morality of the political movement today, which finds discouraging manifestations in the Movement itself. This is an extremely serious question. We have witnessed the deportment of Smith, the leading functionary of the Movement, as he sought to put over his second-story conspiratorial agreements with Cannon. This man's conception of the fight for socialism is apparently that of the prize fighter who has been assured that he will win no matter who often he hits his opponent below the belt. We have seen all the machinations, the political and organizational bribery; the political meanderings, the distortions of the WP position and the downright falsifications which have been imposed by the leadership of the Movement.

To close one's eyes to these horrid realities is to say that a "bureaucratic jungle" can be the birth place of socialism and proletarian decency.

The Movement is not a Movement! It can never emerge from its sickness with the present leadership or any leadership that is at present on the horizon. Not only is the present leadership politically and organizationally incompetent, it is astonishingly inept, bureaucratic and factional. It has no prestige or authority and does not deserve any. This leadership has only the most primitive and elementary conception of its tasks. It does not understand the times, nor how to proceed with the most difficult job of mobilizing, even a small section of the world proletariat. It uses the name of Trotsky but it is not the voice of Trotsky. It is only the cloying hand of Cannon.

No Movement can be built with the concepts and methods of the present leadership. To be sure it will be easy for those to build something who believe that the Stalinist army of 1945 was Trotsky's Red Army, or who believe that Russia is only a case of "bureaucratism," or who believe that the refusal to take peanut shells out of desk when told to by the teacher, is a revolutionary act. People who believe these things while they at the same time take a most cynical and opportunist position on the Negro in the unions, because "the workers won't understand," will have no serious difficulty in building their Movement. They have already built it. Their Movement is complete and ready for the last rites.

The building of the new Movement will require complete attention to the realities of the times. The Party has said in its resolutions what this means. We are attempting to build internationally not only in the period of capitalist decline but of proletarian decline as well, and the ascendancy of Stalinism. We do not have the inspiration of any great world event such as the Great October Revolution. This means starting anew, with a new program in part, with wide latitude in organizational approach and above all with a certain degree of political flexibility. It is one thing to demand political inflexibility from the present parties of the Movement and quite another for these parties or the Movement to demand this same degree of inflexibility from all manner of groups which may be material for a new Movement.

To get started on the arduous task of building a Movement today .

requires a sort of "open door" policy on the part of the Movement. This policy must be followed if there is to be any opportunity for getting close to any mass of workers.

The present "Trotskyist" movement can only be a world cadre, a political cadre. The tragedy is that today it is not even that. If the present leadership understood what is demanded of it, this leadership would abandon all pretensions that there is a genuine Movement. The EPC would be called for the purpose only of consolidating the cadre of the Movement and for exploring the field in order to discover new forces and new means of approach to the masses of the world. It would not proceed "as if", as is planned for the EPC.

The only party which is theoretically and ideologically prepared to give the leadership outlined above is our Party. We must assert this boldly. We must do away with our insipid timidity, our self-denigration and our colossal evasion of this responsibility under the cover of "small forces", "organizational feticism", "objective situation." The building of the Movement is today only in the propaganda stage, the programmatic stage. It has not reached the organization stage in any practical way. Therefore the question of forces is not the decisive question.

It is our position that the Party withdraw its commitment to the CIC. That we signify our intention to attend the EPC with the demand that we be accorded the right of voice and vote, irrespective of any commitment or absence of commitment. For our Party to take any other attitude, in the concrete situation and circumstances is not to take ourselves seriously.

We must say, even if we are forced to stand alone; "we will fight for our program, for our ideas and our position. We will penetrate the Movement from the outside before we will submit to any subordination of those ideas and our program on the inside of the Movement."

Our prestige among the sections of the Movement and among the workers of the world will depend primarily on what we are able to accomplish here in our own country. Can we build a Party here? Can we acquire any appreciable influence and prestige among the proletariat in the US? These are the decisive questions. Not whether or not we are members of a fictional Movement which exists mainly in the imaginings of its adherents.

If no revolutionary party is built in the US there will be no Movement built. A Movement must be composed of parties with members and influence. In the present situation real parties will not arise in Europe. All that can be hoped for is the existence of woefully weak sects.. Furthermore, even if some proletarian upheavals should come in Europe, they could only make headway on the strength of aid from the working class in the US. To think in any other way is to dwell in Never-Never Land.

The WP must establish a Movement in the US. This is where it belongs. We are not afraid to have it here. We are not concerned with the problem of "foreigners" interfering in the affairs of our Party. the center of the Movement belongs at the center of international imperialism; where there is the possibility of remaining of

taking an advantage of the remnants of bourgeois democracy and where the largest proletariat in the world is still "free," and housed, clothed, and fed.

The WP must establish itself as the propaganda center of this development. We can do this. It must be a center for the propagation of our ideas and our program. The organizational details do not belong here.

E.R. McKinney,
November 5, 1947