

INTERNAL BULLETIN

VOL. IX, No. 5

August, 1947

CONTENTS

LETTER TO LOCALS AND BRANCHES ON
"THE SPLIT IN THE WORKERS PARTY", from M. Stein

LETTER TO WP MEMBERSHIP, from Max Shachtman

THE JOHNSON-FOREST MINORITY, THE W.P. AND THE
FOURTH INTERNATIONAL
(Resolution adopted by the Johnson-Forest Minority
at its National Conference, July 5-6, 1947.)

Issued By
Socialist Workers Party
116 University Place
New York, New York

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

July 16, 1947

TO ALL LOCALS AND BRANCHES:

Dear Comrades:

THE SPLIT IN THE WORKERS PARTY

The Johnson-Forest Minority in the Workers Party held a national conference July 5-6, 1947 where they decided to break with the Workers Party and to apply for admission into the SWP.

The resolution of the Johnson-Forest group adopted by this conference will be made available to the branches in the next Internal Bulletin. In this resolution it is stated that "The Minority now proposes to request from the W.P. a transfer of its membership to the S.W.P. and to request from the S.W.P. an acceptance of that membership."

The PC of the Workers Party passed the following motion in reply to this request of the Johnson-Forest group: "The PC rejects the Johnsonite request for a transfer from the WP to the SWP as a cowardly evasion of a responsibility which is that of the Johnson faction alone and as an attempt to shift the task of making a decision from the shoulders of the Johnson faction, where it properly belongs, to the party leadership."

Following this action of the PC of the WP the Johnson-Forest Minority addressed a letter to the Workers Party under date of July 14, 1947 as follows:

To the Political Committee, Workers Party

Dear Comrades:

You have rejected our request for a transfer of membership from the WP to the SWP "as a cowardly evasion of a responsibility which is that of the Johnson faction alone."

It seems impossible to make political ideas penetrate through the fog of "cowardly," "dishonest," "bureaucratic" and other subjective motivations which more and more obscure the politics of the WP.

We hereby inform you that the Johnson-Forest Minority resigns its membership from the WP as from today.

Fraternally yours,
J. R. Johnson
For the Johnson-Forest Minority

At its meeting July 15th our Political Committee considered the new situation created by this split in the Workers Party. The decision of the PC is embodied in the following motion:

We are informed by the Johnson group that on July 14 they formally resigned from the WP and are now applying for admission into the SWP.

They have further informed us that they are prepared to dissolve their faction and to carry out in letter and in spirit the conditions for their membership in the SWP as set down in the February 1947 resolution on unity adopted by the NC of the SWP.

Although we have serious political differences with the Johnson group, we feel that they have demonstrated loyalty to the Movement and a sincere desire to be integrated in it. We are therefore prepared in consultation and agreement with the Movement to facilitate their admission into the SWP without any unnecessary delay.

Pending the formal admission of the Johnson group into the SWP all party units are authorized to collaborate with them in practical work.

Fraternally yours,



M. Stein
For the Secretariat

WORKERS PARTY
4 Court Square
Long Island City 1, N. Y.

July 9, 1947

TO ALL PARTY MEMBERS:

Dear Comrades:

We have just received the official text of a resolution adopted by the National Conference of the Johnson Faction held in New York on July 5th and 6th. The text makes the official position of the Johnsonites to our party amply clear.

I am sending the document to all members of the party immediately, even before the Political Committee and the National Committee have had an opportunity to discuss it and to take an official position on the proposal made in the resolution for the transfer of the membership of the Johnsonites from the Workers Party to the Socialist Workers Party. Now that the actual text of the resolution is in your hands, all rumors and misrepresentations become impossible. It goes without saying that the Political Committee will act on this matter at its very next meeting and propose to the members of the National Committee a line of policy to be followed. As soon as the line has been officially endorsed by the National Committee, it will be communicated to the entire membership.

Consequently, the resolution is being sent you for your information and not for formal discussion in the branches. I suggest that such formal discussion be postponed until the membership receives the decision of the National Committee, at which time a discussion can be more rounded and fruitful.

With best Party greetings,

Max Shachtman
National Chairman

THE JOHNSON-FOREST MINORITY, THE W.P. AND THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Resolution adopted by the Johnson-Forest Minority at its National Conference, July 5-6, 1947.

1) After five years of antagonistic separation, followed by two years of international discussion the W.P. and the S.W.P. in February 1947 agreed on unity. Today, July 1947, the prospect of unity has receded and in both parties mutual recrimination is at a higher pitch than ever before.

The crisis of contemporary society continues sharp and naked, insoluble except by the proletarian revolution. American capitalism and the American proletariat are each the most powerful representative of the international class struggle which will result either in the common ruin of the contending classes or the socialist reorganization of society. As could have been, and was, foreseen at least eighteen months ago, the American proletariat has recently shown its readiness to challenge the bourgeois parliamentary regime by direct action; only the counter-revolutionary labor leadership stands in the way. The clarification of the profoundest international problems of politics and organization is placed on the order of the day by our co-thinkers abroad. Seen against the background of international class struggle, proletarian needs and party tasks, the conduct of the unity negotiations by the W.P. and the S.W.P. demonstrates the gap that lies between the Fourth International in the United States and the needs and aspirations of the proletariat.

2) The W.P. Majority undoubtedly provided the initial provocations for the latest rupture by a series of acts which it now has the gall to call trivial. But the violent reaction of the leadership of the S.W.P, its sudden reversal of a policy arrived at after so many years and after such widespread consultation, is out of all proportion to any objectively based position on unity.

3) The beginning of the present crisis is the fact that the W.P. split from the S.W.P. in 1940 on an unprincipled basis.

The very unreasoning, monstrous character of the split added now to the fact that the W.P. has tenaciously carried on the class struggle for seven history-making years, should warn that there were deep historical forces at work. In the 1940 split and in its subsequent evolution, the W.P. expressed in concentrated form a basic problem of American radicalism: hostility to world imperialism but an inability to assimilate the principles of Bolshevism owing to the absence of any conscious revolutionary perspective in the United States. This deficiency is rooted in the whole history of the country. The course of the W.P. has demonstrated without a shadow of doubt that the underlying motivation of the split was a conviction that a revolutionary party in the United States could be built only by empirical agitational methods in opposition to the supposedly narrow, sectarian, sterile, antiquated methods of traditional Trotskyism.

The experiment has proved a failure of highly symbolical importance and is a historic contribution to the evolution of American

Bolshevism. After seven years the W.P. Majority, has no theoretical contribution to make to the building of the party in the United States. It is today without perspective, either political or organizational. Worse still, the absence of a well-thought-out revolutionary conception, the empiricism and the impatience which characterized it in 1940, have led it, under the whip of defeats in Europe, to develop a series of deviations on the fundamental perspectives of world revolution and on the traditions and ideas of Bolshevism. All this not only unmistakably confirms Trotsky's analysis of it in 1940 as a petty-bourgeois political tendency in organic affinity with similar tendencies in the history of proletarian movements in Europe. It also constitutes a warning to all such tendencies which may appear in the future.

4) But the W.P. is not a petty-bourgeois tendency in general. It is a petty-bourgeois tendency functioning in the period of the death agony of capitalism, in the United States where no mass Social Democratic party exists. Hence the W.P. is torn between the increasing barbarism of bourgeois society and its own inability to find a basis in American society to concretise and develop the political and organizational principles of Bolshevism. In this conflict it has capitulated to characteristic moods and tendencies of American petty-bourgeois radicalism. But such is the character of our epoch and the granite revolutionary foundations of the Fourth International that all of the abominable crimes against the theory and practice of Bolshevism committed by the W.P. cannot be held in the balance against the consistency and energy with which, according to its lights, it has fought for its reintegration within the ranks of the Movement. The W.P. has indulged in unbridled attacks against the S.W.P., but these are no more than the expression of its own theoretical and organizational bankruptcy and impotence before the power of American imperialism and international Stalinism. Consciousness of the painful task of reintegration into the Bolshevik milieu in a subordinate position, the instinct for self-preservation and the need to justify in the eyes of its rank and file the split of 1940, all impel the W.P. leadership to the behavior it has pursued. But its very hysteria shows the consciousness of coming defeat and testifies to its recognition that there is no way out of its present impasse except the Movement.

5) The subjective intentions of the W.P. leadership are subordinate to the problem posed by the evolution of the W.P. The problem posed is in embryo the problem of the American revolutionary movement in relation to the petty-bourgeoisie within the national peculiarity of the United States. Hostile to the crimes of decaying American bourgeois politics but unable to recognize the political potentialities of the proletariat owing to its long tradition of passivity and the absence of political organization, the American petty-bourgeoisie vacillates between the impulse to revolutionary action and distrust of the leadership of the proletariat which has supplied it with neither precept nor practice. The task set is therefore one which will constantly recur in different forms. In this case it is a test of the theoretical penetration, political firmness, consciousness of strength, and tactical flexibility of the revolutionary proletarian tendency in the need to win over, discipline, differentiate, and integrate the best elements of a petty-bourgeois tendency which is objectively forced to turn to the revolutionary movement. The responsibility and the initiative

in all such cases rest with the Bolshevik tendency, but particularly so in this case when it is the majority and has the prestige of the international comrades behind it.

6) The S.W.P. by 1947 has been able to demonstrate far more clearly than in 1940 that it represents a proletarian as opposed to a petty-bourgeois tendency. It has justified its claim in 1940 that it is the inheritor and continuator and continuator of the traditions, principles and policies of Leninism-Trotskyism as against the petty-bourgeois opportunism and unprincipled revisionism of the W.P. For, more than in 1940, it is possible to say, and easy for informed persons to demonstrate, that in 1940 the historical and political right of the split was on the side of the S.W.P. There can be no greater misconception of the American movement than to equivocate in the slightest degree as to the contrast between the determined struggle of the S.W.P. to maintain the principles of Bolshevism in contrast to the political and organizational degeneration of the W.P. Yet the S.W.P. has failed conspicuously to cope with the disruptive tendency represented by the W.P. It began by accusing the W.P. of capitulating to the imperialist war in the spirit of the Social Democracy of 1914. Thereby it misunderstood the particular character of revisionism within the ranks of the Movement. It accused the W.P. of unreadiness to attempt the hard tasks of proletarianization. Thereby it misunderstood the particular character of petty bourgeois opportunism in the special conditions of the United States.

That the S.W.P. has found itself unable to recognize its initial miscalculations, even after the W.P. had demonstrated them to be wrong, is due directly to the American environment and the weaknesses of American Bolshevism, forced upon it by the whole history of the country and in particular by the political weakness of the American proletariat. As late as August 1946, the S.W.P. was unable to differentiate itself strategically from the W.P. on the American scene. There still remained the illusory belief that while the differences in 1940 had undoubtedly grown wider, on the American scene the two parties had a similar strategic approach. It is precisely because this differentiation was absent that the S.W.P. has seen unity always as a prelude to nothing else but a demoralizing repetition of the disputes of 1940 against which the only safeguard was a change of heart in the intentions of the W.P. leadership.

Precisely this lack of theoretical clarification where it matters most for the American party keeps the American movement in the swamp in which it is. The S.W.P., justifiably hostile to the clash of opposing tendencies on matters so alien to the new tasks, has tried to ignore the W.P. out of existence. It has tried indiscriminate denunciation. It has then tried indiscriminate benevolence. All have failed. It failed to take the initiative on unity in 1945 and to lay down both the theoretical and organizational conditions of unity. Thus it has allowed the W.P. and its own Goldman-Morrow Minority, to do an infinite amount of harm and to win latitude and support which only their organic political bankruptcy prevented them from taking advantage of. The accumulating confusion and the present failure have demonstrably proved that the existence of two tendencies in the United States is a source of political weakness and demoralization. It is impossible now to set the clock back and start the process of ignoring all over again.

The dispute in the United States now is an international scandal which can seriously compromise and disgrace our whole movement. To lay the responsibility for this on the good or bad intentions of the W.P. leadership is to inflate them not only in their own eyes but in the eyes of the comrades at home and abroad.

7) The political evaluation of unity cannot be based upon anything else but the strategic perspective of the American Revolution and the building of the American party. That the two parties discuss everything else but this is the surest sign of a historical immaturity and the source of tactical errors, confusion and the miseducation of the membership. From 1929 to his death, Trotsky fought for a comprehensive theoretical presentation of the perspectives and tasks of the American revolution. After the rapidity and power which marked the appearance of the C.I.O he intensified his efforts to make this strategic perspective the axis of party life in the United States. Because this has remained only an "underlying conception," the American tendencies and the S.W.P. in particular, conscious of their differences, are compelled to discuss them in terms that inhibit the clarification of American Bolshevism. This must be brought to an end. The definitive split in the Bolshevik Party took place only after many years of incessant struggles for unity and took place over such concrete policies as the liquidation of the Russian organization. Up to the present time neither the S.W.P. nor the International has dared to say that the coexistence of the parties in one organization is politically impossible. To say this would be to make nonsense and hypocrisy of the whole struggle of the International Left Opposition to enter the Third International. But it would be equally false to rest the future on the subjective intentions of the W.P. instead of on the crisis of bourgeois society in general and the radicalization of the American proletariat. The basis of Bolshevik discipline is politics and not vice versa. It is the political responsibility of the S.W.P. to cut through the confusion of a situation in which two parties exist both claiming to stand on the program of the Fourth International. It must resolutely proclaim the needs and tasks of the American Revolution as the base for the unified American Party.

8) The S.W.P. at its last convention has brought forward, as a new stage of development for the American movement, programmatic perspectives for the revolution in the United States. What has been missing since 1940 can therefore now be made clear: theoretical unity or difference around the strategic orientation of the American party in its struggle for the American revolution. Not to do this is to remain in 1940 and to do in 1947 what Trotsky refused to do in 1940, i.e. to leave the initiative in the hands of the petty-bourgeois revisionists and carry on the disputes on the level chosen by the revisionists.

No ultimatum of any kind to the W.P. is here envisaged. Trotsky imposed no theoretical conditions whatever on Burnham even after this enemy of Bolshevism had openly and directly attacked the political and organizational traditions of our movement in the most offensive manner and seemed to have a large minority of the party and the bulk of the youth with him. Trotsky took the initiative to guarantee all rights to what appeared to be a militantly anti-Marxist and anti-Bolshevik tendency, even to the extent of submitting to it, if it should win the majority. But at the same time he took upon himself, in an appropriate tone, the most comprehensive,

the most intransigent, the most searching exposition of the strategic concepts at issue, so that there should be the clearest possible theoretical differentiation of conflicting tendencies. At this stage of American development, the repetition of the task accomplished in 1940 and developed since, would be a betrayal. The condition laid down by the S.W.P. that this type of discussion should be prohibited in the S.W.P. except under the special conditions proposed, is completely justified and is indicated by both the objective situation and the past history of the parties. But the same objective situation and the same past of the parties demand that acceptance of the readiness of the W.P. to submit to the majority, should be accompanied by a discussion, before the whole International, and if possible, initiated by it, on the perspectives of the American revolution including such corollaries as the Negro question. Not to do this means to ignore the symbolic significance of the events which have followed the pact on unity. It is to be categorically asserted that these events sprang from the political vacuum created on the national scene by the Unity Pact which appeared to be nothing more than a case of repentance and forgiveness instead of a political conjuncture ending one historic period in the history of American Bolshevism and opening up another - the struggle for the mass party of the revolution. Without the conscious, deliberate posing of new strategic perspectives, to take the unified organization forward in theory as it hopes to take them into the proletariat in practice, the unresolved conflict will tend to perpetuate itself around the old axis. It is the politics of 1940-1947 that caused and maintained the breach and it is the politics of 1947 that must solve it. If unity is desirable and possible, then how else, at this stage is it possible to begin the task of cementing the proletarian and genuinely revolutionary elements in both American parties? Good intentions and adjurations to hard work are not sufficient. Political differentiation is a Bolshevik necessity. Thus, political differences will not be hidden behind silence or futile discussions about "bureaucratic collectivism" and "bureaucratic jungle" and "deceptions" and "misunderstandings." What is required are clearcut political issues, the discussion of which could only result in benefit to all concerned, education of the International, and, if necessary, a definitive separation of American Bolshevism from all other tendencies.

For this clarification must be posed also the necessity for a comprehensive program of education in the principles and application of dialectical materialism as applied to the American scene. The letters, memoranda, conversations, etc. of Trotsky, the most precious arsenal of analysis of the United States ever made, must form the basis for a revolutionary attack upon every phase of American bourgeois production, social life and thought. In the face of such a program the whole vapid nonsense of verbiage, pessimism and defeatism of the W.P. are certain to be exposed and exploded, marking the end of any possibility of the resurgence of Shachtmanism as a tendency in the American party.

9) The International is hereby warned that few tasks before it are more important than the political clarification and organizational solution of the miserable situation to which the American movement has been reduced. The W.P. which has played so mischievous a role in the United States has now unmistakably shown that it has already transferred its operations to the international field. By the same vague and adventurous politics combined with

sharp organizational attacks, which have characterized it in 1940 and 1945-1947, it seeks now to build support for itself abroad. The International should not be deceived by the political bankruptcy of the W.P. into believing that it still does not have great capacity for disruption at home and abroad. The "centrifugal tendencies" in the International have already received substantial support from the W.P. and the infinite adjustability of its opportunist politics is always at the beck and call of its organizational needs.

From the beginning of the unity negotiations there has been inherent in the S.W.P. a tendency to elevate its own difficulties with the W.P. into principles for the organization of the International. It would be a serious error, fraught with great danger for our movement, if under the influence of the American dispute, proponents of the theory of bureaucratic collectivism or of the "totalitarian character of the Stalinist Parties" were to be considered as inadmissible to the ranks of the Fourth International.

The moral authority of the International inevitably suffered in the United States from its equivocal handling of the unity question. Its intervention, though of necessity only of a moral character, was of great effect. With the new situation the International has the duty to intervene. It must, above all, avoid giving the impression that it has nothing more to contribute to American Bolshevism than the role of organizational peace-maker between the W.P. and the S.W.P. It would be acting contrary to all the traditions and lessons of Bolshevism if it failed at this stage, to recognize that the political perspectives in the United States must be the basis of organizational clarification.

10) The crisis of humanity is the crisis of the proletarian leadership. The very fact that the unity negotiations have now continued for two years shows that there is a powerful need and urge for unification. So far the effective proletarian leadership has shown itself unable either to cement unity or politically to destroy the need for or the urge toward unity. Under the circumstances it is necessary to urge upon all participants the careful study of the following from the documents of the 1940 dispute:

"A light-minded attitude towards party organization, towards splits and unifications - one of the most characteristic expressions of intellectualism and dilettantism - is a fatal thing. Socialism is inevitable but the struggle for socialism by means of the proletarian revolution must be organized. The sole means of organizing the proletarian revolution is the revolutionary party. A petty-bourgeois intellectual or dilettante who has not assimilated the ideas of Marxism into his blood, is capable of rushing into unification one day when there is only a seeming agreement and of splits the next day at the first sign of serious disagreement. Not so the workers. The worker joins a party for struggle. He puts his life into it. He takes his time before joining in order to see what a party is doing as well as what it is saying. When such a worker joins a party he takes it very seriously. He gives it his full devotion and recoils fiercely against anyone who takes the party lightly and disregards its discipline.

"An intellectual dilettante is capable of joining a party without attaching any great significance to such an action, and of leaving it at the first disagreement or more often - the first

time someone steps on his toes. The worker, on the other hand, who as a rule will not join a party unless he means business, will not leave it at the first disappointment or when the first doubt enters his mind. No, the worker clings to his party and supports it until all his confidence and hopes in it are exhausted. This is the great factor which underlies the extraordinary tenacity with which thousands of militant workers stick to the Communist Party. Superficial intellectuals are inclined to regard these workers as incurable idiots. Not so. The workers cling to the C.P. in spite of disappointments and doubts and misgivings only because they do not see any other party. This sentiment of seriousness, devotion, sacrifice, tenacity - horribly abused and betrayed by the Stalinists fakers - is a sentiment that in essence is profoundly revolutionary. Don't be hasty to leave your party. That is a sign of petty-bourgeois impatience and instability, not of proletarian revolutionary responsibility."

II

The Johnson-Forest Minority has from the beginning opposed the political attitude of the W.P. and S.W.P. in posing unity in organizational terms and not in terms of the objective situation in the United States and the needs of the international movement. It has bitterly resented the political practice of both parties in conducting their relations with Minority on unity solely on the basis of whether the Minority would split from one party and join the other.

The Minority refused to split from the W.P. because the suggestion was accompanied by the clear indication that such a split would be but a preliminary to a definitive declaration of the unfitness of the W.P. for membership in the S.W.P. At a time when the possibility of unity seemed hopeless the Minority refused to lend any support, theoretical or organizational, to such a policy and declared to the International, the S.W.P. and the W.P. that it would actively oppose it. With the signing of the Unity Pact and the general acceptance by the comrades of this pact this responsibility of the Minority ends. It proposes to seek ways and means to carry out the unity envisaged in the pact. The Johnson-Forest Minority refuses to take any responsibility for the acts, trivial or otherwise, by which the W.P. has imperiled the unity; or for any interpretations or misinterpretations of the pact, or any conditions the W.P. chooses to demand. The principled right of the W.P. to membership in the F.I. is now established and this with the by no means negligible assistance of the Minority. The future course of the W.P. Majority is now in its own hands. Nothing prevents it, if it so wishes, from following the example of the Minority: reopening negotiations with the S.W.P. and seeking ways and means to eliminate causes of distrust and to implement the Unity Pact.

The Johnson-Forest Minority is impelled to take the step of implementing the pact for the following self-evident considerations:

1. The world situation and the political positions of the Minority have long demanded that the Minority align itself with those elements in the C.I.C. which are in opposition to the proponents of the theory that the proletariat is today permeated with democratic-illusions. The "bureaucratic collectivists" and the retrogressionists of all stripes are extreme forms of this type of subjective political thinking which constitutes the greatest danger to our movement today.

ii. With the death of Trotsky and the breakdown of bourgeois society, the International needs more than ever moral authority and organizational support from all tendencies. The Johnson-Forest Minority has fought for this consistently against the savage attacks open and concealed, upon the International by the W.P. Majority. At this stage it is necessary to supplement the ideological struggle by concrete action.

iii. On the American scene the proletariat during the past two years by its actions has given ample warning to the revolutionary movement that it has entered upon "the years of decision." Only those who do not see this or who misunderstand the role of the party in revolutionary struggle, can ignore the necessity for immediately seeking to implement the Unity Pact.

iv. The Minority has been proved powerless to influence the Majority by its own principled struggle for Bolshevism in the United States. The W.P. Minority has spent six years of opposition to the theory of "bureaucratic collectivism" as a dangerous deviation from Marxism, it has implacably opposed and has consistently refused in writing and in speech to join the Majority in its slanderous attacks upon the F.I. and the S.W.P. Yet the W.P. Majority, as soon as the Unity Pact was signed, not only demanded but expected that the W.P. Minority would make a bloc with it on these questions against the S.W.P. and the F.I. It is obvious that the correspondence between Bolshevik theory and organizational action has no meaning for the W.P. Majority and will have to be taught them by others. Meanwhile, the Johnson-Forest Minority will teach the W.P. Majority, by action, at least this much: that its loyal and disciplined membership of the W.P. and its struggle for unity have been and are matters of Bolshevik discipline and Bolshevik policy. They have not mitigated but intensified the Minority's determination not to be confounded in any way with the "unique theoretical contributions" of the W.P. to Marxism and the organizational practices that correspond to those theories.

v. The Johnson-Forest Minority has come to the conclusion that it can do nothing further to influence the W.P. Majority politically. Political differences have been clarified as far as possible; the lines have been drawn. The degeneration of the W.P. now involves the Minority in wearisome and futile political struggles. The obstinacy of the W.P. Majority in blindly pursuing the course it followed immediately after the Unity Pact, despite the objections of the Minority; the Majority's statements now that the incidents were trivial; its shameful attempt to smear the Minority for disloyalty - a charge which will be abundantly disproved before the whole International; the written statement by Shachtman and Goldman that Johnson is not fit to be in the party; the degrading shifts and dodges, demoralizing to all concerned, to which the Majority has been reduced in order to reverse its position on the General Strike; all these events of recent occurrence have taken place not only without a single protest or objection from the membership, but by their incorporation into the intrigues and maneuvers of the leadership. After the history of the retrogression theory in the W.P., an experience without parallel in the history of Bolshevism, after the scandalous tangle of opposing political positions on the Negro question, still unravelled, the Minority has been compelled to draw the conclusion that the W.P. is a stagnant organization without perspectives, sunk in petty-bourgeois conceptions, and despite all its tenacity against the bourgeoisie, incapable of serious change except in a different milieu. The Minority does not accuse the membership of the W.P.

of being nothing else but blind followers of the leadership; it does not characterize tendencies of the Fourth International in this way. But it recognizes to the full the result of seven years of Shachtmanite politics and of the last two years of propaganda against "Cannonism" in the W.P. The existence of two parties and the skillful exploitation of party loyalty have had a stultifying effect upon the free political development of the membership.

11) As a result of the developments in the class struggle and as a result of six years of constant struggle in the W.P., the Johnson-Forest Minority, while acting always as loyal, devoted and disciplined members of the W.P., has developed consistent positions on all the questions of the revolution and the counter-revolution of our epoch, particularly in regard to the United States. The international comrades, for the most part, have seen fit to ignore them and, even on an international scale, as late as January 1947, have been concerned with the Minority only in giving it advice to split. The Minority is not deterred by this, but as a completion of six years of work it is now engaged in publishing documents, new and old, embodying its political ideas and experiences, including a balance sheet of its seven years in the W.P. and a fundamental document on its revision of Trotsky's position on the Russian question in the context of the present perspective of proletarian revolution.

The Johnson-Forest Minority, however, now recognizes that its own development and the "growing revolt" of the American proletariat compel a drastic reorientation of its previous course. It will struggle for its political positions, including that for unity, particularly on an international scale, by all the ways and means traditional in our movement coupled with the discipline it has always shown. But it hereby declares that its main purpose now is to devote its energies towards the building of the revolutionary party by winning workers into its ranks. It believes it to be the duty of all revolutionaries in the United States to be hostile actively to the preoccupation with internal discussion and the winning over of groups of Trotskyites from one point of view to another within the party or rival parties. This type of politics, is, at this stage, the main enemy of the development of the revolutionary party in the United States and can be traced directly to the lack of revolutionary perspective. Contrary to the beliefs of petty-bourgeois arrogance and ignorance, penetration into the workers' movement and milieu demands not a lowering but a heightening of the theoretical level of the cadres, particularly in the United States. For the Johnson-Forest Minority this means that such theoretical activity must be aimed against the bourgeoisie and against the enemies of Bolshevism for the consolidation and the mutual education of the party and the workers. The Johnson-Forest Minority proposes for itself as its next step the task of integrating itself in the S.W.P. It will seek to learn from their experiences, to penetrate always more deeply into the mass proletarian movement and to test the ideas that it developed during the seven years, not as a faction in the discussion of theses, but in the closest comradesly association for the common task of winning workers to the party.

12) The Minority reiterates its detestation of the hysterical accusations of the W.P. against the "bureaucracy" in the S.W.P.

The manner in which the W.P. uses the term "bureaucracy" against the leadership of a section of the C.I.C. implies that the revolutionary workers and intellectuals who constitute the C.I.C. of their own free will erect and subordinate themselves to "bureaucracies" of a Stalinist type. Particularly after the history of the last fifteen years, this type of political accusation is the most shameful and irresponsible capitulation to the terror of the proletarian revolution which is being today systematically injected into the petty-bourgeoisie and the proletariat by imperialism in every part of the world and is a vile slander against the traditions, aims, and principles of our movement. The Minority here repeats its principled stand on this question, as enunciated in its resolution on party tasks submitted to the May 1946 Convention of the W.P.

"The W.P. does not unduly concern itself with problems such as Hansen's article on Cannon and the controversy in the S.W.P. about the rights of intellectuals to criticize the party and the publication or non-publication of letters, etc. It does not give the slightest credence to the conception that a party cannot be built with Cannon. It is confident that if Cannon or Cannonism or any other individual or tendency stands in the way of building the Movement in the United States, then the revolutionary cadres in both the W.P. and the S.W.P. will either defeat such individuals or tendencies or thereby prove their inability to defeat the bourgeoisie. The W.P. makes its main attack on Cannon's regime its refusal to enter honestly into fusion negotiations. This refusal betrays its stultifying monolithic conceptions. The W.P. recognizes that the mere acceptance of fusion between the two parties would strike a death blow at the monolithic conception. All other preoccupations are subordinate, disorient the membership of both parties and strengthen the Cannonite miseducation in the rank and file of the S.W.P. on unity." (The Task of Building the Bolshevik Party, Convention Bulletin #3, March 28, 1946, p.23)

13) The C.I.C. has recommended to all who wish to live under the banner of the Movement a specific course of action: to unify with other national groups wherever possible in preparation for discussion. The Unity Pact also lays down conditions for such unifications in the United States. The Minority now proposes to request from the W.P. a transfer of its membership to the S.W.P. and to request from the S.W.P. an acceptance of that membership.

From the first day of its existence up to this moment the Minority has scrupulously refrained from secret consultations, intrigues and maneuvers of any kind with the S.W.P. or any representative of the C.I.C. However, with the presentation of this document to the P.C. of the W.P. it will seek all legitimate means to carry out the policies outlined herein.

14) It is not the purpose of the W.P. Minority to make the request for transfer and its repercussions anything more than an internal episode within the confines of the C.I.C. The Minority is a political tendency, numerically small, organizationally insignificant, projected into a fictitious importance only by the maneuverist politics of the W.P. and S.W.P. It is not a party as are the W.P. and the S.W.P. and in the past it has been forced into situations over which it had no control and for which it had by implication to take responsibility. It declares before the whole

Movement that it will not be in any way responsible for any public denigration of the W.P. or S.W.P. or for disputes which may result from its proposed action. The Minority leaves to those who control recognized organizations the negotiations for its transfer and whatever may emerge therefrom.

15) In view of the attitude adopted by both the W.P. and the S.W.P. to unity at the present stage, the Johnson-Forest Minority will do all in its power to place the policy here outlined before all parties legitimately interested.

July 5, 1947

J.R. Johnson
F. Forest

For the Johnson-Forest Minority