

Letters and Reports from Europe by F. Forest, 1947

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7/25/47

Dear J:

Today I met with some of the Minorityites (Healy, Emmett, Goldberg). It took some time to get away from the many organizational complaints down to fundamentals, but when we finally reached ~~the~~ perspectives, not as to entry or non-entry into IP, but as to analysis of the world and British situations and the class struggle developments here, I was amazed to find exactly what we, from "far away", had expected, and that is the mobilization of labor behind the Gov't., was appearance only; in actuality, the self-mobilization of the masses was ~~that~~ of a far deeper and more spontaneous nature. Here is what happened, in just two instances in which our comrades were involved:

On Fri. night when the radio had announced the shutdown of the factories due to the fuel crisis, these comrades of the Min. called up Haston and asked what would be done by us; evidently they were in no way prepared for this emergency and had nothing ready. The workers themselves were not involved till Monday since they do not work on Sat. When this comrade, Emmett, appeared at work on Mon., he called together all stewards and immediately a movement sprung up among the engineering factories to see to it that the workers would be paid for the time of the shutdown, to prevent dismissals of workers during that time, and no discrimination for participation in this movement. The Amalgamated Engineering Union to which this comrade belongs elected him as chairman with authorization to get to other workers and see concerted pressure be put on MPs. I enclose Resolution passed.

Another comrade, Goff, who works at Standard Telephones (not white collar but the factories that make the telephones) was likewise confronted with such a spontaneous reaction of the workers and this tremendous factory likewise elected a committee of which he was the head, and passed a resolution, which I enclose.

The Stalinists were left far behind in this spontaneous movement, which meanwhile gained such high political coloration that their last resolution already speaks of "overall socialist economic plan", ~~against~~ of "conflict with capitalist production in the interest of profit", demands "that any attempt at sabotage on the part of employers be met by immediate confiscation of industry" and calls for the withdrawal of troops from all occupied territories. The representatives of these workers proceeded to the House of Commons and demanded a special meeting; the MPs promised a special meeting of "those MPs who were interested" with the committee. Our comrades held the initiative in their hand all the time, and through being in charge of credentials committee, were able to exclude some of the Stalinist delegates who were top bureaucrats, forming an alliance with the rank and file Stalinists. By the time the committee met with parliament the 120 elected representatives represented no less than 100,000 workers. (Please look up article by Kelly in Militant at end of February or early March for article on this movement; I shall try to get a hold of copy of article here and send it; since I think it should be used as basis and rewritten with new material I am sending in our Bulletin.)

It is true the movement frittered away, but ~~they~~ workers got all demands. The contention of the Minority is that their participation in it is not accidental, but because of their revolutionary perspective, and that the other comrades were tied by considerations of lull in the working class movement, "stabilization" of economy, etc.

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The lines however within the internal party struggle have by no means been that clearly defined; no political positions were elaborated to bring out inherent tendencies hidden by the faction struggle, and they are evidently ready to leave the RCP and enter the LP by themselves, claiming that although they are only 70, they are of such excellent proletarian and trade union connection, that they can accomplish wonders while the RCP is stagnating, etc. etc.

Jock returns tomorrow so I will get a full report of his views; I have now read the Resolutions and they are poor stuff. The one on statification of production is a school-boy's thesis full of underconsumptionism, market views, and no appreciation at all of what that stage of economy signifies ~~xxxx~~ in the actual production relations, and the political consciousness of the proletariat; neither is there an attempt to see its international implications; a very insular thesis indeed. When I compare our work on statification in the International Resolution in particular with this sort of stuff, I first begin to appreciate what real contribution our tendency has made.

The conference promises to be a very heated affair--and evidently the past struggles will also brought in, and you personally will be mentioned, evidently as not having contributed in those years, to clear political alignments.

I have asked to speak both on the American and Russian questions to both groups, and both said they agreed, but...now that the conference is here or will be next week and the agenda is prepared as is, I may get no further than personal discussions, and full meetings would first be arranged sometime later, I presume on the return voyage.

Sunday afternoon the Stalinists are having a demonstration which I am attending in Trafalgar Square; now that I am out of Piccadilly and in some 2 x 4 hole on the top floor of a rooming house which has not too many facilities, I am getting more of a feel of the land; in fact if this continue I ought to have a wonderful girlish form, just as slender as you like them. ~~xxx~~

I wrote to Spencer, and perhaps can get out to Lancashire the early part of next week before conference; I shall let you know what he says.

How are you? Do you expect to write me at all? Will the anti-Germans and Balance sheet be out in some form I can pass around? Our Int. Res. is very important; I hope it has been sent me. I have met an English comrade who works in Czechoslovakia and have some report of that; meanwhile please have Grace send me Velazquez's address, as they wish to contact Peru; I have given her Freddie's address that they may send us their material there, and I will arrange to send them our documents.

Warmest greetings to Connie; did she get the outline out in time? O, yes, ask her to send me Dick's address in Paris.

*Remember us to all the comrades,
I do not seem to have time for
postal cards.
663 Yours, R*

7/26/47

Dear J:

Jock spoke to me for about an hour, in which he explained that the partial stabilization the English speak of--evidenced in the exceptional stability of Stalin, Labor Govt. in England, US help to Europe (Marshall plan)--was only an accounting of the facts, and meant that the tempo of revolutionary developments was much slower than envisaged by the Int., and that they at no time had anything in common either with retrogressionism, or the playing with a third alternative as do the bur. collectivists. In fact, without acknowledgment, the IS had incorporated their amendments in the international resolution. To put it mildly, they do not have too high an opinion of the international leadership, are very critical of the German thesis--but remain with a workers state position! Worse than that, they are so absorbed, overwhelmed rather by the entry-non-entry here, that although they acknowledge that R.Q. is central to the whole international dev., they not only remain merely carping critics, but they first intend to discuss the R.Q. at their next convention in Easter, which is after the Fourth will have come to a decision! It is impossible for them to arrange a discussion for me now, but will do so on my return trip, and meanwhile I will discuss with who I can individually.

As to the internal British situation, I listened to the most narrow economist discussion of their PB as to how the standard of living of the British workers has risen since LP has been in power, that it would have been possible to imagine could occur among revolutionists. Naturally, it was dealt with only as "facts" which must not be ignored, and which must be pointed out against the extravagant claims of the minority, and that starting out from what is, one can better present the revolutionary line, and keep our banner flying till when there will be a differentiation in the ranks of labor. I was asked what I thought of the discussion--I took just three minutes to say that I was sorry the discussion had merely stated "facts" divorced from the interrelationship of these with the entire European economy on the one hand, and the production relations in Britain on the other; that I would have appreciated hearing of the moods of the British workers, and the uncertainty they feel, although they have jobs, for judging by the moods of the American workers, who were at least as well off as the British, we could watch a new stage in the development of production relations in which it was evident the workers were ready to break with the entire system of value production, etc. etc. Naturally, I explain I speak only as an individual, and that the Johnsonites have no position on the internal question of entry or non-entry. I was told they would try to have another discussion on the moods of the workers, for my benefit; meanwhile they pockpooched the claims of the Min. that the movement led by them (which, the Maj. claims was really led by the Stalinists) was much--120 delegates can be gotten for anything; if the movement is really significant it would have been not delegates but the masses themselves; and that even so it was mainly around economic demands, and not political, etc. (I now enclose the little article as the movement was written up.) I was not impressed by the Maj. but am still forming no definite opinions until Congress reveals all that is involved in discussions.

Tomorrow I meet the German group, and here I have succeeded in being interested to listen to me, although not yet on R.Q., but on Historical Retrogression and our Int. Res.

Cheerio,

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7/29/47

Dear J:

Yesterday I met with the German group--a very fine group of 9 workers who do excellent work among the POWs here, issue a ~~printed~~ mimeographed bulletin, Solidaritat of 22 pp., which has increased its circulation from 50 to 500, and their perspective is to issue a printed weekly. The POWs are so well impressed that they take it back with them to Germany, and there was recently an article in the Times that it is being circulated in Berlin. In Germany itself there has been a sort of convention of 8 groups, Trotskyists, but they have no news of it as all news in such cases is centralized in Paris. The IKD, with which they have broken off all contact here, claims 15 members; they say only 6-7 are Germans; in any case they do absolutely no work, evidently have no intentions of trying to get back to Germany, and are p.b. intellectuals who seem not even to write. Here they claim NY is the "mass" base; they wield no influence whatever.

I spoke for 1 hour on what they call the German question--Historical Retrogression and our International Thesis. They fully agree with your attack on the IKD, and should like to reprint it, but the comrade who started the translation is now working, as they all are in fact, and both the difficulty of the material and time element makes it impossible. But should we find a translator; they would be very happy to stencil it and duplicate it in their regular bulletin, which means it would also get to Germany. (Can't Harry from Philadelphia do that?) As for the International Thesis --if it were not for Russia, etc.--they still hold to the workers state theory; but are perturbed and should like to discuss it in detail. We therefore left Russia for a future meeting (When I will next be in London, there will be held 3 group meetings for me on Russia--the Maj., Min., and the Germans) and discussed the questions both of SUSE and concrete work, such as the fight for legality, unification, strike struggles, propaganda for common struggles with other E.E. and W.E. workers. They were highly satisfied with the discussion--said it was the most profound and serious one they ever have had--and I learned a lot from them. BE SURE TO SEND THEM 3 extra copies each of your articles on His. Retrogression, Oct. NI review of LT and my ~~Thank you for the articles on Russia. Mail to: (and keep that address also for our anti-German and other material): K. Thierl~~

5, Gayton Crescent
London, N.W. 3, England

Finally I attended last pre-conf. debate between Min. & Maj. on entry question. I am afraid I was more impressed with the rank and file discussion than with the main speakers; the branch meeting of 14, predominantly workers, discussed objectively and on a very high level; the meeting was well conducted and just as I am impressed with the politeness (really civilization) of British proletariat in general, so I was with the meeting here; the British party seems to be a very healthy, proletarian organization--the trouble of course is with lack of perspectives. (By the way, the relationships with rank and file Stalinists seem excellent; in fact, a good many members come from their ranks.) The anti-war work and participation in transport and dock strikes which had gained them members now to have received a set-back, and everyone is ready to construct theories about the lull. There is a great contradiction in the arguments of the Maj. since, on the one hand they argue lull and partial stabilization, and on the other hand, say we must keep independent party because the party got its best base by working directly with the workers in process of production and inevitable future radicalization will bring workers directly to us. The Min. bases its case only

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partially on fact there is no lull, but rather than work this out fully, they remain on need for concrete program, T.P., and stagnation presently of party, so that they get accused of opportunism. The bitterness comes of course over what is called by them "division of labor" and by Maj. split and the fact that, being backed by IS, they are resolved not to be effected by convention discussion and results.

I was able to get away with Jock and speak candidly for hours; I posed the necessity for a more world-wide and deeply theoretical view of the entire tasks of the Int.; what was the use of so burying oneself in England and in criticizing the IS on such tertiary issues, when the Russian Question which is central to the whole development is not even touched by them, and the leadership whose theoretical abilities are doubted is not even challenged by them. He agreed that the British here-to fore on the plane of amendments was insufficient, and that we must make up collectively what we lack in the individual authority of the Old Man. (Gabriel he says is their best man, and Germain the most brilliant--he talks fluently in several languages and at conferences addresses various groups in their separate languages and makes an impression, but he writes on every damned question on earth, etc. etc.) I think when I return in fall, we will be able to get somewhere on the RQ; I cannot say the same for the Min., although their perspectives are closer to ours, because they seem pretty much to toe the line. But by retaining neutrality, and merely learning, I have laid a basis with all groups.

Tomorrow Gabriel is expected so I will then be able to broach my "mission". What is new in NY? Have you become a columnist in the Militant? Have any of our Bulletins come off? Has it been possible to republish my section on Labor and the State? This material will become extremely important as the debate develops.

The Stalinists (Int. Spanish brigade) had a demonstration, quite a poor one, in Trafalgar Sq. I noticed one of the Negro RAF men had the identification "Trinidad", so I proceeded to introduce myself and ask whether he ever heard of fellow Trinidadian. An author? Yes. "Black Jacobins"? Yes. He is convalescing at a hospital in a suburb, but will be in next week, just before I leave, and he will take me up to the Colonial Club. Manly had been through England and had shown his sympathy to us, and there is a Nigerian I am to meet. Padmore, they tell me, is completely out of the picture--but I managing to pick up some contacts (the Britishers say, these Americans are too active) and perhaps get something started in that field too. The British party has not followed Negro discussion, and seems not to be interested, but with a little prodding, the interest can easily be aroused. And while giving the Negroes their due share of publicity, I am not forgetting the American proletariat as a whole, and now I have them all talking about the strike because the workers were "fatigued with negotiations"; these Americans are evidently not too backward. I am to meet some of the miner delegates and discuss with them.

Did I tell you I love London? Please give my warmest greetings to all the comrades.

*James
P. [unclear]*

8/4/47

Dear J:

So amazing an exhibition of catcalls and hostility toward the Int'l. was put on in the last session of the Haston-led convention, so ~~extraordinary~~ great a lack of leadership and responsibility on Haston's part and his whole child-like NC, that it was all I could do to remain a neutral. In fact, it is only my strong sense of what I came for that kept me so. To go back a bit, here is the run of the convention. First, there was an organization report by Millie Lee, who made a good enough impression as a efficient secretary but who is not a politico in any serious sense, and the discussion around that did not begin to tackle the question of the decline of RCP, distinguish between the "intervention" in strike struggles brought about by selling EAs and that of actual participation or leadership in a strike struggle, etc.etc. The discussion was pretty much a waste of time, but at least it was, on the part of the rank and file, fairly objectively handled, and a good impression was made on me by their working-class composition and fluency of expression. That was the only topic in which some sort of objectivity, though a narrow one, was observed.

The second day concerned itself with the main topic of the convention: British perspectives. The Maj. (Roy Tearse made report and Jack Haston handled the summary) was a vulgar economist view of the "boom" in Britain, the rise in standard of living since labor came to power, the illusions of the working class that this was socialism, and the consequent apathy of the masses and non-appearance at LP meetings--such apathy as even to effect our own party. No attempt was made to consider the British "boom" either in relation to the class relations, or in relation to European economy; no serious attempt to answer: ~~perhaps~~ nay, not even a posing of the question, of working toward assuming leadership of the mass movement by turning toward mass work, and a view that the CP, despite the fact that it has lost about 20% of its membership, will first become a mass force (because of its key posts in t.u. movements) before we ever will grow. The Min. report (Lawrence) was good in rejecting the analysis of boom, speaking of the crisis in the whole economy and the dissatisfaction of the workers, and warning that if we do not null ourselves, the fascists won't (there have been anti-Semitic demonstration). But at that point he did not know how to connect this with the tactic of entry so that entry appeared practically merely as burying ourselves in LP in the hope of some day becoming a mass force. The discussion was on a very low level--Maj-ityites speaking of how dead their local wards were, Minorityites on how lively theirs were--and the question of revolutionary perspective never clearly brought out. The Maj., which has the entire leadership on its side, could nevertheless raise the level no higher than Haston's saying that it was the duty of this convention to "generalize" the experience of the ranks in LP work and thus (!) derive their theoretical approach. The most awful underconsumptionism--there is no crisis; they say, because there is no overproduction, and there is partial planning to where more milk is consumed; what is needed, according to them, is not such abstract slogans as workers control of production, but a unifying slogan: for a national plan.

The Dutch delegate intervened to try to raise the level to the plane of European perspectives, whereupon the French Maj. (Magnin and Craipeau, both of whom seem to be irresponsible asses, with the most colossal illusions as to boom and their own importance to have discovered this boom) rose to dispute him, thus:

"The French PB have followed as closely as possible the discussion in International...we believe there is a tendency here that we well know in the Fourth International of over-estimating

crises, ~~which are the result of the crisis in the world.~~ It is a crisis that Britain can overcome through American loans and inroads into the workingclass and not a crisis of the regime. We have had our own French Min. who always speak of the revolutionary working class held down by the lid of Stalinism and giving the impression that if we only lifted the lid, the workingclass will explode.

"But we must make a realistic estimate of the situation...the real situation is that the working class will not struggle because of their illusion, and not that they do not because their leadership holds them down. ...The strikes are important, but a realistic analysis shows they start as an economic program and do not pose political question.

"Thirdly there is a weakness of revolutionary leadership. (In the greetings yesterday this fatuous editor of La Verite, Magnin, said "There was no revolutionary situation in France, anymore than you have one in Britain; there is no revolutionary party.") The first problem therefore is to build patiently a leadership of the workingclass and that is a long-term perspective.

"The French Maj. gives its entire support to the British analysis of the perspectives." He then launched into an attack of the IS, saying they were for IP entry because Haston was opposed, and if today Haston changed his mind, the IS would tomorrow change its position, and more of the same subjective tripe.

The French Min. then asked for permission to answer as he had been attacked twice at this conference to which he was only an observer while Magnin and Craipeau were the delegates. When it was granted, he (Doumat, head of our youth) really lashed into both the British and French, pointing to the decline of the British empire, its vassalage to American imperialism, the crisis of its economy, ending "The comrades wish to tell us that all this has no effect on the present situation and the stage of the class struggle. Didn't Lenin say that this empire was the basis of reformism and the British aristocracy of labor? Don't you see that when this basis of reformism has gone, it cannot help but effect the economy and the proletariat?"

"The French Majority too speaks of boom--only in our party do they speak of boom; take any paper and they speak instead of crisis--and but 4 days before the Eynault strike broke out our Fr. Maj. was busy proving that because of the economic revival we cannot expect big strike struggles!"

That was the only worthwhile moment in that entire discussion, and the perspectives of course were adopted; but instead of proceeding to discuss the solution proposed by the Min. and IS as to "division of labor", the Maj. were going to give the Min. an "educational" and so we proceeded the next day to the discussion on Statification. I intervened in that discussion, saying that I was glad the RCP posed the question of statification on a world scale, but that their document was quite inadequate, approached the question very haltingly, not so much as mentioning Russia, whereas once the question of statification and capitalist relations is posed, we no longer can satisfy ourselves either with nationalizations--workers state, or the form of property is the determinant of the class nature of the state. Moreover, they posed the question, even if we leave Russia out, merely by citing certain facts, and not by analysing the stage of production relations. Contrasted to that, how we posed it in 1941 re Russia, 1945 re Int. and question of SUSK, 1946-7 re Am. Q. and General Strike. Spoke of laws of production, method of analysis by Marx Engels Lenin & the CI, and stressed the revolutionary conclusions that flowed from it. Pointed out that for Britain it is surely wrong to say that we have to put workers control to background and intervene only as to unifying slogan of national plan. It is not the plan

that is the concretization of workers control, but the factory committee, particularly so this important in Britain where the masses might think that workers control means the I.u. bureaucrats' participation in joint production committees. The unifying slogan therefore seem to be : national plan ~~through workers committees~~ through workers committees, or statification plus prol. democ.

Unfortunately, I was the only one who spoke in those terms; their whole discussion was mechanistic and an attempt to show up the Min's lack of interest in "political questions". When I tried to tell Jock that their thesis was more like a discussion article, that it stopped where it should start: production relations and political policy flowing from and hence it would be better not to put it to a vote, but merely refer for further discussion, he could see no further than "exposing" the Min. & meanwhile getting his ranks to vote on something vaguely presented, and after but one solitary discussion.

We then reconvened for the point, and that is where the farce began; the Maj. asked for 45 minutes for Maj. caucus to consider solution (Am enclosing the Res. presented by Min.)--then decided Gabriel should present just to caucus their IS position. This lasted not 45 minutes, but a full 3 hours, during which Maj. & myself & Sterling (who, by the way is so Cannon-blind that he subscribes to manner of running convention & I can just see what his report will be like; every slap in the face of the IS will be bragged about as a anti-Cannon move.) & Fr. Min. & Dutch delegates. We then heard ~~xxxxxx~~ heckling for G, tremendous applause for their own speakers and general disorder. Finally we were permitted in & when G asked to address the whole convention, the delegates of the Maj. were about to vote, No, when Haston at that point stopped them. He made a short address, Haston answered saying solution is unacceptable: "What guarantee," he asked "have we that if we agreed to this split, the IS would not then say, now the whole RCP must enter L.P.--No, the Min. must loyally abide by the decisions of this conference? In summary, G put a motion to the effect that this conference agrees to abide by the decisions of the IEC when that will be convened. The whole conf. was then thrown into an uproar, and that is where Haston revealed his lack of leadership and lightmindedness. Mind you, I do not agree with the solution proposed of division of labour; the forces will be too dissipated and it will be impossible to really test out a line; it is better to recommend the entire party enter. But here is a situation where from the first day that I arrived the Maj. told me of the solution proposed & that it was unacceptable to them, that the IS will probably have a maj. against them at its next session, etc. etc. and yet they were so unprepared to receive this motion, had oriented the discussion so much on insular lines, had created such hostility to the intervention of the international, that at the end of a 3-days conf. of just such predictions, Jock seemed completely amazed and what he had to offer was a motion: that in the case of an adverse decision by IEC a special conf. be convoked to consider whether the RCP would abide by decision. When asked why he had voted that all other sections agree to abide by decision and "in principle" he still agrees, but here he makes the spectacle of calling a convention and ~~not~~ refusing to even put the motion of IS to vote. I never heard this before but the conf. rejected the idea that the motion be put to a vote, but accepted Jock's Amendment" of calling a special conf. & then voted on the amended motion only. Further irresponsibility occurred in refusing to grant IS two minutes, and in the chair's bawling out Stuart (Gordon) for insisting that the IS has rights to put its motion since the highest body was this convention & after all this was a British conf.--~~xxxxxx~~ and when some Minorityite yeld out, yes, but the British faction is a section of the Fourth, he was yelled

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down. By this time it really became a bedlam. (Some of the Majorityites, I must say, were disgusted & one said to me that his last YCL convention was better behaved than this.)

I do not know whether it is political immaturity on the part of Haston and his NC, or whether it signifies that the RCP is ready to leave the Fourth in event his line on Britain does not carry. Boys, are there waters here for Shachtman to muddy!

(By the way, this is written subjectively and hurriedly and in this form should not be shown to any one but the NY Steering Comm. (I always send a copy to John) and for general consumption merely take out facts of topics discussed etc.)

The meeting ending on this sour note then proceeded to elect its CC; the Min. demanded 5 representatives, were told they could only have 3, and so they refused any.

I am to see G-today, then leave for Lancashire and see Spencer, then go to Paris (the 8th). John sent me your first article for Militant, which was excellent, and which I passed around to many, including Jock, who said "This is Hegelianism, not Marxism."

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

Now, to make some conclusions, and by the way before I do so, I better bring in one other incident, and that is the revelation by G that Magnin had written a letter that if the French Maj. becomes a Min., it should be ready to split and take La Verite with them, and Crappeau and Magnin have no doubt been "advising" Haston.

What it all might add up to is that when the World Congress finally convenes, the pro-Stalinist tendency who sees boom, the anti-Stalinist tendency, including mainly Shachtman who sees boom, the insular tendency who sees boom, in a bloc with perpetual fighters for democracy and any one else who they can pick up on the way--for political lines are far from being clearly drawn--can huddle and make all the mischief possible.

When I return in fall, I should have a better idea of whether I am running up a wrong tree.

Yours,

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8/5/47

the fact of

In posing a new stage of development both for the mass movement and for the 4th, Com. Gabriel has correctly posed the dangers that beset our movement in its turn from the propaganda group to a mass movement--those of sectarianism and opportunism. Those are precisely the two dangers Trotsky posed in his draft of the Transitional Program. He added, that the greater danger for America because of its milieu, was that of opportunism. I would say, ~~that~~ after having seen the theses and actions of the British and French Majorities, that that is also the greatest danger for the other sections of the Int. for opportunism is not only a result of the milieu created by a rich country with a substantial aristocracy of labor. It is even more so the characteristic of those who see the rottenness of capitalism, but fail to have any faith in the proletariat's capacity to reorganize society. That was the trait of Menshevism which Lenin had to fight, and which we now have to fight right within our own ranks. For so deep has been the decay of capitalism that not even the capitalists have any faith in its stability, thus shifting all currents of fear, pessimism, lack of confidence, right into the revolutionary ranks. The perfect example of this is that even the IKD, who think that the proletariat has been so hurled back that it resembles the serf of the Middle Ages, and that it is necessary once again to have the democratic political revolution and the reconstitution of national state, before we can pose the question of the SUSE, world socialism, etc. However, so completely did the objective situation--in the first revolutionary wave that followed the end of the war and especially so the heroic actions of the Italian and Polish proletariat--blow their theory to bits, that they represent no force. The real danger, then, remains those who have not thought their deviations out to the thorough extreme the IKD did; those who speak not of hurtling back of the proletariat, but merely of its passivity; those who pepper their talk of stabilisation by a few red phrase of the decay of capitalism, and the fact that the ultimate solution can only be the proletarian revolution, but in the meantime the workers want not power, but merely 5% more in wages.

That sectarianism--waving the banner outside of the mass movement--is combined with opportunism--estimation of the objective situation as one that is fairly stable--in one and the same section of the Int. is proof enough of the fact that what confronts us is a complex enough factor and, in order to destroy it, politically speaking, we must tear it out at its roots, and that is the methodology it uses in estimating the ^{objective} situation. Yes, Marxists begin with the stage of development of the economy, but that is not ~~the~~ disconnected from the stage of production relations, and since both the highest form of production is in the US, and there too we meet with some of the highest forms of the class struggle, and yet it is at the same time the richest country and which some think think will be able to save Europe, we will begin there.

In America too the dispute in the WP was over the boom. We refused to discuss it at all. Why? We said that unless you mean that this boom is not conjunctural, but the kind that signifies real prosperity and consequent stabilisation of class relations, we should discuss not the boom, but the class relations now, and what will follow the boom. For ex: rrd strike;

unified action.

miners strike; general strike

Lenin on boom--1897--I, p.388-9 "Tasks of Russian S-D", 1897.

fatigue strikes; against value prod.

Economically speaking, what is the boom and what is the significance of the two minor recessions we had; NY TIMES, editorial.--Taft-Hartley Bill and miners strike

Workers savings; differences within bourgeoisie on aid to Europe--
Marshall Plan.

For. mkt vs. production & world mkt.

Crisis: overproduction or real relations in p.p.
Reconstruction of Europe, and that includes Russia, although I'm
leaving discussion of that for future when it will be on agenda,
is impossible except through workers revolution. Now it can only
remain battleground for next, war, which, with its atomic power,
threatens civilisation itself.

2ndly, their so-called eco. analysis--basis is 1938--G already spoke
of crisis--I wish to call attention to the comrades that that is
precisely when LT elaborated TP--

The bourgeoisie itself sees no way
out.

~~xxxxxxx~~ systematic mobilisation
of prol. for social rev.

factory committees
self-mobilisation of masses

That is not to say -- the party's function is underestimated, but
it can be built only ~~xxxxxxx~~ when its ~~xxxxxxx~~ propaganda
is in rhythm with the developing class struggle..

Japan is a perfect example of the old Marxist truth that "The
-international activity of the working
class does not by any means depend on the
existence of the Int: WkgMen's Ass."



Party has always ~~been~~ considered subj. element in rev.
mobilisation of masses.....

In this respect, the real difficulty arising from the war is that
WWII ended with ~~the~~ Stalinist parties not only intact, but mass
parties. If we seriously take our task, then we must not only
turn to the masses but learn from them. And what they attempted
to do in first revolutionary wave is statify plus prol. democ.
What we must counterpose is not merely that the capitalists cannot
plan--but no plan without workers direct intervention in p.p.

8/7/47

Dear J:

The caucus sure has been going to town and I'm indeed very proud to be one of them. When I compare our Bulletin to anything issued here, the political stature of Johnsonites soar so much above, that I'm beginning to think that indeed we ride the stratosphere. The last issue of the Bulletin, with Romano's and Freddy's contributions, is particularly excellent; let them just compare themselves to the Scotsman who had the following wonderful examples of the self-mobilization of the masses to relate, and yet, because of the line given him by the British leadership, concluded his speech not with hosannahs, but the lull in the proletarian movement. His was the only real contribution to the statification discussion, and I promptly wheeled him out of the room to get the full story, and, of course, got myself invited to Glasgow. This is the tale of the ordnance factories, 21 in number, employing a total of 28,000 workers; ~~data~~ during the slump they had been dismantled, but during war the factories numbered 42, and employed 150,000 workers in the Isles. The particular factory we are concerned with is the Dalmuir in Glasgow:

As you know, the ROF (Royal Ordnance Factories) are state factories. It seems that through the war the stewards in Dalmuir, who came in constant conflict with the Executive committee of the unions both because they were opposed to production and proceeded to settle many of their grievances directly with management, with or without benefit of the E.C., got the following series of accomplishments: (1) equal pay for women (there were 500-600 in the factory and this immediately mobilised the women to back up their stewards); (2) that the WORKERS THEMSELVES pass upon the 300 houses requisitioned for families bombed out; though the gov't. thought they should be satisfied with the fact that these houses were requisitioned for them as requested by the union, the stewards committee took matters in their own hands, and apportioned these houses to their workers on merit (whether family men, how many children, etc.etc.); (3) when the canteen was destroyed by the blitz, they decided to run that one too, raise in pay for waitresses, and general management. Made and are fighting for the following demands now that labor is power: (1) national planning committee for ROF be established, to be later extended to all engineering works; workers representatives to the extent of 3 out of 8 be part of this committee; (2) the planning committees should supply workers with estimates of sub-contractors, as there is considerable difference in wages received by workers and those listed on sub-contractors lists; convenor and sub-convenor (that is the chief shop steward & his assistant) be included on this committee. (3) Steps to be taken that there be direct production of machinery instead of through private ^{sub}contractors, which is a fraud in the first place, as really all this work is for ROF; anything gov't. is engaged in doing in this respect should be through national planning committees. (4) Demand that Labor Gov't. live up to its promise of the "reorganization of state bureaucrats" as stated in its pre-election pamphlet "Let Us Face the Future" (p.7, par.7) of which 8 mln. copies were distributed by L.P.

Now, originally, out of the 47 stewards in this factory 46 were Stalinists. But the CP policy during the war was so strongly resented by the workers, and 14 of them left the CP (most of our comrades come from this group, including their leader who is now our), and although 30 remained in CP as members they would support our comrades in the actual struggle. Because of the many betrayals by the Stalinists and seeming ineffectiveness (due to not being to control redundancy at one period) 20 stewards became anarchists; 4 became Trotskyists. The CP which had 4,000

members, dropped to 250 by 1943. And they tell me that the concretization of ~~workers~~ workers control of production is not factory committees as national plants

I liked very much the draft you sent of the article on blocs; it is of vital importance in the regroupment of forces on an international scale. Of course, we have to leave ourselves open for blocs on defeatism, and particularly so state capitalism, but if some of the groups don't realize what they are playing with in their zeal for defeatism, not to ask: for what? and which leadership is to carry out the line? we would have confusion worse confounded instead of clarification and a sense of responsibility for claiming the leadership of the masses on a world scale. I myself have acted very cautiously with Easton & Co.; but whereas I wish to leave all doors open for possible conviction on state capitalism; their analysis of boom and lull bodes very badly indeed. The IS on the other hand has not been able to push them to the wall as we have the Bur. Collectivists, and the Min. here is weak indeed in forcing a political line through; the whole discussion of entry-non-entry, if placed in the proper context of revolutionary perspectives on a European scale at least, would have had a far different, and stronger, groupment of forces. I myself by just rank and file discussions was able to influence a Majorityite uninfluenced by the Min. fight, first to abstain, and probably now, to fight on straight political issues. What I hope to do after being in France for a while is to be able to write an article on the European scene that, I hope, would rout the boom-enthusiasts. I may wait on the other hand till I have also seen Italy. I wish first to clarify our American position, then while working on the Russian position with whomever I can (I'll be handicapped by lack of French), see whether I cannot be invited to contribute an article. (I've already half sold the idea to the British Min. that I write an article for them on the economics of the Maj.)

Naturally, IPC may begin to call for me to return, but at this point it doesn't seem likely; I haven't broached the question to G, but it is taken for granted I will stay around, and I hope to make myself useful. I do not think I should broach the question of remaining till world congress, till after I have made my mark at the IEC, Sept. 15th. If the ~~workers~~ RCP really means to split, then my interventions, small as they were, both in greetings and statification discussions as well as individual talks, particularly to worker elements, miners and ordinance workers, plus a collection of addresses and invitations, should make me useful to IS. Even if they do not mean to take the extreme step, I believe I could do a lot to get discussions on strict political lines, and not on who said what to whom.

In leaving Britain, and before I have seen the real industrial sections (coal and steel; Wales and Birmingham), but with a look at both London, which, as you know, is much more industrial than NY, and also of Lancashire of the mills and the wooden clogs, I would say that England started the industrial revolution, but somewhere along the line got left behind. A factory employing 6,000 is considered tremendous, and there are many little factories which are really no more than workshops that I thought only existed in the pages of Marx's Capital as a purely pre-capitalist phenomenon. There is not the alienation the American worker promptly feels; on the other hand he has a political maturity and class consciousness that if our worker, with his feeling of alienation, had we could have truly social revolution unequalled even by October. So I'm going to go in for some combined thinking...

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8/18/47

Dear J:

I love these Africans! When they do something they do "to a man", so that I feel that Lenin would at this time embrace them very warmly. I have just heard of the most remarkable of all national resistance movements -- the one that has occurred -- and has not yet been squashed -- in Cameroun. It seems that during the war a movement for independence from France started there and so spontaneous and overwhelming was it that, without a party or any other form of political organization, (their trade union is strong and has 3 mln. members), the people, literally en masse, turned out during an election campaign, disregarded entirely the established French colonial government, elected their people, enacted their laws; everybody seems to belong to this movement; there seems to be no such things as membership cards; it is just taken for granted that all are members because all are. Until 6 months ago it was truly a state within a state; now the French gov't. has started pressures from sending swarms of aeroplanes to following the leaders, etc.etc. (I met this Camerounian comrade, but he cannot speak English; I cannot speak French, and he had to return ^{to Paris} but I shall have another chance to meet him in Oct. when he returns. I have his address and you could write in French to him, but since everything written is first read by French police, I think it is better to wait. Meanwhile, I gave him one of our Negro Resolutions, and what with the contacts we have in West Indies and Nigeria, etc. it seems to me we can really soon start an African Bureau. This comrade, Charles, is a remarkable young man who came here to CGT congress a year ago; was considered by the Stalinists as their prize, and here met up with our comrades and is now a Trotskyist; I wish you could meet him. The movement itself, because it has no political (i.e. no revolutionary) direction, but is only spontaneously national revolutionary) has many, many lessons for us, but while it is being crushed and our comrades persecuted, it is dangerous to write about it, and so it has gotten no cognizance in press. But in circumspect terms we can at least let our comrades know something about its existence; I cannot help but think that all these accidental meetings (I met him as I jumped on train to Lyon) as ~~various~~ ^{various} live examples of the self-mobilization of the masses ~~occure~~, occur to me not accidentally but because I am a Johnsonite and have my eyes and ears open for just these movements which we theoretically knew must be alive. In contrast to this, I can just imagine what reports Judd sends back!

The French internal situation promises to be even more complex than we thought; for besides the primary division into Maj. and Min; mainly on perspectives and what Craipeau choses to "spirit regarding tactics" -- that is, everytime he introduces a principled change, particularly in regard to the Stalinists and the IS and Fr. Min. objects, he says it is only a tactical, realistic proposal and their "spirit regarding tactics" is both sectarian and stubborn -- and the 2 other groupings within these primary divisions -- the one state capitalist and the other "new exploitative society" -- on the Russian question, the manner in which these groups blocs is so full of confusion that it will take some time to disentangle and be correctly oriented. I was quite surprised to hear -- but this is not yet from Guerin directly since he will not return to town till Sept. 15th -- that the statecapitalist group blocs with Maj. on perspective! On the other hand, the "new exploitative society group" blocs with Min. and emphasizes much better than "our" group the instability of Russian society. That presents a different aspect to the question and I shall have to have a free hand to find out and decide and then let you know. I specifically sent you the Russian Bulletin of the Congress air mail; and I am arranging as soon as possible -- since the heat is

66 675

keeping so many out of town just now it is not possible to do as quickly as I should like, although I am kept busy enough--as many meetings as I can with the various tendencies. After orienting myself, I shall then expound. Meanwhile, while in Lyon I met one comrade from the CC who has no position, or as he puts it, is a "very shy defensist"; Paillet is his name, he made a very good impression on me, we had a discussion on the RC, and have scheduled another one when he returns to Paris in Sept., and I may have an opening there for yet a third grouping. I am sure he is not alone, for example, in, on the one hand, agreeing with the general line of the Min., but disagreeing with many things in it, and refusing merely to raise his hand for the one or the other. He disagreed very sharply with, for ex., the ultra-leftist line on the national resistance movement, and the story he told me of how on the one hand the Gestapo worked in Lyon, and the other hand the Stalinists, was indeed rich in lessons and fully confirming our line, for the Stalinists are a mass force now precisely because of their work in the resistance, and we are isolated because we isolated ourselves. With all the danger the comrade was in, and all the brave individual Trotskyite acts he did, --had he done them as ~~an~~ member of the national resistance movement instead of as a sympathizer out of it, we would have been somewhere.

Lyon, as you know, is the silk center of France. If England did not advance, in many sections beyond the beginnings of the industrial revolution, France never got there at all. The manufacturers here, for example, give out all their work to the workers to their homes; home work I believe is a good stage older than workshops; in any case, it is impossible because of the dispersal of the workers to have any sort of CIO union, and it is hopeless under these conditions to make these workers the cadre. On the other hand, the district of Lyon, as contrasted to the city, has both cotton factories, and metal workshops, and it is these cotton workers and metal workers that are the backbone of the Stalinists; that were the core of the national resistance movement, particularly so after the workers were being taken to Germany for forced labor; it seems that before then the De Gaullist character and not too mass proportions of the movement was so apparent that there was some excuse for our policy of disregarding the movement; but as soon as occupation was coupled with forcing the workers to go to Germany, the Maqui begin getting the mass backing and the national resistance movement in general have a more proletarian character. Paillet thinks that the first revolutionary wave, which definitely aimed at a new social order, was definitely been stopped; that whereas the Maj. has no right to claim that there has been a stabilization of capital, the Min. has no right to claim that the present economic movement is the same as the social movement following the war. He is a young man (29) with 13 years in the Trotskyist movement, but with not too strong a theoretical background. He has done a marvelous job in the youth movement--he started it and Dumas has continued it and remained with the greatest authority; the same comrade of whom I gave you a favorable report because of his behavior at the British conference, and of whom I shall write more to the youth. We shall see how this contact works out.

Now, then, the main reason for going to Lyon, which was to attend the socialist youth conference was a revelation in the real line of the French Maj.--and a scandalous revelation it was too. First, let me explain my interview with Craipeau who directs this work.

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He said that the differences in perspectives and tactics was clearest seen in the attitude toward the socialist youth; the Min. wished to withdraw them and make new youth and party. But, said, he, even the whole socialist youth is only 2-3,000 whereas the Stalinists ~~xxxx~~ (not under their own name, it is true, but as Republicans!) some 300,000; hence without break-offs from the Stalinists there would be no mass movement. The tactics therefore should be "united front" with the Stalinists and on class struggle basis break off considerable number who, with socialists and with us, could form new youth and party. This is his interpretation of ~~the~~ revolutionary ~~xxxx~~ regroupment. When I said that class struggle alone would not distinguish the 4th; that the Stalinists are for class struggle, and if now collaborating with bourgeoisie, could tomorrow change depending on policy of Stalin; that surely a cadre was necessary on full program of Fourth, and that this was more important than numbers, he said (1) I did not understand the French situation where the Stalinists were not for the class struggle, (2) that the T.P. was precisely the program concrete and more important at this stage than sectarian flinging of full banner (By the way, keep in mind a document on the T.P.-- the interpretation of this both in France and Britain makes of the Shachtmanites ultra-left revolutionists!), and (3) numbers are important because isn't the objective situation revolutionary and yet no revolution, because the masses are not ready and the ~~xxxxxxx~~ party is not there. He went into a further talk of the importance of united front with Stalinists, the failure of the Min. to understand its importance, etc. etc., succeeding in making himself clear on only one question and that is he has no confidence whatever in the Fr. Party, or the Int., as being capable of becoming a mass force. However, how centrist his conception of united front ~~was~~ and regroupment of forces did not become clear to me until the scandalous affair the following day at the socialist youth conference, where the following took place.

(1) The Trotskyist youth, who are in the Maj. Minorityites, came with letter addressed to socialist youth with suggestion that they ~~xxxxxxx~~ begin discussion with the 4th as to program and possible fusion. Paillet made a half-hour address. My understanding from Graipeau was that, although he ~~disagreed~~ disagreed with the tactic of fusion, the comrades within the soc. youth, who are Trotskyites and under direction of Maj. would support the open 4th internationalist, and agree on discussion, and let the congress itself decide which way it wishes to move.

(2) However, as soon as Paillet had finished, the "socialist" (actually member of C.C. of Trotskyites) answered him, as follows: (a) for first 4 minutes he said he was in accord with suggestion of 4th and even with its program, BUT, (b) he proceeded for a full 25 minutes after that to attack the 4th! Mind you, this ~~is~~ is at a congress of the socialist youth, who have to chose the path of reform or revolution, and it is at this congress where the Fr. Maj. chooses to say the 4th is (i) sectarian, (ii) was wrong on national resistance movement, (iii) overestimates the revolutionary situation, (iv) wrongly posed the problem of fusion; the real problem was creation of anew revolutionary force, which would come out of united front with Stalinists and other working class organizations in actual class struggle.

(3) I was extremely glad I had been there to witness this scandalous behavior, and to be able to influence it to some extent, for I promptly proceeded to write notes to Paillet and the rest of the delegation, that he should ask for special time to answer and that, in his answer, he should treat this, diplomatically but nonetheless determinedly, as a betrayal ~~for~~ to suggest united front with Stalinists, under the conditions when

4th is openly asking for fusion, is not to be "for" the united front so much as against the Fourth. This is exactly what Paillet did.

(4) The delegates of the Socialist gave this answer by our comrade an ovation, standing up to sing the International, and showing that the congress was to the left of the direction given it by the Trotskyites within who are under the direction of the Fr. Maj.

(5) Finally, the Stalinists had, precisely because they fear the youth going to the Trotskyites, offered the Socialists the roof of St. Peter's dome: the existence as a separate tendency within the Republican youth, with right to their own paper! Craipeau tells me they turned a completely deaf ear to the Stalinist offer, but I beg to differ, because when you consider that the motion passed to open discussions on program both with Stalinists and with 4th, and that the Stalinists are not there whereas we have had their direction for a year, I cannot take his interpretation at face value.

What will now happen is anybody's guess; if the direction of the Maj. continues, we stand a good chance of having everything fritter away, and we not only will not have the thousand he so ~~gloriously~~ confidently spoke off at the British Congress; we will not have the few hundred which the Min. comrades tell me is the more reliable figure to depend upon.

It is evident to me--I have now also spoken to Demaziere and Parissot, which, added to Craipeau and Magnin, includes the whole leadership of the Fr. Maj.--that the question of economic stabilisation, pro-Stalinism, and anti-Stalinism, united fronts with Stalinist parties, and treating them everywhere as enemy parties, have one "centralising" force and that is completely lack of faith in masses and in themselves; fear of fighting for proletarian power and capitulation to all centrifugal petty-bourgeois forces. Under the circumstances, by the way, it seems to me that, without in any way modifying attack on Germain, our thesis must go all out against Menshevism and, while hammering away at Germain that the reason for these centrifugal forces is his false policy, soften none of the blows against petty-bourgeois defeatism which, in this unsettled situation, ~~gives~~ shows confidence in bourgeois stabilisations. That does not mean ~~max~~ closing all doors to blocs on defeatism, but clearly putting the condition for bloc to be the revolutionary perspective.

An enclosing letter to youth; please transmit to Cookie. I hope I will have word from you re contribution to International and also now to French youth; I should like to give \$200 to Int. and \$50 to Fr. youth; can our youth raise the latter?

Sorry my letter is so disorganized and incoherent, but I'm hurrying to meet G. and I did not wish to delay news. By the way, I would have thought that my Labor & Property would have had little note, saying it is unpublished part of Russian articles as otherwise the article ends somewhat in mid-air, no? I'm also quite proud of what "I" wrote in introduction to Marx's essays; it is just what is needed. Be sure to send that issue to French Party (address to Art & Culture, 46 rue de l'Arbre Sec, Paris 1, France) and of course all bulletins go to Br. Party, no?

I could stand for some entertainment; why not send me copy of the skit? My love and warmest greetings to all,

0 6 7 9
8/13/47

Dear Youth!

Of course I did not forget the vital nerve of the revolutionary movement, nay, the reconstruction of society on communist beginnings! I merely did not write you, because until I landed in Paris, the capital of European culture, which includes not only art and literature but politics and the proletariat, I had not found them regrouping around the Trotskyites. But here I am, and very proudly, as if I were young myself, found that the majority engaged in the Reynault strike were youths under 25; that the Trotskyist youth were in the leadership, outstripping the party representation by 17 to 2! So naturally, I sat down, with pencil in hand, and said tell me more. And here is what I found out:

(1) Two years ago, Comrades Dumas and Paillet had asked the French Party congress to organize a district of party youth; they were given 10-15 members to start work in that district.

(2) Last April at the first conference of our youth we had represented 200 youths, who are, by 60-70% proletarian both in ranks and in leadership.

(3) They have done--a group of about 6 yo start with--remarkable work among the socialist youth so that its last conference, held but a day ago, concluded with ovation for the Trotskyist delegation's presentations that the question of revolutionary program be begun by discussions of socialist youth with Trotskyist youth. The socialist youth are somewhere between 2-3,000; we influence about a 1,000 of these; and no doubt several hundreds of them with actually break not only from S.P., which they have already done, but from centrism as well and join the Trotskyists to form ~~xxxx~~ beginnings of mass organization.

(3) The prospects of a real mass organization of youth are not exaggerated. Among the movements in which our youth work is one which will sound funny to you, but which has a real militant traditions here--the youth hostels. They began as a sort of nature lovers youth organization many years back; but as, in majority they are young workers, and as their camping equipment is too costly (a napsack fit for hiking costs 3,000 francs and so do the shoes) for youth to afford, and as hotels are altogether out of reach, a group within there began not only to sympathize with workers strikes, but fight for what they call "right to leisure". It is around this question that our Trotskyite youth is organizing itself--a good number of the members by the way come from this organization--giving the question of "loisir" the following interpretation: (a) the workers have as much right to leisure as the bourgeoisie; which means not only the week in summer but one in winter; (b) to make the leisure possible--and it is of utmost necessity for working class youth--the bosses should pay for camping outfit and build youth hostels where youth, in their hikes, can stay very cheaply; and (c) generally the bosses should pay ~~for~~ to make available to youth access to sports.


(4) Our Trotskyist youth began to publish a paper of their own--I have asked them to send you 6 copies--but, unfortunately the party paper was in danger, and so they gave their money to keep La Verite alive. I was wondering whether you cannot start some campaign to help them bring out their paper. Let me know.

Now, even though, our youth does not yet compare to it either in size or proletarian composition, I did not think that we have to be ashamed, and in fact thought we could be of great

help to each other, and particularly so in the educational field, which they have had to neglect somewhat because of the difficulties in getting Marxist literature. I promptly proceeded to speak very highly of you, pointing out that as your first venture in that field, you had decided to issue Krupskays's "How Lenin Studied Marx". They were enthused about that, and said would you please send them 6 copies immediately; and they would translate it into French, and mimeograph it immediately. They are also translating my Outline of Capital. (By the way, Cookie, do you think, that the Shachtmantox would part with their stencils of that?)

I think also that you should immediately begin a correspondence with them; their experience can be of great help to you. Write to ^{Com}Dumas, and have outside envelope addressed to Art & Culture, Rue de l'Arbre Sec, Paris, 1, France. If you do collect any money, write them the letter, but send it to me in cash & I will transmit. Stein of the SWP was present last April to their Conference and no doubt he reported the work to the SWP youth; perhaps also they have a copy of the youth paper and you can get it there. In any case, here is the beginnings of an international revolutionary youth movement, and from there we can march forward. By the way, in order to allow themselves for a broad mass basis, they have not in their constitution stated that they were politically subordinate to party, so that they are the revolutionary youth, based on the principles of Marxism-Leninism-Trotskyism, but not only organizationally but politically remain autonomous. I do not know how best it is to work out in the US; this is best for you to decide after the fusion with SWP youth. The Third International youth always was politically subordinate to adults; the Fourth, they tell me in the 1938 program, left the question open.

How are you all? And why is no youth writing to me? Please transmit to all my very warm revolutionary greetings,

Yours,  Freddie

9/3/47

Dear J:

Wow! In a slow and torturous way, and I cannot predict just when it will actually mature, but the IS is undoubtedly moving toward dropping the defense of Russia! The formula under which it will take place will be that the bureaucracy is an obstacle to the development of the productive forces; it is already an obstacle, they say, openly admitting Germain was wrong to give it a decade in which it could still develop the productive forces, but it is not yet "an absolute break" upon the productive forces, which would be the basis for entirely transforming the manner in which they would defend "the last remnants of October: nationalization, planning and control of foreign trade." Meanwhile, they are doing the following things: (1) definitely being defeatists in E. E., and (2) definitely stating that "defense of the U.S.S.R." is not a slogan "and outside of Russia should not appear in the headlines of the Fourth Int. press"; but is "a scientific definition of the degeneration of a workers state, never forgetting the October from which it issue";

and moreover (3) insisting that in the counterposition of Russia vs. America, "whereas we do not raise the banner of the third camp", we nevertheless "need not chose one of the two camps". They will decide on the actual evolution of the struggle, plus charts as to (a) the destruction of collectivized agriculture and the infiltration of capitalism through the E.E. countries, (b) the fall in labor productivity, which proves the break the bureaucracy is on the dev. of the productive forces, and (c) emphasize, that, at this stage, with war not being immediate, we must emphasize "that the greatest danger to the workers movement is Stalinism", and that the greatest danger to the planned economy is "not the outside imperialist attack" but "the bureaucracy itself", so we call call upon the Russian workers to overthrow it as an immediate goal instead of something they must subordinate "to the defence of Russia", which is not threatened by any enemy as much as it is threatened by the bureaucracy.

This "new manner of defense of Russia", which is "not at all a giving up of the defense of Russia" as the "defeatists and revisionists" wish us to give up, must nevertheless be vigorously propagandized against "the conservatism in our ranks" which continues to use defense of Russia "in its headlines", and otherwise so "exaggerate the war danger" as to make it appear that "we must now chose between Russia and America", whereas now is the time to fight Stalinism and organize the only force that can lead "the fight both against capitalism and Stalinism, that is the Fourth

Now all this came out at the discussions just concluded, of which I am writing a more detailed report tomorrow. And it is this which prompted my cable to you to hold the Germain brochure for a possible new preface. The trouble is that in black in white it will only come out partially in an article Germain is writing against Marcoux, and perhaps it is as easy to write an additional article after it, just devoted to it, as to hold up the pamphlet now. On the other hand, I felt that particularly as we first dealt with Poland where we definitely accused them of being defensists, a change should be introduced, pointing out that, inconsistently enough with their position of defense and "structural Assimilation" (which, by the way, they now say can never occur with a proletarian revolution), such and such is the character of their analysis. One other point in which I felt I wished to influence somewhat the pamphlet, is the direct and very lengthy quotation we have from Peralta. I felt that because of the new alignments, etc. etc., there is no reason why we must so clearly align ourselves with them politically, especially the manner in which they are making their opposition to Sp-CP.

2681

CGT

as the center of their agitation. I would prefer in other words to state in our words, our position on the self-mobilization of the masses, and in a footnote merely mention that Munis-Peralta also approach it that way, although they draw from it the wrong conclusion of opposing CP-CGT. Perhaps you yourself modified that section already. I wanted you to know all the facts.

So much now. More tomorrow--but do not delay the pamphlet unless you think what I already told you deserves it, for tomorrow's letter will bring nothing fundamentally new on question of Russia.

Our American Resolution goes into next issue of Fourth; Stone's criticism into the issue after that; the Negro Resolution they ask to publish instead in an Internal Bulletin, because they are so pressed for space, although they also said perhaps, the piece you wrote for Memorial Issue could be published in the Fourth. Let me know about the letter.

Love

Handwritten notes and scribbles:
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C...
The length...
I will...
18682

0 6 8 3
9/4/47

Dear J:

We started out the discussions, without the presence of the French and British Majorities; the first did not even bother to send a representative; the second sent one so late that he missed the first discussion and much of the second. The first discussion was on the international situation and perspectives and was given ably by Gabriel. He stressed: (1) that we faced a new stage of development both in the mass movement and in the movement of the International; the first because of the new wave of strikes, particularly in France, and the approaching crisis in America which would have more profound reactions on the world economy and the production relations than even the war did; the second because we are everywhere facing the transformation into mass parties and in that struggle we must combat the twin dangers of opportunism and sectarianism. (2) no "immediate" prospect of either war and or revolution (Italy was the ripest for civil war, by the way, Germain reported who has just returned from there), and it is precisely this stage of instability of ~~international~~ capitalism and the ruin of the European economy on the one hand, and extreme vitality of the working class demonstrations, that creates the very best atmosphere for us, and makes our optimism for building mass parties, based on actual reality. (3) new stage of development of colonial revolutions, and also in China; where (this ought to make Grace feel very good) where, in 1946, in Shanghai alone, there were 1,000 strike and this number was exceeded in 1947. He divided the world into: USA-Russia, stressing immediate war was not imminent and we must not therefore make a choice of either one or the other; instead we must look to the crisis in USA, and the bureaucracy in Russia, which was a break on productive forces, having charts to show that destruction of collectivized agriculture there was and the centrifugal tendencies (evidently it is there they will look for capitalism); the Orient; Japan, India, China, Indo-China; and the "glacis" or EE. In actuality, the latter were left for discussion under Russian question. Since, no representatives of the non-revolutionary perspectives were present there, the discussion became general, one of pure agreement; I tried to concretize, and the notes of my speech are herewith enclosed. The discussion lasted a full day.

The second series of discussions, lasting almost 4 days, were on Russia, divided thus: State Capitalism, 1st day; Bur. Collectivism, 1/2 of next day; Workers Statism, full day; and Glacis and defensism, 1/2 day, but by far the most interesting and important. They were all led by Germain; I had ~~about~~ equal time with him during the State Capitalist discussion; 1 1/2 hours each and 1 hour summaries; practically full time with him on Bur. Coll.; 1/2 hour on workers statism, and limited myself merely to questions when it came to Glacis.

The first discussion on the K₂ was not such as to create the best atmosphere; he was very anxious to score points, and to do so, had to misinterpret the state capitalist position, and, even as Shachtman, went to show that the Mensheviks long before the appearance of J-F held that position, etc. etc., and calling us revisionists; so beside presenting our own position affirmatively (and I had full and uninterrupted time (in fact I had more time than he because questions were a separate category, and since all questions were directed at me, I had an extra full hour, so democracy prevailed more than WP; I had a total, in other words, of 3 hours to his 2), I decided to hit at their tin little god's methodology, stating that I presume that in the night all cats are gray, and in the heat of arguments all opponents appear the same, but that adds absolutely nothing to the clarification of political lines. I also hit at him for dragging the colonial revolution, which presumably

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we would have to oppose if we were consistent in our putting so much stress on "technical level of production and backwardness of Russian masses in retaining control". If he were not intent on scoring points (or was he aiming at votes of colonial delegates here represented), he would have at least mentioned our Int. Res., where no such fantastic conclusion is drawn by us.

The delegates did not take well my attacks on Germain, although they were very polite, but so upset were they that by the third, this incident occurred, which I relate in detail because I believe it is the kind of thing that the comrades will meet in the SWP, and it is as good well that they ~~learn~~ from my experience. I believe I handled it very well.

(1) Although they are patient and very democratic, the international comrades are both convinced that they are marxists and our arguments are "pathetic" and that therefore at the end of an argument, we should really "admit" the superiority of arguments presented by them and adopt their position. When this does not occur, they become embittered at our "schematism", and then all that they have been brought up on through a superficial understanding of "In Defense of Marxism", comes to the fore, and they attack blindly.

(2) In the case of the present discussions, the antagonism broke out as follows: the Dutch comrade, Santin, the most rabid of the group, said he wished, before asking more questions, to state openly that he considers (a) that I answered none of the questions, (b) that I proceed to pronounce my schema, and talk in my own language (If some one asks me: what time it is? I answer: It is not raining), despite all facts brought to the contrary, (c) that I am "arrogant" and have the attitude of "to hell with all the questions asked; they must instead listen to what I have to tell them", and that, as an example, he cited the question that when he showed me the Russian prisoners of war to whom he spoke had all told him they fought for the workers state, I proceed to disregard it, and speak instead of the "my schema", "But workers, contrary to intellectuals, do not take things that lightly, and the workers revolution is the most important thing in their life and in history, and it is this I must consider and not my abstractions"; and (d) finally that he does not like my lack of "self-criticism."

Now this was a very delicate situation, which needed both offense and defense, and particular distinction made between the rank and file comrades (and in a sense these delegates were that) and the leadership, which, without even realizing it, had fostered that spirit, although they would not have been so undiplomatic, ~~xxxx~~ or as brave if you wish, to state it. I made the following statement:

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9/5/47

Dear :

To continue where I broke off a few hours ago to go to lunch with Magnin... and return to Gabriel's contribution on RQ...

"There must be an immediate struggle against Stal not only because it threatens the remains of October, but, above all, the only way out for the Russian proletariat remains the world revolution.

"In the countries of the glaci, taken as a point of departure, we are defeatists, for the slogan of the withdrawal of the Red Army, which we naturally tie up with fraternisation with the soldiers; in the USSR we are for an irreconcilable struggle against Stalinism. The Fr. Maj. which covers up the treacherous character of Stal, leaving the impression that it is a question (I left off here, it was in regard to making it appear a ques. of "bad leaders", instead of nature of Stalinism, and said very quickly in Fr. in conclusion)

Now the final thing that occurred in that discussion was that S.G., while in principle agreeing with new orientation, said that in US, since that was the home enemy of the prol., the slogan/would still have to be used. Gabriel and Germain disagreed, emphasizing that of course US imperialism must be fought by Am. prol. as main enemy, but that fight should not be conducted "under the slogan of the defense of the USSR."

Now to the last day of the discussions, which dealt with problems of national sections, but so sketchily that it need not be reported, except for Indo-China. And here is Lucien's report:

In 1930 when CP suffered a split, three groups, semi-Trotskyist came out: (1) official LO led by Ta-Too-Ta; (2) a group of journalists and lawyers, who soon disappeared from the scene, and (3) another group, organized by a comrade who had been a member of the P-L of France, which called itself the International Communist League (of which Lucien has evidently always been a member who had fought against Ta-Too-Ta, for (1) the elaboration of a straight Trotskyist program (instead of the attempt of Ta-Too-Ta to unite with left Stalinists and form an org. neither Tr-ist nor Stal.) and (2) for return to masses and construction of factory cells.

In 1939 (May), during the course of a colonial election the ICL supported the struggle of the La Lutte (the new group of Ta-Too-Ta) and forced it to conduct its struggle in the name of the ICL. They obtained an unprecedented victory, leaving Stal. without practically any influence among the masses. The IS then recognized the La Lutte group as the official group, and condemned the ICL; the latter, in order with IS discipline, then disbanded and joined La Lutte, on a detailed program lasting 86 pages. In Aug. 1945 the Trotskyists succeeded in building trade unions; the La Lutte elements, however, joined the nationalists in the struggle for independence. (The Viet Nam, which is but another name for CP)

The high peak of the movement is August 25, 1945 when the ICL organized mass demonstration for independent; 40,000 demonstrated under slogans of the Trotskyists, including workers and peasants or peoples committees, peoples militia, Constituent Assembly, down with imperialism and agents of foreign capital; for a socialist world revolution. In Saigon alone, there were 200 such peoples committees; the ICL, composed of Stalinists, Nationalists and Trotskyists, were chairmanned by a Trotskyist who appeared as the main political spokesman of the demonstration. The ICL got

got its own headquarters, over which the Trotskyist flag (a red flag with 4th Int. insignia of a world struck by lightning) was flying and which was guarded by a full military guard. The Tr-ists had a print shop of its own, 4 armored motor cars and 6 cars.

In complicity with the police and the administrative bur., the nationalist parties made a coup d'etat then, but so violent was the peasant movement that they got frightened, and turned over the direction to the Viet Nam movement, which is Stal. However, at 6 a.m. of that Aug. 25th in the biggest square in Saigon there were ~~making~~ nobody but Stalinists and Trotskyists, with the Trotskyists having the clearest mass support and applauded most enthusiastically by the populace. So strong was this mass movement that even the police quickly donned ICL or Stal. insignia to avoid wrath of people. The ICL moreover fraternized with the Jap. soldiery (it was during the Jap. occupation still), and so great was the response of these Jap. soldiers that they brought over to the Trotskyist headquarters, 500 rifles, 6 machine guns & 15 cases of machine gun bullets. In all respects the ICL was recognized as a mass party, whereas the elements of La Lutte, which now called itself the wkrs. Rev. Party, joined the Viet Nam movement, on the basis of 3 slogans: (1) for a republic, (2) for Viet Nam, (3) for national independence, and on their trucks, contrary to those of the ICL on which flew only the Tr-ist flag, they flew, in addition to their banner, those of the imperialists, and now decidedly rejected unity with ICL. They had in fact attempted to assassinate some of our comrades, but because of our strong mass support, did not dare to slaughter us yet.

However, in Sep. '45, in the course of a colonial demonstration, in which the French colonial troops shot at the masses, they, along with Stalinists accused Tr-ists of pushing the people to revolt, and on Sept. 12, the chief of police of the Stal-ists sent an armed detachment of 500, encircled the Tr-ist headquarters, where the committee of the people were in session, and arrested its leaders (50). On Sept. 23, the Br. & Fr. troops arrived, the Viet Nam abandoned their horses and in the confusion fled. The ICL reorganized the masses in the syndicates and constituted a workers militia of 250, which included Japanese non-commissioned men, to resist French army. They had to retreat 5 kilometers, since the colonials, supported by Fr. & Eng. troops, tanks and howitzers, were a murderous and overpowering force. (The war is murderous beyond even any fictionalized report; for ex., out of 500 Trotskyists, 30 were left) The workers militia became somewhat isolated and the Stalinists immediately accused them of being provocateurs.

But the workers militia, now together with nationalist army, fought for 15 days, (the workers militia always under the Tr-ist flag and they have their own battle song and a beautiful one it is; Lucien sang it for us) and so heroically held of the troops and won new positions that the Trotskyist comrade who organized them was made a general by the nationalists, and even the imperialists admitted his superior qualities. The Trotskyists now published their own organ, requisitioned their own radio center from the Fr. imperialists, had their own doctors and their own hospital service. However, much of the food which the civilian people had tried to send them, was intercepted by the Viet Nam. The struggle continued for 6 months, winning notable successes, but the might of the combined imperialists and the treachery of the Stalinists, ended the battle in a massacre. The leading Trotskyist (To ⁶⁸⁸ I believe is the name, but I cannot be sure), with five others, died on the battle front at the funeral the nationalists attended; over his grave, which tells under what circumstances he fell, there is an insignia, reading, "Member of the ICL, section of the Fourth." ⁶⁸⁸

The heroic fight and the slaughter of the combined forces of the imperialists is beyond compare, having practically

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decimated our forces, who fight for the national independence and for (hold your hats on this off, since he was considerably critical and the IS hopes to be able to change that slogan to Socialist Asiatic; but Lucien insisted that when you consider all the enemies they have to face, now including Am. imperialism, there is no other way out for them) Soviet Socialist French Union. Despite the crushing blows, the ICL is now resuming its struggle in the trade unions, which is now becoming the main problem in Indo-China.

This by far climaxed the discussions (I am now tired and shall not write of India, especially since you have already gotten report from what the Indian comrade gave to Br. Congress; some other day I will elaborate on it). The vitality and heroism of these colonials is really something to shout to the sky about. Even the rather ridiculous last slogan--and I participated in that discussion, and brought out the greater value in appealing to the Asiatic Socialist Union, and rouse the colonial masses as a whole, as well as showing there was nothing in common with the economies of Indo China and France, except that of mother oppressor to oppressed, and not the integral economy of Europe--was so concretely posed and so motivated, as to show the complexity of this revolution, rather than a capitulation to opportunism.

I am sorry I cannot tell you more of the Cameroon revolution; nobody here seems to know much and the Camerounian will not return to Paris till Oct.; you can write him in French cautiously to the address I enclose, mentioned that the Am. comrade whom he met on the train to Lyon and who had given him JRJ's Negro Res., sent the name to him.

O, yes, one other thing on the discussions. In the last discussion on the national problems, I presented question of SWP-WP unity (By the way, Sterling is here as "observer", and no matter what kind of crazy reports he sends back, he must mention my role, which instead of a slanderer of WP is always in the ~~rank~~ capacity not only of fighting for unification, but of criticizing many of the things both of SWP and IS; I am the only "opponent" present) and again criticized dear Germain (he is by the way a charming chap, and has already since return to Paris "taken me out" to dinner and was the one delegated to invite me to write for Quatrieme) for his ridiculous article on Poland, where he said the WP had crossed to the opposite sides of the barricades, which surely did not help bring the WP ranks; criticizing SWP's stand and especially so failure to give WP credit for its revolutionary defeatist role in war; and giving advance "advertisement" to our Balance Sheet, which I thought would be of help to the whole Int. in its present fight. I was received warmly, and the attitude was "If Shachtman wants unity, of which they are not at all sure, he can still have it."

Those grueling, filthy, 3rd class train rides, which brought us back to Paris, and during which part of the time I did not even have a seat to sit, and at no time slept, has me knocked out (it is two days since my return), so I will take a rest for day, then elaborate speech for IEC, and probably not write for a few days.

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9/5/47

Dear J:

My cable had evidently thrown you off schedule, but what could I have said in a cable; it takes only 4 days for an air mail letter to get there, so it is best under such circumstances to merely await the following letter. As you see now, it is not at all a question of my wishing to moderate the tone against Germain. I believe that not only strictly theoretically, but politically as well, we make no compromises whatever on that score. However, the question will not be discussed the 10th, but first at world affair at the end of the year (these discussions we held were merely a preparation for that latter date, and the positive feature was to know how to argue with workers statista; our arguments previously had been an exposition of state capitalism vs. bur. coll.), and by then I do not know what the IS position will be, and, in view of the tremendous shift made on the question already--the clear defeatism in the glaxis and the "new manner of defense" of Russia itself--I felt the pamphlet should be held so that we do not appear to be arguing against something that isn't, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, hitting away even harder as to why the step is so halting a one. This could be done either by leaving the text intact and writing a new preface to it, or the text could be modified (I prefer the former) and since we actually do not need it before the earliest October, and even first part of November would not be too bad (I cannot see that that would bring any complications in the fact that we already would then be members since that is the one thing that will continue to distinguish us). I would suggest therefore that you proceed to give the text to the printer as is, telling him there will be a preface letter. As soon as his article against Marcoux is out, and it is this which will take up the question of the glaxis, I shall air mail it to you and on the basis of that, plus my report of the discussions, you could write the preface. I would also prefer seeing it, if possible before it goes to print, because so much of what was said was underlying and not open, and it is best that some one who was there and heard both the words and the spirit with which it was made, check it. (The new paragraphs in the Balance Sheet for example on the British and French Majorities, I would have made more specific.)

In a few days I appear before the IEC on the question of our entry; they probably have a majority for it, but I will face still opposition (organized by Shachtman?) from some, who will argue that if we are "really" for unity, why did we leave? (2) the IEC in any case will "hurt" unity by letting us in, as Sh. will say it is a maneuver, and hence they should request that we stay out till world congress. The Fr. Maj. asked me the type of questions we are used to getting from Sh: when did I see Cannon, etc. etc. and a continuous checking of dates. The Indian delegate I spoke to during the discussions was leaning in that direction. The Br. Maj. said yes and no at the same time. There is still 5 days before meeting, and I will meet again with these oppositionists; Jock has just gotten to town too.

I am thinking over your suggestion re open letter to Natalia, but wish not to decide for a few days. The IS, by the way, has invited me to conduct two columns a month for the Quatrieme; one on news of interest in the Russian press, and one on economic trends in the world; 1 & 1 1/2 pp. each. I accepted "in principle", but have not yet made arrangements as when to start. Frankly, I do not care to start yet since the tendency work keeps me quite busy, and if the IS will also use some of my travelling, as they are beginning to think they should, perhaps sending me to Germany, for their purposes, I shall be completely bogged down. I am sorry to say that I do not think they will be "broadminded" enough to consent to publishing the p.....

Balance Sheet in French; I shall take it up with G when I see him in a few days. The other printing costs I shall find out, and also arrangements of our representation. I spoke, briefly, on the latter with G during discussions; the representation as to general delegates is based on the CI congress which divided up the world more or less along those lines, and then proposed that each congress decide basis for next. Moreover, they insist they shall be very glad to accept the suggestion of Shachtman-Munis as to proportional representation since that would give them an overwhelming and decisive majority because of the strength of SWP, and would practically wipe off the map the many smaller countries who do not have more than 50 members; whereas the manner they chose, and he showed me the mathematical formula, would assure a more equitable representation. I propose not to argue on the question. On the matter of the Minority representation, the suggestion for a 4th came from the Minorities; we were not considered since we are a separate category. Did you take the question up with Stein? He is arriving tomorrow and I shall take it up with G and Stein.

Continuation of discussion report follows.

Here are samples of Gabriel's contribution to the Russian discussion: "At the same time (as combatting revisionist tendencies in Fourth on it, fi) we must overcome the conservatism within our own ranks. We cannot say that LT has exhausted the question; we must make a close and serious study of the new developments since his death."

"We cannot agree with Santin (the/comrade who had objected to the shift in emphasis and said he could not promise the slogan would disappear from the headlines of his party's publications"). The defense of Russia is posed in completely concrete terms...the consequences of the degeneration of the USSR that had taken place during and after the war, and particularly because the USSR had formed part of the world situation when the world working class was defeated, and hence we put the emphasis on defense. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ internal

"Today we are in a different situation. ~~the~~ situation is different, and at the same time a revolutionary period has begun and our first task is the preparation of the world rev. Stalinism is the greatest obstacle for the revolutionary movement. All these considerations must be taken together in order to give the question of defense of the USSR a different interpretation than during the war. Today the accent should be based upon an irreconcilable struggle against Russia in the glacis and in the capitalist countries. Today it is not like the war when we had to defend in common with Stalinism the Nazi attack; today there is no common defense with Stalinism, but a defense of the remnants of October against Stalinism...We must watch closely what is going on in Russia.

"The fact that Am. is preparing a war against Russia cannot be an argument for defense in a military sense as we did previously...Stalinism is becoming the No. 1 enemy in the USSR as well as elsewhere to what remains of the bases of October. In this sense, our defense of Russia is completely subordinated to the triumph of the world revolution and the interests of the world proletariat as well as the Russian.

"There is a clear nuance here. It must be brought into correspondence with our perspectives internationally--a period in which we can regroup the revolutionary forces. (He had spoken here also of the fact that Stalinism had reached its peak also in W.E. and now gives us a chance.) Above all, stalinism remains No.1 obstacle in the path of revolution. If, in fact, we fail in this task ...The is not between Russia and America but between the bourgeoisie and Stalinism on the one hand and the take of the proletariat....

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9/9/47

Dear J:

I just had a most satisfactory meeting with Gabby, and this once again shows how much superior he is to the others, not only in organizational matters, but also in dealing with political opponents. Both Phelan and Germain had told me that the Balance Sheet could not be published in French, mainly because of money. (The money part happens to be true since, in order not to sin regarding democracy they have put out much, much money to publish such tripe as Sh., etc., and got next to no contribution towards it) But when I put it up to G., he said, Of course, they would; it was impossible to translate any such great mass of material for IS--each was given an English copy and arrangements for the only two that do not know it to get an oral translation--but it would certainly be done for conf.; it may have to be done in mimeo form, but they will try printing and it will be done. Meanwhile, send a couple of hundred if we have that many, to be distributed to all sections. Have note accompany it as to which sections we had already sent some. The same will be done for our anti-Germain document; they will distribute the English to all the sections; and they will take care of translation. (The corrected copy of Grace's document I handed in; they already started translating the other version I gave them; I called attention to new first page, etc.; it would be safest if Grace sent an air mail immediately, calling attention, page by page, to changes) Also, send them a bundle of 12 of Marx's Essays, and they will order more as they take it up officially. So much for documents.

We then discussed representation at W. C. I pointed out that not only because of our contributions should we be represented, --and numbers should be made a subordinate factor to that,--but that, as matters looks now, they really couldn't say any one else can represent the state capitalist point of view for us. We, for ex., will make as a condition for a bloc, the acceptance of a revolutionary perspective; I will have a chance to meet all defeatist groups soon; but vote on us should not depend on that. He said: "What do you want?" to which I answered, "A delegate with voice and vote." He said that that is exactly what he would recommend, so I presume that now it is up to Stein, whom I will see in a day or so. (The J-ite topic first gets discussed Fri., which is the 12th.)

I told him you suggested my writing an Open Letter to Natalia; evidently they too would like it. I shall draft a copy when I have all documents before me--I still have not seen the one on which she collaborated with Marxh.--and send it to you. I still think that a preface is the better way to handle the change in Germain; our critique remains valid, and we merely call attention in preface that new interpretation is unavoidable because the conception of degenerated workers state so clashes with world revolutionary perspective. The very minute his article comes out I shall air mail it to you, but I do not think the printer should be made to wait that long, although, as I pointed out, October is in good enough time.

I spoke to Malaquais re printing costs (also to our people; will know something in a week) and meanwhile he became very interested in Dick's MS, and said he would like to translate it in French, etc. etc., then he saw Dick, who denied having given us a MS, said in fact he intended to rewrite it, enlarge it and have his publishers undertake it, etc. Naturally I was quite confused by the report; he promised Malaquais he would call me, but so far I have not heard. With that MS I should think it would be better in any case to proceed in US because paper here is very cheap and so are covers, and whether it will be alright for our pamphlet; I think this, if it is still ours, should be treated with care, and 1,000 seems way too few copies. By the way, since run also makes a difference, and since proofs

would have to be sent to US, and probably also the binding would have to be done there, to avoid high duty, I doubt there would be more than a 1/3rd at most saving. But I shall see; however, I do not think, to repeat again, that that should concern Dick's MS. Malaguais has arranged for me to meet Sartre, who last week was violently attacked in Pravda, and who is beginning to question what kind of state Russia is; I shall take chance to speak to him about Grace's essay to Phil's book; I do hope I shall have received it by then.

How are you?

for R

Dear... just a few words...
 ...to a note meeting...
 ...at 2 hours to...
 ...straight line...
 ...will you please get me...
 ...warm gloves (blow...
 ...size...
 ...as usual...
 ...sorry to...
 ...all of...

UPA 691

9/18/47

Dear J:

Today's letter from John speaks of the fact that proofs of anti-Germain pamphlet were read during the week-end, and I therefore fear that you did not allow time for me to proofread and that my telegram, which I sent immediately upon receiving the proofs, may not have convinced you to make changes indicated, and I hurried therefore to send another cable to emphasize point. You have no doubt by now also received the letter which explains my reasons, and I thought it important enough also to ask to be excused from the IEC for an hour, that I may further elaborate, this time upon the second cable and hence the section which applied to Britain. I will begin a report of the IEC with this question, though chronologically this has just been concluded today whereas Int. & us came in first part. (But for that report you will have to wait till we have concluded our sessions.)

First, to be noted is that the political report on the British question by Gabriel was much better than any of the other material on it, driving hard the point of perspectives to the end, and emphasizing that the derailed discussion on boom, etc. was actually only an illustration of the fact that what bases one's politics on is not a conjunctural revival, but the whole European economic perspectives and actual stage of class struggle and what you may expect it to develop into, based on the objective situation, etc. etc. More or less what we have been hitting at. So that immediately made unnecessary (where we wish to include latest developments as illustration of our general line) repeating the point on Britain, and we made it sufficiently in Balance Sheet.

Secondly, this being a political gathering not an academic one, the question of tactic into L.P. assumed an entirely new light since the British Maj. now consented to a solution to be worked out by ~~James~~ Gabriel, Stein and Haston, which resulted in the following: the Br. Min. be permitted to make its own experience, but that that be done completely outside of the party, so that the the party does not have the overhead expense of a continued factional fight; the Min., in other words work under IS direction; the Maj. work as the line was democratically decided upon by its own membership, and that the case, within a certain period, be reviewed for final decision. Now, I believe that not a little part in convincing the Maj. not to go headlong toward a split with the Fourth was precisely such matters as our Balance Sheet, Judd's presence there trying to convince them for a bloc for "democracy in the IS", etc. etc. (I, for example, took the occasion in personal note to congratulate Haston on decision on ground it was not only a solution, but a blow to all those who counted on just such differences to bring about a break in the International, and when he answered that if they had the majority he has in the British party... I replied that I was not unaware of why centralists become expendable, but that the infinite adjustability of Shachtman's politics was the danger; and we are friends, finis.) Under these circumstances, you can see why I am insistent that this be not made a point in the document.

The article of Thomas I already explained on the grounds of the character of Thomas and his politics. I wish also to add that we cannot afford to use the method toward any single article that we used, say to Coolidge's article on general strike.

As for Palestine, it seems a generalization that arises out of an anthises that seems to be in contradiction to facts; the generalization ~~may~~ can be made in regard to another situation, which would not be contested.

John

9/19/47

Dear J:

Finally the IEC sessions are over; we were all so fatigued at the end of some 9 days of talking, that the result was that when the Political Report came up as the last point on the agenda, no one (practically) wished to discuss it. It is the same one I reported G giving at the international discussions held in the Alps, and it was decided that a resolution on the basis of it be drawn up by IS, then submitted to national leaderships, etc. Along with the Min. of the British section, I was merely an "observer" that is, present with no voice or vote except on the one case in which each was particularly concerned, which, of course, in my case, was our appeal for entry. However, on the political report, I did feel like making an intervention and asked for special permission, which was granted, and during which I presented (1) The discussion around the T.P., published by us in Balance Sheet, as a guide to method of approach of the present situation; (2) A short analysis of the French situation, which required a combination of propaganda and agitation around General Strike plus SP-CP-CGT, in contrast to what the French Party was doing whose policy was characterized by a combination of opportunism--presenting T.P. as a minimum program, vacillating on Stalinism, etc.--and sectarianism--dropping SP-CP-CGT for "Workers and Farmers Govt"; and (3) The question of war between USA-USSR, which G correctly presented as not imminent, and therefore demanding of us not a choice of one or the other, but of the revolutionary perspective which included the fact that the main enemy of the Russian proletariat was not American imperialism, but the Russian "bureaucracy" ("if you wish to call it that), just as the main enemy of the American proletariat was not Stalinist Russia, but its own bourgeoisie and the labor bureaucracy which keeps it tied to the bourgeoisie.

The only other time I intervened was when I presented our case, and on that I enclose my speech, but not my rebuttal, which was very brief, and dealt mainly to the objections of the Indian delegate, whom I finally convinced to vote for our entry, and that of Geoffroy, who was the only one who voted against IS Resolution and wanted to keep us suspended in midair till Shachtman said unequivocally that he has no objection.

The British question I already reported, and it is the best thing that came out of the plenum, which had at its beginning hanging over it a possible split. The French question was, theoretically, also "solved", but actually it is only an armed truce, but that question is so involved that I leave it for another day when I am not so tired. However, I am enclosing the Resolution passed, and the counter-resolution by our friend Jock who played some role on this question, fearing actually to back up the opportunism of the Fre. Majority, and yet wishing somehow to absolve them, and be "objective".

I have not yet heard from you regarding my suggestion for my return mid or end of November but I am more convinced than ever that is the only course. I shall discuss the question with Stein and G when everybody has had a good long week-end's rest.

I enclose also Natalia's letter, and now adieu, I

693 am going to bed.

Frank

9/22/47

Dear J:

Because we are liquidating our faction October, and my future reports will be only to you, I am hurrying to apprise you of one development, though I would have preferred waiting till I have something more accomplished in that direction, but that probably will not be until after we no longer exist as a faction. It concerns one of the French groups: Chaulieu.

As I wrote you when I got a hdd of the bulletins of the French conference on the Russian Question, it was evident from the document of Chaulieu-Montal that, although they called Russia "a new exploitative society", they were very close to us, closer in fact than the one that calls itself "state capitalist". It was then I wrote the SC, saying I need more elbow room here. However, what was not evident until I met him after his return from the holidays--it is one of those things you can only learn on the spot, and not through correspondence--is that he is not merely closer to us inception of defeatism and world revolution, he is a find all by himself. If we gain him, we have established ourselves not only as an international tendency, we have found a collaborator who can amount to something in the future development of the revolutionary movement, actually and theoretically.

He is a young Greek (only 25) who has a mastery of the dialectic; he is now translating Hegel's Logic into French. He entered the Greek CP in 1936 when he was only 14. He broke during the war, became defeatist and as such entered the Greek Trotskyists. He is entirely opposed to the national resistance movement, and is a bit ultra-leftist but as sound in actual revolutionary work and courageous and sane approach as you can imagine. He came to France in 1945 (I believe), started fighting G's (Germain and G and everybody in the Int. is an underconsumptionist as they can be, without even knowing it; I was shocked to find G, who is by far the most sensitive Bolshevik in the Int., recommend as "excellent" Kautsky's "Economic Doctrines of Karl Marx", which literally stinks to heaven.) underconsumptionism and defensism at once; otherwise, as I see it he would have gone much further than Germain for he is ~~far~~ by far the superior. He fights bureaucracy, but does not go haywire on it, as does Gallienne on the one hand, and Kunis on the other. He agreed with me immediately that that must be fought within political context, within framework of Int. and soberly, although when it comes to French matters, he gets pretty hot, and did so with Frank who is no worse and somewhat better in fact than our American counterparts.

He does not accept law of value, but that is not absolute; we are in the process of serious discussions, and I have hopes of winning him. He does not accept SP-GP-CGT, but he does not do so as those who say they wish nothing with Stalinism, or that it is absolutely excluded to have such slogans, but rather as unnecessary. He points to the fact that Lenin did not call for a Menshevik-Bolshevik Govt., but for all power to the soviets which were Menshevik controlled and our stress should be on the factory and extra-parliamentary committees, etc. But when I pointed out that there are no soviets in existence, so we cannot have an exactly parallel slogan to that of Lenin's, and that if the manner in which we propagandize for SP-GP-CGT, puts its main emphasize on workers committees, we accomplish both tasks, he said he does not agree, but is willing to rediscuss with me. He thinks highly of all our work, is very happy to meet some one who doesn't think that Marxian philosophy is something referred to but never applied; has a tendency to stress politics over economics, but generally comes out not too far wrong because the dialectic gets him there. His group is overwhelmingly proletarian. He agrees (1) that he must write immediately against Shachtman, as

his position has nothing in common with him, although Shachtman in his usual unprincipled manner is trying to pretend that this group has a similar view and his stooge here waxes with Chaulieu; (2) that it is necessary to have a long-term, not a short-term perspective regarding any change in the International, that now we must back the forces that are its core, although he wishes to make a clearer distinction than he thinks we are making; (3) that it is necessary to have a cadre that is not limited to any one question, and that understands the seriousness and integral connection of all aspects of Marxism.

Because this is the biggest thing that has happened since my arrival here, and the importance of this task, I have decided to cut some of my travel, and remain here longer, and after a short trip to Italy and England, return here for the French Party Congress sometime at the beginning of November. I am to address his group next week; meanwhile I am anxious to have more preliminary meetings with him. In a couple of weeks I ought to be able to report more definitely, but I wished to hurry the information such as it is for the comrades.

I am to meet G tomorrow to take up such things as relationship regarding finances on bulletins; my proposition heretofore has been that we undertake full cost of English translation of Germain pamphlet; and let them handle the French; that means the copies in English we would send them (I shall find out the address for bulk shipments and send it to G) and they could keep the money. In view of the fact that we will no longer be a faction, that is best, although it would put us in a terrific hole financially. But I think it is definitely right to sell it to SWP, and get money to defray our expenses; I cannot see how they can object since it is recognized by all that that is the dividing question; since it is our full constitutional and other right to do so responsibly during regular convention discussion. I believe JPC will be reasonable; but of course he will not break his neck to sell them for us, so anything we can do before entry, or first week after should be done. The only thing we have to watch out for is that our comrades do not think that is the first duty and get that to be the basis of discussion with their new comrades, but if they do it soberly, it is o.k. On the whole, I would suggest that just before entry, you take up with JPC precisely such organizational questions and have an understanding, which understanding would also be understood by the Clarks and Franks who will think they can step on us.

I see that we see eye to eye on Munis-Natalia. First upon reading her Open Letter to the French Party, I thought I must write an Open Letter to her, and half-promised Morris to do ~~it~~ so. But then I balked. -- I thought, why should I do so? Why not continue truly personal letters? Why not leave myself room for collaboration if they give up their foolish organizational course (And, organizationally, he is making a perfect ass of himself; you should see the ridiculous manner of representation he proposes, that the English Int. claims, by the way, would give a majority due to proxy votes, etc. One example will suffice to show you how absolutely unfounded his counter proposals are: He proposes to give Cuba 4 votes on basis that, although it is a small group, it is large in relation to population of country and hence importance of Trotskyism; while Germany he gives only 2 votes!) Politically, we are absolutely right in criticizing him, and I think it is best expressed in the anti-Germain. (we must insist that tactics aren't merely tactics, but sometimes are the real concretization of both strategy and conception of proletarian revolution; and SP-CP-CGT in France, especially after being here and seeing the French proletariat beginning to move away from Stalinism--all important strikes were against G)

Stalinists--and yet in that party, I am more than ever convinced that the slogan is an essential. It is not by accident that both the ultra-leftists and ~~maximalist~~ opportunists have given up the slogan; they fear really to tell these workers, demand your leaders take power; the minute they see a percentage move away, they think they will come to us without further ado on the one hand, and trembling on the other hand, to leave them have their experience.)

But we must also not let ourselves be roped in by SWP who has its reasons for fully discrediting him. I have therefore decided instead to write a very patient, sober personal note to Natlin, and let it go at that for the time being.

The delay in WC--it will definitely not be before Spring--and the appearance of Morris and Sylvia here (they will remain for many a month) shows that they wish to delay the congress, not because they do not know where it will go, or because of pressure, but, I am sorry to say, because they are interested in literally destroying the WP, and they feel letting them hanging around for so long will lead to the disintegration of the party. JPC is not the kind of man that lets himself be fooled; he was, you know, really, by thinking unity would occur in two months and he would come with greatest game to WC. Now that Sh. pulled out, he is going to let him have it as only JPC knows how, and I trust JPC to do a thorough job. Even a guy like Sterling has to admit that Sh. has been a fool and bungled everything up. We're going to have a tough battle, to see that politically it is destroyed, but that revolutionists just don't fall by the wayside. But this will have to be left until I come home; it is not an urgent matter. Unity, for example, was not on the agenda at the IEC; they merely reaffirmed they were for it as before, but no one (that includes Sh's friend Geoffroy) did a thing thing to implement it, and my voice fell on deaf ears.

Although this has been and is continuing to be a great experience, I am truly sorry I missed the two months of our independent existence "ensemble". The caucus has done an absolutely miraculous job; they were the talk of the whole IEC. At lunch break I would run down to American Express for my mail; when I returned, everybody would cluster about me for "the latest issued by the J-F Tendency"; notes would always be addressed to me "to J-F Tendency"; and although it was all in a joke, there was a good deal of truth and even envy at the efficient and truly political manner of our functioning.

Don't worry about Dick; he doesn't even show up at all; I think he doesn't want to meet politicians. Malaquais will be put on right line; and meanwhile I am definitely of opinion that French printers be left to their own devices; and we publish what we have to in US; I can't see why such a publication as American worker, with introduction by Stone, should not be published by SWP; you might try asking.

10/1/47

Dear Gabriel:

On this, the day of our official entry into the SWP, I received a letter from the caucus that the steering committee, as its last official act, has decided to appeal to the IS for official representation, with voice and vote, at the World Congress. I do not know how this is motivated, but I presume that it is due to the fact that since they are dissolving the faction, and would need to reconstitute it just to ask the IS officially in the name of the Johnson-Forest Tendency for such representation, that they thought it better to ~~xxxx~~ request it now, and avoid any factional reconstitution. As a tendency, however, there is no doubt that we will remain a distinct grouping--unless, of course, the Fourth adopts our position before the W.C.--and on the basis of all the serious documents that we have issued, and particularly so, "The Invading Socialist Society", the caucus feels it should be granted representation. I need not further "sell" you the claim of the caucus, insofar as its proletarian composition and all-roundedness of its intervention not only theoretically but in class struggle. I know that you will bring this request to the attention of the IS, that I may have its answer before my departure.

I shall look forward to seeing you the 8th and spending a last hour with you, not merely to put an end to my "private property", but for a last minute comradesly discussion.

*Your,
Freddy*

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10/2/47

Dear John:

A few hours ago, I sent you a cable and an air mail letter. This is in the same vein, and should be shown to J & F simply cannot understand why we act so empirically in these matters, that we do not know one day in advance before the action is undertaken, or at least no one bothers to inform me ahead of time? It seems to me that in these matters I have a bit more experience than any one else, and this type of experience may or may not be transcended by dialectics, but, stemming from other sources myself, I prefer the experience.

What is involved? Apparently, merely a question of the uselessness of having you continue a faction when J & F have dissolved theirs. Actually, a lot more goes into it than uniformity. The question must be viewed from all angles (1) as a faction arising from a different party, that is out of its own soil; (2) as one that is facing a WC, which officially has had but one date set on it "the end of the year", and now has been changed to "first month of new year", so that you cannot give as an excuse that the long (actual) delay in congress convinces you to disband; moreover--and this of course is of greater importance--facing a WC which is being attacked as non-democratic and as soil that makes impossible the existence of factions; (3) as one that within SWP has not had a single of its documents published (and you say you have accomplished your purpose of presenting your views!); (4) at a time when, as I understand from G, the WP has broken the unity pact because they cannot accept "in advance", etc. etc.; and we should be anxious to show that whereas as J-F, entering from a different milieu, want no faction, no such decision was "demanded" of them, as witness the existence of JF-JH.

Now, so far as minor items are concerned; if the life of your faction is sort of useless at this point, as it seems to be, there is no law on earth that requires a faction to meet at definite times and carry on active life, etc; it merely exists as a right, and ready to jump to life if necessary; at the same time it shows that its existence does not hinder its work as loyal SWP; why must one destroy a faction before one proves loyalty? and to whom--George (Clark?) and I have been treated very nicely, but very nicely as an outsider (not by G, but by Stein & Gordon); I have not had over a decade of life with JPC, but I have; neither of us has known the party since 1940, but you have, and your stories do not picture a Garden of Eden. If we then not only give up our own existence, but also yours, what does JPC say, "These guys don't even know how to bargain; they can be handled, boys." Of course, we do not stoop to his type of politics, and especially that of his boys which is far worse than the Old Man's, but we also have to show that we understand a thing or two about these matters and, although we are in no way such asses as to put organization up on a pedestal all by itself, we are not blind either.

Finally, the international angle. Here, too, everybody is "nice", but there is an air of "Yes, we know that you didn't capitulate", but you are babes in the woods." I believe also that "people think": J doesn't know too much of these things; F is a bit wiser than he, but then she follows him politically, and so her wisdom does not get her as far as it could." This aside, as of tertiary importance, there still remains the question however, that Stein was sent to do a job; part of this job consists in putting himself above G; there is a little rivalry there because G is a god-damned sight more civilized a Bolshevick than all of them put together and takes as seriously the democratic as the centralist

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angle of democratic centralism; and this is judged by the others as "soft". Have I been taken into the inner counsels and told any of that? No, of course not, but if you are more than a year old in the movement, you get to understand these things by feel, and I try my best to let you know I know, and I think I succeeded. Even on such matters as representation, where no one objected to the hypothesis that if we asked for representation, we'd get it, I took nothing for granted, and said to you in private: "You'll invite me down to the Congress, no matter what, no?" And he said: "Of course."

One final word; from my letter to Natalia you can also see two things (1) I defend European parties, but leave myself uncommitted on American; (2) I defend democracy of IS, but offer her a bloc against any bureaucratism that may be found. She is no small person; I wish to influence her, if I cannot win her; actions such as you contemplate (or perhaps have already done!) will not help me.

There is nothing more to say now, except I really am amazed at J's unilateral actions on pamphlet and on this. Give him my love, but also show him this letter.

Rae

P.S. As regards the publication of your document in French; G assured me it will be done. Generally speaking, they do the contributions in 3 languages: German, French and English. However, (1) finances are catastrophically bad and actually I believe only 1 or at most two bulletins had come out in all 3 languages; (2) among the jobs Stein has is to be in charge of the publication in the English language; need I tell you he may not hurry with your material. Moreover, there is a terrific backlog; Grace's, for example, was to have gone into this one and would have (the translation was done!) but she made changes; the changes arrived after deadline, so it is once again postponed; and meanwhile the whole thing they say has to be retranslated because the changes are so many, it would only be fuddle the matter if it were done otherwise. Yours, then, will be published in French for sure; the other languages I can promise nothing.

P.P.S. You evidently have not heard of the fact that there are no dollars in Europe, and that in England in particular forbids export of money. All this refers to the fact that you expect to place our publications on sale in England. Do you know that such a respectable store as Brentano's is unable to get a single American book--and is now refusing to take any orders--since it must be paid in dollars and there are no dollars; and since all England is to export, not import.

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Brief Resume of Sessions

1st was held 9/10/47, Patrice, chairman. 1st question considered is composition of IEC, which, because Martin could not be present, Blanche replaced him; Adrian replaced Ernesto, due to change in Spanish group. Following present with full voice & vote: Jerome, Haston, Conrad, Geoffrey, Henri, Mangano (did not arrive), Walter, Adrien, Theo, Robert, Blanche, Levan, Bos, Jacques, Bernard. Present as observers, without voice or vote except on questions in which they are directly involved: Heally & Lawrence, (BCP Min), Lucien (since full information on Indo-Ch, unavailable), and Freddie. Time of sessions to be: 9:30 to 12:30; 2:30 to 1.

Organization Report of IS by Jerome.

Since last IEC, Mar. '47 IS worked under extremely difficult conditions; preparation of WC, publication of documents, etc. demanded strong apparatus, whereas actual financial conditions are so disastrous that most of staff has had to be cut. Nevertheless, publications on France, on Russia and Stalinism, on England, including translations in Spanish and German, and 3 double-numbers of La Quatrieme have been put out, and new number is in preparation.

IS has functioned regularly, with only one interruption, Aug. 20- Sept. due to international discussion gathered around for this period, during which 20 comrades, representing 8 sections had attended. During same period IS representatives had been present to assist at conference of Swiss section, which took place May 1947; the British conf. in August, and a journey undertaken to Italy.

Contact has been established for the first time directly with India (and an Indian comrade now participates on IS); with Indo-China; with Czechoslovakia. In July 1947 there took place conference of German section in Germany itself, in which 30 comrades participated, and a provisional leadership has been elected. A journal has begun to appear in Germany itself. We have also established contact with Egypt, where preparations are being made for national founding conference of Trotskyist group.

Attempt has also been made to establish sub-secretariat, for Latin America and another one on colonial questions; have not yet succeeded in functioning regularly.

Question of unification in New Zealand has not evolved according to optimistic expectations we had in March, and it appears now that nothing will be settled before the W.C. IS has expressed its opinion on evolution in its response to letter of WP, in letter dated May 28, 1947.

Concerning IS, we propose to ask IEC to enlarge it from 7 to 9 members, since two other comrades find it possible to participate. (Indian comrade and Robert) NZ).

Questions revealed also that an Irish section has now been established, that we are in regular communication with Greek section; Palestine contacts not very regular; regular contacts with Scandinavian sections (very small). In So. Africa there are 3 groups; question of unification posed to them but so far not much progress in that field. Contact has also been established with Australia. There is no contact however with Korea and Japan.

Drastic financial situation discussed; economies undertaken include suspension of all financial aid to sections except Spain; publication of no more than one bulletin monthly; dismissal of all comrades of technical staff, retaining only one; on IS there is but one full-time comrade & that because we promised India that we would maintain him if he came; Newsletter reduced to half the size. If preparation for WC are to proceed, we must make appeal to all sections.

This administrative part of Organization Report was unanimously approved, and Jerome proceed to second part of report, dealing with preparation for WC.

WC

Criticisms of preparations received from WP, from Spanish comrades in Mexico (including signature of Natalia) and partially from Cuba. First point of attack of WP was that it was without precedent; (this was also the view of Munis, Natalia and Peralta); the second point of WP's attack was the question of representation. WP's suggestion was that we have instead proportional representation. We answered in our letter of June 24, 1947 which has been communicated to all sections. We have shown precedent existed in 1st congress of CI; that moreover his suggestion of simple proportional representation would practically entirely eliminate small sections, which in our schema are protected.

Letter of Munis, with his proposal for basis of representation, was read; his was not at all on basis of pure proportional representation, but also took into consideration importance of country and of section; however differed widely in interpretation of importance of each. (See attached letter.) His proposals were discussed and unanimously rejected. Resolution presented by Jerome, reaffirming former decisions as to basis of representation, pointing to tendentious character of criticisms, and elaborating our ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ motivations for representation and preparation left for voting at future session. Question as to whether POUM should be invited and on what basis left to a commission, then in hands of IS.

Question as to Minority representation, not merely on basis of numerical strength, but seriousness and political importance raised, citing case of J-F and group of trade unionists in Holland; each case will be taken up on basis of merits upon demand; and in any case final word is with WC itself.

If IS is to guarantee publication of documents, all contributions must be in not later than Nov. 15th. (See special resolution.) As for discussion being closed after WC, Jerome explained: "We have never said there will be no discussion after WC; we have said that an organized discussion on an international scale cannot normally... If however important articles are submitted which pose a new aspect of the question, in a serious manner, even on questions which have been settled by WC, I do not think a responsible leadership would refuse to publish such articles from time to time; the same is true with all important political events... What we decided against is the opening of a systematic discussion after WC by any tendency which will start again to attack the whole line decided upon by the congress and perpetuate the atmosphere which exists now in the International.... Another remark. It is absolutely stupid to fear the democratic character of the International. If we have been wrong at all, it is because we sinned too much on the side of democracy... any one can see there has been no limit to discussion (and all views have been published)."

Finally, date suggested for WC "first month of the new year" (See Resolution)

Second day, 9/11/47. Report on J-F request by Robert, Boston, chairman.

"I should like to give you a factual report on the split in WP and the proposal we are confronted with for admission into SWP of J*F group, who have broken from WP. It was, I believe, 7/8/47 when we received a letter from the WP enclosing a document entitled the Resolution of the JF Tendency, which was adopted at the conference this tendency held in NY on the 5th & 6th of July. The same day (7.8) a messenger from JF came to our office and handed us a copy of their declaration, and asked for a conference. This was the first we heard of this development. We were not aware that the J-F was having a conference to decide their orientation. We were not aware that the struggle in the WP had reached the point of split. All we knew was what we read in the Bulletins of the WP, (Since the signing of the unity pact we had free exchange of bulletins of the two parties.) and we knew that the internal situation in the WP following the declaration of unity had sharpened rather than ameliorated. To us it was a very ominous sign and we were particularly appalled at the hostility with which the Majority of the WP had dealt with the JF tendency after they had committed it to unity. It was close to us; as a matter of fact it was the unity group in the WP and of the WP to declare itself for unity and at the same time open up a merciless struggle against them as agents of the SWP.... To us this had political meaning. It meant that the WP rather than preparing itself for the day it was to enter and integrate itself into the SWP was on the contrary preparing it's ranks for a more hostile attitude to the SWP, its program and its leadership and its organization methods. But this was only one of the signs. There were other indications that the WP was withdrawing from the unity agreement."

(Robert then related the incidents--prefatory note to unity pact, Weber letter, etc.--with which he dealt in his speech to NC of SWP.)

"The JF Tendency on the contrary took the unity proposal seriously because they are motivated by a serious desire to build the revolutionary party. This desire flows from their whole political line--and, even though we have serious differences with them, especially on the Russian question, we can nevertheless greet the fact that they are coming to us not as a hostile tendency, not as a tendency that is seeking gain and aces, as the Shastmanites for their revisionist poison, but by people who are motivated by desire to build the Fourth... In coming to us they condemned in no equivocal terms the unprincipled split of the WP in 1940. This tendency evolved in the WP since 1941 in a struggle they have conducted against the flight from Marxism which characterized the WP in its progressive degeneration since the split of 1940. In the Resolution of J-F (7/5) it proposes to break with the WP and it proposed also that the WP accept this proposal of formal transfer of membership--it is part of the Unity Pact that there be agreement to such... groups and tendencies--. The WP PC rejected this proposal because they thought that would therefore assume responsibility for splitting, which they said was entirely the responsibility of JF. Thereupon JF sent a letter to the WP, informing them that as of 7/14, they no longer considered themselves members of the WP and were applying for membership in the SWP... In the JF we have a tendency and a loyal attitude and we were determined, no matter what happens, we are not going to permit formalities to stand in the way of their integration into the Fourth and

into the SWP. It would be wrong for us as politicians and as revolutionaries to permit a revolutionary tendency to stand outside while we are trying to win a tendency that is so alien as the WP, and our PC, in considering the question on 7/15, passed the following motion. (Attach) Comrades Cannon, Dobb and myself had a meeting with Johnson and representatives of his Group and, and, before the motion was passed, we agreed on the following proposal. We explained to him that we would not/88^t our own, but would seek consent of other parties, but we are firmly convinced that they should be admitted immediately. Johnson, on the other hand, felt he needed sometime --2 months--to complete Balance Sheet and to prepare his group for admission into the SWP, and it is with this agreement that we come here before the IEC. We held a plenary meeting of the NC, combined with a conference of organizers which was held 3rd week in August and, among other things, it carried the following resolution. (Reads Resolution, attached) With this we rest our case." (Date fixed for entry was October 1; resolution included phrase "without prejudice to eventual unification with WP.")

Freddie then presented the viewpoint of J-F. (Speech attached)

Resolution of NC of WP was then read. (Attached)

Discussion revealed that only question regarding admission of J-F into Fourth and SWP was as to interpretation Shachtman would put on it; Adrien wishing not to include in it any polemics against WP; Geoffroy wishing to append an amendment that admission be effective if within 6 weeks WP raises no objection.

Resolution of IEC passed with one (Geoffroy) voting against, and one (Adrien) abstention and voting for his own. (Resolutions attached.)

Question of youth. Report by Dumas. Resolution (attached) dealing with work on youth, and possibilities of holding an international youth conference following WC considered.

9/12/47--Report on France, Part I, by Garbat (Robert, Chairman)

Comrades, the immediate and fundamental task with which the International is faced is its transformation from an aggregate of propaganda groups into a centralised International of mass parties. We believe the line of delimitation inside the Int. should be drawn to these two fundamental tasks. We think that the internal life of the Int. should be shifted as much as possible from abstract concern to the central question of the present period, that of the method needed to find the way to the masses, that of the method of building mass parties. But the discussion around such subjects have had in the past a profoundly abstract character because the Int. lacked concrete experience. In spite of the fact that the Fr. section of the Int. remains a relatively small in numbers and in degree of influence in the masses, it is incontestably the French section which is the first section, especially in Europe, to give us an example how to leave abstract policy in order to

carry out a daily revolutionary policy. This experience began in 1946 and after more than a year now has been placed under the changed leadership which took place at the 3rd congress. The experience carried out by the Maj. is an experience valuable to the whole Int., an experience from which the international should learn, ~~xxx~~ above all, how urgent it is, and how necessary it is, to avoid, in transfer to mass work, opportunist errors, comparable to the sectarian errors of the previous period. It is because the French experience is richest and the most important experience that we ask for a very long expose of this experience. We say in advance that we will discuss today the politics, nothing but politics. We will separate from this report the organizational question and all the conflicts which arose in the last months we will discuss separately. The entire Int. has felt the need of this political discussion and I make an appeal in advance to the IEC, and especially to the French comrades to limit themselves to the political question, and not mix with it subjects which will be discussed later. I should like one other remark. This report will be pretty hard and pretty violent in regard to some of the Majority, but we are not attacking men. We wish to say from the outset that all the PCI leaders not only have their plant in the Fourth, but bring to it....."

(From here on Gill took stenogram, and I am merely mentioning the main topics dealt with):

The crisis in France at the time the Fr. Maj. took over leadership; inflation at callup; 4 ministerial crises; life under Ramadier. The new wave of '46-'47 strikes; railroad, miners, general strike throughout the provinces; Renault. Just when the Maj. leadership spoke of lull. 180° turn of Maj. at time of De Gaulle's speech, at which time they declared that there is an immediate fascist danger, although before they saw no social crisis of regime.

Policy of La Verite during strikes; "scratch an opportunist and you find a sectarian; strike a sectarian and you find an opportunist;" contrast between failure to expound general strike propaganda and limit oneself to "vital minimum and sliding scale of wages"; then giving up SPCPCGT for abstract "Workers & Peasants Govt."; insistence on purely economic character of struggles and completely economist line with which governmental crises was judged. Finally, capitulatory policy toward Stalinism: (1) position to 2 Stalinist leaders (Indo-Ch& Greece); (2) treatment of Indochinese work ("Not one word about the French CP which is responsible for massacre in IndoChina."); (3) Viet Nam (5-6 articles on achievements of Viet Name, sowing completely false illusions as if it were a workers and peasants regime) (4) attitude toward French CP leaders as if they merely made mistakes. (5) Champ de Mars demonstration; (6) treatment of USSR (La V #162 speaks of peace treaties as "a defeat of USSR, which has succeeded only in recuperating those territories stolen from it", and has not a single word to say about the pillage and exploitation of the workers in the glaci" by USSR; headlines like "Stalin is the S.U.'s Munich" is the "gravest adaptation to Stalinism"

IS intervention in French CP not factional; tried to pacify two tendencies, in order to concentrate on work outwards.

Geoffroy made the counter report (See Gill's stenogram), in which he said "The situation is not revolutionary, politically speaking, was demonstrated by the possibility of the bourgeoisie had, and still has, to put back into functioning order its economy and revival." (2) "The fact that parliamentary illusions are becoming parliamentary delusions does not resolve the question... Precisely those who are moving away from Stalinism, the slogan SP-CP-CGT cannot bring them to us"; workers and peasants govt. more correct. (3) struggles still on economic level. (He then attacked the Fr. Min., mentioning personalities, and this caused quite an outburst of charges and counter-charges, and commission to investigate the situation.)

9/13/47

Insert
Participating in discussion for IS point of view: Dumas, Lambert, Prentiss, Jacques (?); for Fr. Majority Magnin, who was given 10 extra minutes to develop the point: "When one says that Stalinism is the syphillis of the movement, one must also see that the workers movement is also syphillitic."

The evening session did not continue with discussion on general French situation, but with question of Frank youth work among socialists. Waldemar gave a short 20 minute report on developments among Italian socialist youth toward us; and posed the question of international youth work among socialists south-French, Italy and Austria.

This aspect of the work, plus the question of what our comrades in French socialist youth, would present to their meeting tomorrow, regarding date of possible fusion with JCI, was to be reported on by Dunoyer, who was given 45 minutes.

Dunoyer:

I must repeat that I am incapable of examining the French socialist youth without examining the entire work done in the socialist youth because this work was done during the period of 2 years, and in relation to that which we have obtained today. If today we can discuss the fusion on the basis of a program of the Fourth, it is because a certain work had been done and under a certain political line, and also through the strategical and tactical line employed.

(He then began to talk about the resistance they met in trying to do socialist youth work, line the then Majority had, the contrary and successful line the then Minority and present Majority employed. After about 10 minutes, chairman interrupted him to say he was out of order, since the special time granted him was for only one aspect of the question. Dunoyer insisted: "What is on the agenda tomorrow is the revolutionary regroupment and revolution unification. When I made certain references to the past, it is because in reality it is impossible for anyone with who has any political honesty, to be able to judge when he doesn't know how this work started. The only place I've ever seen such procedure, of dividing the political from the practical aspects, is in the Social Democracy." The chairman's ruling however was upheld, and Dunoyer continued):

(1) to outline work done among youth, provoking split from SP;
(2) work since the rupture, both in aiding strikers, on Indo-China war, and (3) the Lyon Congress: "The objectives of this convention was the understanding of a complete break with the SD, its policy, its organization, its method and conception, and the congress was to orient itself toward revolutionary regroupment."

"Since the convention the socialist youth have founded themselves an independent organization, breaking at same time ~~XXXX~~ with reformism and Stalinism, and they voted for a resolution extremely near the program of the Fourth."

Committees of Revolutionary regroupment have been established, and are immediately engaging in discussion with all currents who have broken away from the Second and Third Int., and particularly so with the PCI, with a view to forming a fused organization with JCI. It is hard to estimate numbers, but there are about 2,000 militants upon whom we can count "but we must be bluffred"; the attacks on them from right and even "Left" (Pivot) have been extreme; they do not know full program of Fourth, "but we will bring into the International 500"; but the good work may be lost through wrong tactics; "we cannot let the youth remain high heaven and earth; we must give them an orientation... We cannot say in how many weeks or months the fusion will be consummated."

Jerome asked: what will be the proposition Dunoye will make at the NC tomorrow? Will the maturity toward fusion correspond with the date of the French Party Congress.

Much discussion was held around this point, and it was agreed (See Motion passed) that our comrades not commit themselves to any date for fusion until after the whole French question has been discussed by the IEC. Dunoye had with him Resolution he intended to present, which likewise did not commit us to any date of fusion. (See Resolution) Discussion also revealed: (1) that 45% of the youth was proletarian, (2) that Coms. of Rev. Regroupment will participate in municipal elections; (3) that at present there no rev. currents participating in the CRR; that it is the socialist youth which calls upon militants for such a regroupment; (5) that International Action of Youth does not at present exist; there is only one youth beside French, the Italian, that have so developed. (Here Swiss delegate said it was not true; that the Swiss socialist youth had also been expelled and are interested in int. youth action; and so would the Austrians.)

The following day, 9/13/47, the discussion was again on the French political report, with following participating in discussion: Bos, Frank, Conrad, Lucien, Adrien, Bernard, Demazierre, Maston (See his Resolution based on speech), Theo, Roy, Levan, Robert, Jerome, Craipeau had also participated in discussion the day before. Geoffroy summarized for French Majority. (See his Resolution) Walter summarized for IS. (See Resolution.)

No session Sunday, 9/14.

9/15/47 Report on organization question in French Party by Walter
Theo, chairman

(Voting upon political Report had been postponed upon request of
Haston who wished to have time to write a new resolution on question.)

Walter report on Magnin case (excerpts from his letter to Maj.
tendency which posed the question of split were read) and on Zeller
case (Excerpts from his article in La Verite was read)

Resolution on French Party attached.

Motion: that the IEC clearly condemn this letter.

Motion: that the IEC disavow the declaration that a new Party is
necessary because of a new stage of capitalism.

Counter

~~Resolution~~ Resolution by Geoffroy. (Attached)

Motion by Adrien: to strike case of Magnin off agenda.

Motion by Robert: that we hold off any discussion of alleged charges
of Craipeau against Frank until we conclude this point.

Resolution by Haston: (1) Having discussed the Zeller article,
which appeared in La Verite the IEC requests the
Ed. Bd. to expound editorially the perspectives, policy and tactics
of the Fourth so as to leave no ambiguity which may have arisen in
the minds of the readers of LaV regarding this question as a result
of this article. (2) The IEC also requests Com. Zeller to expound in
the Internal Bulletin of the PCI the exact ideas which he may have
regarding the formula which has aroused considerable criticism
and which reads as follows: (Quote from article in La V.)

Amendment by Jerome: that instead of the phrase "the IEC requests
Com. Zeller", we say "If com. Zeller wishes to expound," etc.

Amendment accepted by Haston and motion as amended carried.

Resolution by Robert (attached). Walter withdraws his resolution
on Magnin in favor of that by Robert. Robert Resolution carried.

Question of youth was then brought up again and it was decided that
discussion be postponed, and that a commission consisting of Walter,
Craipeau, Duma and Stein, consider whether it is possible to bring
in a common Resolution, and that based upon their report, we decide
the question tomorrow.

9/16/47 Commission on youth question brought in a common Resolution,
(attached) differing in only one point, and this solution of
the question of youth work among socialists was accepted.

Resolutions on atmosphere in French party, and appeal to both factions
to see what they could do to make it healthier, in preparation both
for November Congress of PCI and for eventual fusion of socialist youth
also carried. (Attached)

~~9/17/47 Commission on youth question~~

9/17/47 Report on situation in RCP. Adrien, chairman.

Reporter for IS: Jerome; Reporter for RCP Majority: Hasston. (French stenographer has first speech, and English second).

Reporters more or less summarized positions already evident in Bulletins on British Question for past 2 years, and especially so in Congress held in August.

Toward the end of Com. Hasston's report that, whereas he thought the solution proposed by IEC was worst evil, he was not opposed to seeing whether a solution could not be found by mutual agreement. It was therefore decided not to continue with discussion, but instead to adjourn and see whether commission consisting of Hasston, Jerome and Stein could not work out a common resolution.

9/18/47

On the question of the solution of the situation in the British question, a Resolution was worked out unanimously by commission. The IEC thereupon withdrew its previous resolution. There was however a second resolution on the political aspect of the question, approving the IEC orientation of entry into L.P., which was likewise put to a vote, and against which the RCP Maj. voted. (Both Resolutions attached; Healy of the British Min. assisted at the commission's sessions on the solution)

Italian Question: Reporter Walter; Mangano could not be present; Bruno of Italian Party asked to assist at this session.

(French Stenographer has report), where Walter first dealt with objective situation and the latest strikes; the explosive situation in socialist youth and in general in the workingclass parties; then with politics of our own section there, which seems to be semi-Bordigist and does not agree with the Fourth International program on a single fundamental problem, and, where besides, organizational atmosphere and discipline exists which makes impossible the functioning of the Bolshevik-Leninist minority there, and in fact the threat of expulsion hangs over their heads in view of the decision of the party that any one who engages in political work in another organization (for ex., the socialist youth which is so ripe for our fraction work) shall be expelled.

(See Resolution on Italian Party, attached)
(See also attached Letter and Appeal by Mangano)

The question was asked: how does it happen that this openly semi-Bordigist party bears the official title of section of the Fourth, and it was explained that Nicola, an old Trotskyist, had, with this split off from the Bordigist group, organized a party after the fall of fascism and gained the recognition of the then existing IS. That, with the death of Nicola, and the coming to leadership of Mangano, the party had steadily moved away from program that there was nothing now to do but wait for W.C.

9/19/47--International Report by Jerome. (Stenographic report--French)
Is to draw up Resolution based upon it and sent to national sections.
Meeting adjourned.

RESOLUTION OF THE FOURTH PLENUM OF THE CIC

The CIC has taken note of the departure of the Johnson-Forest Tendency from the WP, and its request to join the SWP, as also of the statement of the NC of the WP, Aug., 1947 on this question. The CIC considers that this departure constitutes the final result of the international struggle which has gone on in the WP between the Johnson-Forest Tendency and the rest of this organization, a struggle motivated by deep political differences between these tendencies, and particularly accelerated as a result of the hesitations (hanging-back) which characterized the policy of the leadership of the WP towards the unification question after the signature of the Joint Statement of March 1947. Neither the Movement nor the leadership of the SWP has in any way whatsoever worked to provoke this departure, of which it was in ignorance until after the accomplished fact, nor had it utilized it as a basis of maneuver to repose the question of unification.

Faced with the accomplished fact of the departure of the Johnson-Forest Tendency, the CIC considers that practically there is no solution other than that of accepting the entrance of this tendency into the SWP. Its independent existence as a third organization claiming to be Trotskyist in the United States being neither possible nor desirable.

The CIC in any case declares that in its opinion this question cannot in any way bring into question the unification in the terms which were decided on at the time of the March 1947 plenum of the CIC, and hopes that the leadership of the WP will not seize on this question as a pretext, ~~to go back on its former commitments,~~ as would seem to appear from the last paragraph of the prefatory note of the Resolution of the NC of the WP (August 1947) which says: "The coming plenum of the NC will be the occasion for a complete review of the situation not only in reference to the Johnson capitulation but to the question of unity itself."

For: Jerome, Haston, Conrad, Henri, Walter, Theo, Robert, Blanche, Levan, Bos, Jacques, Bernard
Against: Geoffroy; Abstaining: Adrien.

Resolution by Adrien:

The IEC takes note of the request to the SWP of the Johnson tendency and of the agreement of the leadership of the WP to this. The IEC considers that, upon the basis of the established agreement of unification in the US ~~and in the~~ framework of their achievement, nothing therefore opposes to the entrances of the Johnson tendency into the SWP and ratifies it.
--Lost-- 3 for; 5 against; 4 abstaining.

Amendment to the Adrien Res. by Geoffroy, to insert after "nothing opposes itself to the entrance", "if the WP does not do so within 6 weeks." (This was considered a counter resolution since the amendment was unacceptable to the mover of the motion--steno's note)
--Lost by a vote of one (Geoffroy) for, and all others opposed.