

COPY

COPY

COPY

*for the PC*

Brussels, March 19. 1975

John Barzman

Internationalist Tendency  
of the Socialist Workers Party

Political Committee

Dear Comrades,

Attached to this letter you will find a letter from the IMT Enlarged Bureau which met on April 18 in Brussels, addressed to the IT Political Committee.

This letter expresses the unanimous opinion of the IMT Enlarged Bureau, after a discussion it held on the items that are on the agenda of the IT conference of April 5-6.

You can, of course, use it for the pre-conference discussion as you want and publish it in the IT Bulletin if you want.

A member of the IMT Bureau will come for your conference; and you will receive informations about his arrival very soon.

Comradely,

Aubin  
for the IMT Bureau.

cc: SWP National Office, United Secretariat.

March 19, 1975

TO: Political Committee of the Internationalist Tendency

FROM: Enlarged Bureau of the IMT

Dear Comrades,

The IT Political Committee, after consultation with the members of the Steering Committee, has decided to cancel the Plenum previously scheduled for March 15 and 16 and to hold instead a delegated conference on April 5-6. The conference of the IT is meeting to draw a balance sheet of the latest session of the IEC, at which comrades of the leadership of the SWP and comrades of the leadership of the IT were present as fraternal observers (reactionary legislation prohibiting their formal membership in the IEC). The conference must also examine the perspectives that derive from this IEC session and must set an orientation for the whole IT in the coming period.

On the occasion of this discussion, the Bureau of the IMT wants to give you its opinion on these questions, although the IMT Bureau claims no decision-making power in the preparation or conduct of the conference.

#### A. Balance Sheet of the IEC

In accordance with the mandate of the IMT members of the IEC, who met to examine the results of the IEC plenum, the IMT Bureau made a statement (annexted to the minutes of the IEC meeting) in which it stressed the essentially positive character of the conclusions of the IEC session for the entire International.

1. Politically, the discussion of the recession and its political and social implications in the advanced capitalist countries showed that the differences that exist between the IMT and the IEC minority faction are not based on a different analysis of the recession. On the contrary, the unanimous adoption of a resolution on this point should permit the movement to confront new developments in the world situation from a common point of departure and therefore with lines of intervention that at least conform to the framework of the analysis drawn up by the entire International leadership, although they will of course differ according to national realities.

2. The adoption of a resolution on the political situation in Argentina and the tasks of Argentine Trotskyists militants presented by the IMT in counterposition to the minority faction's support for the orientation expressed in the statement of the Executive Committee of the PST raises the political fight to a new level. The positions expressed in the PST statement are now, at least formally, the positions of the minority faction, which endorsed them. The IMT is therefore justified in confronting all the components of the minority faction -- and thus also the leadership of the SWP, which is in political solidarity with that faction -- with the political implications for their own orientation of the conceptions upheld by the leadership of the PST.

In such a struggle, the leadership of the IMT aims at an important political objective: a differentiation and decrystallization within the components of the international minority that represent

national majorities, the actual transference of the PST's theses to the national practice of these groupings would run counter to their traditions.

3. This objective, among others, can be obtained only through the prior elimination of organizational obstacles that tend to impede the indispensable debate by providing so many pretexts for an interminable organizational polemic that is unproductive for the activity and education of the International.

That is why we consider the expanded participation of the minority faction in the United Secretariat and its presence in the Bureau of the USec as a step forward. That is also why the IMT accepted the presence in the USec of a member of the PST with the status of an observer without counted or recorded vote. The axis of these organizational measures -- the last-mentioned of which represents a concession that is necessary in helping to lower the level of tension now prevailing in the International -- is to bring the minority faction into the leadership of the world movement, including its day-to-day leadership, to the utmost of its capacities and potential by having the minority faction share the responsibilities and problems of leadership.

Any attitude that would aim at excluding a significant minority of the International from effective leadership positions -- apart from being in contradiction to the traditional principles of democratic centralism to which we adhere both in the conduct of the internal debate and in the direction of the activity of the International -- would only lead to results opposite to those the IMT is seeking: the construction of a united and strengthened International capable of politically and organizationally aiding the development of the sections. By once again raising a knot of internal tensions in the movement, such an attitude would only contribute to paralyzing the International with multiplied factional activities and would wind up by heaping discredit on the International both inside and outside the sections.

Increased political and material collaboration, on the other hand, should favor the correct conduct of the internal debate while sacrificing neither the work toward centralization nor the extension of the International's public impact, which is required by the intensification of the class struggle nearly everywhere.

4. Finally, the recognition of the comrades of the IT as fraternal observers of the International (in a motion that was adopted by the IEC unanimously) allows us to envisage a rapid positive solution to the grave crisis opened by the expulsion of the IT from the SWP. In the meantime, the motion entitles the IT comrades to enjoy all the rights reserved for members of the Fourth International (although it does not recognize the IT comrades as members of the Fourth International, as that is forbidden by the Voorhis Act).

Undoubtedly, the comrades of the IT are disappointed that the IEC did not definitively settle the question of their reintegration into the SWP. Certainly, that would have put an end once and for all to the already too long period of uncertainty inaugurated by the expulsion of the IT from the SWP on July 4, 1974.

The IMT has several times unambiguously expressed its position in favor of the collective reintegration of the IT into the SWP. It did this once again at the IEC by stating its agreement with the

report of Comrades Karl Anderson and Tantalus, supported by Comrade Hoffman. But given a choice between a majority vote for the position of the IMT, which in any case would not have been binding on the minority faction, and a unanimous vote for the recommendations of the International Control Commission and a common motion of the IEC as a whole, the IMT preferred to choose the latter solution, because it was the only one that can now aid the reintegration of the IT into the SWP on the basis of the unanimous recommendations of the ICC and the positions taken by two members of the SWP Political Committee who committed themselves to push within their National Committee for the adoption of the recommendations of the ICC.

In any case, on the basis of the statutes of the International that was the only solution possible, because on questions of this type the IEC does not have executive power, but only the right to express an opinion and also because according to the SWP statutes only the NC can make such a decision.

Thus, the crisis has not yet been resolved on the national or international plane -- far from it. But the IEC at least permitted the ways and means of its resolution to be posed. The final outcome now depends on the International minority's will for effective collaboration, the attitude adopted by the international majority, the broad outlines of which we have indicated, and the behavior of the IT, which we must now examine in more detail.

#### B. Perspectives for the IT

1. Whatever disagreements we may have with its orientation, intervention, or internal functioning, the SWP is the only Trotskyist organization in the United States. The SWP has a long tradition and a national base and has played a role on a national scale that has carried it to the head of significant mass mobilizations which, after a period of stagnation, are now tending to emerge once again because of the crisis that is shaking the American imperialist system.

Thus, given the present state of affairs, there is no political or organizational argument justifying separation from the SWP, nationally or internationally. This fact must serve as the basis for a determined policy of the IT of struggling for its reintegration into the SWP, as you yourselves affirmed in the political resolution of your October plenum. Nothing essential has changed since that date; if anything, the perspective of reintegration is even more concrete than it has been at any time during the past eight months.

Obviously, the condition for the realization of this perspective is that the majority of the SWP effectively implement the terms of the IEC motion recommending collaboration between the SWP majority and the IT and that the comrades of the IT do the same, without losing themselves in unverifiable hypotheses about the "probability or improbability of reintegration," which can only serve as a pretext for avoiding dealing with the necessary priorities.

2. At this stage, we believe, the priorities of the IT must be centered precisely around the concrete proposals for collaboration in the general areas of intervention of the SWP. The present re-emergence of social struggles in the United States provides numerous opportunities for this collaboration, through which the comrades of the IT, in addition to fighting effectively for their reintegration, can make an effective contribution to the development and spread of

Trotskyist ideas among the mass movement and the vanguard.

Carrying out such a project in the two months remaining before the National Committee plenum of the SWP will contribute to demonstrating to the leadership and membership of the SWP and to the whole International that the IT genuinely respects the principles of democratic centralism on which it bases itself in justly demanding its reintegration, even though these principles require that the IT comrades act under the leadership of or in collaboration with militants who uphold conceptions with which the IT comrades differ, sometimes in important respects.

3. Carrying out such a project should prepare for the active and rapid reintegration of the IT comrades into the SWP. Moreover, this project will allow the IT comrades to develop their capacity to politically elaborate a revolutionary orientation for the United States on the basis of a real activity.

This work can be aided by an examination of the positions upheld by the IT in the past and by drafting synthetic documents on the major problems in the United States. It will thus raise the political level of the IT and consequently the quality of its contribution to the building of the revolutionary organization in the United States. An abstract political discussion divorced both from the necessary reference points provided by militant activity in the various sectors of intervention and from the development of the discussion that will be held within the SWP before its next convention would threaten to draw the IT toward overestimating the particularities of the tendency and toward the independent unfolding of a sectarian dynamic that would represent a retreat from the best political contributions the IT has made within the SWP, contributions that must now be systematized and clarified.

4. This process must lead to a swift reintegration of the IT into the SWP. The expulsion of the IT constituted a flagrant attack on the Leninist norms that are in force in our movement. For the IMT, the fight for the reintegration of the IT into the SWP is a principled fight that goes well beyond a simple organizational conflict. What is at stake in this struggle is the defense of democratic centralism, not only as a method of building the International and its sections, but also and above all as a fundamental acquisition of our program. From this standpoint, any solution involving the individual reintegration of the members of the IT is unacceptable to the IMT.

Moreover, an individual reintegration would lead in the direction of recognizing the right of the SWP leadership to choose among the IT those members who fulfill some particular conditions. The members of the IT were expelled from the SWP because of their adherence to the IT and not because of this or that individual violation of discipline. Thus, the comrades of the IT must be reintegrated collectively into their party.

Nevertheless, just as any conditions posed by the leadership of the SWP to the reintegration would be unacceptable, any conditions for their reintegration posed by the IT would be equally unacceptable to the SWP and to the whole International. The statutes and decisions of the national leadership bodies must be respected by all members of a Trotskyist organization, whatever disagreements they may have with the documents or orientations upheld by the national leadership.

The IT cannot claim a privileged status. In demanding its re-integration into the SWP, the IT at the same time commits itself to respect the discipline of the SWP such as it is described in the statutes and in the organizational resolution of 1965 and not to impede the activity determined by the elected leadership bodies of the SWP. The IT commits itself, as it has already done in several documents and statements, to contribute to the building of the SWP to the best of its ability ---without renouncing its own political positions, which it will raise at the appropriate times within the framework of the internal debate within the SWP.

5. All these points relate to a strategy of the long-term construction of a tendency within the SWP. They are in no way dictated by conjunctural exigencies. Any activity of the IMT in the United States must rest on these bases. This implies, among other things, that these considerations will not disappear after the plenum of the SWP.

If, as we hope, the SWP NC decides on reintegration, the comrades of the IT, while continuing to defend the positions of the IMT against those of the minority faction, will again take their places within the SWP. They will then have to decide how to participate in the internal debate of the SWP, which does not necessarily imply the immediate reformation of a faction based on a national platform; that must be determined on the basis of various criteria, not the least of which is the character of the political theses presented by the leadership to the next convention of the SWP.

If the reintegration is refused by the SWP, the IMT could not but support a possible expansion of public activities by the IT, activities aimed at preserving the very existence of a group of comrades in political solidarity with the International. But there again, the political basis of the activity of the IT would scarcely be modified at all in the final analysis. The IT would then have to continue to wage a principled battle for reintegration and would have to draw the conclusions that flow from this for its intervention, which would be likely oriented toward maximum collaboration with the SWP majority in order to reunite the two factions of American Trotskyism in the same organization as quickly as possible.

6. The IT is in fraternal solidarity with the Fourth International with its majority tendency. In solidarity with the IMT it upholds the essential bases of the international platform of the IMT in the international debate.

But the IT is also a national tendency that aims at reintegration into the SWP, within which it has already defended its own positions on questions of political orientation in the United States. The IT cannot continue to exist unless its members are armed with clear conceptions in both these areas. Particularly as concerns the definition of strategy and tactics for the United States it seems to us that the tendency must once again clarify these questions on the occasion of its conference. That would permit the squelching of the interpretations the SWP leadership has read in to some of your documents and would provide the whole of the IT with a solid basis for work in the future.

We repeat: The existence of the IT is difficult to compare with the situation of other groups of comrades of the IMT in the

International. Adherence to the IT today must rest on agreement with the essential documents of the IMT, but also on agreement with the essential political and organizational points of a national orientation along the lines of the one we have tried to sketch out. In the absence of such agreement, political and organizational heterogeneity will complete the work of disintegration that the SWP leadership has attempted to effect.

The confirmation of such a line by the comrades who share it thus seems to us vital in the present stage, on the eve of a new turn in the objective situation of the IT, in order to assure the tendency of the best chances for success.

We hope that the few points we have raised in this letter will aid you in your discussion and contribute to the positive development of the work of your conference, which we consider very important and which we hope will be fruitful.

Fraternally,

Enlarged Bureau of the IMT