

# INTERNAL BULLETIN

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

LETTER FROM THE R.C.P.

26th July 1944

To the Political Committee,  
Socialist Workers' Party,  
U.S.A.

Dear Comrades,

We have received the International Bulletin, Vol. 3, No. 1 containing an article "The Fusion of the British Trotskyists" (A Report).

We want to be informed whether this is (1) a personal opinion, or (2) formally endorsed by the P.C. of the S.W.P. If it is a personal opinion why was this not clearly indicated in the document itself? If it is formally endorsed, quite apart from the political opinions, should not an official document have been checked at least for questions of fact, on which the document has numerous glaring errors?

Furthermore, we seriously question the propriety of using other than published documents or official statements as a basis for political characterisations of one section of the international in a document broadly circulated within another section of the international. In this connection we wish to know whether copies of this document have gone to other sections, and if so, whether individually or in quantities.

Until we have heard from you we are not publishing this document in the R.C.P. Internal Bulletin but we wish to state immediately that we reserve the right, not only to do so, but to request that any reply we may find it necessary to make, be given at least the same publicity as was given the International Bulletin.

Since we are suspending action pending your reply, we would appreciate receipt of your reply with the minimum delay.

Yours fraternally,

M. Lee  
Acting Secretary  
Revolutionary Communist Party

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LETTER FROM THE S.W.P.

New York  
August 21st 1944

To the Political Committee  
Revolutionary Communist Party

Dear Comrades,

We have received your inquiry about the International Bulletin, Vol. III, No. 1, containing the report "The Fusion of the British Trotskyists."

Let us first try to clear up the character of the Bulletin.

1) It is "international" only in one sense, in the sense that the subject matter treated in it is international in character. It deals with the problems of a sister section in which our comrades are keenly interested. Otherwise it is entirely an internal bulletin of the Socialist Workers Party for the information of the party members.

In answer to your question we can inform you that it has not been sent to any other sections, except for the several copies we sent you.

2) The report does not represent official party policy or official party opinion. It is the report of a leading comrade, expressing his observations and views. You ask, "If it is a personal opinion why was this not clearly indicated in the document itself?" It has been our practice in issuing internal bulletins -- and we have issued many of them -- to print articles and reports in such bulletins with the understanding that they represent the point of view of the individual author, except when signed by the Political or National Committee. We have proceeded on the same basis in relation to this bulletin.

We learn with regret that you question the veracity of some of the statements in the bulletin and the soundness of judgment expressed in some sections of the bulletin. We can only say to this that the best method of procedure is for you to correct what you consider errors in the bulletin or to take issue with the judgment of the reporter. We will be only too glad to publish your material in a bulletin and to distribute it just as widely as the report itself was distributed.

We fail to see wherein our procedure in issuing the report in bulletin form was wrong. It seems to us that it is far better, even from your point of view, to have such a report black on white. This report was before us. Should we have confined it to the leading circle of the party? If it is your belief that the report misrepresents you and errs in its statements, how would you then be able to correct it? It seems to us that by the method we have pursued you have the full opportunity of correcting errors. This is the only method that makes possible an intelligent and comradely interchange of opinions. We assure you that the bulletin was issued in good faith.

Trusting that this answers adequately your questions,

Fraternally yours,

M. Stein  
Acting National Secretary  
Socialist Workers Party

LETTER FROM THE R.C.P.

4th October 1945

Secretary  
Socialist Workers Party  
U.S.A.

Dear Comrade,

We have studied your reply to our queries regarding the "International Bulletin" issued by the S.W.P., and after careful discussion and consideration, the Political Bureau has come to the conclusion that your reply is unsatisfactory to us in almost every respect. At best, the issuance of this Bulletin can only be seen as a measure of incredible thoughtlessness; at worst, it must be regarded as an attack against the leadership of the R.C.P. based upon misinformation and misrepresentation.

You state that the Bulletin was issued for the information of the S.W.P. membership. No one can take issue with an attempt to inform members of one section as to what is taking place in another. Such information can only help in the process of integrating the international. What concerns us here is the nature of the so-called "Report"; how it was arrived at; and what it sets out to do. More important in some respects, than the actual material selected, is the question of the method of selection, as well as the method of circulation.

The Bulletin is based upon a tissue of falsehoods and malicious misrepresentations. It also contains numerous factual inaccuracies (misinformation) which although important in themselves, are of much lesser consequence. All these are dealt with in our reply.

Assuming that everything stated in the Bulletin was correct, and the arguments and conclusions were sound; with the best will in the world, the publication of such a Bulletin -- its manner of publication could only serve to damage the work of international collaboration.

Surely the best method of informing the membership of the S.W.P. would be the publication of the internal political discussion bulletins and resolutions which were circulated preceding the formation of the R.C.P., and which formed the background of a united Party in Britain? All the ideas of the participants were there, and a selection would have shown the lines of political demarcation. Copies of these documents have been in your hands for many months. There is no apparent reason why they should not have been used as the basis for internal "information."

Traditionally, our movement has had a serious attitude towards the statement of facts. The Old Man has taught us to check and recheck in the most conscientious manner, material which had the important function of informing our people. How much more important to check on data and facts, when such are to

be used as the basis for the characterisation of one section for the information of another, and the characterisation of the factions within the section?

Instead of using this tested method, you chose to publish a document founded on chit chat and factional fireside gossip.

The document in question is issued as a "Report", yet there is no indication what the sources of the report are or how the conclusions are arrived at.

But it is undeniable that its function in fact, as well as by intention, is rather more than a "report."

The document is unsigned, and therefore, so far as the membership of the S.W.P. are concerned, is surely the responsibility of no one person, but of the P.C. Unsigned documents usually, at least in the British movement, have a semi-official or official character -- adding authority to the text and to the conclusions drawn. Whatever special knowledge the P.C. might have of the author, this knowledge is patently not shared by the membership. In any event, the fact that this same article, somewhat edited, appears in the "Fourth International" under the signature of the author, which is unsigned in the internal bulletin, gives added weight to the opinion that it can only be regarded as an official or semi-official document.

Our experience of S.W.P. bulletins is that they circulate freely in the international sections. It seems to us a probability that this one will likewise reach other sections -- thus misinforming the national sections as to the real situation in Britain, and undermining what confidence we may have built up in a period of painful struggle.

The Bulletin specifically introduces a discussion on the perspectives and tasks which face our Party here, and enters on one side of the discussion. No one can object to such a step, providing the partisan character of the document is made clear. This document is not only a report, therefore, even assuming that all the data were correct: it is the voice of a protagonist who is lending his weight in a discussion.

It is hard for us to understand why the P.C. did not veto this report, or cause it to be checked. The P.C. of the S.W.P. are fully aware of the difficult situation which exists in Britain -- or existed -- arising out of the protracted split in our movement here. The unification arrived at was the culmination of a very painful and delicate process, and in line with all other fusions, requires time to heal the "split scar." It is indeed, still only in the process of fructification. How is it possible to conceive that the "Report" which you circulated could be helpful to that process?

The P.C. of the S.W.P. is also aware of the attitude adopted towards the author of this "Report" by the overwhelming majority

of the leadership of the British section. This attitude, let us say at once, is the result of our experience of his unfortunate intervention in the pre-fusion discussions in Britain. On these grounds alone, we think more thought should have been given to the subject before rushing into print. A significant point is, that on hearing that Stuart was to write a report, mindful of our previous experiences at his hands, Comrade Grant, who is attacked in the text although not mentioned by name, requested that a copy be sent to us for checking before it was published in the States. Stuart agreed to do this, but did not see fit to do so.

You ask whether you should have confined this report, when it was before you to the leading circles of the Party? Yes, comrades --- at least until you had the opportunity to check it. We would recall to your memory official reports sent from this country, which were confined to leading circles of the Party in the past. The authoritative documents of the pre-conference discussions were also confined to the leading circles of the Party. These would have been immeasurably more valuable for the education of the rank and file of the S.W.P. than the present "Report." When the author of this "Report" participated (together with another S.W.P. comrade) in the pre-fusion discussion in which the authority of the S.W.P. leaders was invoked, it was suggested that such material be circulated just as freely in the S.W.P. as it was being circulated here. You decided then, to keep the discussion within the confines of the Party leadership. It is difficult to find reasons why you were in such a hurry to print this document. One thing we can state: before publishing in this country an attack upon the S.W.P. leadership, we would most certainly have checked the material and had discussions with the leadership first.

One question raised by the publication of this document which disturbs us very much and which, in our opinion, demands an answer from the I.S.: should not such reports and documents come through the official channels of the sections, or be checked by responsible bodies? Otherwise all kinds of friction and difficulties must inevitably and regularly arise. This seems to us to be the only responsible method of informing our comrades in other sections and maintaining the closest bonds between the sections. Certainly, it was the method of the C.I. under Lenin.

How can we be sure that reports of other sections now in our hands, are not equally distorted as this one? The very basis of international confidence must be destroyed if this method is pursued.

In concluding this letter, I must point out that its very necessity, is already in itself a criticism of the method you adopted. At best it has introduced a great deal of unnecessary labour and friction. We are informed that when our letter was discussed by members of the P.C., the author of the "Report" shrugged his shoulders nonchalantly, and said: "So what, I made a mistake", and "I am entitled to get my information from whom I please." It is precisely this lightminded attitude, which is characteristic of the "Report", to which we take strong objection, and which, if persisted in, can only harm our movement.