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RESOLUTION ON U.S. AND SECOND WORLD WAR

(Draft)

Balance Sheet of the "War for Democracy"

1. When the United States entered the Second World War in December 1941, Roosevelt, the chief spokesman of American capitalism proclaimed that this war was a crusade for democracy, for the four freedoms, for the destruction of fascism and totalitarianism. The labor bureaucrats became recruiting sergeants for the war machine, declared a moratorium on the exercise of labor's right to strike and volunteered their services in selling the war as a conflict between "free labor" and "slave labor."
2. After three years of America's participation in the war, the demagogic slogans under which the people were dragooned into the slaughter have been stripped bare. Democracy and freedom have been among the first casualties of the war. The slogans of "national unity" and "equality of sacrifice" have been a snare. The pledges to take the profits out of war to prevent a new crop of war-time millionaires, have proved a monstrous hoax.
3. The capitalist government logically began its reactionary campaign by striking its first blows at the class conscious vanguard of the American working class. On the very day war was declared, December 8, 1941, sentence was passed on the leaders of the Socialist Workers Party, who were convicted under the anti-labor Smith "Gag" Act for their uncompromising and outspoken opposition to the war program and their firm adherence to the principles of revolutionary socialism. The conviction and imprisonment of the 18 was accompanied and followed by a whole series of measures designed to throttle the unions and paralyze labor's resistance to the onslaught of Big Business.
4. The right to strike, basic to the freedom of the labor movement has been virtually outlawed. Workers have been frozen to their jobs at frozen wages while the cost of living continues to rise. A "modified" version of forced labor has been imposed by executive decree. An increasing weight of taxes is being saddled on those least able to pay while corporation profits soar to the highest levels in all history.
5. The war immediately strengthened the most reactionary groups and institutions. Brutal discrimination and humiliating segregation of the Negro people in the armed forces as well as in civilian life reduce the slogans of "democracy and freedom" to a hideous mockery for 13 million American citizens. The wave of anti-Semitism unloosed by capitalist reaction has already risen to alarming proportions. Jim Crowism and anti-Semitism march hand in hand with the assault against the organizations of the working class. This is the reality behind the demagogic facade.

6. This reactionary trend was analyzed and forecast in the Manifesto of the Fourth International on The Imperialist War and the Proletarian Revolution, published in 1940, prior to America's entry into the war, which stated; "Seeking to gain the advantages of a totalitarian regime, the imperialist democracies launch their own defense with a redoubled drive against the working class and the persecution of revolutionary organizations. The war danger and now the war itself is utilized by them first and foremost to crush internal enemies. The bourgeoisie invariably and unswervingly follows the rule: 'The main enemy is in one's own country.'"

7. With the declaration of war the Military Staff emerged as the spearhead of reaction. The ruling capitalist circles demand unquestioning subservience to the authority of the military caste. The intervention of the brass hats in various spheres of civilian life is an integral part of the growing regimentation of the American people, of the enormous strengthening of reactionary tendencies in American life and politics and the unmistakable trend toward totalitarianism.

The Capitalists War Program

8. The American capitalist class is coining fabulous profits out of the second World War. Corporation profits in 1942 amounted to \$19 billion or twice what they were in 1929 and four times the average of the pre-war period 1936-39. In his "hold the line" report issued in April 1944, Roosevelt boasted that; "Corporation profits, both before and after taxes, rose in 1943 even above the record-breaking levels of 1942." The same report emphasized that; "The level of basic factory wage rates has been raised less than 1½ cents an hour by actions of the War Labor Board. Wages have been stabilized (frozen)." Soaring profits and frozen wages, taxing the poor instead of the rich, -- that is the program of the capitalists in war and peace.

9. The war brought the direct representatives of Big Business to Washington. The war agencies were staffed with corporation lawyers and executives, bankers, stockjobbers and speculators. Wall Street was represented in all key positions of the war administration. Thus the war served to accelerate the fusion of monopoly capitalism with the state.

10. The American capitalist class stands united in pursuit of its imperialist program to establish its hegemony over the world with the aim of making Wall Street the center of world tribute. To secure its domination American capitalism plans to maintain armies of occupation in Europe and Asia. Its most authoritative spokesmen speak of establishing naval and military bases all over the world, of building a five-ocean navy, of policing the world for 100 years, of establishing an era of "peace by force," etc. The plans of U.S. imperialism call for maintaining a military machine before which all previous world militarisms pale into insignificance.

11. Let no one imagine that imperialist domination will spell well being for the American masses. The maintenance of a gigantic military establishment will mean the imposition of back breaking taxes on the working masses. The creation of a powerful military caste can only lead to the Prussianization of American life and the further

regimentation of the American people. This program of regimentation aims to clear the road for Big Business, strengthen the forces of reaction which seek to impose their open shop program by crushing the unions and institute a regime of hunger and repression for the many and wealth and privilege for the few.

12. War is inevitable as long as capitalism continues to exist. Only a society free from exploitation and oppression, from profits coined out of the blood and bones of humanity, can put an end to war. Only the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of a socialist society will spare the American people the unending horror of continuing war.

13. As part of their military program the ruling capitalist circles have projected the plan of conscripting the youth for compulsory peacetime military training. We have nothing in common with the pacifists and muddle-heads who are "against" military training. In this epoch of wars and revolutions all great questions will be decided arms in hand. In order to fulfill their historic mission the workers must become skilled in the use of arms. But against the capitalist program of placing the military training of the workers under the control of the reactionary military caste we advocate our proletarian military program: military training of workers, financed by the government, but under the control of the trade unions. Special officer's training camps, financed by the government but controlled by the trade unions, to train workers to become officers.

Trade Unions and the War

14. The trade unions have been in retreat since Pearl Harbor. Deprived of their most effective economic weapon by the no-strike pledge, the unions have been unable to maintain their positions against the unrelenting pressure of the employers. The surrender of the strike weapon in favor of a compulsory arbitration through the employer-dominated War Labor Board has deprived the unions of their independence of action and has led inexorably to their subservience to the capitalist state. Utilizing the slogan of "national unity" the capitalist government has put through the program of the exploiting class.

15. The tri-partite labor board is an instrument of class collaboration by which the interests of the working class are subordinated to the interests of the capitalist class. To create the illusion of impartiality the personnel of such tri-partite bodies as the WLB is composed of an equal number of representatives of the unions, the employers, and the "public," that is, the government. But in a capitalist society the government functions as the executive arm of the ruling capitalist class. The labor representatives on the War Labor Board, therefore, are an impotent minority who only serve to perpetuate the fraud of "impartiality" by lending their prestige to the anti-labor actions of the WLB.

16. With the connivance of the labor bureaucrats the WLB has evolved into the super-arbiter of the labor movement. Following the promulgation of Roosevelt's "7-point stabilization" program on which the wage freezing Little Steel formula was based and the adoption of the Smith-Connally anti-strike bill Roosevelt issued his sanctions

decree empowering the WLB to take punitive measures against "recalcitrant" unions. The War Labor Board became an agency to police the unions, enforce the wage freeze, hog-tie and housebreak the union movement for the benefit of the bosses. With the collaboration of the union officials the decisions of the WLB were imposed by threats, intimidation and force in which the use of troops became part of the "arbitration" procedure to discipline the workers and keep the unions subservient to the war machine.

17. Wages are frozen while rising prices and soaring profits enrich the exploiters. Workers are frozen to their jobs to prevent "competition" between employers in a tight labor market. Labor conscription, as imposed by executive decree under the Roosevelt-McNutt "Labor Referral Plan," places the workers at the mercy of the dollar patriots. The use of troops to break strikes has become a regular procedure while the rabid labor baiters in Congress and the State Legislatures vie with each other in the adoption of more repressive anti-labor legislation. Such are the results of the policy of class collaboration.

18. It has become impossible for the unions to cope with their problems, defend their interests or preserve their existence by the outworn methods of "pure and simple" trade unionism. The capitalist state intervenes and acts as the outright agent of the employers where even the most elementary "economic" demands are involved. Therefore the fight for the most elementary demands entails a direct conflict with the capitalist state. The traditional "non-partisan" political policy of the trade union bureaucracy dooms the working class to impotence. The trade unions can survive only by breaking with the bankrupt policy of class collaboration, by regaining and strengthening their independence of action on the economic field, by formulating labor's own political program and organizing labor's own political party with the goal of establishing a Workers and Farmers Government.

The Role of the Labor Bureaucracy

19. From the outset the labor bureaucrats proceeded to prove, by word and deed, how indispensable they were in harnessing the workers to the chariot of war. They declared a moratorium on labor's right to strike. They espoused the policy of compulsory arbitration. They installed labor representatives on the employer-dominated War Labor Board -- thereby fostering the illusion that the WLB was an "impartial" agency. Accepting Roosevelt's counterfeit "stabilization" promises as good coin they acquiesced in the freezing of wages and as part of the War Manpower Commission's "labor-management" committee shared the responsibility for the job freeze. They remained on the WLB even after the passage of the infamous Smith-Connally "anti-strike" law, the executive decree authorizing sanctions against the unions and the emergence of the WLB as an outright strikebreaking agency in the service of the employers. Functioning as obedient agents of the capitalist administration they have rendered yeoman's service in propping up the structure of deceit and repression upon which Roosevelt's labor policy rests.

20. The labor bureaucracy has joined in a conspiracy with Roosevelt against their own rank and file. They strive with might and main to refurbish the tarnished "liberal" reputation of their "friend" in the White House, whitewash his crimes against the labor movement and screen his responsibility for a whole series of anti-labor measures by focusing their vapid criticism upon his hirelings. They disarmed the unions and sacrificed their independence on the altar of "national unity." They have taken on the job of outright labor lieutenants of the war administration to police the trade union membership. Finding workers' democracy in the trade unions incompatible with their policy of betrayal the bureaucrats utilize the no-strike pledge as a pretext for depriving the membership of their democratic rights by installing dictator-receivers over locals which resist employer provocation and purging union militants. In performing this task of bureaucratizing the unions the repressive machinery of the capitalist state is placed at the disposal of its labor lieutenants.

21. As a reward for their services in keeping the labor movement tied in the war strait-jacket and subservient to the capitalist class and its aims, the Roosevelt administration has granted the labor bureaucrats, not cabinet posts, as in Great Britain, but "maintenance of membership" and the "checkoff" via the War Labor Board.

22. The treacherous role of the labor bureaucracy has paved the way for the capitalist reaction which threatens the very existence of the unions. But the bureaucrats are confronted with insoluble contradictions. As the reaction deepens the workers grow more restive increasing their pressure on the leaders. Any show of resistance by the top bureaucrats provokes a stormy movement of the working masses which threatens to topple the Rooseveltian labor structure. The bureaucrats whine and complain of their increasing difficulty in "holding the line" against their membership and plead with their "friend" for concessions. But Roosevelt's pronounced swing to reaction served notice on the bureaucrats that the era of "New Deal" reforms was over. The capitalist rulers not only oppose new concessions but aim to cancel out those gains made by labor in the past decade.

23. Since Pearl Harbor the number of "unauthorized" strikes has increased each year. Reaching a peak in the months prior to the European invasion on June 6, the strike curve resumed its upward spiral after a slight recession in June to reach a new high peak in August. The workers, betrayed by their top union leaders and handcuffed by the no-strike pledge, have been attempting through direct economic action on the job, to break out of the straitjacket in which they have been bound.

24. These sporadic strikes, lasting in the main only a few days, have in the majority of cases been unable to achieve the objectives for which they were called. The striking workers lacked leadership and found themselves immediately subjected to the combined pressure, intimidation, and terrorization of the employers, the government and their own union officialdom.

25. The most advanced workers as in the auto union, have come to the realization that the workers cannot break out of the straitjacket into which they have been thrust simply by the calling of uncoordinated departmental or plant strikes. They have come to realize that this is a national as well as a political problem. These advanced workers, drawing the lessons of their struggle, have already formed a progressive wing in order to rescind the no-strike pledge, to adopt a militant program of action and to develop new union leadership dedicated to fight for such a militant union program.
26. The resistance against the onslaught of reaction is increasing in spite of and against the top union leadership. The struggle against the no-strike pledge, that is, to regain the unions' independence of action, is gathering momentum. The plans of the labor bureaucrats to convert the unions into auxiliary tools of American imperialism will face increasing opposition from the ranks.
27. The American working class is today strongly trade union conscious. The lessons of the 1929 economic crisis, the traditions of the heroic strike struggles of the last period and the emergence of the CIO have penetrated deeply into the consciousness of the working class. Despite the uninterrupted retreat of the trade union movement since the outbreak of the war, despite the loss of its former independence and the cynical betrayal of the labor movement by its whole official leadership, the trade union movement remains a mighty power. In the past decade the trade union membership has almost tripled. The membership rolls stand today at an all-time high of 13 millions and are still growing. Once this 13 million giant of a labor movement is armed with a correct program and a militant leadership it will reveal its unconquerable power.
28. The trade union policy of the Socialist Workers Party since Pearl Harbor has been confirmed by the experience of the past three years. It retains all of its validity today. We fought and continue to fight for the following program:
29. For the Independence of the Trade Unions! Free them from the domination or control of the capitalist government and its agencies. The first step in regaining the independence of the unions is the demand that the labor representatives resign from the employer-dominated War Labor Board.
30. Rescind the No-Strike Pledge! In the face of an intensive campaign of repression it is suicidal to surrender labor's most effective weapon of defense against the employer-government assault on the unions.
31. Scrap the Little Steel formula! For a nation-wide conference of all trade unions regardless of affiliation to draw up a program of independent action against the wage freeze. The central slogan in the fight against the wage freeze should be the demand for:
32. A Rising Scale of Wages to meet the Rising Cost of Living! For an escalator clause in all union contracts. Roosevelt's promises to stabilize the cost of living have proven a gigantic fraud. Only the escalator clause can afford the workers a measure of protection against the worst effects of capitalist inflation.

33. For Democracy within the Unions! There can be no effective independent action without the fullest internal democracy. The subservience of the labor bureaucrats to the program of the exploiting class inexorably leads to the attempt to crush the democratic rights of the rank and file.

34. For an Independent Labor Party based on the Trade Unions! Labor must break decisively with the parties, program and candidates of the capitalist ruling class. Only by its own independent class action on both the economic and political field will the trade union movement be able to save itself from destruction at the hands of Big Business and its political deputies in the government.

CIO Political Action Committee

35. The formation of the CIO Political Action Committee is an attempt by Hillman-Murray to duplicate the technique employed by John L. Lewis, (Labor's Non Partisan League) to pervert the sentiment for labor's independent political action into support for Roosevelt.

36. From its inception the CIO, encompassing the workers in the basic mass production industries, found itself involved in a bitter struggle with the most powerful monopoly interests in the country. The epoch of imperialism is characterized by a fusion of monopoly capitalism with the state. The role of the government as a strike-breaking agency in the service of monopoly capitalism and the growing recognition of the inadequacy of the methods of "pure and simple" trade unionism to solve their most pressing problems, impelled the mass production workers of the CIO to seek a way out along the road of independent political action. The organization of Labor's Non Partisan League, represented a systematic attempt on a national scale to mobilize the political strength of the working class separate and apart from the existing apparatus of the two capitalist parties.

37. In 1938 the Socialist Workers Party correctly characterized the LNPL as "a stage in the development of the labor movement from complete subservience to the political parties of big capital to an independent labor party." The CIO bureaucrats with John L. Lewis at their head, at that time frustrated the aspirations of the workers and perverted their instinctive desire to break with the political parties of capital, by supporting Roosevelt. Their purpose? To mobilize the workers as a political force independent of the Wall Street controlled Democratic and Republican parties in order to wean Roosevelt away from his dependence on Big Business. A utopian dream! Shortly after his reelection in 1936 with the aid of Labor's Non-Partisan League, Roosevelt issued his infamous "plague on both your houses" statement at a time when the steel barons had unleashed a murderous attack on the steel workers in the Little Steel strike of 1937.

38. Thus the development of the movement toward an independent labor party was retarded by the false policies of the leadership and above all by the mitigation of the economic crisis attendant on the feverish preparations of the capitalist class for war. The hypnosis of "national unity" is being dispelled, by a sharpening of class conflicts. The workers, becoming more and more disillusioned with Roosevelt's fraudulent "equality of sacrifice" program, are pressing for

wage increases. The strikes of the coal miners, which evoked a series of strikes in the automobile, rubber and other industries, threatened to topple Roosevelt's elaborate labor relations edifice. The passage of the Smith-Connally Act; the unrestrained labor baiting in Congress in which Democrat vied with Republican in urging more brutal anti-labor measures; the increasing intervention of the government on the side of the employers in labor disputes; the disarming of the unions by the no-strike pledge; the inadequacy of relying only on trade union methods in a struggle which was essentially political, have all given an impetus to the sentiment for an independent labor party.

39. The CIO Political Action Committee was organized during a period of labor struggle. Its formation was announced one week after the Michigan CIO State convention went on record for the organization of an independent labor party. The CIO-PAC was established for the express purpose of heading off the growing sentiment for labor's independent political action. But so discredited had the capitalist politicians and parties become that Hillman-Murray had to pay lip service to the idea of labor's independent political action in order to guide the movement back into the channels of the two party system.

40. Despite a superficial resemblance to the traditional "non-partisan" policy of the labor bureaucracy, the CIO-PAC, like its predecessor Labor's Non-Partisan League, represents a departure from the Gompers School of politics. The essence of the Gompers policy was expressed in keeping the working class politically atomized and wholly subordinate to the political bosses of the two capitalist parties. The CIO-PAC attempts to organize the workers as a political unit.

41. This tacit threat to the political monopoly of America's Sixty Families inherent in the attempted political mobilization of the workers by the CIO-PAC calls forth the venomous opposition of the agents of Big Business. By singling out the CIO-PAC for special attack, reaction is in actuality waging war against labor's right to organize on the political field.

42. The factors which gave rise to the movement for an independent labor party will become more compelling in the next period. The need for a solution to the problems of the labor movement will become more acute. The perfidious policy of the Hillman-Murray leadership in converting the CIO-PAC into an auxiliary weapon of one or another of the two capitalist parties can only lead the unions further into a blind alley.

43. Despite the bitter opposition of the top labor bureauerats the movement for a labor party is gathering adherents among the more advanced sections of the labor movement. The emergence of the Michigan Commonwealth Federation, the adoption of resolutions calling for the formation of an independent labor party by a number of local unions, the development of labor party movements under the leadership of the more conscious union militants, testify to the dynamic character of this movement. Around the struggle for a labor party will crystallize a genuine left wing in the trade unions which will lead the movement forward to a decisive break with the political parties of the capitalist class.

The Role of the Stalinists

44. In the period of the Hitler-Stalin pact the Communist Party conducted a pseudo-radical and essentially pacifistic agitation from the "left" against the imperialist war. Large sections of the labor movement were duped by the left coloration which served to camouflage the reactionary character of Stalinism. After Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union and the shift in the Kremlin's foreign policy the Stalinists became the most vociferous warmongers. The imperialist war of yesterday was metamorphosed into a "war of liberation." Following Stalin's dissolution of the Comintern, the Stalinists announced the formal dissolution of the American Communist Party, disavowing all socialist aims and objectives. Through the Communist Political Association they stepped forward as the avowed defenders of the capitalist status quo.

45. That the Communist Party was an agency of Stalin's foreign policy, that the Stalinists change their fundamental program overnight in compliance with the demands and needs of the Kremlin bureaucracy was in the past understood only by the class-conscious workers. Today this fact is widely known by large sections of the labor movement. Thus great sections of the trade union movement from a trade union basis, oppose the Stalinists today from the left.

46. Today the Stalinists operate as a strike breaking agency in the service of the bosses. Although the entire labor movement opposed Roosevelt's proposal for labor conscription the Stalinists rushed forward to endorse the measure. In the Montgomery Ward Strike the labor movement lined up solidly behind the union with the notable exception of the Stalinists who proclaimed their readiness to scab on the strikers. Their latest campaign for a permanent no-strike pledge, their unremitting agitation for the speedup, their lynch incitation against union militants who resist the employer-government union busting drive, their organization of a vigilante assault on a pacifist Quaker group in Seattle recently, etc., etc., brand the Stalinists as the spearhead of reaction inside the labor movement.

47. In their eagerness to convince the ruling capitalist circles that they are the most dependable agents of the employing class, the Stalinist flunkies have not hesitated in coming into conflict with the conservative bureaucracy of the unions. It must be recognized that the Stalinists, on an increasing scale, are beginning to address themselves directly to the capitalist class. They are trying to demonstrate that they are an indispensable force in ferretting out the militants and in keeping the trade unions clamped in the vise of the war machine. The capitalists remain cautious toward the Stalinists today. Tomorrow, when the crisis of capitalism becomes more intense, they may decide to utilize the services of the Stalinist strikebreakers more directly.

48. Despite the growing opposition to them in the union ranks the Stalinists remain a power in the American labor movement. They are still the greatest single obstacle in the path of the revolutionary party. They have an effective, well organized national apparatus. They control a number of International unions in the CIO, numerous CIO local unions and central labor bodies as well as many AFL locals.

Corrupted to the very marrow of their bones, the cynical agents of the Kremlin bureaucracy are ready for anything.

49. The Socialist Workers Party will continue a merciless exposure of the traitorous program of the Stalinists and will work indefatigably to destroy their influence within the labor movement, both by propaganda and organization work and by timely appeals to the worker elements within their ranks.

The Capitalists "Post-War" Program

50. The "post-war" plans of the capitalist class have taken legislative form on the basis of the Baruch-Hancock report which was drawn up by Wall Street bankers, endorsed by Roosevelt, supported by both the Republican and Democratic parties and administered by Big Business tycoons. The Baruch plan is based on the preservation of the "free enterprise" system; that is, on the system of monopoly control of production, distribution and exchange. It envisages a return to the era of planned sabotage of production, monopoly prices, a huge reservoir of unemployed labor, of mass poverty. The Baruch plan is a Bourbon plan -- its authors have learned nothing and forgotten nothing.

51. Having amassed untold millions out of war contracts, the cost-plus patriots are planning a gigantic steal of billions of dollars worth of Government-owned land, industrial plants and equipment and "surplus" commodities. This Government-owned property is valued at approximately 100 billion dollars. Comprising one-quarter of the total productive capacity of the nation, the Government-owned plants alone are valued at 20 to 25 billions and represent 20 percent of all capital invested in American manufacture. Under the "free enterprise" disposal of Government-owned property provided for in the Baruch plan, for which legislation has already been adopted, the great bulk of these plants will go to a small group of about 25 corporate giants to enormously strengthen the strangle hold which the banking oligarchy has on the economic and political life of the nation.

52. The monopolists view the newly created industrial empire erected by the government as a source of "over-production" and therefore as a potential threat to their monopoly control. Under the Baruch report, the planned sabotage of production practiced by the "New Deal," in which premiums were paid for plowing under cotton, corn, livestock, etc., is to be repeated on a gigantic scale with the plowing under of plant and equipment.

53. Under a rational economic system, the resources and productive capacity of American industry are capable of assuring an economy of abundance for all. The Government-owned plants, land and productive facilities can become the key to the future. If utilized for the benefit of the people this Government-owned industrial empire is capable of feeding, clothing and housing millions of our population. This new productive capacity will be so utilized only if the producers themselves, i.e. the workers, establish their own control over these vast means of production.

54. With the military collapse of Germany there will be a sharp cutback in war production of 40 to 70 percent with a sharp decline in employment. The Federal Reserve bulletin for May 1944 estimates that a return to the 1939 pre-war level of production -- a relatively "prosperous" year -- will mean from 15 to 20 million unemployed. Re-conversion to civilian production under monopoly control will create the largest army of unemployed pariahs in all history. Yet, while Congress legislates generous cash payments to war contractors and insures the profits of the corporations during the "reconversion" period, the only provision made to cushion the shock of widespread unemployment to the lives of millions of workers is the "states rights" starvation bill which provides "relief" as low as \$2.00 a week to those fortunate enough to be able to meet the "eligibility" tests.

55. Against the capitalist breadline and soup kitchen plan the workers must counterpose their own plan for the "post-war" period. The plan, if meant seriously, must be formulated in the shape of a political program. To provide a solution to the problems of "post-war" security the program must provide:

56. For the full utilization of all productive capacity. Against the sabotage of production for the sake of monopoly profits the workers must counterpose the slogan of continued operation of all government-owned plant and equipment under the control of workers' committees. This must be the first step on the road to expropriation of all industry and its operation under workers control. No plant must remain idle while workers are unemployed.

57. For full employment and job security. Against the plague of unemployment the workers' program must advance the slogan of a sliding scale of wages and hours. The 30 hour week at no reduction in pay. For each increase in the cost of living a corresponding increase in wages. As the productivity of labor increases the hours of work must be reduced with no reduction in wages.

58. For the political instrument to advance the program. Against the Democratic and Republican parties, both of whom represent the interests of the monopolists, the workers must organize their own Independent Labor Party. Against the so-called "free enterprise" system -- a system of planned economy. Against a government of America's Sixty Families -- a Workers and Farmers Government.

59. The essence of capitalist "planning" is reduced to artificially creating an economy of scarcity. The parasitic capitalist class has lost all justification for its continued existence. It cannot further advance the productive forces, it can only retard and sabotage production as a whole. It is the task of the American working class to free the productive forces from the strangle hold of private ownership and institute a planned economy under a Workers and Farmers Government.

60. The crowning slogan of our transitional program is the Workers and Farmers Government. Each of our transitional demands leads to one and the same political conclusion; the workers must break with the political parties of the capitalist class and organize their own political party in order, jointly with the working farmers,

to establish their own power. Under the program of transitional demands elaborated by the Socialist Workers Party the Workers and Farmers Government can assure the transition from capitalism to socialism.

61. The Socialist Workers Party strives to mobilize the working class around our transitional program as the only way out of the morass of unemployment and hunger, of artificial scarcity in the midst of potential abundance.

Perspectives

62. The colossal war expenditures will raise the national debt of the United States to the astronomical figure of \$300 billions. This huge debt is accelerating the process of inflation. The cost of living continues to rise, additional and more burdensome taxes are imposed on the masses, the standard of living is depressed to lower levels. Despite the favored position of the United States the war will have a ruinous effect on American economic life. Unemployment, that devastating social plague, will scourge the land. The reactionary measures of repression against the labor movement adopted under the pretext of war necessity will be extended to the "post-war" period. The drive toward totalitarian rule will continue under the demand for a "strong" regime.

63. Occupying the very nerve center of the world capitalist order the United States is sensitive to every dislocation and shock to the social system. The growing contradictions and antagonisms that break through the surface "unity" of the "United Nations"; the conflict between imperialist interests and the fundamental antagonism between World Imperialism and the Soviet Union; the intensification of class conflicts within each nation; the tremendous social convulsions shaking the European continent, all have profound repercussions within the United States. Trotsky wrote; "We must not for a moment lose sight of the fact that the might of American capitalism rests more and more upon a foundation of world economy with contradictions and crises, military and revolutionary. This means that a social crisis in the United States may arrive a good deal sooner than many think, and have a feverish development from the beginning. Hence the conclusion: It is necessary to prepare."

64. The war, which in the beginning hindered the radicalization of the masses, will impart a tremendous impetus to this radicalization. The indignation of the working masses will rise in a wave of revulsion against those parties and leaders who deceived them. The need for a solution to their problems will impel the workers along the road of revolutionary struggle. Our transitional program will meet with an increasing response from the advanced sections of the American working class.

65. We already see the first signs of this awakening in the movement for labor's independent political action and the increasing opposition of union militants to the no-strike pledge. In many instances union militants have adopted parts of our transitional program and advanced our slogans in the struggle against the labor bureaucrats. These developments demonstrate that our transitional program conforms to the needs of the workers and, when properly applied, provide the indispensable medium for carrying out our political tasks in the mass movement.

66. Only the Socialist Workers Party has such a program and can provide such leadership. Many of the best, most intelligent and most politically conscious of the union militants will draw the proper conclusions from their experiences and will join the ranks of our party in the coming period. Only on the basis of our transitional program can the trade unions break out of the impasse into which they have been led by the labor bureaucrats and become a powerful weapon for advancing the interests of the working class.

67. It is our task to penetrate more deeply into the unions, to extend our influence in the mass movement, to reach those militants groping their way toward a revolutionary solution, to rally the vanguard around our banner. Our program has met the test of experience, our banner is unsullied, our cadre is prepared. We can look forward with complete confidence to a phenomenal growth of our party in the period ahead.

68. The profound crisis of the social system and the sharpening of the class struggle, will pose before the American people the alternatives: either fascism or socialism. There is no "third" alternative. Confronted with a threat to its privileges and profits, monopoly capitalism will call upon their fascist gangs to preserve capitalist "law and order." Functioning as the agents of Big Business, the Fascists recruit their bands from those sections of the population rendered desperate by the economic impasse into which capitalism has driven society. The dissatisfaction, indignation and despair of the unemployed, the disillusioned war veterans and the lower middle classes ruined by big capital, are diverted by the Fascists away from their real source of misery and against the workers.

69. The Socialist Workers Party teaches that the labor movement can combat the fascist menace only by organizing the unemployed in alliance with the trade unions and championing their struggle; that the labor movement must unite the war veterans in organizations allied with the unions and fight for their demands; that the labor movement must elaborate a bold program which provides a solution to the burning needs of the working farmers and ruined urban lower middle class. Only by putting itself at the head of all those sections of the population, exploited and oppressed by monopoly capitalism and providing the fundamental solution embodied in our transition program can the working class destroy fascism and lead the people to a society of peace, security and plenty.

70. It has been established as an historic law that fascism cannot come to power unless and until the working class party fails to provide a correct leadership in the revolutionary struggle for power. The American working class has demonstrated its fighting capacity in numerous class battles. It is relatively free from the Social Democratic and Stalinist traditions that paralyzed the will of the European workers before the fascist onslaught. The initiative lies with the American working class. Our party, the only revolutionary party on the political arena, will have its chance. We shall not fail!

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THE ORGANIZATION METHODS AND PRACTICES OF OUR PARTY;
WHAT IS AT ISSUE IN THE PRE-CONVENTION DISCUSSION

Speech at the N.Y. Membership Meeting, Oct. 25, 1944

By M. Stein

Comrade Morrison has summoned the party to fight the germs of Stalinist degeneration. He says: "Let us destroy every germ of degeneration that enters our ranks. The spirit of the article in 'How the Trotskyists Went to Jail' is a germ of degeneration. Let us destroy it. The spirit of those who insisted on publishing this article in a pamphlet after a substantial minority objected to the article is a germ of degeneration. Let us destroy it. The spirit of those who organized the New York membership meeting to make our members feel that they cannot discuss political questions with W.P. members is, consciously or unconsciously, one that constitutes a germ of Stalinist degeneration. Let us destroy it."

Fighting germs is, as we all know, a very useful and honorable occupation. Many lives have been saved by those who knew how to fight germs. However, one must be scientific about fighting anything, and especially about fighting germs. To fight germs one must have a scientific appreciation of their type, their origin, what it is that produces them, what they feed on, what the weaknesses of the organism are which permit germs to penetrate. That is, one must give a scientific appraisal of what it is you are fighting. Then, and only then, will you begin to approach an understanding of the best method of fighting.

It so happens that there are several theories dealing with Stalinist germs. Comrade Trotsky had occasion to analyze these theories. There are, for example, those who contend that the germs of Stalinist degeneration stem from Marxism, and that you cannot fight this germ except by renouncing Marxism. These people reason thus: Stalinism grew out of Bolshevism. But Bolshevism itself grew out of Marxism. Consequently, you cannot fight Stalinist germs while remaining on Marxist foundations. These are the gentlemen who have become converted to the "Free Enterprise" System as against socialism. They are now among the most faithful servants of capitalist reaction. Their writings are warmly received by the capitalist press and widely publicized. The recently published book by the Austrian ex-Socialist Hyack, is representative of this school of renegacy.

There are others -- and this is probably the school of thought most popular among ex-radicals -- who say that the germs of Stalinism stem from Bolshevism and that in order to fight Stalinism one must abandon Bolshevism and return to Marxism. In analyzing this school of thought, Comrade Trotsky posed the following questions: "How? To what Marxism? Before Marxism became 'bankrupt' in the form of Bolshevism it had already broken down in the form of Social Democracy. Thus the slogan 'Back to Marxism' then means a leap over the period of the Second and Third International. . . to the First International, but it too broke down in its time. Thus, in the last analysis, it is a

question of returning. . . to the complete works of Marx and Engels. One can accomplish this heroic leap without leaving one's study and even without taking off one's slippers. But how are we to go from our classics (Marx died in 1883; Engels in 1895) to the tasks of our own time, omitting several decades of theoretical and political struggles, among them Bolshevism and the October Revolution. None of those who propose to renounce Bolshevism as an historically 'bankrupt' tendency has indicated any other course. So the question is reduced to the simple advice to study 'Capital.' We can hardly object. But the Bolsheviks, too, studied 'Capital' and not with their eyes closed. This did not however prevent the degeneration of the Soviet state and the staging of the Moscow trials. So what is to be done?" (Stalinism and Bolshevism -- by Leon Trotsky).

What Bolshevism Shall We Return To?

Comrade Morrison gives us no analysis of his theory. He indicates that he does not agree with the above-mentioned theories on "the germs of Stalinist degeneration." He presumes to fight these "germs of Stalinist degeneration" in our movement in the name of Bolshevism. He is thus implying that in our organizational practices we have departed from Bolshevism, and that what he is fighting for is a return to Bolshevism.

We can only ask the same questions asked earlier by Comrade Trotsky. "How? To what Bolshevism?" Does Comrade Morrison propose to take a leap back over the rich history of Bolshevism which is embodied in our own movement? Since 1923 our world movement has written the richest chapters in the history of Bolshevism. Since 1928 our movement in this country has made its great contribution to this history. Our party has gone through years of ideological struggle -- struggle for program as well as struggle for organizational methods. We fought, not only against treacherous Stalinism in all its phases of degeneration, we also fought against the Social Democratic agents of imperialism in all their shadings. We fought the pacifist reformism of Norman Thomas and his friends, while inside the Socialist Party as well as outside. We have, in addition, accumulated a treasure of experience in the struggle against sterile sectarianism and petty-bourgeois revisionism in our own ranks. How can one leap over this whole period of Bolshevism in action, as embodied in our movement, and as we have applied it to our daily tasks?

Comrade Morrison advises us to study the history of the Bolshevik movement. We can easily agree to that. But a rich chapter in the history of the Bolshevik movement is embodied in the documents of our own struggles, which are easily available. The Bolshevik organizational practices are embodied in our organization practices, in the documents of our struggles and in resolutions which, too, are available and should be studied.

To assert that some of our organizational practices of the recent period have departed from Bolshevism is to take on the responsibility of proving such assertions. We must be told when, at what point, have we departed from the Bolshevik procedure of Lenin's party

and our own, thus permitting the germs of Stalinist degeneration to penetrate into our organism.

Throughout the years of the rich history of our movement we have adhered to the same Bolshevik program. We have been led by essentially the same leadership. The question then, is, when did the germs slip in? At what point did we become vulnerable to the germs of Stalinist degeneration? Was it when Hansen wrote his article, which Morrison says showed a tendency towards a leader worship in our movement? If this were the case, then Morrison betrays a lack of perspicacity. Shachtman and Burnham detected what they called a "leader cult" in our movement long before him. That was some five years ago. How did this so-called leader cult in our movement assert itself during these five years? What has it produced in the five years? One article by Hansen! What sort of leader cult is this?

The situation is no different when we approach another of the "Stalinist germs" which Comrade Morrison sees in our party; the censure of the four New York members. We can only repeat what we have said before. Shachtman and Burnham charged us with bureaucratism some five years ago. Is this action all that our "bureaucratism" has produced in the past five years? Then why all the hysteria?

Similarly with the charge of withholding the Morrow document from the party, the charge that we fear discussion, etc. None of these charges is new. They have not improved, either with age or with use by the petty-bourgeois revisionists. It is Comrade Morrison's obligation to tell us where he agrees as well as where he disagrees, with them on these points. Were they correct then, or are these germs an entirely new development?

Where Are The "Germs Of Stalinist Degeneration?"

We have said before that anyone developing a sweeping theory about "Stalinist germs" in our movement must give us a scientific analysis of such "germs." Such an analysis must of necessity deal with the similar theories advanced by others, that is, an analysis of the similarities as well as the differences with the other theories. If Comrade Morrison thinks there are Stalinist germs in the party, he must try to convince the party as a whole of it. One cannot convince our party on mere assertions.

Let us take up for a moment the various points raised by Comrade Morrison which he labels as "germs of Stalinist degeneration."

One may agree or disagree with Comrade Hansen's article. But in what sense would it possibly represent a "germ of Stalinist degeneration?" In what sense could it possibly represent a tendency towards a leader worship? Did Comrade Morrison stop to ask what a leader worship is? Is it leader worship if comrades show confidence or express confidence in a leadership, a confidence based on experiences through years of common struggle? Is it leader worship when comrades admire a leader or leaders for their consistent struggle within the revolutionary movement in defense of the Marxist program against traitors and revisionists? Nonsense! If this were the case, then Trotsky, and before him Lenin, and before him Marx, could have been the objects of

the same charge. And shallow impressionists have indeed made such charges before.

Leader worship is based not at all on the confidence of the party ranks in the leaders, not at all on admiration for their defense of our program. It bases itself on a deliberately pre-conceived and carefully executed plan to set up the "leader" above program. This is the indispensable need of Stalinism so that the leader may be free to sell out, to betray, to make precipitous turns, unhampered by program and by the interests of the working-class. The Stalinist leader cult is furthermore backed up by something very substantial; by the whole state apparatus and all its organs of repression.

The whole charge of a tendency toward leader worship in our movement is merely a smoke-screen for those who would resist all leadership, for those who would denigrate leadership. This has nothing in common with Bolshevism. A party to be strong must have not only a tested Marxist program. It must have a strong organization and a firm leadership.

The role of the leadership of our party is an open book for anyone who wishes to examine it even most minutely. It will be extremely difficult to find the least reason why this leadership is not worthy of confidence. On the contrary, there is every reason why the party ranks are imbued with the spirit of confidence in the party leadership, its integrity and ability to struggle.

We have said that the charge that Hansen's article represents a tendency towards leader worship is in reality a cover for an anti-leadership tendency. Something similar has been revealed in the objections to the censure of the four New York comrades. The more you listen to the arguments against the censure, the more you study them, the clearer it becomes that behind these arguments is a resistance to the centralism of our movement.

What is wrong in this censure? Is it wrong for the party to insist that it have rigorous control over the political activities of its members? But this is part and parcel of Bolshevik organization methods. And if it is correct for the party to insist on controlling the political activities of its members, then is it wrong to call to account those who violate this procedure? In what sense, by what stretch of imagination, does an insistence on this kind of Bolshevik procedure represent a "germ of Stalinist degeneration?" The fact is that Comrade Morrison, the author of the charge and his supporters, proceeding from a pre-conceived distrust and suspicion of the party leadership do violence to the facts in order to squeeze them into the framework of their pre-conceived notions.

Comrade Bennett's Contributions To The Discussion

Comrade Bennett's contribution on this point is probably the most revealing. She has written an article for the internal bulletin taking exception to the censure, but there is hardly anything in the article that is true to fact. She starts out by reducing the characters in the case to the bare minimum necessary for her purpose. Thus, of the four comrades involved she begins by arbitrarily eliminating

two on the grounds that she is not acquainted with them. Since when is personal acquaintanceship a criterion in judging Bolshevik organizational procedure? After dismissing the two comrades out of hand, she says a few words about the third comrade, Abe Stein, but only in order to likewise quickly dismiss his role in the case so as to clear the road for the real central figure in her melodrama. Then she proceeds to paint the party leadership in the most horrible colors of the brutal villain in the melodrama, a villain who does violence to a young innocent girl, by whipping up the N.Y. membership into a frenzy and throwing this young creature to them as if to a pack of wolves.

Now, why does Comrade Bennett do this? Because she proceeds from a pre-conceived notion of "Stalinist germs." When she heard of the trial in New York, she looked up the files on Stalinist trials. She came across two instances; her own trial when she was expelled from the C.P., and the Moscow Trials. Following this, she proceeded to write a piece in which the facts had to be made to fit her pre-conceived ideas. This is why Comrade Bennett reduces everything she has written for the internal bulletin on the organization question to pure fiction.

Take her other contributions. In her two articles on our failure to issue the Morrow document after the Plenum she argues very heatedly against monolithism, for freedom of discussion, for the need of discussion, and so on and so forth. But not a single one of her arguments has anything to do with the actual facts of the situation. In a word, she argues against Stalinism, not against us, leaving the unmistakable impression that she is fighting Stalinism in our movement.

Yet the facts in this case as well are so clear, so simple, that anyone could grasp them without the least bit of effort. We concluded a Plenum where, after long debate, we arrived at a unanimous motion to accept the general line of the Committee resolution and to leave it to the Committee for final editing, in consultation with Morrow and Morrison. This was done. The resolution finally made its appearance with the approval of Comrade Morrison. When Comrade Morrow left the hospital and decided the resolution in its final form was unacceptable he wrote his objections into a document. This document was presented to the P.C. just one week before our comrades left for jail.

I remember that meeting very distinctly. I remember it because of the deep impression it made on me and the feeling of heavy responsibility it gave me when I looked around the room and realized that out of thirteen people present, eight were going to jail, including the National Secretary of the party, the Labor Secretary, the editors of the press, the organizer of the New York Local and so on. I remember it because when during the course of the discussion I made the remark, "Who am I remaining with?" it brought general laughter from the comrades present. Some of the comrades who were to carry on the work of the party had just come to the center from out of town. I myself had been away from the center on and off for several years. Our first job was to pick up the threads of party organization and functions and see to it that the blow of imprisonment should not reflect itself in the public activities of the party.

It was at this moment that Comrade Morrow proposed to present the party with an internal discussion. The principals in the discussion were to be behind bars and the comrades saddled with the responsibilities of party work had to think first and foremost of the public party work.

How And Why Violence Is Done To The Facts

Morrison says now, in connection with Morrow's proposal to open a discussion in the party at that time; "His proposal for a discussion was met with great hostility and was voted down. So great was the clamor that I, always in favor of letting the ranks discuss important questions, did not insist vehemently that his proposal be accepted." No, Comrades, Morrison was not "misled" by our so-called "clamor." The situation itself created the loudest clamor against the discussion at that time. Anybody with the least bit of responsibility and understanding of our limitations, handicaps and the tasks the imprisonment confronted us with, could not act otherwise. The fact is that Comrade Morrow himself finally withdrew his request for a party discussion, and we did not even have the occasion to vote on this question.

Why does Comrade Morrison now claim that he was misled? Why does Comrade Bennett argue so vehemently and heatedly against "monolithism?" Because they are trying to prove a preposterous theory of "Stalinist germs in our movement" and violence has to be done to the facts in order to provide such proof. This is why they must label Hansen's article as a tendency towards leader worship; that is why the disciplining of the four New York members who violated the elementary requirements of party discipline and loyalty is placed in the category of Stalinist trials; and that is why the failure to initiate a party discussion which would be against the interests of the party at the given moment, must be equated with Stalinist monolithism and fear of discussion.

Comrade Morrison tells us that "since the terrible Stalinist degeneration every serious person in the Marxist movement fears and thinks of possible degeneration." This is not so. Our movement has analyzed every phase of Stalinist degeneration and its causes. Russia was extremely backward under the Czars. The revolution was a gigantic leap forward. Had the revolution in other more advanced countries been successful, the backwardness would have been overcome. As it is, the revolution backtracked. Stalinism is the specific outgrowth of a Thermidorian reaction growing out of a revolution in a backward country under conditions of capitalist encirclement.

Someone might say; "But there is an American Stalinist party. How do you account for it?" The social base of the bureaucracy in the Stalinist party is not here. It is in Moscow and we all know it.

The Real Danger of Degeneration -- And its Antidote

We do not "fear" the danger of Stalinist degeneration because we know that the real danger of degeneration lies in another direction. The germs of degeneration of the Marxist party are caused by the pressure of the social classes in the society in which those parties function. Far more real than the Stalinist degeneration of our movement is the danger of the influence of alien classes seeping into our movement. Long before Stalinism was in existence we have seen such degeneration taking place within the Second International. We have seen the parties of the Second International succumb to the pressure and influence of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois tendencies. We have seen it in our own movement at the outbreak of the war, when the petty-bourgeois elements in the party sought to revise its program.

We know of only one weapon against such degeneration, and that weapon is a correct revolutionary policy and programmatic firmness. We have no talisman against degeneration, but we do have the knowledge of the causes of degeneration and we do know that insofar as it is possible to prevent degeneration, it can only be done by the most scrupulous, the most conscientious adherence to program. This lesson has been driven home to us by the innumerable and terrible defeats suffered by the working class the world over. These defeats have been due to Social-Democratic and Stalinist betrayal of Marxism. This makes us all the more determined to adhere to our Marxist program and to struggle for it and to guard against the real danger: conciliationism with renegades and revisionists.

The objections raised against the censure of the four N.Y. members place before the party for discussion not only the question we have dealt with earlier, that is, the resistance to party centralism on the part of some comrades, but also the very important question of the relations of party members to opponent organizations.

Our Attitude Toward the Petty-Bourgeois W.P.

There obviously exists a difference of opinion between Morrison and ourselves on the reasons for our hostility to the petty-bourgeois W.P. Comrade Morrison says the following: "Comrade Stein forgets that he, together with all of us, including the Old Man, was perfectly willing to have the minority remain in the party, even though they believed in the same ideas, with reference to the Soviet Union, that they stand for at present. We did not ask them to change their beliefs; we only insisted that they abide by the majority decision to defend the Soviet Union. If it is their program that makes them renegades from Marxism, Stein should explain how it is that we were willing to have renegades from Marxism in our party."

Marxists cannot view this or any other question statically. We must examine not only the situation as it existed at the time of the split, but the course of the developments since the split, and the general direction in which the W.P. has been travelling. It is quite true that in 1939-1940 we asked them to remain inside the party. But we did this in the confidence that events would confirm our point of view and that we would have a chance, in the course of

experiences, to win over a section of the misled rank and file. Furthermore, that was the period of the beginning of their deviation on the question of the defense of the Soviet Union. They hadn't as yet developed their full revisionist position on the nature of the state. It is true Burnham had such a position, but he withdrew it and they refused even to engage in a discussion on the nature of the Soviet state.

This divergence from our principled position has since developed into a full anti-Marxist position. The issue of the split itself has become subordinated to the political differences and this is what dictates our hostility to them at the present. There is yet another element in the situation. The Soviet Union at the time of the split was not yet under attack of the imperialist enemy and the discussion was more or less in the realm of program and policy. But it was not long after the split that the Soviet Union was attacked and the question of defending the Soviet Union became a life and death question. This difference was no longer a question of "discussion" but placed us on different sides of the barricades. How can these factors be dismissed so lightly?

No Conciliation with Conciliationism

The struggle between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks in the Russian party started over what might have appeared as a minor organizational question; over the question of the responsibility of party members to the organization, over the question of a "hard" or a "soft" party. This was the beginning of the divergence between the two tendencies which at a later stage of the struggle, found them on the opposite sides of the barricades in the Russian revolution.

In determining our attitude towards opponent parties we do not go to the beginning of the divergences but we take into account the unfoldment of the struggle and its degree of intensity especially in periods of crisis, such as war and revolution. We have learned our organizational methods from Lenin. He was attacked more than once for his irreconcilability. History proved him correct. And we have been building not only on the basis of Leninist theory but on the basis of actual historical experiences.

That period in the development of the revolutionary movement when all the tendencies found it possible to exist within the same party, or, when in different parties, they maintained a friendly collaborative attitude among themselves, is long past. Rosa Luxemburg, although programmatically irreconcilable in her attitude toward Bernstein and Kautsky, nevertheless remained in the same party with them without posing the task of splitting with them and building the new party. She and Liebknecht, as well as the German working-class, paid very dearly for this. Rosa Luxemburg, this sterling revolutionist had to begin first building a party in the midst of revolution. One can go into an examination of each and every country of the period after the last war and prove, on the basis of concrete experience, how costly conciliationism had been. One can refer to the experiences in Italy, in Hungary, etc.

Comrade Morrison feels triumphant! He "succeeded" in establishing that it is permissible for party members to discuss with members of opponent organizations, to attend classes of opponent organizations and their meetings. We never proscribed this kind of conduct and this was not at all the issue involved in the censure of the four New York members. But since Morrison in his letters deals so much with "spirit", I would like to say a word about the spirit that is involved in this hue and cry against the censure of the four. We want to ask what spirit motivates comrades in a desire to shop around in "meetings and classes" of opponent organizations. Is it the spirit of hostility to opponent parties or the spirit of conciliationism? Of course it is the spirit of conciliationism, and it has nothing to do with Bolshevism.

Our Record of Struggle

In our organizational methods, in our attitude towards opponent organizations, as well as in everything else we do, we base ourselves not only on the early experiences of the Bolshevik movement but also on all the events that have transpired since, including the rich experiences of our own struggles. Especially the most recent experience in which our organizational principles and methods were tested in life -- the great struggle against the petty-bourgeois opposition, some five years ago.

In conclusion, let me recapitulate: The charge that "germs of Stalinist degeneration" have penetrated the nerve center of our organization, its National Committee, has been flung at us without any attempt at analysis. This charge is easily refuted when we examine the incidents that Morrison contends have a "resemblance to Stalinist procedure." It is refuted by an examination of the social base of Stalinism and the history of our whole movement, which was born and which developed in merciless struggle against Stalinism. It is in addition refuted when we examine the history of our movement over the past sixteen years. Not only did the party as a whole prove immune to Stalinist contamination, but there were very few individuals in our ranks who found Stalinism in any way attractive.

As against this, we have had a rich experience of struggle against those who have succumbed to the influence of bourgeois environment; the most recent expression of this was the petty-bourgeois opposition. This, it seems, should make it clear to all in what direction we should look for the germs of degeneration. Try as he may, Comrade Morrison will never find any support for his point of view in the history of the Bolshevik movement from its earliest days to the present.

What Kind of Party Must We Build?

Our party has great opportunities before it. Our slogans are beginning to penetrate the masses and we have every reason for revolutionary optimism. To take advantage of these opportunities and to fulfill our revolutionary task we must have a party built along the lines of a combat organization. Not a mere forum for self-expression and self-improvement, but a party of iron discipline, capable of acting like an army facing the outside world as a unit. The party

has a right and a duty to control and direct the political activity of all of its members, to be informed about and to regulate the relations of its members with opponent organizations, and to demand complete loyalty. This kind of party procedure has no resemblance whatever to Stalinist procedure. The murderous hostility of the Stalinists is directed against the revolutionists while, at the same time, they cringe and crawl before the bourgeoisie.

We have said over and over again that the party structure and organization methods and procedure serve a program. They are the instruments of policy. Our revolutionary program and policy, is best served by a party of democratic centralism. Centralism in action; fullest democracy in the internal life of the organization whenever questions of policy are before the membership for discussion. As our movement grows and develops, every last rank-and-filer will be called upon to assume places of responsibility and leadership in the mass movement. Our membership must be imbued with this sense of responsibility. Our movement must be imbued with the comradeship of people who are in a life-and-death struggle for a common cause. We must have the necessary ability to work together. This is made extremely difficult if comrades proceed from an unfounded suspicion towards the leadership, suspicion that they are the carriers of Stalinist germs. Such an attitude can result only in distrust, friction and hostility. This applies to personal relations as well as the movement as a whole. Anyone who takes as his point of departure that the National Committee is contaminated with Stalinist or bureaucratic germs -- and proceeds furthermore, as has been done in this discussion, to distort facts in order to support such suspicions -- can only poison the atmosphere in the party.

Our leadership represents a selection of the best revolutionists in the movement, a selection that has taken place over a period of many years. Far from giving any cause for suspicion, the conduct of the leadership through the years of struggle for revolutionary program and policies, has given every cause for great confidence.

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A LETTER FROM NATALIA

September 23, 1944

Dear Friend:- ,

From your reply I conclude that my letter was written far too generally. I shall try to concretize it.

I do not propose that we take off the slogan "defense of the USSR" but I find that it must be pushed back to the second or third rank. In the process of war and especially of victories its content has sharply altered. It is necessary to lay this bare tirelessly. The slogan of the defense of the USSR comprised in it a two-fold aim; a) the struggle with the internal enemy -- Stalin's regime; and b) the struggle against foreign intervention. The final goal of the defense of the USSR is the world revolution.

"I consider that the main source of the dangers for the USSR in the present international situation is Stalin and the oligarchy headed by him. The struggle against them in the eyes of public opinion is indivisibly connected for me with the defense of the USSR." (L.D.'s article on Stalin after the Finnish experience).

The unconditional defense of the USSR was always for us a factor of a merciless struggle against the Bonapartist bureaucracy right up to its overthrow and the reestablishment of Soviet democracy.

The military triumphs have strengthened the position of the Soviet bureaucracy (the internal enemy); reaction is growing -- from this it is necessary to draw the conclusion with regard to the slogan of the defense of the USSR. You write that it is necessary to take our starting point from that which is; base ourselves on facts. Absolutely correct. But after all this means that the slogan of the military defense of the USSR withdraws to the background in the face of new events.

The Soviet land stands on the threshold of revolution or counter-revolution. To carry through the counter-revolution under the conditions of encirclement by the revolutionary ferment in Europe is as difficult as to intrench the basic conquests of the October revolution in the reactionary encirclement of the Stalinist regime. When you underscore in your letter the meaning of that which is and the facts on which one must base oneself in his judgements -- you apparently have in mind the still unliquidated nationalized sector of property and planned economy. But after all it is impermissible to analyze this most important fact outside of the general present Soviet conditions which could not have failed to find their reflection also in this fact. The nationalization which was carried out in the epoch of revolution had as its goal; the equality and raising of the living standards of the masses. In the conditions of advancing reaction and in the hands of the Bonapartist bureaucracy it has still been preserved, but has moved away from its initial task (as has the Red Army). The Bonapartist bureaucracy has used the greatest conquests of the revolution for its own personal interests. In addition to facts it is necessary to take into account the tendency of the development of this

or that political phenomenon. Without such an accounting it is impossible to lead, or to prepare or to carry on propaganda, or to sketch out perspectives etc. etc. In the pre-October epoch the Mensheviks basing themselves on facts predicted the crushing of the October revolution, assigning to it a two week period of existence. The Bolsheviks basing themselves on facts conducted a confident agitation for the overturn. How is it then? The evolution of the tendencies of political events must take into account, analyze, discuss from different standpoints right up to sharp polemics, right up to differences of opinion -- in this consists the living creative work of the organization, its preparation for the impending events; otherwise it is doomed to inaction.

The Soviet bureaucracy, the most reactionary in the world is pushing planned economy not in the direction of socialism but of capitalism. With the termination of the war the question of planned economy will be posed in all its sharpness. There is ripening a clash of planned economy with the Bonapartist bureaucracy which has strengthened its positions by the victories. The contradictions may become unbearable and the break with planned economy can confront the bureaucracy as a vital necessity. Socialism or the restoration of capitalism? This most important problem of the USSR must be put in the center of our attention. A mortal danger is threatening the Soviet land, and the source of this danger is the Soviet bureaucracy (the internal enemy). The war is not ended; the external enemy still exists. But at the beginning of the war we viewed it as the most dangerous one and the struggle against the bureaucratic regime ceded its place to the military struggle; at the present time matters must be put just the other way. It is necessary to explain this to the Soviet workers as well as to the workers of the whole world; we must with all the necessary clarity warn them about the threatening danger to the first workers' state.

Military victories of the Red Army cannot assure the overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy; military defense does not lead to the revolutionary struggle against the Stalinist regime. The military defense of the USSR in the present world situation has become transformed into the problem of struggle against Stalinism.

A few words about Soviet literature. In your opinion it does not reflect Soviet reality -- this is correct, but not entirely, not wholly but only to a certain degree. And this certain degree must be taken into account. The war propaganda could not have failed to have its effect on the Soviet masses. The war, what was lived through -- not only the sufferings but also the experience -- has taught Soviet citizens a great deal. They are feeling more confident of themselves, more independent, more demanding and this has already found its expression in the local correspondence in Izvestia and Pravda despite the bureaucratic vise and "command." But this is not all. In the same papers also is reflected the watchfulness and alarm of the bureaucracy in this connection and it is already issuing out calls for the restoration of order.

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A LETTER FROM MARTIN

Natalia's letter draws attention to the accelerated pace of the Stalinist degeneration in the conduct of the war. The political policy of the bureaucracy is the most vulgar nationalism. There is abundant evidence on this side of the question, and the facts cited by Natalia add more concrete instances to fill out the picture whose outlines we have long known. We do not know, however, what sentiments animate the Soviet masses in their unprecedented struggles and sacrifices. I personally am strongly convinced that the conquests and the memories of October play a bigger part than the Stalinist appeals to the past glories of Czars and Czarist generals. And, I do not for a minute forget that the objective logic of the Red Army achievements in the war against the Nazi, regardless of the officially declared aims, is profoundly revolutionary.

We know, and we have always said that the Soviet Union cannot be carried through the transition period from capitalism to socialism without workers' democracy. That is the reason we call for the revolutionary overthrow of the bureaucracy and the reinstatement of workers' democracy. By this formula we sharply distinguish our position from that of the fetishists of democracy who regard it as an end. For us it is a means to an end, i.e. the construction of the socialist society by the creative efforts of the masses and international collaboration between them. We are no less convinced that the transitional period which has assumed the form of a degenerating workers' state dominated by a nationalistic bureaucracy cannot be "permanent", or even long-lived.

The fundamental alternative confronting the Soviet Union is and remains: Forward to socialism, or back to capitalism. By this formula we draw a line between ourselves and all the profound "theorists" of a new bureaucratic "class". We have less reason than ever to reconsider our conclusions on these two basic propositions.

The bankrupt bureaucracy was capable of producing only the one evil which it promised to avoid, and to avoid which, it sold out the international revolution -- a war on Soviet soil.

The "theory" of a new "bureaucratic" class interposing itself between defeated capitalism and unrealized socialism was given a certain superficial plausibility only by its bolder representatives, such as Bruno R., who assimilated the regimes of Mussolini, Hitler and Stalin into one homogeneous system. The sorry fate of Italian and German fascism, after a brief rule of 20 years in one case and 10 years in the other, seems to me to have knocked the props out from under Bruno R's "theory" of "La Bureaucratisme du Monde". It is not necessary even to speak of his half-hearted imitators and their anemic new, nationally-limited class of "bureaucrats" in one country.

The national-reformist policy of the bureaucracy, in its degenerating course of reaction against the October revolution, can only -- unless it is overthrown -- pile quantity upon quantity, and this in turn must, at a certain point, result in a qualitative change in the state inherited from the great revolution. I think we must look for

signs of such a change in the field of Soviet economy. Politically the bureaucracy seems to have done all it can do to erase the revolution. By their politics they brought the Soviet economic system to the very brink of overthrow by Nazi militarism, and now leave it exposed, in a terribly weakened position, to the still mightier and as yet unspent military power of the Anglo-American bloc.

The same type of superficial thinking, characterized by the attempt to form political conclusions without reference to economics -- the type of thinking which determined an attitude toward the Soviet Union in war without any prior estimation of its class character; which, in another version, lightmindedly assumed that the Stalin-Hitler pact would be long-lasting because of the "affinity" of the two regimes -- is now quite convinced of the durability of the Anglo-American-Soviet pact of Teheran. In reality the irreconcilable conflict of economic systems completely excludes the possibility of an Anglo-American toleration of the Soviet economic system over one-sixth of the earth any longer than it is compulsory by reason of necessity, i.e., the relation of forces and the disunity in the imperialist camp. If we leave aside the prospect of workers' revolutions in the capitalist states, or such a state of unrest and insurgence as that which followed the first world war -- and it is just these details that are omitted in all varieties of literary politics -- then there is no room to doubt that an economic, and, if necessary, a military offensive of the allies against the Soviet Union is predetermined as soon as accounts are finally settled with the Nazis and the Japanese; perhaps even before.

Of course, there are all kinds of difficulties and complications, but -- again, if we eliminate the detail of workers' revolution -- the only serious question is whether the required economic concessions, opening up the Russian market to Anglo-American exploitation and, thereby, the overthrow of the Soviet economic system, is to be accomplished by war or by economic pressure and threats of war. Have such fatal concessions already been tentatively agreed upon? What was the real meaning of Eric Johnston's visit to the Soviet Union? There is ample ground for the deepest suspicion flowing from the inexorable logic of the situation even if we disregard such surface indications. But so far we do not know of any basic infringements on the Soviet economic system made during the war, and we therefore have no reason to change our attitude toward it in its relation to the capitalist world.

On the other hand, we do know that the nationalized property system permitting state planning and control (even though it is monstrously distorted and crippled by bureaucratic mismanagement and privilege), revealed an enormous power under conditions of war. We Trotskyists had more confidence in the vitality of Soviet economy than anyone else, including the conservative and cowardly bureaucracy, but all our calculations were far surpassed. The results of the Soviet-Nazi war must have had profound effects on the Russian masses. We are shut off from every scrap of authentic information on this score. But how can anyone doubt that their self-confidence has been raised and that the returning soldiers will demand something from their victories bought at such a heavy price? What will they do when the bureaucracy

offers them nothing but a still more odious oppression and an even sharper division between the privileged caste and the mass of the people? We had better not assume, prematurely, that the Russian workers have said their last word. We had better wait and see what is going to happen before we even think of playing with the idea of changing or modifying our policy which, of all schools of thought on the Russian question, is the only one that turned out to be based on the realities of the situation; the only policy that stood up under the test of such a devastating war that, as Churchill rightly said, no other regime in history could have survived it.

Our "Russian" policy, however, is only one section of a complete program based on a fundamental class concept and a world view. Our active political slogans of the day must always be consistent with our general program and express that phase of it which has the greatest urgency at the moment. It is important always to keep in mind this subordinate relationship of active slogans to the program as a whole and not to identify the one with the other. Serious politics is impossible without a firm program of Marxist internationalism; those who dispense with this chart produce nothing, as we have seen, but speculation, guess work and irresponsible experimentation. We do not change our program. No amount of criticism and impatience can modify our "conservatism" in this respect. But to stand firmly by the program, naturally, does not authorize us to repeat the same active political slogans all the time with the same degree of emphasis. That would reduce the art of politics to memory work, and as the Old Man once remarked, make every sectarian a master politician.

The art of politics consists in knowing what to do next; that is, how to apply the program of Marxism to the specific situation of the day. We do not change any of our slogans insofar as they represent, each in its own way, the various sections of our complete program. But if we are alive to the complexities and quick changes in the world political situation, as well as that at home, we must always be ready to change the emphasis with which we advance one or more slogans while holding others more or less in reserve, as the situation may require.

We think Natalia's letter must be considered from this point of view. When the Nazi military machine threatened the destruction of the Soviet Union every communist had to put the slogan of the defense of the Soviet Union in first place. Those who denied this defense were then no longer comrades having a different opinion on a theoretical question, as Morrison still wants to treat them, as if nothing had happened, but people on the other side of the barricade with whom comradely arguments were out of season. But this fight for the defense of the Soviet Union against Nazi militarism has been decisively won. The problem will most probably arise again, with another power in place of the Nazis, but that will take some time.

The political reality of the present day is: The military, economic and moral collapse of the Hitler "new order in Europe" which some people even in our own ranks took far too seriously; the military occupation of the continent by Anglo-American and Soviet troops; the indicated beginning of a workers' revolutionary movement and the

conspiracy of the imperialists to crush it with the active aid of the Stalinists. Our active slogans, the slogans which we put in first place and emphasize in all our agitation, must correspond with this political reality.

In our opinion there can be no question of abandoning the slogan of the defense of the Soviet Union; in principle it retains all its validity and will most likely acquire burning urgency again at a later stage of events. But to continue to shout this slogan in the present situation would be the greatest political ineptitude, putting us out of tune with events. All our emphasis now must be placed on the defense of the European Revolution against the conspirators. Our program gives us all the guidance we need, first to evaluate the problem theoretically and, on that basis, to deduce the appropriate active political slogans of the day.

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WOMEN WORKERS AND THE POST-WAR CRISIS

By Irene James

What's going to happen to women after the war? The thousands of women who are already victims of cut-backs and mass lay-offs were probably surprised to read the cheerful statement of Eric Johnson, President of the United States Chamber of Commerce;

"People who foresee grave difficulties for women industrial workers after the war are just conjuring up ghosts that will never arise. . . Women will be able to keep almost every gain they have made in industry -- in numbers employed, in better types of jobs, in higher wages."

Most bourgeois commentators, in contrast to Johnson, assert that women are tired of their war jobs and will be delighted to return to their homes.

Women are considered a labor reserve that can be used or laid on the shelf at will. But more than 11,000,000 women were employed in 1939, before the war. Most of them worked from necessity, not choice. Many were the sole support of families. Their number will be greatly increased by war widows and wives of disabled soldiers.

As unemployment grows, every effort will be made to drive women back to the home -- although the very existence of that home may depend on the woman's wages. Women will not only find themselves barred from the new jobs they have mastered, but the nurseries, plant cafeterias, and other services which have been established as a wartime emergency measure, will be closed. Capitalism, impoverished by war, will be in no position to provide such luxuries!

But millions of women have for the first time acquired skill in what was considered "a man's work". They have been released from the drudgery and confinement of domestic labor and became an essential part of the productive life of the community. They have won financial independence. They have joined unions and many have become active in the labor movement. They have learned that nurseries can free them from a 24-hour day as mothers, and at the same time provide an ideal environment for the growth and development of their children. Will these women be willing to return to their traditional and restricted duties in the home?

They will have gained new confidence and a wider experience of life. They will want to use their new skills and not be pushed back into the kitchen. They will need work desperately. They will revolt!

But is it possible for them to make a permanent advance on the base of wartime gains? Obviously not. Capitalist economy cannot provide jobs for women. It cannot meet even the most immediate practical demands which women will make -- equal opportunity for employment, equal wages, seniority, etc. The fight for these demands will lead women directly into the fight to change the whole existing order of society. We will have a unique opportunity to show women that only a socialist economy can solve their problems.

The early years of the Soviet Union provide a concrete example of the socialist solution to this question. The Soviet government not only gave women complete political and legal equality with men but, more important than this, it made every effort to secure for women access to all kinds of industrial and cultural work. It attempted whenever possible to socialize the physical functions of the home by providing nurseries, communal dining rooms and laundries, recreational organizations of every type. Its goal was to eventually absorb all housekeeping functions in these socialist institutions and liberate women from bondage in their homes, giving them for the first time an opportunity to actively take part in the productive and cultural life of the community.

Right now women are the hardest hit by cut-backs in employment. This situation will reach a crisis in the course of the coming year. There will be millions of women in a rebellious mood. . . industrial workers, trade union members who have already learned the elementary lessons of class struggle. We must plan now to reach these women. Women, like Negroes, are an oppressed minority. We need appropriate demands and slogans. We need special committees and forms of organization. We must not overlook the necessity for such work because of a vague idea that it is "feminist". As Lenin said when he discussed this problem twenty years ago: "That is not feminism. That is practical, revolutionary expediency."

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REVIEW OF OUR TRADE UNION POLICY

By A. Winters

The fundamental problem that has confronted us and will yet face us in the near future is how to function in the trade union movement without beheading ourselves. And conversely, how to function in the trade unions without stagnating in this period of imperialist war and reaction.

To be sure, these are also "peace time" problems, but under the tremendous impact of the stringent war time measures of the democratic imperialists, both of these dangers are accentuated.

Upon the successful answer to these problems, lies the success or failure of our trade union fractions and our whole proletarianization campaign, which are inseparately linked together.

If this problem has been successfully handled nationally, then the main source of the party's recruitment would be from the results of our mass work in the unions. There can be no successful substitute for this type of work. There can be no other way of becoming a proletarian party.

The potential party recruit in the initial awakening of his class consciousness participates in his trade union. This is especially the case where Negro workers are concerned.

It is from this layer of workers, and you will find such groups everywhere, that our main source of recruits will come. It is necessary to know how to reach them and win them for the revolutionary party.

It is necessary for us to consciously seek or create arenas of activity at a level which can activate this group. We may contact these workers in many ways, but unless we can activate them, unless we can show ourselves as something of a force, we lose them. What is worse, a certain amount of demoralization sets in on our own comrades, when the sweep of union life passes over them. The comrades cannot but feel a certain amount of impotency.

The important thing is that we actively participate in our union life and then we set the level of participation before each concrete situation.

We have found the following types of activity fruitful and reasonably safe to work in. These types are not just local phenomena found only in North Jersey, Bayonne, but repeat themselves in various forms nationally, especially in the mass production industries of the C.I.O.

We have found that we can fully participate in the progressive groups which are against the no strike pledge.

While we do not assume the very top leadership of these groups, we are nevertheless, the principal backbone of these groups, and are recognized as such. We fully participate in such campaigns as these groups carry on, such as local elections, convention delegate elections, etc., and have made much political capital from it. What is almost equally as important, is that it has served as a testing and steeling ground for the comrades involved and has tremendously served in their individual development and revolutionary assurance.

We have found that we can organize a fight on the union floor against Hillman's PAC and use the opportunity for exposing the boss role of both parties and offer the alternative of a labor party. It is a perfectly normal and logical manner of introducing the whole labor party question and of being its main exponent.

We can sail into WLB decisions without necessarily leading any strike movements. All the workers are protesting, and the least we can do is state their grievances in a clear and general way.

We can organize a fight for the support of the 18, from the floor at a membership meeting, and not only secure support from the heads of unions but from the membership as well.

Even if we don't win the official support of the membership, we have nevertheless popularized the case before a few hundred workers and can do the necessary work from below.

We cannot expect to incidentally and accidentally chance across a contact who happens to ply his trade next to you, but rather we should be consciously participating in the arena which would most likely attract the better elements.

We cannot lay low and abstain from any substantial leadership now while awaiting the upsurge itself and expect the workers to follow us once it comes.

In the first place, in the very near future, capitalism may solve the whole problem for us by removing us from industry along with millions of other workers when they cut back war production. This process has already begun and will gain tremendous impetus with the close of the war with Germany.

This would undoubtedly be the sad fate for many of our "colonized" proletarians, whose approximately 2 years of patient waiting will have gone for naught. Comrades with such perspectives should deliberately step up their tactics. We cannot give ourselves long term perspectives when only short ones exist,

Secondly, when the workers do begin to move on a mass scale, why should they follow anyone who did not previously supply some type of leadership? How would they know that we are even capable of this leadership? How would a young comrade ever gain his leadership experience and confidence while sitting it out?

Thirdly, all types of scoundrels, and fakers, like the Stalinist, and S.P., budding Trade Union bureaucrats, etc., would have in the meantime utilized the period of hopeful waiting to entrench themselves in the leadership of these workers. These types often exist for lack of an alternative that we could supply.

We will have lost an excellent opportunity to expose these fakers and counterpose our own program.

The contention that any such programmatic fights automatically leads to top leadership and exposure on the one hand or opportunistic adaptations on the other hand is simply to reason in a formal manner and in no way can be considered a mirror of the living mechanics themselves.

First let us concern ourselves with the danger of exposure and victimization. This is an important consideration for some who "do not do so much".

Offhand let us get one thing straight. The fact that there might be some victimizations should not automatically exclude us from participation. There is always a certain amount of danger involved, but if we are not simply people whose main activity in life consists in contemplating our respective navels, we will give everything its just weight.

We have outlined in this article, types of activity which have yielded as yet no casualties whatsoever, but on the contrary, have proven themselves quite fruitful. These activities can by and large,

with due considerations to specific concrete situations be carried on nationally, especially in the C.I.O.

While one can argue to some plausible degree of the danger of victimizations, the danger of opportunism is truly blown up by some to fantastic proportions. Only a very brief examination of our national fractions can prove this contention to the hilt.

We see that on the whole our fractions are modest and do not influence any wide circle of workers. They are most certainly not in the leadership of the masses, where there would be perhaps a tendency to make life easier by a few adaptations, to the official trade union bureaucracy, the labor lieutenants of Roosevelt and his war machine. When the comrades win such mass influence and leadership, the time will then come when we will have to keep a close guard. But what have we today? The exact opposite is true. The comrades are essentially isolated and play a negligible leadership role. Many are inexperienced in mass work and have doubts and qualms as to their as yet, untested ability. The heavy hand of the war makes it quite uncomfortable and unpopular for a revolutionist to advance even the slightest criticism of the official line. Given the broad and general excuse and backing of "this is a fundamentally reactionary period", the danger that does exist is to sidestep not solve the problem and preserve one's revolutionary conscience. The danger then we can clearly see is sectarianism and ultra-leftism, and not opportunism. The danger that does exist, is that fractions may wither away, and not that they will adapt themselves to the pressure of the labor fakers.

Where fractions are situated in extremely healthy environment (large membership militant, democratic union life) such sectarian tendencies will result in a lot of lost opportunities for growth. There may be a little progress shown. But when these sectarian tendencies manifest themselves in a relatively sicklier climate (petty-bourgeois background, Stalinists, worn out radicals etc.,) the result may be and has been the failure of our proletarianization campaign. Here the subjective factor of policy, given an adverse objective background can be and is decisive.

But if this is admittedly a "reactionary period", someone may ask, how can you function to any extent? Again, the comrades must avoid falling into a trap created by formal thinking.

The war time dictatorship of Roosevelt and capitalist democracy is one thing, the fascist dictatorship of Hitler is another.

Between the professed and real aims of U.S. democratic imperialism, we know exists a wide discrepancy. But fortunately for us, the American capitalists have not yet seen fit to cast aside completely these democratic pretensions. They do not as yet see any need for any fascist repressions. The labor lieutenants are assigned the job of coralling and pacifying the American labor movement. We can and we must utilize these contradictions. It is possible to conduct progressive struggles today. Witness the UAW, Rubber and Ship conventions. In the Rubber union, we have seen the membership force Dalrymple to retreat on the expulsion of 30 militants in his union.

Everywhere the workers are growing increasingly restless. More and more progressive formations are taking shape as an expression of this fact. We must learn how to inject ourselves in these limited struggles in this period not with the perspective of leading the workers in struggle, but of winning cadre elements to the party.

As the war fever wears off and the needs of the war, which the workers today passively support, become less and less apparent, the masses will wage increasingly greater struggles. But the political repressions of the capitalist will become correspondingly sharper and sharper. As the labor lieutenants, the Murrays, Greens, etc., show their increasingly inability to cope with the rising discontent, the capitalists may well resort to raids on labor such as Palmer conducted after the last war. The prospects then are that we are in for a protracted period of reaction. We will have to have a positive as well as a negative set of tactics to cope with this situation, such as briefly outlined in this article.

NOTE: A regular national monthly bulletin notifying the comrades of the experiences and methods of activity of the important fractions, would be of tremendous aid and value.

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PARTY EDUCATION AND PARTY DISCUSSION

By Bernard Forrest

The article by Comrade Martin in the Party Builder poses sharply the need for increasing and extending our educational work. Many aspects of party education will be discussed during the coming months. In this article I propose to discuss the relationship of education to internal party discussion, a question which I believe has not been dealt with recently in our movement.

In approaching the problem of party education we must always remember that, although a party's program and activities may be Bolshevik, many of its individual members may not be full-fledged Bolsheviks. In this respect, the whole is greater than its parts. Actually, if the party is experiencing a period of rapid growth, a large portion of the membership will be developing towards Bolshevism. To become a Bolshevik requires a certain quantity and quality of education and experience. One can confidently assert that when the Bolshevik party of Lenin led the October insurrection, many members of the party were not Bolsheviks -- in the true sense of the word -- although they were revolutionary workers. Let us recall that a good half of the membership was recruited in the six months preceding the insurrection. Despite the rapid development of workers during a revolutionary period, undoubtedly a large part of the new membership had not become fully developed Bolsheviks at the time of the insurrection. This development would be slower during a relatively quieter period, such as the present one. The paradox between the Bolshevik character of the party and the political development of individual members must be borne in mind for proper educational work.

Discussion in our party serves to clarify ideas, prepare for a decision on policy to be carried out in action, and educate the membership. Internal discussion develops the party ranks and lays the basis for real collective leadership.

It is essential that all comrades be grounded in the fundamental principles of the Marxist movement. A mere knowledge of principles, however, is not enough. Our primary aim must be the development of comrades to an understanding of the method of Marxism and the ability to use that method in solving current political problems. In a period of illegality comrades who can apply the method of Marxism independently will be the greatest bulwark of the party program. It is essential that at the present time we teach as many comrades as possible the method of Marxism. One of the best methods of instruction is by regular discussions in the party on current events, taking into account various points of view in the organization. Comrades will then learn to translate the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky into the language of current politics. Party discussion serves to convince comrades of the correctness of the basic ideas of our movement, thereby forging better and greater party discipline. Differences on episodic or secondary questions may be viewed then in proper relation to the party program as a whole.

The Conduct of Party Discussions

In the event of disputes between members of the National Committee the various points of view ought to be presented in writing to the N.C. The N.C. would then open a discussion in the party for a specified period of time. At the end of that period the discussion would be closed, a decision reached, and the minority would carry out the decision of the party majority in action. The question may be re-opened in the next pre-convention discussion, unless new facts or a different position convinces the N.C. majority to reopen the question sooner.

The same general procedure should apply to discussion in party branches, although comrades may prefer to state their positions orally. Disputed questions in the branches should be raised in such fashion as to permit the branch executive committee to organize the discussion and maintain the greatest order in branch meetings. If the question is of sufficient importance, it may be referred to the National Committee for discussion. Once a discussion has been opened, any party member may participate, of course. The above is not a definitive outline but merely the normal procedure in party discussion. Let us remember that discussions in the party need not arise only when disputes exist. The National Committee should launch discussion on all important questions to clarify and to educate the party membership.

The Bi-Annual Conventions

The party constitution requires that party conventions be held at least once every two years, and provides for a pre-convention discussion period for sixty days prior to the convention. From this, some comrades have drawn the conclusion that discussions in the party should be restricted solely to this pre-convention period. Such a concept betrays an ignorance of the revolutionary nature of the present epoch. Further, it would suppress discussion in the ranks, thereby hindering party education; and it would tend to create factions as the only means for comrades to get their position before the party. The latter is much more dangerous than even a little superfluous discussion.

Party discussions are not determined by the dates of party conventions, but rather by the march of the class struggle. The great events of our epoch -- the radicalization of the masses, wars, revolutions -- demand that they be discussed. Even if a rule against discussion were promulgated, the class struggle itself would violate that rule.

The history of our own party shows how ridiculous such a concept is.

1. Convention in December, 1937. In the summer of 1938 we had a full party discussion of the transitional program and the labor party question, ending in a national referendum.

2. Convention in July, 1939. In September, 1939, the Nazi-Soviet pact precipitated a discussion which lasted until the special convention in April, 1940, resulting in the split of the petty bourgeois minority.

3. Convention in April, 1940. In May, Hitler overran Europe. A month later the proletarian military policy was advanced by Comrade Trotsky. We held a discussion in our ranks in August and September, concluded by the plenum conference which also solidified the party after Trotsky's death.

4. In July, 1941, the government attacked our party. The discussions on the Minneapolis case ended in a Plenum conference in October.

5. In August, 1943, Mussolini was overthrown by the revolt of the Italian workers. A Plenum of the National Committee was held in October to discuss the events. For various reasons, the discussion was not carried to the membership.

Our convention adjourns November 19. If the German workers overthrow Hitler on December 19, can anyone doubt that we would open a full party discussion on this great event? Or would someone propose keeping it on ice for two years?

Discussion In A Combat Party

A combat party is a proletarian revolutionary party leading the workers in action against capitalism. Contrary to the combat organizations of the bourgeoisie, whose discipline is that of the barracks, a workers' combat party unites centralism and discipline in action with the fullest internal democracy. Discipline in a revolutionary party bases itself upon an understanding of, and an agreement with, the basic political principles of the organization. To understand this, and to see the need for the fullest participation of the party membership in making party policy is to understand that discussion makes for greater discipline and consequently for a better combat party. It is ridiculous to contrast party discussion to party activity and to assume that one excludes the other. Let us look at the Bolshevik Party in the period from February to October, 1917, for some lessons in this regard.

They held two full-dress party discussions during these eight months. The whole month of April was spent discussing Lenin's April Theses, culminating in the April conference and Lenin's victory. In the month of July a pre-convention period was organized, concluding in the Sixth Party Congress beginning July 26, under conditions of semi-legality, with Lenin in hiding and Trotsky in jail.

In addition there were several minor discussions. In March, in the Petrograd organization, on the policy of Pravda, leading to the demand for the expulsion of the members of the Political Committee acting as the editors of Pravda -- Stalin and Kamenev. In September, on the Democratic Conference and the policy relating to the Pre-Parliament. On October 11, two weeks before the insurrection, on whether the Bolsheviks should take power -- precipitated by Zinoviev and Kamenev -- and carried to the party ranks.

Such was the experience of the greatest combat party in history in the period of its greatest combat -- the revolutionary overthrow of Russian capitalism.

A Debating Society?

An organization of workers with its face toward the masses, standing on a platform of Trotskyism, with its members in the mass movement, involved in the daily struggles of the working class, is in little danger of becoming a debating society. That danger has not threatened our party for some years now. The fact that we can launch an ambitious literature campaign simultaneously with a pre-convention discussion is proof of that. Here in Chicago we are planning a full discussion with at least one meeting per week. Nevertheless, we are not only participating wholeheartedly in the literature campaign and continuing our regular work, but we have taken on additional work during this period. We inaugurated a new class on fundamentals. Our trade unionists are organizing discussion groups with contacts. We plan three open meetings and a November 7 celebration between now and the time of the convention. We increased the bundle order of the Militant from 1,200 to 1,500 copies weekly, adding two UAW union meetings monthly to our regular scheduled list of six plant distributions. We ordered 10,000 copies of the Militant of September 23, containing the summary article on the UAW convention, for distribution at two UAW local meetings and at least four UAW plants -- day and night shifts. No, comrades, there is little danger of turning our party into a debating society at this stage of the game.

Party discussion educates party members, gives them a greater understanding of the needs of our movement and consequently helps to make them better Bolsheviks. As better Bolsheviks they are capable of participating more competently in greater party activity. Greater party activity, in its turn, gives rise to more party discussion. It is absurd to try to counterpose party discussion to party activity. The two are dialectically intertwined and both are indispensable for the healthy, rounded development of the party and its membership.

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