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ON THE SLOGAN OF THE REPUBLIC IN ITALY
AND ITS DISCUSSION IN THE S.W.P.

By Daniel Logan

At the beginning of June 1944 the Allied troops entered Rome and the question of the existence of the Italian monarchy became central in Italian politics. For a few weeks I watched the attitude of The Militant on the question. The paper simply ignored it, in accordance with its previous policy which for months had been to completely ignore the problem of democratic demands in Italy. I decided to write a short article on the problem. The article is dated July 9, 1944 and, a few days after that date, it was presented to the Acting Secretary, Comrade Morris Stein, and to Comrade E. R. Frank.

How the Question Came Before the Convention

I asked for publication of the article in Fourth International and, if refused, in an internal bulletin. Comrades Stein and Frank did not care to discuss the problem itself, but, as has been current practice during the last few years, raised objections on "form" and "procedure", and on the "tone" of the article. They said that for these reasons the article could not be published in its original form. I declared that I was ready to make all concessions on "form", as long as I could clearly state the political problem, and it was agreed that the Acting Secretary would soon let me know exactly what changes were requested by the P.C. for publication.

I waited a few weeks until I received a letter from Morris Stein, dated August 3rd, which stated about my article: "We decided to hold (it) until such time as our resolution on the European situation is written. We are working on it now and it appears to us that it would be best to wait until you see the resolution so that any polemic that may take place would be far more concretized and to the point."

Comrade M. Stein's declaration is very important in the light of the subsequent declarations of Comrade E. R. Frank during the pre-convention discussion and at the convention. Frank kept repeating that the S.W.P. was not competent to examine the question and that the comrades who raised it were "literary men" making "blueprints" and disorganizing the discussion.

The picture is clear. I present a signed article on the problem of the republic in Italy, directly connected to current events. The article is "held" because its subject would be discussed "more concretely" at a convention scheduled for more than four months later. At the convention it appears that the question cannot be discussed because "we do not know enough", and the mere fact of its presentation to the convention is held against me as a crime of disorganization. If for the information of distant readers I add that Comrades M. Stein and E. R. Frank both belong to the leadership of the same tendency, namely the majority, the honesty of the procedure becomes obvious to everybody.

As Comrade M. Stein had told me, toward the end of August I received a copy of the draft resolution for the coming convention. I immediately wrote a criticism of it, in which I incorporated parts of my July 9th article, "held" unpublished, and I submitted it to the P.C. As an answer to my criticism and, probably, to the criticisms of other comrades, some of the most objectionable formulae were corrected in the draft resolution and a new, revised, draft was presented to the party for pre-convention discussion.

The changes introduced would well deserve a careful examination, which would be quite illuminating about the method of the writers of the draft and their political associates. Thus, for instance, I criticized in the draft resolution the formula: "Fascism, in its last days, bereft of all mass support, could rule only as a naked military dictatorship. The Allies and their native accomplices are today ruling Italy in this same manner." To answer my criticism, the P.C. simply introduced the word "virtually" in the last sentence of the new draft: "The allies and their native accomplices are today ruling Italy in virtually the same manner." What was the purpose of this "virtually"? Certainly not to make things clearer, for the amended sentence is, if possible, more confusing than before. The purpose of the change was simply to provide the majority with a little corner, very convenient for their game of hide-and-seek. (I must add that at the convention the sentence was removed altogether, which shows that the criticism of the opposition was not too pointless.)

The new revised draft did not come into my hands until well into the second half of September. Because of the changes introduced by the P.C., I had to rewrite my criticism in order to present it to the party. The result was the article now published, On the Situation in Europe and Our Tasks. The article is dated October 1, 1944. It was in the hands of the Acting Secretary by October 3rd. The article was published in the Internal Bulletin, No. 8, of the S.W.P., which came out during the last week of October. I have been able to ascertain that branches not too remote from the center did not receive the bulletin containing the article until well into November (the convention started on November 16th). Delaying an article more than three weeks in a "sixty day pre-convention discussion period" is slightly clipping the wings of party democracy. However, I shall not complain too much; political ideas I had presented on current events in Italy came to be known by the party only four months after they were presented. I shall not complain too much, I said, because some other comrades have not even had that luck.

At the Convention

The main speakers for the majority were quite reserved in their arguments against the slogan of the republic in Italy. Their main line of defense was that the S.W.P. was incapable of deciding, or even examining such a question. Those who had forgotten their geography were reminded often enough that New York is more than three thousand miles away from Italy. What can you say from such a distance? A geographical fact becomes the main political argument of the majority.

However, when we listen more closely to the debates in the party during the pre-convention discussion or at the convention, we find that a good part of the arguments used by the majority were of a purely ultra-left character, completely alien to our movement. These ultra-left arguments were used by minor spokesmen, who were only too eager to seize every stone as a weapon, and were unchecked by the control that the party as a whole and the sections of the International imposed, to a certain degree, on the main spokesmen of the majority.

When I say that the major speakers for the majority did not use ultra-left arguments, I must be more precise: they did not use ultra-left arguments in articles or recorded speeches. However, off the record the spokesmen of the majority, major as well as minor, did not fail to use weapons taken from the arsenal of ultra-leftism. The result has been that, when you speak to rank and file members of the party, one out of two tells you that, "of course", the majority of the leadership opposes the slogan of the republic for principled reasons.

The ultra-left arguments were also put forward or readily accepted by quite a few rank and file members. Many new comrades, who came to us in the past five years, still know very little of the activities and experiences of our movement in Europe ten or fifteen years ago. They have been educated in the political atmosphere of the United States of America, where most bourgeois-democratic problems have been solved in the most radical way by the bourgeoisie a long time ago. They fail to appraise the political weight and the explosiveness of the problem of the monarchy in a country like Italy.

All that is only too understandable. What is less easy to understand is the attitude of the party leadership. Instead of correcting the infantile prejudices of younger members, they flatter them, they nourish them, because, after all, they are against the opposition and, against the opposition, everything is good. You wouldn't expect the majority of the party leadership to correct comrades who vote against Morrison, Morrow and Logan, even if the price paid for that support is the sacrifice of the most precious traditions of our movement?

While, on the record, they themselves were not using (or not using many) ultra-left arguments, the main leaders of the majority did nothing to rebuke the many ultra-left arguments put forward against the opposition. On the contrary, they did everything to make them appear and flourish, and they drew support from them. In the dictionary of politics such an act is defined as unprincipled politics.

This procedure may secure votes against the opposition. It contains, however, great risks. Its first result is the miseducation of the party and this miseducation may have very dangerous surprises in store for tomorrow. That is why it is imperative to examine carefully the ultra-left arguments brought forward. We are, however, immediately confronted with a difficulty. The majority of the leadership has been careful enough not to permit such arguments to appear

in print. What to do? Should we keep silent about them? I cannot resign myself to such a dangerous conclusion. I will examine these arguments on the basis of verbal reports on them that have come to me from both majority and minority members. I am fully aware of the fact that my action may provoke a hue and cry from the majority of the P.C. That, however, would be sheer hypocrisy. I have explained how that action has been forced upon me by the majority. I clearly state beforehand that the arguments have been put forward verbally and, by bringing them out into the open, I am giving the majority of the P.C. the opportunity of denying them factually and politically.

"We Are For Socialism!"

This is the common denominator of a great variety of arguments circulated against the slogan of the republic in Italy: "We want socialism, not the republic!", "We are for a workers' republic, not a bourgeois republic!", etc.

These arguments are not new. They are classical expressions of ultra-leftism. Arguments built on the same pattern have often been examined and refuted in our movement, and in the Bolshevik party and the Third International. In my article On the Situation in Europe and Our Tasks I tried to show how alien that kind of argument was to our methods. Comrade Goldman dealt with them again in his article On the Question of the Slogan "For a Democratic Republic" (Internal Bulletin, Vol. VII, No. 1, March 1945). I simply summarize again our conclusions.

The method of ultra-left arguments consists in opposing our goal to anything else. The method of those who want to follow Lenin is the direct opposite: it is to find a path of action from the present situation to socialism. The problem cannot be solved by simply stating whether or not we are "for socialism" (a strange thing in our movement!), but by analyzing how to get onto the road to socialism. And here the whole question of democratic demands is involved.

The fundamental defect of such arguments, when used in our ranks against the slogan of the republic, is the following: these arguments about "being for socialism" are so general that they can equally be used against any democratic demand. That is why we have the right to say that the acceptance of a program of democratic demands by those who use such arguments against the republic is merely ritualistic. The struggle for democratic demands is so unquestionably a tradition of our movement that they cannot oppose it openly. But the kind of arguments they used against one specific slogan, being equally applicable to all, shows that they pay only lip-service to our traditions.

Of course, one can sincerely be for democratic slogans and at the same time be against the slogan of the republic in Italy now. But, in such a case, the reasons against the slogan of the republic must be specific, related to that one particular slogan and not apply as well to all democratic slogans.

The inability of some members of the majority to grasp the handling of democratic demands at all is at times suddenly revealed by

the surprising arguments they use. Thus a minor spokesman of the majority declared: "If you are for the republic in Italy, why not in England?" And a burst of laughter completes his argument.

This objection is remarkable for its method; if the slogan of the republic is correct in Italy, it should also be in England. Since nobody puts it forward for England, then it is clearly incorrect for Italy. Admirable logic!

However, more than the method is deficient here; the political acumen is not especially sharp either. Today, the existence of the monarchy in England is a tenth-rank question (which, however, should not be completely forgotten in our agitation.) But, when England enters a revolutionary crisis, the Court may become a focus of counter-revolutionary Bonapartist intrigues. Its existence may become a burning political issue. In that case the slogan of the republic will become for a time an important political demand of the revolutionary party. Our critic does not seem to suspect that, and thus reveals how much his thoughts are imbedded in the frame of present reality, how little he sees a political situation in its revolutionary dynamism.

Sometimes spokesmen for the majority tell us, not without a malicious tone: "But calling for a republic means your acceptance of the bourgeois republic!" Such an argument could be directed against any partial demand. Does it mean that we stop there? We support the struggle of a union for a ten-cent increase per hour. Does that mean that we are against a twenty-five cent raise? More generally, does our support of a fight for a wage increase mean our acceptance of the capitalist wage system? Etc., etc. But enough about all these ultra-left ratiocinations. Here a clear answer must be demanded about our past.

Our movement had the slogan of the republic in Spain in 1930-31. In the pre-revolutionary period of 1934-36 Trotsky suggested its inclusion in the program of action of the Belgian section of the Fourth International, where it had incomparably less importance than now in Italy. That does not imply that the slogan is necessarily correct now in Italy. But it does imply that the slogan cannot be opposed for general reasons such as: "We are for socialism, not for the bourgeois republic", etc. We were also, as far as I know, for socialism at that time! It also implies that the first task of the majority of the leadership should have been to explain what concrete, specific and new conditions, not existing in the past, prevented the use of the slogan in Italy now. As it did not fulfill this elementary duty, as it left the traditions of our movement in the dark, and, instead of precise clarification, threw all kinds of general accusations at the opposition, it thus opened the door to the strangest misconceptions in the minds of its own followers. The result of such a policy did not take long to appear. A minor spokesman for the majority declared: "Yes, Trotsky was for the republic in 1931, but because Spain was a feudal country." Not a voice from the ranks of the majority came to correct such political illiteracy.

It must be repeated once more. As long as the majority does not settle its political accounts with our past, as long as it does not clearly state what specific reasons prevent us today from using a slogan we used in the past, but simply opposes us with general arguments and accusations, the majority must be considered to be in a state of political insolvency.

"The Masses Want Soviets!"

The argument about our being "for socialism" was so shaky, so alien to our methods for solving such a question, that most of the spokesmen of the majority felt obliged to present something a bit more concrete. They discovered, although "more than three thousand miles away", that the Italian masses "want soviets", and therefore ... we cannot call for the immediate proclamation of the republic.

Does that mean that we are on the eve of the passing of state power into the hands of the Italian soviets? In such a situation, of course, the problem of the monarchy would have been solved long ago, or would have been by-passed and would have lost any significance. Unfortunately, we are not yet at such a stage.

There are no soviets in Italy now. The Italian masses still have very little practical experience about the functioning and the potentialities of such bodies. The present problem is, then, to get soviets. How can we get them? By the revolutionary action of the masses. How can we help the masses to unleash their revolutionary energy and enter the road of action? On that point the majority keeps silence.

Soviets are not formed because the masses are intellectually convinced beforehand of their advantages, because the masses set the goal of forming them. Soviets appear at a certain stage as a necessary instrument of the struggle. The objective aim of the struggle is, of course, to establish a duality of power and, later on, the power of the soviets. Subjectively, however, in the consciousness of the masses, soviets appear rather as a means than as an end. This is especially true at the beginning of the struggle. And we are still at the beginning in Italy.

What are the subjective aim or aims of the struggle at the starting point? There is a great variety of them. Experience in many countries, as far back as 1848, shows that many diverse issues may be incentives to action for the masses in the first stages of a revolutionary crisis. The touchstone of a revolutionary party is precisely its ability to seize upon such questions and use them as a lever to push the masses onto the road of action.

This does not at all mean that the immediate proclamation of the republic is the only or even the main slogan in Italy now. But even if the problem of the monarchy were secondary, that would be no argument for condemning the slogan of the republic. As a matter of fact, the problem of the monarchy, in my opinion, has been for the past nine months and is now one of the four or five major political questions in Italy. But, whatever may be the exact rank of the slogan

of the republic in our program, it does belong to it. It is true that the problem may be solved very rapidly, in a few days of revolutionary struggle of the masses, especially if a military front ceases to separate the North from the South. However, the problem of the monarchy still exists today; it has existed since June, it existed at the time of the convention, and only those who voluntarily and obstinately closed their eyes could not see it.

If soviets appear tomorrow in Italy with the monarchy still in power, will the fight against it lose all significance for revolutionary action? It depends on the tempo of events. If the tempo is not too quick, the duality of power will manifest itself as the opposition of the central authority of the soviets to the monarchy. The court will become the center of reaction, the focus of Kornilovist intrigues. The question of its existence will be a burning issue, even with soviets existing. There is the possibility, of course, if the tempo is very quick, that the soviets will be confronted with the problem of power so rapidly that the issue of monarchy may be bypassed and as good as forgotten before being solved. This, however, seems to me the most unlikely perspective.

But, whatever the future variants may be, the present reality is still the absence of soviets. The present problem is to enter the path of action, in order to form soviets. There is not the slightest contradiction between the orientation toward soviets and the demand of the republic. Quite the contrary, in fighting for that demand, along with many others, the masses will build soviets.

At What Stage Are We in Italy?

I have heard the following argument repeated here and there in the party: "Did not Zinoviev, in October 1917, threaten to lead the Bolshevik party astray, with his orientation toward the constituent assembly?" The implication is that the use of democratic demands in general and of the slogan of the republic in particular may tram-mel the party in its offensive for power. Surprising as such an argument may be, its examination helps us to get at the heart of the question, which is: at what stage of the Italian revolution are we now? Answering this question is an important part of the problem of determining whether the slogan of the republic is correct or not. The majority did not give any clear answer to the question, it did not even notice the existence of a question; but, by circulating or letting circulate such arguments as the one reported above, it confused the present situation in Italy with the eve of October.

I tried to answer that question about the present stage in my article On the European Situation and Our Tasks. Using the Spanish revolutionary calendar, I made a comparison with the Berenguer interlude, trying to show the similarities as well as the differences. If we want to use the Russian calendar, the question which arises is not "Are we on the Eve of October in Italy?", but "Are we before or after February?". My answer to this question is as follows: Certain factors of the Italian situation put us after February. The most important of these factors has been the participation of the Stalinists and the Socialists in the government. But other factors place us before February: the Italian masses still have less experience of a generalized political struggle in the streets

than the Russian masses had after February, the monarchy is still in existence and, because of that, the Italian ruling classes still have more centralization and cohesion than the Russian ruling classes had after February. The result of the analysis tends to prove the correctness of a vigorous offensive by the revolutionary party on the question of the monarchy.

Certain comrades have objected to this method of establishing points of comparison between Italy now and past revolutionary periods. This method, they say, may lead to the conception of necessary stages: Italy will ascend, one by one, the successive steps of the revolutionary ladder. The objection does not seem to me to be correct. In the period we have now entered, the masses will make, from time to time, tremendous leaps. Problems which have been stagnating for months, for years, will be solved in a few weeks, a few days, even a few hours of tremendous revolutionary passion. This is precisely the true character of every revolutionary period. Moreover, the tempo will not be the same everywhere and will not be the same as in past revolutions. Here slowly, there quickly, it will bear the mark of specific circumstances.

When all this is said, however, it does not mean that anything can happen at any time. Revolutions have their natural history. If not, what is the use of studying the past? We try to establish a correspondence between the different stages in Russia, in Spain, in Italy, never forgetting, of course, that the tempo may be slower or quicker, that whole stages can be skipped over, etc. Analyzing the May days in Barcelona in 1937, L. Trotsky tried to determine whether they were the Spanish counterpart of the Russian July days or October days. We cannot dispense with such a method. It entails a certain relativity, for events are never exactly repeated, and we must always be on the lookout for possible differences; but to abandon the method of comparison altogether means to abandon all method in political thinking.

To the question: "At what stage are we in Italy now?", I have given my answer, using either the Spanish or the Russian calendar. I only wish that arguments be presented against me, permitting me to change, to correct or to maintain my analysis, but, anyway, helping clarify the problem. The majority has not made the slightest effort in that direction, has not even considered the problem, -- which has not prevented it from throwing out the most brazen accusations at its opponents and from letting some of its members here and there argue about Zinoviev and the eve of October.

Positive and Negative

Certain comrades put the problem this way: We can very well propagate the negative slogan: "Down with the king!", but to call: "For the republic!", that is impossible! And they think they have thus avoided the sin of opportunism and saved their soul.

The main argument for the substitution is that on the morning after the proclamation of the republic the masses will be disappointed with the bourgeois republic; therefore we cannot call for anything positive. Unfortunately for the proponents of the negative slogan,

exactly the same arguments can be directed against it; You called to fight against the king, the king is overthrown, and things are not much better! The solution is, of course, not in the petty trick of substituting a negative slogan for a positive one, but in a proper understanding and use of the slogan.

We call for the republic, but we never take the slightest responsibility for the republic arising out of the dirty compromises between the reactionaries, the liberals and the collaborationists. On the morning after the proclamation of the republic we tell the workers: "Is that the republic we have fought for? Is it for this that we have fought in the streets and forced the king to flee? No!" And we will develop the next stage of our program. The masses will lend an ear to us, because we have been with them in their first fight. Bolshevism, real Bolshevism is precisely that way of going with the masses through all their struggles, and not the lifeless manikin which is presently being built in the central offices of the S.W.P.

I must say that, if the same place and weight are accorded to them in the agitation and action of the party, the difference between the two slogans -- the positive one "for the republic" and the negative one "against the king", -- is very small. If the Italian comrades would for some practical considerations prefer the negative one, I would not spend a minute discussing the change and would accept it readily. However, the Italian comrades did adopt the positive slogan of the republic and put it as the first point of their program. And when some American comrades, on this continent, prefer the negative slogan, it is not for practical considerations on the Italian scene, but the distinction is for them a kind of shelter where they expect to be protected from the scarecrows of opportunism erected by the leadership of the majority. That is why we must discuss with them and force them to bring their reasons into the open.

Events Speak

Since last June newspapers have reported dozens of incidents which indicate, even more than "three thousand miles" away, that the problem of the monarchy is a burning political question in Italy. These incidents show the wrath of the masses against the accomplices of Mussolini, the king and the crown prince. They show also the servility of the official parties, Stalinist and Socialist, on that question.

Here we may stop an instant to answer an argument of a minor spokesman for the majority. According to him, we cannot use the slogan of the republic because the Socialists and Communists are also calling for a republic and we must "differentiate ourselves."

First, a question of fact. It is not true that the Stalinist party is now calling for the republic or even saying anything against the monarchy. For many months the Socialist party kept silent on the issue. Last November Nenni, a bit less cynical than Togliatti, felt obliged to utter a few phrases against the monarchy.

But even if the collaborationists were using the slogan of the republic, that would not in itself prevent us from using it. Very

often we do not "differentiate ourselves" by the slogans, but we "differentiate ourselves" by the methods we advocate for their realization. We say clearly that, unlike the collaborationists, we prepare to solve the monarchic problem, as any other problem, by our own methods, through the revolutionary action of the masses. When in 1940 the Stalinists were denouncing the imperialist war, did we feel the necessity of "differentiating ourselves" by ceasing to oppose the war? But enough of that.

A great light has been thrown on the question by the November 12 meeting in Rome. It has, until now, been the greatest political demonstration in Italy since the fall of Mussolini. Let us reread a few sentences of the account in The New York Times:

"The meeting was clearly anti-monarchy, as far as the sentiment of the public was concerned. Although Signor Nenni fanned that feeling, Signor Togliatti was again careful to avoid compromising himself on what has become Italy's most delicate problem. Every possible reference to the monarchy, however indirect, was greeted with tremendous hoots, whistles and boos."

What a vivid picture of the situation!

The November meeting was such a blow at the shaky political structure of the majority that its spokesmen had to find some kind of explanation. Until now they have found nothing better than this: "The meeting was for the celebration of the anniversary of the Russian revolution, the masses showed they were for socialism." How revealing of their mentality is that explanation! Instead of trying to discover in the shouts, in the interruptions, in what the speakers said and in what they did not say, what questions preoccupy the masses, the spokesmen for the majority simply accepted the official Stalinist version of the meeting.

According to The New York Times' account of the meeting, "Signor Togliatti's address was restrained. It was full of praise for the Russian revolution... Whenever possible the crowd shouted: 'Down with the monarchy!' But the Communist leader was careful never to mention the subject."

The Militant was also careful not to mention the subject of the monarchy. Its account of the meeting, in the November 25 issue, simply repeated the official interpretation that "Italian Masses Celebrate 1917 Russian Revolution". Not a word about the anti-monarchical character of the meeting! Can you imagine? The Italian masses confirming just in time by their action the prognosis of the opposition. What impudence! A letter from Comrade Abe Stein, reminding the editors of The Militant of the obvious anti-monarchical character of the meeting, was buried.

Yes, the Italian masses want socialism. But how to get socialism? How to make the first step? On that, of course, the majority is as dumb as a fish. The whole problem is erroneously transferred

from the plane of action to the plane of conviction. The question is not simply to convince the masses that socialism is very beautiful, but to help them to take the first step of political struggle, to find the issues on which they are ready to fight. I have said since last July that an important one of these issues was the monarchy. The November meeting confirmed my prognosis as completely as a political prognosis can ever be confirmed. The answer of the majority is: "The masses want socialism, and you are a literary man." Everybody can appreciate the pertinence of the answer.

Since the November meeting, new incidents have further confirmed the importance of the problem. After the escape of the Fascist hangman Roatta, a big political demonstration took place in Rome on March 6. Where did the crowd go to express its wrath? To the Quirinal Palace, that is, to the residence of the royal family. The revolutionary instinct of the Roman masses was more correct than all the ultra-left ratiocinations. The whole demonstration clearly had an anti-monarchic character.*

The problem of the monarchy has taken on even more political weight than one could suspect last July, when I wrote my first article on the problem. Very likely, when the military front which separates the North from the South disappears, events will take a quicker tempo. The fate of the Italian monarchy may be sealed in a few days and the Italian revolution will tackle new and higher tasks. But, until then, the question is on the order of the day.

It is not for us, of course, to decide here, in New York, all the details of the use of the slogan of the republic. We can leave that to our Italian comrades. But have not events thrown enough light upon that question in the last nine months to permit us to adopt the slogan in itself?

The majority of the leadership of the S.W.P. has been prevented from accepting the slogan not by lack of information, but by political prejudices. Nothing reveals that more clearly than the fact that they have concealed information about Italy. The press of the S.W.P. has kept silence on the anti-monarchic character of the November 12th meeting and other political demonstrations. The press of the S.W.P. took four months -- and then only after a minority motion for it -- to publish the program of action of our Italian comrades, which was received in the latter part of November. The delay was for no other reason, as far as we can understand, than that the first point of that program is the demand for the republic.

When political misconceptions come into such conflict with reality, it is high time to abandon them. It is high time to reject all ultra-left ratiocinations. It is high time to come back to the traditions of our movement. It is high time to enter the road outlined by the opposition.

New York,
March 14, 1945.

*Most of the big newspapers were careful not to mention this aspect of the demonstration. But a UP dispatch, reproduced, for instance, in Il Progresso Italo-Americano of New York, states: "The demonstrators shouted 'Death to the king!', 'Death to Umberto!', 'Down with the House of Savoy!'."

ANSWERS TO COMRADE CANNON'S QUESTIONS

By Albert Goldman

In the Internal Bulletin of April 1945, Comrade Cannon poses five questions dealing with our past and present estimate of the Workers' Party (see page 19 of the bulletin). A sixth question is added by Cannon in a tone of triumph as if no one will dare take up his challenge. That question is: "Do I hear an answer to these questions?" I hope Comrade Cannon "hears" the answers that I am giving to his questions.

Question 1. "Was the analysis of the petty-bourgeois opposition, which we together with Trotsky made at the time, correct or not?"

Answer: Yes.

Question 2. "Was the attitude which we took toward them properly based on that analysis?"

Answer: What attitude does Cannon mean? Did the party adopt a resolution officially indicating the proper attitude towards the minority that split from us? Did the party adopt a resolution designating the members who were expelled as renegades? If such a thing was done I am completely unaware of it.

As far as I was concerned our attitude toward the minority was one of struggle against them on the basis of their incorrect theory on the defense of the Soviet Union and their criminal conduct in splitting from the party when they were given the right to have their own faction and factional organ. I probably wrote at least as many articles against Shachtman as any other member of the party. True I did not call him names. I let Comrade Hansen and other comrades do that. I merely presented arguments.

Question 3. "Was our action in expelling them when they refused to accept the convention decisions the proper action?"

Answer: A thousand times yes.

Question 4. "What changes have taken place in the meantime? Has the Shachtman party come closer or gone farther away from us?"

It is obvious that the answer to this question touches the heart of the problem and should indicate to us what attitude we should take to the former minorityites. It must be divided into several sections.

a) The important event that occurred after the split was the entry of the United States into the World War. Thereupon, from a revolutionary Marxist standpoint, every party and every group pretending to march under the banner of revolutionary socialism was subjected to the most serious test. Next to the revolution itself the best and most serious test for any party claiming to base itself on the principles of revolutionary Marxism is an imperialist war on the part of its

own bourgeoisie. The attitude of a party towards its own imperialist bourgeoisie during a war is a decisive test of the seriousness with which such a party takes its convictions.

In his polemic against Burnham, Trotsky remarked that should any of the American opponents of the dialectic reveal a self-sacrifice and independence from patriotism, similar to that of Karl Liebknecht, we shall render what is due him as a revolutionist. Lenin was ready to applaud all socialists who adopted a revolutionary position in the First World War.

When the Workers' Party refused to support the American bourgeoisie in this war, we should have been the first to give it the credit it deserved. One does not need to be a profound student of Lenin and Trotsky to know how scrupulous they were in giving an opponent credit for a correct position on an important question. The attitude of Cannon in failing to do this is the very opposite of the attitude of the great leaders of Bolshevism.

Because of the circumstances under which the Burnham-Shachtman group refused to defend the Soviet Union during its war with Finland, we asserted that it yielded to the pressure of the democratic bourgeoisie. Although the minority refused to defend Finland, its attitude to the Soviet Union resembled the attitude of the petty-bourgeois democrats, and the conclusion was plausible that it yielded to the pressure of that social layer in society.

But the bourgeois democratic pressure exerted on all socialist groups was infinitely greater after the United States entered the war. Norman Thomas yielded to that pressure immediately and went over to a war position. If a group had actually become part of the democratic world it could not possibly have withstood the pressure and would have gone over to a pro-war position. In fact to be against the defense of the Soviet Union, an ally of American imperialism, became more difficult than to favor its defense.

On the basis of our assertion that the minority had yielded to democratic pressure during the Finnish-Soviet conflict, some comrades predicted that the Shachtmanites would go over completely to the side of the bourgeois democrats. That was of course a complete vulgarization of the Marxist method and, as was to be expected, Comrade Hansen took first prize among the vulgarizers. In an article published in the Fourth International of February 1941, the prophet Hansen gave Shachtman a few months in which to catch up and outstrip Burnham. (I presume Hansen will answer that his error is one of tempo).

Even such a serious crime as splitting from the Fourth International can be partly expiated by taking a revolutionary position during an imperialist war.

b) In our present estimate of the W.P. one must not ignore the important fact of the separation of Burnham and his followers from that party. It was Burnham who largely set the tone of the minority-ites of 1939-40. From the fact that Burnham left the W.P. soon after it was organized the conclusion can justifiably be drawn that Burnham worked for a split during the factional struggle and, once the split

was achieved, left the new party in the lurch. His leaving the new group was an important factor in keeping the Shachtmanites on the road of the proletarian revolution. With his departure the members of the minority who had devoted many years to the revolutionary movement freed themselves from an anti-revolutionary element.

Instead of prophesying, as Comrade Hansen did, that Shachtman would follow Burnham, an intelligent Marxist would have expressed the hope that Shachtman and the others, having gotten rid of Burnham, would find it easier to remain on the path of revolution.

Dwight Macdonald's disassociation from the W.P., while not having the important influence that Burnham's leaving had, was an indication that those who were consciously anti-Bolshevik were finding it difficult to remain in the new party.

c) A large proportion of the minority of 1939-40 consisted of non-proletarian youth. Their separation from the problems actually confronting the workers created an unhealthy atmosphere, where the necessity for discussion tended to be over-emphasized. On the basis of the fact that the W.P. had no roots in the trade union movement, some comrades predicted that, at best, it would never be more than a propaganda group, and most comrades prophesied an early demise for the new party.

The expansion of industry as a result of the war, plus an undoubted policy of proletarianization transformed a good many of the de-classed youth of the minority into workers. My judgment, based on a reading of the W.P. press, is that the W.P. has made some gains from the activity of their members in the trade unions. I know that this runs contrary to the assertions of most of our comrades but none of these comrades has taken the trouble to explain how a disintegrated party can continue to publish a weekly and a monthly. It is impossible to explain this fact if one accepts the picture of disintegration that some of our comrades give us of the W.P. That they have not made the gains we have made is certain, but it is not certain that they have lost in membership.

Because the minority had a proportionately larger number of youth than we did, it is very likely that they lost a proportionately larger number to the armed forces. Without recruiting some new members it is unlikely that they could have continued to publish a weekly and a monthly theoretical organ. Furthermore the fact that Labor Action consciously attempts to orientate itself to trade union workers is additional evidence that the W.P. is active in the trade unions and has made some gains.

The question of the nature of the activities of the W.P. in the trade unions and the correctness of their policies is completely irrelevant. Even if the W.P. members were as adventurous as some comrades claim they are (and that is difficult to believe, judging by their press) I would not be impressed by such an argument. Most young and inexperienced revolutionists tend towards leftism in trade union work. I shall not hold youth and inexperience against any revolutionist.

Some comrades who are in a position to know claim that the Shachtmanites are stronger than we are in the trade unions of the New York area. They have played a larger role than we have in the recent conventions of some important trade unions. That is of course because of our "policy of caution". Nevertheless it proves that they are active in the trade unions.

What is important is that the non-proletarian youth whom we justly criticized at the time they were in our party, have shown a seriousness of purpose which we did not expect. Because they are very articulate, intellectual youth in the trade union movement are very valuable, once they are cured of ultra-leftism and adventurism. In judging the character of the W.P. and in determining our attitude to the membership of that party we must by all means take into consideration that the group which we thought would never have anything to do with trade union work, has made serious attempts to orientate itself to such work and in some instances has achieved some success.

d) Certain aspects of the present program of the W.P. have undoubtedly, in a formal sense, widened the gulf between us and the former minorityites. It is necessary to analyze each one of these aspects to determine the essential question whether or not the W.P. cannot be considered a revolutionary Marxist party because of their differences with us on some important questions. Of course some comrades will contend that refusal to defend the Soviet Union immediately transforms one into an anti-Marxist. But if this is so why were we willing to permit "anti-Marxists" to remain in the party and grant them the right of a faction? There are very important questions upon which Marxists can differ and even split without ceasing to be Marxists. Some comrades should remember that Trotsky and Lenin differed on the very important question of dictatorship of the proletariat versus democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, but it occurred to neither one to call the other an anti-Marxist, because of their differences on this question.

The W.P. considers the Soviet Union a bureaucratic collectivist state. Only Burnham and Carter had that viewpoint at the time of the split. Undoubtedly the official position of the W.P. on that question means that the minorityites are farther away from us now than they were at the time of our struggle with them. But it is necessary to remember that Burnham and Carter were members of our party for several years while they held to that view of the Soviet Union and it occurred to no one to suggest that they be expelled.

It may well be that after capitalism should be restored in the Soviet Union, the Shachtmanites will still consider it to be a bureaucratic collectivist state. It would be downright insanity if, all other factors permitting, two groups would refuse to unite because one considers the Soviet Union a capitalist state and the other a bureaucratic collectivist state.

e) If, on the question of the nature of the Soviet Union, the gulf between us and the W.P. has been deepened, this is not true at present in the case of the more important question of the defense of the Soviet Union. For the time being we all agree that the military defense of the Soviet Union has receded into the background. According

to Comrade Munis it is hardly probable that the question of the defense of the Soviet Union will come up again in as sharp a form as it confronted us in 1939. Be that as it may there is not a single voice in opposition to the view that all of our efforts must now be concentrated on the defense of the European Revolution against Stalin. And on this question there is no difference between us and the W.P.

Nevertheless, if reuniting the two parties were to be proposed, the question of the defense of the Soviet Union would still be the most important question. For, so long as we believe in defending the Soviet Union in case of any imperialist attack, there is still the possibility of our using the slogan. What sense would there be in uniting if, to-morrow, the same struggle that took place in 1939-40, were to be renewed. Personally I do not believe that unity is a practical proposition so long as there is a fair probability that the defense of the Soviet Union will once more be placed by us on the order of the day.

Nevertheless it must not be taken as absolutely certain that the former minorityites would not be willing to return to the party under the same conditions that we offered them in 1940 in order to keep them from splitting the party. Had they agreed to accept discipline in action we would have given them proportionate representation on the various leading committees, with the right to have a faction and a factional organ. It is now five years since they have split; they have had their experience outside of the party; the slogan of the defense of the Soviet Union is not the burning question that it was in 1940. It is therefore necessary for us to ask the W.P. members to return to the party and accept the same conditions that we proposed to grant them in 1940..

Such an offer would serve the interests of our party either in case of acceptance or rejection. Should the former minorityites accept, our forces would be strengthened by the addition of about four hundred members, many of whom are able people with long experience in the revolutionary movement. Their return to the party would eliminate a group which confuses many workers who cannot see the difference between us and the W.P. Should they however reject our offer we would have a powerful argument to disprove their contention that our party is a "bureaucratic jungle". They would be in an exceedingly difficult position to defend their organizational criticism of our party, and the likelihood is that they would lose many of their members to us.

It should be clear, however, that our estimate of the W.P. is not to be determined by the fact that unity is impossible because of our differences on the question of the defense of the Soviet Union. It does not follow that, because unity is impossible, the members of the W.P. are renegades. It does not follow, because unity is impossible at present, that we should not collaborate with the W.P. wherever and whenever possible, on the trade union and on the political field. To harbor a permanent grudge because of our differences on the defense of the Soviet Union and because of the split is infantile politics.

f) Since the split, three questions have arisen upon which we took a position contrary to that taken by the W.P. We decided to continue giving material support to China in its struggle against Japanese imperialism, after the United States entered the war, while the W.P. took a position against material support. The W.P. favored raising the slogan of national liberation for the countries occupied by Hitler's armies. We opposed that slogan. Whereas our party adopted the slogan of military training under trade union control, the W.P. rejected that slogan.

All of these questions are such that differences could be expected with reference to them in the same party. Recently the majority of the Fourth Internationalists in India took a position against supporting China. On the national question there are differences in our own ranks. The same is true of the slogan for military training under trade union control. Some English comrades are strenuously opposed to the slogan. Undoubtedly our differences with the W.P. on the three questions mentioned above are important but they are not at all of a nature which, in the course of a party discussion, could not be solved by a majority decision with the acceptance by the minority of the decision of the majority.

Question 5. "Do these changes provide the logical ground to reassert and strengthen our original decision, or to change or modify it?"

Answer: To this question the reply must be: as a result of an objective political analysis we are compelled to say that the political differences between us and the W.P. have not at all been enlarged to a point where, considered by themselves, they justify continued separation. But this does not settle the problem in the sense that it is now possible to proceed to unification.

It is the incorrect assumption of Cannon that an estimate of the W.P. can lead to only one of two results: either we must deepen the split or proceed to achieve unity. Such a simple formulation of the problem indicates a formal and not a dialectical method of reasoning.

Obviously if, upon investigation, we find that the former minorityites have turned into renegades then we do not even have to bother about deepening the split. It has become so deep that there is no way to bridge it.

But it does not mean that we immediately proceed to unite with the former minorityites if we conclude, after an analysis of their program and activities, that they are devoted revolutionists. We do not unite with people simply because they are devoted revolutionists. Should people loyal to the revolution be sectarians it would be foolish to consider unity with them. We would have to split and remain separated from those who would insist on organizing revolutionary trade unions and refuse to work in reformist trade unions, no matter how devoted they may be to the revolution.

It sounds very profound when one says that we must think things through to the end. That is excellent advice but one must

actually follow it and not simply enunciate the necessity to do so. To present us with the alternative; either deepen the split or unite with the Shachtmanites is far from thinking things through to the end.

Above all it is necessary to recognize that the question that led to the split has not yet been eliminated by history. If the former minorityites still feel about the defense of the Soviet Union as they felt at the time of the split, that is, if they still feel that it is an issue of such a character that they cannot possibly submit to discipline in action, then there can obviously be no talk of unity. We are still for the defense of the Soviet Union even though we have shifted our emphasis in such a way that for the present there is no practical difference between us and the W.P. But it is not altogether excluded that a situation should arise where we would be for the defense of the Soviet Union in the sense that we were for its defense in 1939-40. So long as we do not give up our estimate of the Soviet Union as a degenerated workers' state, so long is there a possibility that we use the slogan of defending the Soviet Union as we did formerly.

Furthermore it would be senseless to unite with those who consider, as normal procedure, the publication of a minority paper for the purpose of agitating among the workers for a policy contrary to one adopted by the party. While I do not believe that the former minorityites stand for such a procedure, their demand for a public organ during the factional fight justifies raising the questions and clearing it up. Should the Political Committee of our party be sensible enough to invite the former minorityites to return to the party under the same conditions that we offered them in 1940, this question as well as other questions can be raised and clarified.

Even if all political and organizational differences between us and the W.P. are eliminated, unity is practically impossible because of the attitude of Comrade Cannon and his followers. In their eyes the leadership of the W.P. consists of renegades (at least that is what they claim) and there can be no unity with renegades. According to Cannon we must make the split "stronger, more precise, and definite, more intransigent". Why? Comrade Cannon has not made any political analysis of the differences that now exist between us and the W.P.

When Cannon, without making any political analysis of the program and activities of the W.P., says: "we, on our part, assume that the course toward deepening the split is necessary and correct", he reveals that his approach is based on personal rather than on political factors. A political person thinking in political terms asks: have the activities and program of the W.P. been such as to indicate a widening of the gulf between us? It is necessary to base oneself on the objective factors of program and activity, both of these factors indicating a trend away from or toward us.

When one says: "we must deepen a split", it is safe to say that he shows an intention to go out of his way to find pretexts for deepening the split, even if the program and activities of the opposing group have in fact not deepened the split. This attitude inevitably leads to demagoguery, that is, the utilization of arguments not

based on anything corresponding to the truth and calculated simply to arouse prejudice and hostility. Insistence on using the term 'renegades' to apply to the Shachtmanites and the writing of criticisms like the one by Comrade Frankel of Shachtman's essay on the Soviet Union, are examples of a demagogic attitude.

Intelligent comrades will not be swayed one bit by name-calling. They will analyze the program and activities of the W.P. and, should the question of unification become a subject for consideration, will decide on the basis of all the political factors then prevailing. Motives of personal dislike or hatred are completely alien to Bolsheviks.

Could unity be achieved it would be altogether desirable for it would increase the strength of our party considerably. Against this statement I am certain the majority of the P.C. will raise the scare; what, do you want us to go back to the days of endless discussion with the petty bourgeois elements? But political people must consider that many of those who split from us were in the revolutionary movement many years and are very capable people. They remained in the revolutionary movement after they split and showed by their actions that they are very serious revolutionists. No one who is not serious sticks to the revolutionary movement as most of those who split from us have done. The elements who were not serious have left the W.P.

Unity would eliminate a party that in all of the day-to-day activities presents, for the American scene, practically the same program that we do. It is difficult, if not impossible, for the average worker to see any difference between our agitation and that of the W.P. What have been the main ideas emphasized by The Militant in the last few years, for the American scene? The character of the war and our non-support; opposition to the no-strike pledge; a Labor Party. These ideas also constitute the main agitational basis of Labor Action. At present the defense of the European Revolution against Stalin and the imperialists are stressed by both papers.

So long as unity is impossible so long must we take great pains to distinguish ourselves from the W.P. and patiently explain what separates us and the circumstances under which the W.P. group split from us. But it would be utterly absurd and politically criminal to reject unity simply on the basis that the former minorityites split from us and that we must punish them for that crime by refusing to unite regardless of the fact that no political or organizational questions separate us any longer. This of course is not yet the case but the attitude of Cannon and his followers indicates that they will create differences if necessary in order to prevent unity.

Surely at the present time our relative strength to the W.P. is not so great as to justify ignoring them on that score. To justify his attitude to the W.P., Comrade Cannon tells us to "read Lenin's letter to the German Communists after the break with Levi. Read Trotsky's letter on the Spanish events after the break with Landau". As usual Cannon ignores fine -- and not so fine -- distinctions. That Landau had about ten followers, that Levi was a lone wolf in comparison with the official party, that it was not a question of

dealing with a group that for five years showed it could exist and carry on work with some effectiveness -- all these are factors that Cannon blithely ignores. He hands us quotations without analyzing the present concrete situation.

The claim is made by Cannon that the W.P. has only about one fourth of our membership. A little less than one-half is probably much closer to the truth. But let us even assume that Cannon's figures are correct. Can eight hundred ignore two hundred or eight thousand ignore two thousand? Especially if, in the group with the smaller number, are old and experienced revolutionists?

One need only remember the split between Lenin and Trotsky and the many years of sharp struggle between them, with all the factional name-calling, to realize that a split does not have to be permanent. He who refuses to heal a split when its causes are eliminated is just as bad as he who has split a party when he is given complete freedom to agitate for his ideas. Since the political line of Trotsky was essentially the same as that of the Bolsheviks and since Trotsky realized that unity between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks was out of the question, the fact that Trotsky and Lenin called each other names constituted no bar to the entry of Trotsky's organization into the Bolshevik Party.

It may be argued that the attitude of the Shachtmanites to our party is such that unity is impossible even if the question of the defense of the Soviet Union is entirely eliminated. So long as the Shachtmanites consider our party a "bureaucratic jungle" how can we consider the possibility of unity with them?

The answer to that objection is that the problem on our part is one of a correct attitude to the W.P. A correct attitude on our part places the W.P. entirely on the defensive; an incorrect, demagogic attitude justifies the W.P. in making their accusations against the nature of our party. If, at every stage of the development of the controversy between us and the W.P., we pursue a correct policy based on an objective analysis of all factors the former minorityites will be compelled to ask for re-entry to the party or else disintegrate. An attitude of baseless and inexplicable hostility to the W.P. justifies the existence of that party.

Conclusions

1. In program and activity the W.P. is a revolutionary Marxist party, even though it differs with us on the exceedingly important questions of the nature of the Soviet Union and the necessity for its defense.

2. There are other differences between us and the W.P., but from a political point of view the only difference that possibly justifies continuation of the split is the question of the defense of the Soviet Union. If that question should be eliminated by history then no reason would exist (assuming no other differences develop) for a continued separation, unless the former minorityites should insist on the right of a minority to issue a public organ agitating for a policy contrary to that of the party. This I do not believe to be their attitude.

Even though the question of the defense of the Soviet Union is not as yet a matter of history, we should make an attempt at unity on the condition that the W.P. comrades accept the conditions that we offered them in 1940.

3. Until unity is achieved we must fight the W.P. by showing the advanced workers that it is incorrect on the question of the Soviet Union and that the members of that party committed a crime in splitting the revolutionary forces when they were given the right to have their own faction with their own factional organ. Any other attitude, such as calling the Shachtmanites renegades, being based on demagoguery, is bound, in the long run, to repel thinking workers.

4. Until unity is achieved our attitude to the W.P. must be based on the fact that it is a revolutionary party. This means collaboration with the W.P. wherever and whenever possible, with the idea in mind of unification as soon as possible.

May 7, 1945 ,

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HISTORICAL NOTE

By Albert Goldman

In an article by Comrade Wright dealing with Morrison's proposal to give critical support to the Socialist Party in the presidential elections of 1944, published in the Internal Bulletin, Vol. VI, No. 7, October 1944, Wright makes the following statement with reference to the proposal made by Trotsky in 1940 to give critical support to Browder in the presidential election of that year:

"The Old Man advanced his proposal during discussions with our comrades in Coyoacan at the time; and then withdrew it because of the practical objections raised. He did not agree with these objections, but deferred to the opinion of Comrade Cannon and others." (emphasis in original).

I wrote a reply to Wright's article several months ago, in which I showed that Wright's method in dealing with the question of support to the Socialist Party was far removed from the method of Marxism. The article was unfortunately not submitted by the comrade to whom I sent it and with the passing of time I decided that the article was too "dated" to justify publication. At the conclusion of the article I appended the following note:

Note: The statement made by Wright that Trotsky withdrew his proposal to give critical support to the Communist Party in the

1940 presidential election campaign is one the accuracy of which should be ascertained for the sake of historical truth. According to Wright, Trotsky withdrew his proposal in deference to the opinion of Comrade Cannon and others who raised practical objections.

If Trotsky made such a withdrawal in some written form the production of the letter or document would conclusively settle the question. I would be exceedingly surprised but I would have to accept Wright's statement. In the absence of anything in writing we must all depend on memory to recall whether or not Trotsky actually withdrew the proposal.

My recollection now is that when the proposal was brought back from Mexico by some comrades who visited with Trotsky no statement was made that Trotsky withdrew the proposal. It is exceedingly improbable that after the comrades returned from Mexico (sometime in July or August of 1940) Trotsky would have withdrawn the proposal without informing us to that effect in writing.

I know as a fact that about a week before the assassination I began working on a memorandum in favor of the proposal. I finished the first draft when the news of the assassination made it necessary for me to go to Mexico. It was while I was there that a party conference was held, at which the proposal was rejected. This in itself would indicate that Trotsky never withdrew the proposal.

There is this possible explanation. It was reported, I believe, that Trotsky stated that he would not press the question to the point of taking it to the membership if the P.C. decided against his proposal. Wright evidently confuses a statement not to fight for the proposal in the ranks with withdrawing the proposal.

I consider everything connected with the political activities of Trotsky so important that the greatest care should be exercised in stating the facts relative to any incident involving Trotsky, which has some political importance.

In a letter which I sent to Comrade Natalia on February 13, 1945 I wrote;

I am sending you a note which I attached to an article that I wrote in reply to one by Wright. The article deals with the question of our policy in the last presidential campaign. In the course of the discussion Wright made the statement that L.D. withdrew his proposal to give critical support to Browder.

You remember that I discussed this question with you after I received word that the Plenum had rejected the proposal. You agreed with me that it was a mistake to do so. Do you recollect anything about L.D.'s withdrawal?

It may be pedantic on my part to raise the question but I want the comrades to learn to use the greatest accuracy when dealing with facts relevant to L.D.'s life or political

activities and opinions.

To the above letter I received a reply dated February 27, 1945. The answer to my question is the following:

"Concerning the question of the election of Browder I can tell you the following: yes, I recall well our conversation about the proposal and for myself, I can sign your entire note which you have sent me.

"I have also spoken of this question to our friend Munis because he was present at the meeting (where the proposal was discussed -- words in parenthesis are my own). He also agrees with your note."

At a meeting of the Political Committee I proposed that all comrades who knew anything about the matter should write down their recollections. The future historian can decide on the basis of these recollections what version is most probably the correct one.

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LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS IN DISCUSSION
WITH TROTSKY

116 University Place
New York 3, N. Y.
March 31, 1945

Dear Comrade,

We are addressing this letter to all the comrades who participated in the discussion in Coyoacan where L.D. made the proposal that our party give critical support to Earl Browder in the 1940 presidential campaign.

We would like everyone of the participants in that discussion to send us a brief statement of their recollections as to the disposition of the Old Man's proposal.

Fraternally yours,

M. Stein

Acting National Secretary

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LETTER FROM CANNON

April 5, 1945

Dear Comrade Stein:

I have your letter asking a statement of my recollections of the discussion with Trotsky about his proposal to give critical support to the Stalinist presidential candidate in 1940.

I think the best statement I can make is to quote what I reported in my speech at the Plenum-Conference of the party, September 27-29, 1940, when the question was still fresh in my mind.

Here is the quotation, which appears in the Socialist Appeal, October 19, 1940:

"Nobody in the delegation agreed with the Old Man on this drastic proposal. We had a long and at times heated discussion with him on it. We took the position that such a drastic change in the middle of the election campaign would require too much explanation, and would encounter the danger of great misunderstanding and confusion which we would not be able to dissipate. While we might conceivably win over a couple of hundred Stalinist workers in the course of a drawn-out tactic of this kind, we felt that we would run the danger of losing more than we gained.

"We argued back and forth on this ground for several days. Then Trotsky made a compromise proposal. He said that, after all, the main thing is the new military policy -- the long-term strategical line -- and not the short term minor problem of our tactics in relation to the C.P. in the current election campaign.

"He said, if we would take his proposal as one possible maneuver, and would devise some method of united front approach which would really enable us to penetrate the Stalinist ranks, he would accept it as a compromise. We mulled over this a couple of days. I had a personal conversation with him before we left Coyoacan and restated my fears of misunderstanding and confusion from such a drastic policy as critical support to the C.P. in the coming election. He said he did not consider it of sufficient importance to make an issue; he did not want to provoke a party discussion which might divert attention from the paramount question of the new military policy. But we should think over the thing seriously and devise an effective united front attack against the Stalinist bureaucracy."

Yours fraternally,

J. P. Cannon

LETTER FROM COOPER

April 10, 1945

Dear Comrade Stein,

You ask for my recollections of the discussion that took place in 1940 with L.D., in regard to support of Browder in the elections of that year. I have delayed answering a few days to try and recall the real meat of the discussion.

The topic was the 1940 elections -- What should be done? I recall it was agreed by all that under no circumstances could we support Norman Thomas. The S.P. was a discredited, weak social democratic group.

L.D. presented the proposition of critical support of Browder. It was his opinion that there were many true revolutionary fighters in the C.P. and we should bend every effort to try and win them over to our banner. The Hitler-Stalin Pact, and their corresponding anti-Anglo-American line, afforded us a real opportunity to reach them with our program. He (L.D.) said their political position was untenable and we should tell the C.P. members that their leaders -- Browder and Co. -- would again betray them and make an about face and support the Anglo-American imperialists. Trotsky did not present this as an idea he was prepared to fight for but as a possible program of action. He also thought that we did not devote enough energy and time to winning members away from the C.P.

Farrell and Jim opposed the idea of critical support of Browder. They said that for years now, in the trade union movement, as elsewhere, we have bitterly opposed the C.P. policies. That we have been able to prove to many workers what a treacherous role they play. For us to support Browder would be a blow to our prestige and very difficult to explain. It would not be worth the price we would have to pay.

This is generally all I can remember of the discussion.

Fraternally yours,

Jake Cooper

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LETTER FROM CARSTEN

April 24, 1945

I was present at the conference in which Comrade Trotsky made his proposal to give critical support to Browder in the election of 1940, but I do not recall any disposition of the question having been made in the conference. I assume Comrade Trotsky dropped the matter.

Charles Carsten

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COMMENTS ON A LETTER BY MARTIN

By G. Munis

(Translated from Spanish)

The letter to which I will make reference was published in the Internal Bulletin, Volume 6, Number 9, October 1944. Martin answers a letter of Comrade Natalia, concerning the Soviet Union. And inasmuch as the Spanish Group has been proposing a radical change in the application of the defense of the USSR for almost a year, some marginal notes on the Martin letter will aid in illuminating the problem.

Paragraph 1. "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 Nazis, regardless of the officially declared aims, is profoundly revolutionary."

One may believe whatever one wishes concerning the sentiments of the Soviet masses. I also do not find myself among the pessimists. But the roots of the problem are not there, but in the principal contradiction of the actual Soviet system; the proletariat against the bureaucracy. In the economic structure of the country, each one of the ends of this opposition has its own base, equally in contradiction; the socialist tendencies of the planned economy against the capitalist tendencies in the systematic plundering by the bureaucracy. Thus, it is impossible to speak of one objective logic of the Soviet victories. There are two objective logics; proletarian: socialist -- and bureaucratic; capitalist restoration. But it is the reactionary end which is in power and dominates all the social relations -- more than any other, the Red Army. The objective revolutionary logic contained in the Soviet victories will not be able to express itself, nor much less concretize itself in revolution, except by the complete destruction of the Stalinist system.

Paragraph 3. "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.'"

Agreed; but the alternative is not a simple instrument of theoretical limitation. It is also an instrument of political action. Each one of its extremes, socialist or capitalist, is linked to different social strata and different economic interests; both are in motion, evolving. Each one has an objective, its own development, opposed to its opposite, at the same time that it influences and modifies the other reciprocally. But the capitalist extreme has, besides powerful objective supports, (growing economic differentiation of the bureaucracy), full capacity of subjective action (political power), that permits it to diminish its possibilities of subjective unfolding. On the other hand, the proletarian pole only has one means of evading the complete subjective and objective unfolding of its opposite; the destruction of the power of the bureaucracy.

Now then, the Stalinist system is a phenomenon, resulting from the inability of the world revolution to complete itself by extending the Russian revolution, and from the inability of the world counter-revolution to liquidate more speedily the first achievements of socialist economy. Accelerating all processes, the war will precipitate the union of the bureaucracy, not only with the world counter-revolution, but also with capitalist property forms, its source. In this precise moment, the alternative between the continuation of the march toward socialism or the regression to capitalism leaves off being a far-off perspective and is converted into an immediate struggle. The usefulness that it could give us as a line of demarcation, in opposition to the theoreticians of the new class, without losing its significance, cedes primacy before the necessity of combatting Stalinism as the principal threat to the planned economy and to the objective revolutionary logic of the Soviet victory.

Paragraph 4. "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."

To my knowledge, the bureaucracy never promised to avoid war on Soviet territory. This is not an important question. I only wish to deny that the bureaucracy sold out the international revolution in order to avoid war. It is certain that the Stalinist propaganda, above all in the past, tried to justify many of its opportunist acts and treacheries as necessary to the military defense of the USSR. But we always rejected that decoy. The Stalinist bureaucracy sold out the world revolution because that suited its anti-Soviet interests, not for any other reason. This is not a simple question of localizing the origin. In Martin's conception, the Stalinist treachery is relatively well-intended because he awards an excessive worth to its (the bureaucracy's) community of interests with Soviet interests. In our conception, it proceeds directly from its treason to Soviet interests. The difference acquires a considerable importance when it is a question of elucidating if we must accord a

primary or secondary place to the struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Paragraph 7. "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."

Here two things are mingled; that which the "varieties of literary politics" think, and that which the allies will do, facing the USSR. The first does not concern in the slightest degree (en lo absoluto) those of us who have sought (a quienes hemos pedido) a modification of our policy towards the USSR. We can overlook it, as thrusts directed in another direction. The second is already a matter for discussion. The attitude of the allies towards the USSR, will not be determined, in any manner, by the advance or the retreat of the world revolution; it will be dictated by the attitude of Stalinism toward the world revolution and toward the allies themselves. The conception of Martin presupposes that Stalinism is indissolubly linked to the anti-capitalist planned economy, and that the contradiction between the latter and capitalist economy will, at one moment or another, produce clashes, economic pressure and perhaps wars between the allies and the USSR. But there is nothing indissoluble between planned Soviet economy and the bureaucracy; on the contrary the whole history of Stalinism is the history of irreducible conflict between it and the planned economy, inaugurated by the October revolution. In reality, Stalinism has not been linked to the planned economy except by the difficulties that the accomplishments of the revolution affords to converting itself into an owning class. Evidently a part of these difficulties yet remain. But, the majority have been swept away by the reactionary bureaucratic broom, above all in the internal realm.

The contradiction between Soviet and capitalist economy, cannot reach the level of a serious conflict, whether economic or military, until the former threatens to transform its objective revolutionary content into subjective revolutionary activity. But the undeniable fact is, that the planned economy is not accentuating and completing itself, but that it is being done away with (se borra) and is decomposing under the pressure of Stalinist interests. Continually bleeding the revolutionary essence of the planned economy, the bureaucracy minimizes the possibility of its subjective development, that is, working class political action. On the other hand, the bureaucracy by itself, constitutes an objectively reactionary element, with an immense subjective force at its disposal. The existence of revolutionary movements or of completed revolutions in Europe, far from increasing the contradiction between the Soviet Union as a whole, and the capitalist world, will accelerate the action of the bureaucracy against the European revolution, and against the planned economy internally. Stalinism will be the most valiant ally of the imperialists against the masses in insurrection, and the only ally possible against the Soviet economy. We must not forget that although the expropriation of capitalism can only be made rudely, the expropriation of the working class -- once the old capitalist class is reduced to impotence, and a great quantity of new wealth has been created, without legitimate "owners" -- has to follow a gradual

process, upon the base of existing privileged elements. The world bourgeoisie have understood this perfectly. It is not worried because capitalism does not yet exist in the USSR. The important thing is that the bureaucracy knifes the world revolution and continues decomposing the planned economy and depositing around itself the sediment for a future capitalist class.

This last process was already far advanced before the war. Today it must be coming to a head. The revolutionary movements will precipitate still more the recoil of the bureaucracy towards capitalism; in such a manner that its interests, concerning the system of ownership, will each time coincide more than ever with those of imperialism. For that reason, the causes for clashes or conflicts will not increase but they will diminish insofar as the bureaucracy is concerned. No one can expect a sharpening of the contradictions between the property system inherited from October and the capitalist system, except in the degree that the revolt of the masses, including the Soviet masses, weakens the bureaucratic apparatus or threatens to destroy it. From this it cannot be deduced that the slogan of unconditional defense of the USSR, as it has been formulated until now, should be held in reserve (deba ser reservada) waiting until it acquires new importance. Even if this should happen, which appears very improbable to me while Stalinism holds sway, the most threatening enemy of the planned economy, at the present time, is Stalinism. One is forced to conclude that the defense of the USSR depends, above all, before military defense even, on the struggle against the bureaucracy, which is what the Spanish Group proposed in the document, "The Defense of the Soviet Union and the Tactic of the Revolutionaries."

Last Paragraph. "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."

This hides the problem, it does not resolve it. The defense of the European revolution is an unavoidable duty, the exercise of which does not depend in the least on the military threats which weigh upon the USSR, or its relief from such threats (o de su desahogo); the emphasis which is accorded it should be in relation to the importance of the movement itself. The defense of the European revolution requires today the bulk of all our strength, yes, and the party will do well, lending both hands. But this does not absolve us from saying something in particular about the USSR. On the contrary. How shall we defend the European revolution in the countries invaded or threatened by the USSR? How do we take the road to the political revolution against the bureaucracy? How to safeguard the nationalized economy, also part of the European revolution? To all these questions, we formerly answered; unconditional defense of the USSR, with its result of subordinating the interests of the working class to the interests of military defense. If now we should limit ourselves to a change of emphasis, the reply would continue being the same, only in a muted tone. Now, if the reply should still be considered correct, there is no reason to muffle it. It can occupy a second or a third place, but it must continue being voiced as the best defense of the European revolution in the USSR and the territories invaded by it. And just as much in one as in the others, the question is of the highest importance; it cannot be relegated to a second place. The proletariat in general and the revolutionists in particular, must know what the

Fourth counsels them.

Here we respond; we have passed beyond "unconditional defense"; it is not now the best manner of defending the remains of the October revolution, and through it the world revolution. Thus, just as in one fixed moment, we subordinate everything to the necessities of military defense, now everything should be subordinated, including the military struggle, to the necessities of the anti-bureaucratic political revolution. The prime enemy of the USSR is Stalinism; the fight must be against it, also, without reservation, in the territories that it occupies or threatens. And this must not be kept silent but said at the top of one's voice. The complete elaboration of the problem was made in the document of the Spanish Group already cited.

Mexico D. F., November 20, 1944.

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A STALINIST ATTITUDE TO REVOLUTIONARY INTELLECTUALS

By Albert Goldman

In Comrade Cannon's comments on the letter of James T. Farrell, in which Farrell criticizes the articles of Comrades Hansen and Frankel, there is revealed an attitude which is not only incorrect but Stalinist in character. If all the leading comrades were to adopt a similar attitude it would bring great harm to the party.

The comments are handed down to posterity in the form of excerpts from letters written by Cannon and published under the title of "Notes on the Party Discussion" in the Internal Bulletin of April 1945. Taken as a whole the "notes" constitute a pail of filth without a single reasoned argument and hence cannot be answered. Hurling at the intended victims the filth can only dirty the author and, unfortunately, the party. One is compelled, however, to take notice of the comments on Farrell's letter because the intelligent party members must be warned of the harm that a Stalinist attitude to the revolutionary intellectuals can do to the party.

It is not my intention to analyze all of the statements made by Cannon in his remarks dealing with the Farrell letter. Practically every sentence in both of Cannon's letters dealing with Farrell's criticism contains gross errors and obvious half-truths. It would be of no great value, however, to prove that this is so. What is of value is to analyze the attitude which Cannon has towards people like Farrell when they are critical of anyone in the party who faithfully follows Cannon's leadership.

Intellectuals and the Marxist Movement

That the Marxist movement should attract to itself many intellectuals is only to be expected. Even before it reaches a stage of decay, capitalist society is full of so many repelling

contrasts that the best elements of those who are busy in the world of ideas are attracted to a movement which proposes to transform the world, abolish exploitation of man by man and at the same time create the possibility of true intellectual freedom.

Unfortunately a socialist movement that grows in numbers and influence and has at its disposal positions with some remuneration and a good deal of prestige, attracts to itself many careerists; Doctors, lawyers, journalists, professors who are willing to represent the workers in parliament constitute an opportunist element dangerous to the movement.

It must not be forgotten that those intellectuals who devoted their lives to the socialist movement without any thought of remuneration or prestige played an exceedingly important role in the growth and development of revolutionary parties. It was Lenin who held to the theory -- how correct it is need not be discussed at this time -- that socialist consciousness was brought to the working masses by the revolutionary intellectuals, that without the aid of these intellectuals the workers can only arrive at trade union consciousness. One can dispute that theory, but no one can dispute the fact that revolutionary intellectuals of the type of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky gave guidance and furnished leadership to the revolutionary working class movement.

In addition to the intellectuals who participated directly in the work of the party, there were in the past and there will undoubtedly be in the future many writers and artists who see the injustices and hypocrisies of capitalist society and reveal a strong sympathy for the aims of socialism. Such intellectuals can be of tremendous help to the revolutionary party. An attitude which repels the best of these intellectuals can do nothing but harm to the party.

THE STALINIST ATTITUDE

At present it is hardly conceivable that an intellectual with any intelligence would support the Stalinist party on the theory that it is a revolutionary party. But there were many revolutionary intellectuals who, in the mistaken belief that the Stalinist party was a revolutionary party, supported that party before the days of the Moscow Trials. For the intellectuals who indicated sympathy for the Stalinist party nothing was too good -- so long as he accepted the voice of the big Stalinist bureaucrats, especially the voice of Stalin, as an emanation of the divine will. Such an intellectual could be fairly certain that his works of art in his own field would not be subjected to any artistic standard but would be proclaimed the works of genius. The price the intellectual had to pay to receive recognition as a great artist was the unconditional acceptance of the party line.

If the intellectual, however, became critical of the party line or of something that was done by an important party bureaucrat the wrath of the apparatus would be sure to descend upon him. His artistic creations were either ignored or shown to be mediocre in character; he became an enemy of the people.

Is it difficult to see that a revolutionary intellectual with some regard for his ideas could not possibly remain sympathetic to such a party? One of the many great crimes perpetrated by Stalinism consists in the fact that it succeeded in bringing disillusionment to many intellectuals who had been attracted to the revolutionary movement.

By and large the intellectuals who were sympathetic to the Stalinist parties in the late twenties and the early thirties were not of the type who were attracted to a radical party because it was a large and powerful party. These intellectuals were not experts in Marxist theory and could not see the implications of the theory of socialism in one country but they were willing to help in the struggle for socialism. True, the prestige of the Soviet Union was behind the Stalinist party and that was some compensation for the unpopularity of the Stalinists, but, after all, not all the intellectuals could hope to go to the Soviet Union where they would be feted in return for their willingness to advertise the merits of the Soviet bureaucracy.

It can be truthfully contended that most of the intellectuals actively supporting the Stalinist party prior to the days of the Popular Front were not seeking to make a career out of their connections with the Stalinist movement. They were devoted to the idea of socialism but were alienated and driven away by the attitude of the Stalinists towards them.

If the critical and independent intellectuals were disillusioned and driven away from the revolutionary movement, those who were not so independent were corrupted. A party that had to defend itself against Trotskyism by falsehoods and slanders was corroded through and through. No critical intellectual could have remained a supporter of the Stalinist party for long without suppressing his critical faculties or becoming thoroughly dishonest. It is impossible for a human being to tolerate that which he deems to be wrong and dishonest without destroying his moral fibre.

Able intellectuals who could contribute to the revolutionary movement were either corrupted or disillusioned by their experience with the Stalinist party. Instead of a party which feared no criticism because it felt itself able to defend its ideas and practices against the whole world, the intellectuals were confronted by a party which demanded complete and unconditional acceptance of all its ideas and actions and would not tolerate any criticism.

Either to accept and praise everything the party did and said or to be considered an enemy of the party were the alternatives confronting the intellectual in his relationship to the Stalinist party. They who accepted and praised became corrupt; the independent intellectuals were either completely disillusioned with the ideas of revolutionary Marxism which they thought were represented by Stalinism, or else, in the case of a very small number, turned to the true exponent of revolutionary socialism -- the Trotskyist movement.

CANNON'S ATTITUDE TO FARRELL

A revolutionary party does not kowtow to any intellectual, but that does not mean that any responsible party leader is justified in ridiculing a criticism offered by an intellectual who has clearly indicated his sympathy to the party. Whenever a revolutionary intellectual sympathetic to the party undertakes to interpret the ideas of the party to the outside world he must expect criticism if criticism is due. He is given the right to be critical of the party or of anything said or done by a representative of the party. He can expect a reply from someone connected with the party but not a pail of garbage hurled at him.

It is only natural that a revolutionary intellectual having any respect for himself should not hesitate to criticize anything a party member says or does when he disagrees with it. He would not be a revolutionary intellectual if he refrained from criticizing that which he disagrees with. If the criticism has something to do with the party line, the party does not hesitate to answer the critical intellectual. I am certain that Farrell understands that simple rule very well. If he criticizes party policy he expects an answer.

The letter which Farrell wrote for publication in Fourth International had nothing to do with party policy. His criticisms of Hansen and Frankel were not directed at anything officially adopted by the party. The refusal to publish his letter was undoubtedly construed by him as an act of a Stalinist character. In so construing the refusal he was correct. In addition the leader of the party comments on his letter in such a way that Farrell cannot help but be driven away from our party. He is not a party person whose duty it is to fight any manifestations of a Stalinist character. He is a revolutionary intellectual sympathetic to the party and Stalinist rudeness and stupidity repel him.

What is the essential attitude that Cannon reveals in his comments on the Farrell letter? It is this: so long as the intellectual does nothing that I dislike, so long as he praises me and my followers, so long is he acceptable. But let him raise his voice in criticism either of myself or of my followers and he will feel the full weight of a rude and boorish attack.

Instead of publishing Farrell's letter in our press and presenting a reasoned argument showing that Farrell was wrong in his criticism, the letter is refused publication. And then Cannon proceeds to write a reply shocking in its implications and conceals it from the public by publishing it in the Internal Bulletin, indicating thereby that he feels himself incompetent to answer Farrell's letter in the public press. Of course Cannon boasts that he had to restrain himself from answering Farrell's letter the way it deserved to be answered and let the press publish both Farrell's letter and the answer. Vain and empty boast! The best answer Cannon could give consists of the comments published in the Internal Bulletin. And the main point that these comments make is to tell Farrell not to interfere with the esoteric science of politics.

Politics As a Mysterious Science

According to Cannon, Farrell, although only an amateur, dared invade the precincts of the art and science of revolutionary politics, by writing a letter criticizing Hansen and Frankel. Let us see what aspect of the art and science of revolutionary politics Farrell concerned himself with in his letter.

Did he give the party advice on some political theory, on some question of Marxist politics or economics? Had he done so it would have been incumbent upon some leading member of the party to show him that he was wrong, assuming that he was in error. But when one analyzes the actual contents of Farrell's letter, one can clearly see that Cannon's comments have no relevancy whatever. Farrell did not take issue with any party policy or theory of Marxism; he simply criticized the contents and tone of certain articles.

One does not have to be an expert in politics to justify his intervention on the question of the validity of certain arguments and the tone of certain articles. I know very little about astronomy and would certainly refuse to offer an opinion on some theory involving knowledge of astro-physics. But if a scientist presents an article arguing that the theory of an opponent is senseless because the opponent is a member of an "inferior race" I could certainly intervene and give my opinion of that argument. I would not be intervening as an expert in astronomy but as a person who understands that proof in all controversies requires logic and reason.

When it concerns questions of politics the matter is still more simple. Politics is in fact the only art or science which has aspects upon which every person is able to offer an opinion. Do we not urge every worker to participate in the science of politics? Do we not, by asking the masses to support us, also ask them to give us their opinion about our science of politics?

Indeed, Farrell has in all probability read and studied as much of Marxist theory as most of the leading elements in our party. Although not a party person, his opinion on questions of politics can be given serious consideration. But the fact remains that in his letter he did not deal with party policy or theory; he criticized what to him seemed articles miserable both in content and tone. Whether he is correct or not is immaterial; what is material is that as an intelligent person Farrell was justified in making his criticism and Cannon's sneer at his being an amateur is utterly out of place.

Browder, the Intellectuals and the Moscow Trials

It is significant that in attacking the intellectuals who questioned the methods used and the convictions obtained in the Moscow Trials, Browder used an almost identical argument that Cannon used in attacking Farrell. In polemicizing against Reinhold Niebuhr Browder stated that Niebuhr's attitude "can be explained only by assuming that he claims special privileges for the artist to go free-lancing in the field of sharpest political struggles without accountability to anyone. According to this theory the artist may decide to try to put a whole government on trial, a socialist government at that, and propose

as judges the highest legal talent in the bourgeois world, unconnected with revolutionary politics in any way -- and because he is an artist-- even a 'great artist' -- we are to treat such nonsense with respectful consideration." (Communism and Culture, by Earl Browder.)

What does Browder in effect state to those intellectuals who, outraged by Stalin's murder of the Old Bolsheviks and his charge that Trotsky was a fascist conspirator, were willing to interfere in politics to the extent of participating in an impartial investigation of the charges? "You are only artists and intellectuals. Keep your hands out of politics which is a science and an art requiring great learning and experience for proficiency. You are amateurs. Leave the art and science of politics to Stalin and to me, humble servant of the great genius."

I do not know whether anyone in our ranks answered Browder. The answer is of course obvious. Under the claim that politics is an esoteric science and an art requiring great knowledge and experience, Browder wants the intellectuals to keep aloof from the Moscow Trials. But the politics involved in the Moscow frame-ups is just the kind of politics that every intelligent intellectual and worker should concern himself with. This kind of politics deals with questions of fact, of reason and of truth. Not only do the intellectuals have a right but a duty to interfere in such politics.

Is it necessary for me to remind Cannon and others that we strongly urged every intellectual to interfere in the politics of the Moscow Trials? We did not tell them then that politics is not their business. We were of course ready to take issue with them if they deduced from the trials a political conclusion with which we did not agree, but we were anxious for them to intervene.

When Farrell intervenes in practical politics by criticizing the contents and tone of certain articles that appeared in our press, Cannon tells him that he knows nothing about politics and should stick to his profession. When Farrell intervened in politics to defend the name of Trotsky against the slanders of the Stalinists, Browder told him that he knew nothing about politics and should stick to his profession.

Correct Attitude to Intellectuals

Stalinism has created a great dread among the best type of revolutionary intellectuals -- the dread that a revolutionary party calling itself Bolshevik demands unconditional acceptance of its ideas and practices and tolerates no criticism. The intellectual interested in revolutionary politics constantly tends to confuse Stalinism with Bolshevism. This fact requires extraordinary patience on our part. Even where an honest intellectual makes a mistake, our correction of him should in the first instance be garbed in a friendly tone. But if, as in the case of Farrell, the criticism is entirely friendly and, in my opinion, essentially correct, then the kind of reply Cannon made can only confirm the suspicion of the intellectual that Stalinism and Bolshevism are one and the same thing. Fortunately, Farrell knows that Cannon's attitude to the revolutionary intellectual has nothing to do with Bolshevism.

But why, I can hear some comrades say, is Goldman worried about alienating the revolutionary intellectuals? The answer is, that alienating any group by a wrong attitude is harmful to our cause. If the intellectual elements are alienated by our program and correct activities then there is nothing to fear. But if any intellectuals are alienated by an attitude which Cannon reveals in his comments on Farrell's letter, then it is not only the intellectual but every intelligent worker who is alienated.

And are there any prospects for getting the support of intellectual elements? We can expect nothing from the intellectual elements of the type of Eastman who in their younger days fought a valiant battle for the ideals of socialism. Disillusioned by Stalinism they have succumbed to the temptations of bourgeois democracy at the very time when its rotting corpse is bringing forth totalitarian barbarism.

But a new generation of intellectuals is coming on the scene. These intellectuals are not likely to listen to the Eastmans who have given up the struggle. From among them, the best elements can be won over to Trotskyism and our movement can be greatly benefited. But to win them over we must first convince them that there is not a single trace of Stalinism in our movement.

To win the support of the worthwhile intellectuals they must be made to feel that the party encourages a critical and independent attitude; that they are free to criticize us and that they can expect answers based on facts and reasoned argument and need not expect Stalinist filth to be thrown at them. A correct attitude to the intellectuals has absolutely nothing to do with yielding to their incorrect ideas. It means a confident attitude -- confident in our ideas and our ability to defend them. It is this confidence that leads to a correct relationship between us and revolutionary intellectuals attracted to our party. Cannon's attitude is in reality a result of his inability to defend his ideas and his actions.

May 21, 1945.

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