

INTERNAL BULLETIN

SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

116 University Place, New York 3, N. Y.

Volume VII Number 10

OCTOBER 1945



Price 20 Cents

CONTENTS

Some Arguments Heard Against the Slogan of the Republic in Italy, by Felix Morrow	1
The New Opposition in the S. W. P.: Its "Theory" and its Methods, by William F. Warde	3
The Bureaucratic Tendency in the S. W. P.: An Answer to J. Lyons, by A. Stein	9
Petty-Bourgeois Politics and the War, by Milton Alvin.....	12
Fact and Fiction on the Workers Party, by James Campbell.....	13
An Answer to Comrade Weiss, by Dan Leeds.....	15

Some Arguments Heard Against the Slogan of the Republic in Italy

By FELIX MORROW

On June 18th and 19th, I lectured in the East-side and West-side branches in New York in favor of the slogan of the republic for Italy and Belgium. Five Political Committee members (Burton, Wright, Collins, M. Stein, Warde) spoke against my position. This article will discuss their main arguments. Since I have already written on Belgium, I shall limit myself here to Italy.

It would, of course, be much better if I could argue against written positions. The minority position has been defended in writing during the past year in two articles by Comrade Logan and another by Comrade Goldman. But the majority leaders, though very vocal during the pre-convention discussion and again recently in the branches, refuse to put anything in cold print.

ARGUMENT No. 1: "The decision as to whether to raise the slogan of the republic should be made by the comrades on the spot and not by us at a distance." (Collins, Burton, Warde.)

Suppose I agree. But our Italian comrades *have* put this slogan in their program of action. And they have asked us to give our opinion of the correctness of this and other slogans. They are a young party, and want international consultation and guidance. We are confronted by the need and the duty to judge whether their slogan is a correct one.

The P.C. majority's argument does not mean that they are willing to leave the decision to the Italian party in the sense that they are willing to endorse the decision of the Italian party. On the contrary, the P.C. has refused to vote on a motion to endorse the Italian party's slogan of the republic.

So the P.C. majority's argument comes down to a denial that they can pass judgment on the slogan at a distance.

One way they justify this is indicated by Comrade Wright's indignant declaration that if Morrow and Goldman want the P.C. to give day-to-day directives to the Italian party, he will fight them tooth and nail.

Is the slogan of the republic a "day-to-day" directive? Some of the majority even go to the length of making an analogy between the slogan of the republic and a strike and say, "If I, from five hundred miles away, can't be sure that X plant should strike, how can I decide whether to call for the republic 3,000 miles away?"

The answer is that the slogan of the republic is not at all a "day-to-day" directive. Of course, we cannot decide at a distance when this slogan should be in the forefront, and when it recedes for a time into the background, when demonstrations shall be called under this slogan, etc. But, given certain infor-

mation, we *can* decide at a distance of 3,000 miles whether or not it is a correct slogan.

Comrade Marcy, Brooklyn branch organizer, argued that "we do not have enough information" to decide. I asked him to state what kinds of information he needed in order to decide. He said it is "impossible to formulate". His method reduces politics to local mysticism. When I reminded Comrade Marcy that Trotsky, at goodly distances, had proposed the slogan of the republic for Spain in 1930-31 and for Belgium in 1934-36, Comrade Marcy replied that Trotsky was a great genius and Morrow and Goldman are not.

Nevertheless we try to apply Trotsky's METHOD. Here is how we determine the correctness of the slogan for Italy today:

a. For two years, since the downfall of fascism in July 1943, Italy has been gripped by a revolutionary crisis. The question of the state structure to replace fascism is up for decision.

b. But the politically active proletariat is almost entirely in the Communist and Socialist parties, while the party of the Fourth International is only being born and is as yet unknown to the great masses. This situation, despite the objectively revolutionary conditions present, gives an extremely slow tempo to the development of the class struggle of the Italian proletariat which is being held back by its parties.

c. The task of tasks, therefore, is to break the hold of the Communists and Socialist parties over the masses and to win them to the Fourth International. It is (or should be) an axiom among us that this task cannot be carried out directly by winning the masses to our whole program, that is by propaganda for a Soviet Italy and the Socialist United States of Europe. By propaganda you win cadre elements, but not the elements for a mass party; indeed, even cadre elements do not come to us, very often, on the basis of our propaganda; they are won by seeing that the party has the flexibility to conduct *agitation* successfully among workers who are not yet revolutionists, or who, if revolutionary-minded, do not see what next to do; that is, that the party is able to get the workers to take a step forward.

The task of our Italian party on the agitational plane is to show to the Communist and Socialist party members a series of steps which ought to be taken by their parties. These steps must appear reasonable to the masses, possible of fulfillment. We know that their parties, reformist and class-collaborationist, will resist carrying out these steps. But their members don't know it. By convincing them of the need for these steps, by inspiring them to demand these steps by their leaders, we will

teach the masses to be critical of their parties and open their minds to the party of the Fourth International.

d. The masses evidence a fierce hatred of the monarchy as the accomplice of Mussolini. This is *not* the same thing as hating the monarchy as one of the institutions of capitalism. We know that the monarchy is no better or worse than the big capitalists, but obviously the masses at this moment feel a hatred of the monarchy, are ready to tear down the monarchy, in a sense that they are not yet ready to tear down capitalism as a whole. We can cite, if the P. C. majority should challenge this, numerous instances where, in spite of no encouragement from their leaders, the masses have expressed the desire to finish off the monarchy immediately. Nenni is compelled to give lip-service to this feeling, and even Togliatti has to do so increasingly. Our Italian party has correctly seized upon this situation and urges the Socialist and Communist party members to demand of their parties immediate proclamation of the democratic republic. Our Italian party exposes the sham hostility to the monarchy of Nenni and Togliatti, showing how their actions do not lead to the overthrow of the monarchy but help it save itself while it is building an army controlled by royalist officers for eventual use against the masses.

Such, briefly, is the method by which our Italian comrades, and the minority here, arrive at the correct slogan of the immediate proclamation of the republic.

ARGUMENT No. 2: "The masses are organized in the Socialist and Communist parties. Why? To achieve the republic? Ridiculous. They want socialism." (Collins, Burton.)

The Spanish masses in 1931 followed the anarchist-led CNT and the Socialist-led UGT. The Belgian proletariat has been socialist-minded since 1910. Nevertheless, Trotsky raised the slogan of the republic for those countries. It is not a question of what the workers want to achieve finally; it is a question of what we can convince them can be done *next* and which will tear them away from the reformists and deepen the class struggle.

Comrade Collins' and Burton's argument is the classical one of the ultra-leftists which they, more consistently than Collins and Burton, apply against *all* slogans short of the proletarian revolution.

ARGUMENT No. 3: "Our demand is for a Socialist-Communist government which would settle the question of the monarchy." (M. Stein, Collins.)

The slogan of a Socialist-Communist government and that of a democratic republic are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, they go together in Italy today, and *are* together in the program of action of our Italian party.

What would a government of the Socialist and Communist parties be? It would still be a government based on private property, i.e., a bourgeois-democratic government. Its assumption of office would not automatically liquidate the monarchy, no more than the Labor Party government in England has done so. That is why liquidation of the monarchy is made a *separate* demand by our Italian party. What would a government of the Socialist and Communist parties be, after it had abolished the monarchy? It would be a democratic republic—and that is why the slogan calls for it.

Some comrades say they are for demanding the abolition of the monarchy but not a republic. We have seen that abolition of the monarchy means a republic, if it is to be a government of the Socialist and Communist parties. If the comrades who object to the republic slogan will concede that their demand for the abolition of the monarchy means in effect a republic, then we can come quickly to an agreement with them on the actual content of our agitation on this question. There is no real difference between saying "abolition of the monarchy" or "immediate proclamation of the republic". One is a negative and one a positive way of saying the same thing. In the case of this particular demand there is a negative way available for saying it, but other demands of the same character do not have a negative form available. For example, there is no negative form of saying, "For immediate convocation of the Constituent Assembly". Any sensible comrade who recognizes the correctness in principle of the slogan of the Constituent Assembly should not be afraid of the positive form of the slogan of the republic. In any event, we could easily come to an agreement with any comrade

who insisted on the negative form, "abolition of the monarchy," so long as he recognized that it meant in fact the republic.

But if anybody means by "abolition of the monarchy" something else, namely its replacement by a Soviet republic, then he must also reject the slogan of a government of the Socialist and Communist parties, for such a government would obviously not be a Soviet republic. Anyone who insists that "abolition of the monarchy" should only mean its replacement by a Soviet republic is obviously reduced to one slogan—the slogan of proletarian revolution.

ARGUMENT No. 4: "The Social Democrats are for a republic in Italy, and Morrow says we should chime in. He ignores the danger of identifying our slogans with those of the reformists." (Collins, Burton et al.)

The trouble with practically all the arguments of the P. C. majority is that they ignore our traditions and thus drag the party down with them into a morass of ignorance. In 1931 in Spain the principal party of the proletariat, the Socialists, was for the republic yet Trotsky did not therefore hesitate to issue the slogan. The revolutionary party need have no difficulty in distinguishing its use of a slogan from the use of an apparently identical slogan by the reformists. Today in Italy we can easily point out:

a. The immediate proclamation of the republic is for us simply the finishing off once for all of the monarchy, merely a necessary step toward the struggle for socialism whereas for the reformist parties the democratic republic is an end in itself. The day they proclaim the republic we shall condemn the content they give it as a betrayal of the workers' aspirations for a better life. *On a plane of propaganda*, we already now warn the advanced workers that the republic is no solution for the workers' problems; this will become agitation—i.e., really reach any sizeable group of workers—only when they have the republic before their eyes. Those workers who really listen to us attentively today can see that we spread no illusions about what the republic will do for them, whereas the reformists hold out the republic as the solution for the workers' problems.

b. We call for *immediate* proclamation of the republic, we demand that the Communist and Socialist parties act *immediately*, whereas they are putting it off indefinitely. We urge the masses to force their parties to get rid of the monarchy by whatever means are necessary, i.e., by revolution, whereas the reformists propose to do it only by legal means. We expose the acts of Nenni and Togliatti which are aiding the monarchy to strengthen itself: their oath of office pledging not to do anything against the monarchy until the Constituent Assembly, their failure to expose the way in which the army is being put entirely into the hands of royalist officers, etc., etc. In a word, we call for class struggle against the monarchy, whereas the reformists promise to remove it eventually by means of class collaboration. Is it so difficult to make this distinction clear?

ARGUMENT No. 5: "Such slogans are transitory. At any moment they can lose their progressive character and become filled with a reactionary content. Hence it is impossible for us in America to decide when to use it, when to withdraw it." (Wright et al.)

The fact is that *all* slogans are transitory. But when a slogan is progressive and when it becomes reactionary or inappropriate can be fairly well determined even at a distance, when the slogan deals with such a major question as the monarchy.

The slogan will, it seems fairly certain, remain progressive until:

a. The monarchy is overthrown and the slogan is fulfilled; or
b. Soviets arise and extend their authority to the point where the issue becomes one between the power of the monarchy and Soviet power.

ARGUMENT No. 6: "I would never raise the slogan of the republic in a revolutionary situation." (Wright.)

I put it exactly the opposite way. The slogan of the republic can have real meaning in monarchical countries *only* in the first stages of a revolutionary situation. The slogan would be a tenth-rate question in a non-revolutionary period, when the party's agitation would deal primarily with immediate economic demands and the party's propaganda would not make a distinction between the monarchy and the capitalist class and its institu-

tions generally but would contrast capitalism as a whole with socialism.

It is only in a revolutionary situation that questions of changing the state structure become burning issues of the day and the slogan of the republic can have *actual* significance.

ARGUMENT No. 7: "Why does the minority emphasize this democratic slogan?" "Why does it give this slogan such exaggerated importance?" "The minority is preoccupied with democratic demands to the exclusion of socialist demands." "The minority makes this its principal slogan." (M. Stein, Wright, Warde, et. al.)

The New Opposition in the S. W. P.: Its "Theory" and its Methods

By WILLIAM F. WARDE

It is now clear that we are confronted by the emergence of a new petty-bourgeois tendency in the SWP. The 1945 edition however is by no means identical with its predecessor of 1939-1940. One and the same tendency can develop differently under different conditions. Such is the case with the present oppositionists in our party. Political life has been extremely unkind to them. They have arrived on the scene with "too little—and too late."

The period in the development of American Trotskyism when their ideas could have gained a foothold in our ranks passed with the departure of the original petty-bourgeois faction over five years ago. Now they are completely out of place and out of season.

That is why the present opposition is so weak, so ineffectual, so stunted in its growth. It resembles the old opposition as a dwarf resembles a full-grown person. One has the general features of the other—but in reduced proportions and far feebleness.

The faction led by Burnham, Shachtman and Abern launched a full-scale revolt against the theory, traditions, program and organizational methods of Marxism. The grouping headed by Comrades Goldman, Morrow and Logan as yet dares not go beyond isolated forays and border skirmishes. Whereas Burnham went the limit in his flight from Marxism, dragging Shachtman a long way with him, Goldman and his followers tend to recede from their positions at the first serious challenge and counter-pressure from the party majority. Led by Burnham, the minority of 1939-40 openly opposed dialectical materialism and its introduction into practical politics. The present opposition leaders pose as Marxist dialecticians while nibbling away at the roots of the materialist method. The old opposition deliberately threw overboard the political program of the Fourth International on the imperialist war and the Soviet Union. The present opposition proclaims fidelity to that program but in seeking to efface the deep-going differences between the SWP and WP are apparently working toward an ideological rapprochement with the petty-bourgeois revisionists. The old opposition developed its own views on organization at variance with the majority's Bolshevik methods of party building. Goldman & Company have simply seized upon separate issues and incidents to demonstrate the danger of "Stalinist germs" within the SWP—without as yet generalizing their criticisms.

In its flight from Marxism the opposition of 1939-1940 broke from the party and embarked upon an independent career. Now the Workers Party has shifted its organizational course and proposed unity with our party. This practical problem of our organizational attitude toward the Shachtmanites cannot be approached, let alone resolved, without the utmost clarity concerning the theoretical and political differences between the Shachtmanites and ourselves. The most precise lines of ideological demarcation must be drawn before there can be any serious reconsideration or revision of the relations which have prevailed between the two organizations since the 1940 split.

Here is where the minority performs a great disservice to the party in its search for the correct solution of this question. It is first of all essential to recognize and understand the real state of affairs: namely, that the WP and SWP are not identical but distinct political tendencies. Only then can a decision be made on the possibility of these divergent groups existing in a common organization.

All this is completely untrue. We give the republic slogan the same weight that it is given by our Italian comrades, whose program of action includes it as one among twenty-five demands, which range from the demand for a Communist-Socialist government and a republic to the slogan of the Socialist United States of Europe. The only sense in which the minority has emphasized this demand is that it has insisted on discussing it in cold print, whereas the majority has refused to do so; and the verbal majority arguments against the slogan have so badly misled the party that it has been necessary to return again and again to this question. July 30, 1945.

But Goldman and Morrow exert all their efforts to smearing over the profound differences between the SWP and WP and blunting the real divergences. They miseducate and mislead the party by denying the necessity for this preliminary work of ideological demarcation and interfering with it.

The cause of Goldman, Morrow and Logan is a hopeless one. But the controversy can serve to promote the education of the party ranks. It can help them learn what a petty-bourgeois tendency is and how to recognize it. For we now have before us for examination two different specimens: one within our own party and the other outside our ranks.

Characteristics of a Petty-Bourgeois Tendency

At the time of the 1939-40 fight Trotsky taught us to look for the following characteristics in a petty-bourgeois tendency. "A disdainful attitude toward theory and an inclination toward eclecticism; disrespect for the tradition of their own organization; anxiety for personal 'independence' at the expense of anxiety for objective truth; nervousness instead of consistency; readiness to jump from one position to another; lack of understanding of revolutionary centralism and hostility toward it; and finally, inclination to substitute clique ties and personal relationships for party discipline." (*In Defense of Marxism*, p. 443).

To what degree does the present opposition exhibit these features? In this article we propose to analyze the actions and attitudes of its leaders solely in the light of the first of these features cited by Trotsky: "A disdainful attitude toward theory and an inclination toward eclecticism." In the course of this examination the petty-bourgeois traits of this faction should become obvious to the most inexperienced comrade and suffice to establish the blood-brotherhood between the old opposition and the new.

The Controversy over Dialectical Materialism Between Loris and Warde

The first evidence of the disdainful and light-minded attitude of the opposition leaders toward Marxist theory was brought to the attention of the party in the dispute between Loris and Warde over dialectical materialism. It is instructive to note at the outset the procedure of Loris in this debate because it typifies the methods followed by the opposition in the other differences which have developed since.

Loris initiated the discussion on materialist dialectics with the pretext that he was simply engaged in correcting certain errors in the interpretation of Marxist philosophy committed by Warde. A careful reading of his criticism quickly revealed, however, that he was actually going far beyond this legitimate point. Under cover of "correcting" Warde, Loris was really undertaking to revise in passing basic conceptions of dialectical materialism and palm off in their stead ideas akin to such petty-bourgeois philosophical schools as empiricism and logical positivism.

This false note was pointed out by Wright and me in answers to Loris' first article. We warned that his attempt to sever dialectical thinking from its roots and basis in objective material reality (nature and society) and to restrict its field of operations exclusively to the mind, and there within the single sphere of epistemology or the theory of knowledge, represented a divergence from Marxist doctrine. This beginning of revisionism on the philosophical plane could have most serious consequences.

Experience has shown that from such an adaptation to alien ideas it is only a few short steps to complete prostration before petty-bourgeois methods of thought.

Returning to the attack in his reply, Loris only deepened his errors. After considerable beating about the bush to obscure the principal issues in dispute, he admitted that his criticisms were not confined to Warde but extended to Engels who, it appeared, had also incorrectly interpreted Marx's philosophical views. This discovery, apparently newly-made by Loris, is not new in the history of Marxist revisionism. Following the maxim: *divide and rule*, revisionists like Hook have sought to separate Marx from Engels and oppose each to the other on the theoretical field. By this lame device they tried to open the way for introducing their hoary ideas into the revolutionary socialist movement. For good measure Loris also opposed Lenin to Engels. In this he imitated Max Eastman who had long contended that these two Marxist leaders were at philosophical loggerheads.

Loris at that time promised to inform the party precisely how Engels had distorted Marx's teachings. Although he has written on a number of other theoretical questions, he has yet to fulfill this promise.

Goldman's Haughty Attitude

What were the attitudes of the two other leaders of the present opposition to this extremely important controversy on theory which created not a little commotion in the party? Goldman, as is his habit in these matters, maintained a lofty indifference. While agreeing with Loris, he privately sneered at the discussion as unworthy of grown-up revolutionists. This haughty air reflected Goldman's underlying contempt for questions of scientific importance, despite his pretensions as a theoretician and his avowed disparagement of the intellectual capacities of the majority leadership. It also expressed his deepening doubts about Marxist philosophy.

Goldman's revulsion against the application and extension of materialist dialectics was further evidenced during the May 1945 Plenum of the National Committee. There in his customary off-hand manner he took a sideswipe at V. Grey's article on "Modern Welding And The Welder" published in the April 1945 issue of *Fourth International*. This was an ambitious, well-documented, fruitful effort by a younger comrade to demonstrate through the study of a new industrial technique how natural processes, social developments and their ideological reflections combined to prove the truth of the laws of materialist dialectics. How did Goldman greet this example of initiative in the field of theory displayed by Comrade Grey? He pronounced the harshest condemnation upon it: "The article is a disgrace to the party." Does he bother to tell us why? Not at all. He is too lazy or indifferent. After all, what does it matter? These are stupid sheep and who cares about philosophy? And this cynic and sceptic lectures us like a common scold for stifling the education of party members!

Morrow's Enigmatic Silence

Morrow likewise assumed a characteristic attitude. Although he privately collaborated with Loris' attempt at philosophical revisionism, he kept silent on the issues in dispute. As a rule, Morrow prefers to take refuge in cowardly evasion on such fundamental questions. Why does he fear to confront the party openly on these questions? Evidently because he has not yet dared to confront his own theoretical conscience squarely. It is well-known that Morrow's philosophical views are far closer to those expressed by Shachtman than to the positions of orthodox Marxism. At the November 1943 Plenum Comrade Cannon reminded Morrow that although he had long before promised to settle accounts with the revisionists and their attorneys on the theoretical plane, he had failed to carry out this assignment.

Lessons of the 1939-40 Struggle

Morrow's failure to break clearly and cleanly with his philosophical past had for us far more than a personal significance. It had profound political implications. During the struggle with the petty-bourgeois opposition in 1939-40 Trotsky deliberately gave "the predominant place in the discussion to the matter of dialectics." (*In Defense of Marxism*, p. 95). In his opinion the principal issue in the fight revolved around Marxist theory and method.

The old opposition had been able to make considerable headway within the party at that time not only because of the onslaught of bourgeois public opinion and the petty-bourgeois composition and ties of a large part of the membership but also because of the theoretical deficiencies of the SWP. These deficiencies were deeply rooted in the historical development of American society. The theoretical backwardness of the American revolutionary movement plus the strength of petty-bourgeois intellectual prejudices and a certain lack of scrupulousness toward matters of Marxist theory within our own party had permitted Burnham, Shachtman and their associates to oppose and belittle dialectics. This served to disarm the party in its struggle for supremacy against the opposition combination. Moreover the unprincipled philosophical bloc formed by Burnham and Shachtman on the basis of rejection and semi-rejection of the dialectic preceded and prepared the way for their subsequent unprincipled combination against the Marxist wing of the party on the political field.

To cure this malignant disease and to prevent its recurrence Trotsky prescribed the following remedy. He advised the party to turn its back upon the soul-sick radical intellectuals and establish unbreakable ties with the working masses. He stated that this was a life and death necessity for the SWP. It would either become proletarianized or cease to exist.

At the same time he addressed the following advice especially to those who had come into the party from the academic circles of the petty-bourgeoisie. The danger existed that these valuable recruits would degenerate, he wrote, "despite their devotion to the revolution . . . To escape this danger it is necessary to open a new chapter consciously in the development of the party. The propagandists and journalists of the Fourth International must begin a new chapter in their own consciousness. It is necessary to make an about-face on one's own axis: to turn one's back to the petty-bourgeois intellectuals and to face toward the workers." (*In Defense of Marxism*, p. 105).

Since 1940 our party has systematically undertaken to realize Trotsky's injunctions in life. Turning sharply away from the soul-sick petty-bourgeois intellectuals, the party has penetrated more and more deeply into the working masses until it has succeeded in radically transforming its social composition, in becoming a genuine proletarian movement.

At the same time we have applied ourselves to overcoming our theoretical deficiencies especially in regard to dialectical materialism. This work has been carried forward not only through our publications program, lectures, classes, summer-schools and internal discussions but on an individual basis. Most of the party leaders belonging to the majority have consciously opened a new chapter in their intellectual development by endeavoring to master Marxist philosophy through personal study.

As a result of this sustained activity over the past five years, it is no exaggeration to say that our party membership stands upon the highest theoretical level in its history.

The Minority Leaders and the Radical Intellectuals

What part did the three minority leaders play in this fruitful work? And what has been their attitude toward it?

All three have displayed increasingly greater resistance to the turn of the party toward the masses and have either remained indifferent or been opposed to many of the steps taken along this road. As the party has extended its influence among the workers and absorbed larger numbers into its ranks, they have felt themselves more and more isolated within the organization. Instead of separating themselves from the radical intellectuals, they have nestled closer to them. Their orientation toward the intellectuals and alienation from the workers in the party was graphically manifested in their shameful kow-towing before the malicious criticism and gratuitous advice flung at the party by Dwight Macdonald. Comrade Stein put his finger on this obnoxious attitude of the opposition in his remarks on the internal party situation at the November 1944 convention. "In all of Morrison's polemics you will detect the same thing—an impeccable politeness to the party's enemies; insolence and rudeness towards his own comrades. Morrison puts on a full dress suit when he enters into a polemic with Macdonald. But he strips for a public fight with Hansen. This is not the Bolshevik method of polemic." (*Internal Bulletin*, Vol. VI; No. 13—p. 13).

As they have been repelled by the new course of the party, the opposition leaders have fallen into greater and greater dependence upon petty-bourgeois public opinion. They have become the chief channels for the transmission of alien class moods, influences and ideas into our party. Their backsliding has been facilitated by a persistent refusal to renovate and reconstruct their ideological equipment and to root out residual petty-bourgeois habits of thought. Morrow, for example, like Shachtman and Burnham before him, wrote articles polemicizing against Hook's politics—while refusing to challenge his equally anti-Marxist philosophical views. Goldman airily dismisses as unimportant a discussion on the fundamental theory of Marxism and rarely overlooks an occasion to cast doubt upon the necessity and usefulness of Marxist philosophy.

Loris, who wrote several excellent articles against Burnham's philosophical views in 1940, has since then turned his weapons in the opposite direction. Instead of defending dialectical materialism against revisionists, he himself attempts to undermine the materialist basis of scientific dialectics. Instead of following Trotsky's suggestion to write a criticism of Dewey's pragmatism, he has concentrated his fire upon defenders and exponents of Marxist philosophy.

The Objective Alliance on the Theoretical Field

Now they have crowned their course of reconciliation with the petty-bourgeois intellectuals and adaptation to their ideas by adopting not only their methods of thought but more and more of their conceptions of building the party. These developments are not accidental. Dialectical materialism expresses the world outlook of the revolutionary working class. It embodies in theoretical form the historical lessons of the experiences of the working class in its struggle for socialism. Regardless of personal motives, any belittlement or abandonment of Marxist philosophy must inevitably result in the formation of an *objective alliance on the theoretical field with alien class tendencies against the revolutionary proletarian movement*. This is precisely what has happened with the present opposition.

The differences which first revealed themselves on the philosophical field foreshadowed the present conflict within the party on more concrete issues. The present opposition entered into an objective alliance with the old petty-bourgeois oppositionists on the theoretical front before they came forward to propose a trade union bloc and then fusion with them. During the fight of 1939-1940, Burnham displayed a venomous hostility toward materialist dialectics, while Shachtman remained indifferent and Abern silent on these questions. Now we see similar attitudes emerging—although in typically weaker and more shamefaced forms—among the leaders of the present opposition. Loris undertakes a masked revision of dialectical materialism. Goldman plays the part of the cynical bystander. Morrow, prodding Loris behind the scenes, maintains an enigmatic silence. Hasn't the time come for Comrade Morrow to disclose his real position on these questions to the party?

The kindred views and tendencies which first asserted themselves in the apparently remote and unrelated domain of philosophy have now led to conciliationism with the outright revisionists all along the line. Here again we see how differences on the most abstract and general questions of theory can, if consistently developed, result in a growing departure from Marxism.

Marxism, as a unified world outlook, bases itself upon the organic connection and ceaseless interaction between theory and practice. This internal bond which prevails in all spheres of scientific knowledge is exceptionally close between materialist dialectics and the political program and organizational procedures of the revolutionary party. Wherever and whenever this unity between theory and practice is disrupted, the way is opened for the penetration of alien ideas and influences. We see this happening to a growing extent in the case of the present opposition as it did to a far greater degree with its predecessor in our party.

"Theoretical Betrayal"

It is clear from their own statements and actions that the opposition leaders do not understand or care to understand this unity of philosophical theory and political practice. This is graphically manifested in Goldman's narrow, one-sided and in-

correct notion of "betrayal" of the revolutionary movement. According to Goldman, betrayal is limited to the field of practical politics and, in the case of the Shachtmanites today, is exclusively confined to the single question of their position on the imperialist war.

The Marxist conception of loyalty to revolutionary socialism is far different and infinitely broader than this petty, essentially philistine, criterion. For us loyalty consists first and foremost in unshakeable fidelity to the principles, the philosophical method and world outlook which make Socialism scientific and provide granite foundations for our movement. The most perfidious and dangerous kind of betrayal is that which strikes at the brain of Marxism: its theory and its scientific method. In Trotsky's opinion this was the greatest crime committed by the leaders of the former petty-bourgeois opposition. Trotsky branded as betrayers of Marxism not only Burnham who rejected dialectics but Shachtman who aided and abetted his assault upon Marxism.

The present minority leaders deny that the Shachtmanites are "revisionists". They conveniently forget that Trotsky accused Shachtman not simply of revising Marxism but even of proposing in practice "its downright liquidation". (*In Defense of Marxism*, p. 66). In his eyes Shachtman was guilty of "outright theoretical betrayal . . .," of "renunciation of Marxism, of scientific method in general, a wretched capitulation to empiricism."—p. 115. According to Trotsky this theoretical betrayal put Shachtman on "the wrong side of the barricades."—p. 64.

Since that time the Shachtmanites have changed none of their basic theoretical conceptions. On the contrary they have adopted more and more of the methods and ideas of the fugitives from Marxism. Despite this deepening of their betrayal and liquidation of Marxism, the opposition leaders can write: "The comrades of the Workers Party have shown that they remain loyal to the proletarian revolution." Obviously there is an enormous difference between our genuine Trotskyist conception of revolutionary loyalty and theirs.

Are the Shachtmanites Revisionists?

The profound differences in our approach to these questions are glaringly revealed on the issue of revisionism. The opposition does not even know where to look for the signs of revisionism in a political tendency like the Shachtmanites. They seek for evidences of revisionism solely in the field of practical politics. But historical experience testifies what the present instance demonstrates anew: that revisionism frequently begins in spheres farthest removed from everyday political affairs. The betrayal of the revisionists is often first of all *theoretical* betrayal.

What is the essence of revisionism? It consists in the introduction of the false methods and decayed ideas of alien classes into the revolutionary socialist movement. Revisionists utilize the most diverse channels for this work of ideological corruption. A favorite field in the early stages of their activity is philosophy.

The classical school of revisionism, Bernsteinism, first unfurled its banner not in the arena of everyday politics but on the field of general theory with the publication in 1899 of Bernstein's book "The Premises of Socialism." It is significant to recall that Bernstein openly attacked materialist dialectics as nonsensical and a worthless inheritance from Hegelian metaphysics. The centrist Kautsky, while defending Marxian economics and the program of socialist revolution against the revisionists, remained more or less indifferent to their assaults on the philosophical foundations of Marxism. This theoretical indifference found fruition from 1914 onward in Kautsky's capitulation to bourgeois democracy. In Bernstein's case rejection of Marxist philosophy resulted in outright opposition to the revolutionary struggle for socialism. In Kautsky's case philosophical indifference culminated in political prostration before the social-patriots who served as direct agents of the capitalist class.

Stalinist revisionism also manifested itself most clearly and conspicuously at first not in practical politics but in theory, with the promulgation of the anti-Marxist conception of "socialism in one country" by Stalin in 1924. The Trotskyist left opposition predicted at that time that this *theoretical betrayal* of Marxism

would, if consistently developed, inevitably lead, regardless of the motives of its proponents, to a total break with Bolshevism. This forecast, which was regarded as slanderous by many honest revolutionists, has since been realized beyond the shadow of a doubt.

The minority leaders absolve the Workers Party from the charge of revisionism on the ground that it "denies that it has abandoned the Marxist theory of the state, whereas revisionists openly proclaim their abandonment of it." Just how much worth have the claims of the Shachtmanites? Burnham, too, denied in 1939 that he was abandoning Marxism, only to confess later in his contemptuous letter of resignation from the WP, dated May 21, 1940: "These beliefs, especially in their negative aspect—that is insofar as they involve disagreement with Marxism—are not at all 'sudden' or episodic, nor are they products merely of the recent faction struggle. Several I have always held. Many others I have held for some years. Others have, during the past year or two, changed from doubts and uncertainty into conviction. The faction fight has only served to compel me to make them explicit and to consider them more or less in their entirety." (*In Defense of Marxism*, p. 208).

Shachtman too, claimed at the time that he was not discarding the position of the Fourth International on the theory of the state and the nature of the Soviet Union, only to adopt Burnham's revisionist conception of "bureaucratic collectivism" after the split.

The truth is that in order to accomplish their aims, revisionists conceal the real nature of their ideas and tendencies not only from others but also from themselves. They can believe not insincerely that they are merely "modernizing", "improving" or "interpreting" Marxism. What they—and their supporters—fail to grasp is the *objective logic* of their break with Marxism in the theoretical field. The centrists, Kautsky and Stalin, began with a departure from Marxist theory and finished in the camp of the class enemy. Bernstein, Eastman, Hook and Burnham began with a philosophical struggle against dialectics and ended with a political struggle against the socialist revolution. In all these cases what was merely *implicit* in the theoretical deviations of the centrists and revisionists became in the further course of their evolution *explicit* in their open political desertion of Marxism and successive surrender to bourgeois pressures.

Between the first step and the last, between betrayal on the theoretical level and unabashed renegacy in politics, the revisionists can traverse a protracted and complicated road. This has been the case with the Shachtmanite disciples of Burnham. As a group they have not drawn the full practical conclusions from their theoretical betrayal of Marxism. Nevertheless they have deepened their deviations since the split with Trotskyism and the Fourth International to the point where they bear the indelible stamp of a hardened petty-bourgeois revisionist grouping.

Goldman's contention that Burnham's departure purged the Workers Party of its anti-Marxist theories has no validity whatsoever. Despite Trotsky's challenge, the WP has never published Burnham's notorious manifesto against Marxism, "Science and Style" nor have they taken a stand against it. Meanwhile they have bit by bit taken over Burnham's conceptions. An influential faction in the Workers Party headed by Carter holds almost all of Burnham's views, including his "science" and his "style."

To be sure Burnham, the individual, quit the WP—but Burnhamism, the doctrine, remains deeply embedded there.

There never was a revisionist tendency which did not indignantly deny its real character. This mock indignation has never deceived Marxists nor deterred them from exposing the anti-Marxist character of centrists. In this instance the minority leaders have permitted themselves to be deceived by the superficial appearance of things. There is not the slightest reason for us to imitate them.

What Is Really at Issue in the Present Conflict?

The minority wishes the party to believe that nothing more is involved in the present controversy than the "practical" questions of fusion with the Shachtmanites and the organizational methods of the majority leadership. They insist that these concrete issues constitute the entire substance of the dispute. Here

again we see how the new opposition mimics its forerunner. Burnham, Shachtman and Abern likewise contended that nothing more was involved in their struggle than such "immediate issues" as the invasion of Finland and other aspects of the Russian question. They persistently refused to accept the struggle upon a philosophical or principled plane in order to avoid taking unambiguous positions on the fundamental questions underlying the specific differences and to keep together their unprincipled combination.

Thanks to the forthright and principled way in which the majority under Trotsky's guidance conducted the struggle, they did not succeed in limiting the struggle to these concrete questions. From his first intervention Trotsky exposed the social and philosophical roots of the opposition's position. "We, too, have attempted . . . to prove that the issue concerns not only the Russian problems but *even more* (our italics) the opposition's method of thought, which has its social roots. The opposition is under the sway of petty-bourgeois moods and tendencies. This is the essence of the whole matter." (*In Defense of Marxism*, p. 59).

The refusal of the present minority leaders to mention, let alone consider or discuss, the philosophical views and methods of thought of the Shachtmanites, not to speak of their own, provides additional evidence of the affinity between the two tendencies and the organic connection between the struggle of 1939-1940 and the present one. What is basically at issue in the current dispute is nothing less than a defense of the philosophy, traditions, program and organizational conceptions of our movement against the latest attempt of a petty-bourgeois minority to frivolously tamper with them in theory and discard them in practice.

In order to disguise this connection between the old struggle and the new, the minority is obliged to distort the real meaning and lessons of the past. They assert, for example, that "the basis of the struggle with the Workers Party was the question of the defense of the Soviet Union." As the most cursory reading of *In Defense of Marxism* will prove, this was far from Trotsky's view.

This deformation of the fundamental issues in the 1939-40 fight by Morrow and Goldman has its own history. It was already observable as early as 1942 in an incident which has direct bearing on the current dispute. The Political Committee had assigned Morrow the task of writing a preface to the collection of Trotsky's documents (*In Defense of Marxism*) which was designed to educate our movement in the lessons of this fight. In the draft submitted by Morrow he represented the struggle as centering around the Russian question. He made Shachtman, rather than Burnham, the principal leader of the opposition. He omitted entirely any treatment of the fundamental philosophical issues.

In view of these distortions the Political Committee was obliged to reject Morrow's draft and turn over the assignment to Joseph Hansen and myself, who were instructed to present the issues in their proper light and correct proportions. In our introduction we pointed out that, although the fight with the petty-bourgeois opposition began over the Russian question, it had a far more profound significance. It quickly developed into a *class* battle in defense of Marxism and the very life of our party against the petty-bourgeois revisionists. As the theoretical inspirer of the tendency, Burnham was rightfully designated as its most consistent and representative leader. Following Trotsky, we gave "the predominant place in the discussion to the matter of dialectics." That is how the lessons of the struggle are presented in the preface to *In Defense of Marxism* which has since circulated throughout our world movement.

In the P.C. Morrow and Goldman refused to approve this preface. Morrow simply stated that he disagreed with it, without specifying what his disagreements were. Goldman had already made it known that he disapproved of Trotsky's introduction of philosophy into the dispute of 1939-40. The subsequent passage of the opposition leaders over to their present position is helping to teach the entire party what was the real meaning of their rejection of the preface at that time.

"The Inclination Towards Eclecticism."

Only Marxism can provide leaders of the working class with

a consistent and correct approach to the issues and situations which develop in the course of the class struggle. Petty-bourgeois thinkers who have discarded the compass of Marxist method inevitably drift from one position to another. They lack any systematic outlook or principled approach to problems. They resemble a fugitive crossing an ice-filled river who slips and slides until he either arrives at the opposite class bank — or drowns.

The inevitable result of such an unstable class and theoretical position is eclecticism. Eclecticism is a mishmash of ideas derived from diverse and opposing schools of thought, devoid of inner logic, coherence and solidarity. Once the unifying thread of Marxist method has been snapped, we inevitably witness the decomposition and disintegration of thought. That is the *theoretical* source of the present opposition's nervousness, their frenzied zig-zags, the glaring contradictions between their past and their present.

Loris abetted by Morrow attempts to combine dialectics with ideas taken from petty-bourgeois philosophical schools: positivists, agnostics, empiricists. Morrow tries to reconcile the liquidationist outlook of the "Three Theses" revisionists with the revolutionary program of the Fourth International. This later became more explicit in his feverish insistence upon the "method of democratic demands" as the master key to the present stage of the revolutionary struggle in Europe—a position shared by both Shachtman and the "Three Theses" group. Goldman seeks to yoke together those who defend the Soviet Union in the revolutionary way with those who advocate Soviet defeatism. All three unite in seeking to reconcile the theory and program of our proletarian revolutionary party with the positions of the petty-bourgeois revisionists in the Shachtmanite camp. This is eclecticism of the crassest kind. If such tendencies were permitted to permeate or dominate the party they could only lead to its ideological disintegration and its eventual disappearance as a genuine Marxist movement.

The Real Test of Method

The opposition leaders will doubtless contend that they, too, are familiar with Marxism and know how to apply its ideas. But "the proof of the pudding is in the eating." We propose to take the test case of their evaluation of the Shachtmanites and show how they have in reality dropped the method of materialist dialectics and adopted ways of thinking proper to the petty-bourgeois eclectics and empiricists.

In order to arrive at a correct and comprehensive definition of the WP as a political phenomenon, it is necessary to review its entire course of development. We ought to ascertain how and why it originated; how it has developed in the five years of its existence; and in what direction it is really traveling from the standpoint of Marxist theory and program. We also need to know what social forces are predominant within the organization, what class tendencies are represented within it. If it began as a petty-bourgeois revisionist tendency, has it undergone changes for the better or the worse? In what precise respects have their characteristics become altered and what is their relative weight in the whole? Have these changes produced a qualitative transformation?

These questions need to be answered for a correct political appraisal of the WP, which alone can provide the starting point and the basis for any proposals and practical activities in regard to them.

Employing the Marxist method outlined above, the majority has arrived at the following conclusions regarding the Shachtmanites:

1. The WP originated as a petty-bourgeois tendency which openly revolted against the theory, methods, traditions, program and practices of revolutionary Marxism. This group was a product of the political reaction engendered within the labor movement when the full weight of capitalist society was brought to bear upon the revolutionary vanguard before and during the Second World War. They betrayed Marxism, split the proletarian party, and went over into the camp of the petty-bourgeois radical intellectuals.

2. Since the 1940 split, their program has undergone a series of changes along the line of political degeneration. They have successively rejected the position of the Fourth International

on the USSR, China's war against Japan, India's struggle for independence against British imperialism, the perspectives of the European revolution, etc. Their political activity has pivoted around the waging of virulent warfare against the program and organization of the Fourth International, while posing before the world as banner-bearers of Trotskyism and genuine proletarian revolutionists.

This appraisal coincides with all the established conclusions of the party meticulously documented in numerous publications. This was the view held by Trotsky, the SWP and the Fourth International—and until recently, by Goldman, Morrow and Loris as well. This has been the basis upon which up to now we have conducted our struggle against this opponent organization—and not without considerable success.

Their Method and Ours

However, the dialectic as well as life itself, teaches that all things change—and that under certain material conditions things can be converted into their opposites. Theoretically it is not impossible that the WP might basically change its petty-bourgeois character, reverse its course, and return to the revolutionary road. If such should be the case, as realistic politicians we would have to revise our estimate of the Shachtmanites and alter our tactics toward them in correspondence with the degree of their transformation. This, for example, is the way we acted in respect to the Socialist Party during 1935-36 when it threw up a left wing of sizeable proportions compared to our movement.

The dialectic however also teaches us that the truth is concrete. And here we come to the heart of the present controversy over the WP. Have the Shachtmanites actually transformed themselves from a petty-bourgeois intellectualist grouping of a centrist character into an unalloyed revolutionary proletarian tendency as the minority asserts? If so, how, why, when and in what respects has this transformation taken place? These are the questions Goldman and his colleagues are obliged to answer in order to convince the party.

Before dealing with Goldman's present position, it is extremely instructive to note how Goldman approached this question in practice—that is, in real political life. In his speech on "Unity with the Shachtmanites", delivered in New York on July 25, 1945, Comrade Cannon dealt in detail with this important methodological aspect of the matter. He there demonstrated how Goldman's evaluation of the Shachtmanites and his attempted revision of party policy unfolded a step-at-a-time, not in accordance with the real development of the WP but in line with his own personal evolution and factional needs. Cannon showed how such a devious procedure in regard to fundamental questions is opposed to our traditions and method. "The attempt to introduce a fundamental change of line in any question in stages by small tactical steps is the classic method of opportunism. Bolsheviks first discuss and decide the *fundamental line* in every important question and *then* discuss its tactical application."

Goldman's procedure on this question of practical politics duplicated Loris' procedure on even more vital questions of Marxist philosophy. Both have attempted to bring about a gradual revision of party positions not in a forthright and principled manner, but step-by-step in a concealed and oblique fashion. They aimed to dislodge the party piecemeal from its consciously-arrived-at positions, to bring about a radical reversal by successive stages until the party would be confronted with accomplished facts.

This is the classic method of revisionism in theory and opportunism in politics: to inoculate the movement with small doses of petty-bourgeois ideas and practices so that at decisive moments it would be totally paralyzed by the internal conflict of incompatible forces. These abominable methods of petty-bourgeois theorists and politicians have nothing in common with the practices of Marxism which are guided everywhere and at all times by principled considerations flowing from our basic world outlook. Unfortunately, that is precisely how Goldman approached the problem of dealing with the Shachtmanites.

The Minority's Method Applied to the WP

Now let us see how the minority has arrived at its present evaluation of the WP as an "essentially revolutionary" group, which, save for the insignificant (!) exception of the Soviet

Union and its defense, "remains on the fundamental programmatic basis of the Fourth International." As we have said, a serious Marxist theoretician would have surveyed the whole range of activities of the WP from its origins to the present in order to draw up a balance sheet of their development and determine their true character. We would want to know how the Shachtmanites stand on an entire series of fundamental questions beginning with Marxist philosophy, including their attitude toward the Fourth International, and concluding with their activities in the class struggle on a world and national scale. Only then could we come to correct conclusions about their character and consequently the tactics to be followed toward them.

The minority however pursues an entirely different method. They do not even pretend to analyze and appraise the totality of the Shachtmanites' activities since the split in their full connections and implications. Apparently they do not even understand the necessity for doing this.

Even in the political sphere they wave aside all questions save one: the attitude of the WP toward the imperialist war and the bourgeoisie in this country. According to them, this is the talisman by which a genuine revolutionary grouping is to be detected. This is the "acid test" by which its Leninist character can be demonstrated.

Such reasoning stems from the school of petty-bourgeois formalism, not Marxism. Dialectical materialists learn to view a particular phenomenon in its systematic unity as an organic whole, including its interconnections and interactions with other phenomena. Formalists haphazardly fasten upon one or another feature, isolate it from the rest, consider it by itself. In this fashion does the minority single out a solitary feature from the entire history of the Shachtmanites—and one existing mostly on paper at that!—in order to validate their proletarian revolutionary character.

The procedure is as superficial as the criterion. Opposition to imperialist war does not and cannot *in and of itself* convert a petty-bourgeois centrist grouping into a genuine proletarian tendency. Much more is required than that. Under certain circumstances not only petty-bourgeois but even bourgeois parties can assume a defeatist position toward imperialist rulers. For example, the Independent Labor Party of England remained in formal opposition to the British bourgeoisie throughout the Second World War. But this did not suffice to make a real revolutionary party out of this petty-bourgeois outfit which Trotsky correctly called "the classic party of centrism."

In its oppositional moods the Indian National Congress also refused support to the war of British imperialism. But neither the petty-bourgeois clique in the home country nor the bourgeois party in the oppressed colony thereby pass muster as authentic revolutionary organizations. Both served in actuality as brakes upon the revolutionary movements of the masses in their respective countries.

The Shachtmanites are in no way superior to the ILP leaders. Indeed, they are all the more pernicious and dangerous since they do not, like Maxton and Brockway, fight Trotskyism in the open, but deceitfully and dishonestly in the name of Trotsky himself. Knowing this, Trotsky took care to demarcate himself most sharply from these people. "If *this* is Trotskyism, then I at least am no Trotskyist. With the present ideas of Shachtman, not to mention Burnham, I have nothing in common." (*In Defense of Marxism*, p. 168).

The Shachtmanite System of Defeatism

What is the real worth of the war position of the Shachtmanites? The minority pins the badge of "Leninism" upon the WP because it was defeatist toward the American bourgeoisie. They conveniently overlook the far more important fact that this is only one facet of an all-embracing system of defeatism which provides the sum and substance of their politics. In this war the Shachtmanites have not simply assumed a defeatist attitude toward their own bourgeoisie. They were also and equally defeatist toward the remaining conquests of the October Revolution, the degenerated workers state of the USSR. They were defeatist in the struggle of the colonial countries against imperialist invasion (China). They were defeatist in respect to a colonial offensive against imperialism headed in its first stages by

the native bourgeoisie (India). They also took up a defeatist position toward the developing proletarian revolution in Europe by their anti-Marxist attitude on the question of national liberation and by their agreement with the liquidationist position of the German emigres who put forward the "Three Theses." Finally, they were defeatists at the expense of the Fourth International, the world organization of struggle against the imperialist war.

Beginning with defeatism toward the USSR, they have since expanded this break with Marxism into a rounded system of world politics. Such a system, based on abstentionism from the real class struggle, is only opportunism turned inside out. The Stalinists rejected the revolutionary way in the name of the defense of the USSR. The Shachtmanites rejected the defense of the USSR in the name of the revolution. Neither the Stalinist opportunists nor the Shachtmanite adventurers followed the road of Lenin. Despite their differences, the politics of both coincided in renouncing the independent revolutionary policy and perspectives of the international working class embodied in the program and organization of the Fourth International.

The Social Roots of Shachtmanite Politics

It is not accidental that the Shachtmanites have created an entire political system on the basis of universal defeatism. This springs from their petty-bourgeois nature and lack of confidence in their own position and prospects which takes the form of abstaining from the real revolutionary struggles and self-actions of the proletariat and colonial peoples. Their defeatism reflects the doubts, hesitations and the refusal to take definite sides in the class struggle proper to petty-bourgeois intellectuals of all categories. Burnham and other renegades from Marxism have drawn the full logical conclusions from this defeatism by abandoning the revolutionary movement altogether and passing over into the camp of the class enemy. The Shachtmanites remain in the half-way house of petty-bourgeois radicalism.

Their wretched literary scheme of defeatism is really a petty-bourgeois substitute for revolutionary Marxism. It has absolutely nothing in common with Leninist politics. Lenin knew that in the fight against imperialism and its wars phrases counted for very little. What was decisive was deeds, systematic work in mobilizing the masses in real life for the proletarian revolution. Lenin was merciless toward phrase-mongers: syndicalists, pacifists, left-centrists and all those who also at one time or another were formally opposed to the imperialist warmakers. He subjected their purely verbal intransigence to severest criticism. He taught that there was an abyss between petty-bourgeois phrase-mongers who stand on the side-lines apart from the living process of the fight and consistent proletarian revolutionists who intervene at every stage of the class struggle according to the methods and program of Marxism.

Morrow himself knew and recognized this difference when he was still under the domination of Trotskyist tradition. He wrote in the Sept. 1942 issue of Fourth International as follows: "The essence of petty-bourgeois radicalism is phrase-mongering with no thought that the words will ever have to be followed by deeds. Unfettered by any responsibility in the struggle, the petty-bourgeois radical can afford unlimited intransigence of the word. It doesn't cost anything so he raises the stakes. Shouting and doing, Marx noted, are irreconcilable opposites. Quite conscious that the doing is beyond him, the petty-bourgeois radical is unbridled in the shouting. Political impotence assures him of never having to make good his ferocious words. Abstentionism masquerades as revolutionary doggedness. Instructive examples of this phenomenon are provided at every turn of events by the Shachtman Workers Party."

Thus, upon closer and more rounded examination, even the minority's single positive proof, its "acid test" that the Shachtmanites have "a Leninist position towards its own imperialist bourgeoisie," turns out to be unfounded. In reality the defeatism of the WP is nothing but the politics of impotence, petty-bourgeois abstentionism masquerading as verbal intransigence.

What Has Really Changed?

The minority berates us for failing to recognize the qualitative change for the better in the WP since the split of 1939-40.

To be sure, colossal changes have occurred in the past five years on both a world and national scale. But the real changes in the situation are not at all those brought forward by the minority and in fact speak entirely against their position.

First of all, the main changes which have taken place in the WP have not resulted in their regeneration into a genuinely revolutionary group. So far as we know, there has not yet arisen in the WP a tendency that is reevaluating the past and conducts a struggle for Marxism against revisionism. Insofar as groups and individuals have done so, they have been obliged to break completely with the WP and come over to us. On the contrary, the Shachtmanites have accentuated and fixed the petty-bourgeois intellectualist characteristics previously manifested within our own organization. Nor have subsequent developments brought the WP closer to revolutionary Marxism and therewith to the program of the Fourth International and the SWP; they have widened the ideological distance between us.

All the evidence the minority cites in their "Resolution on Unity with the WP" simply signifies that the Shachtmanites did not go over completely into the imperialist war-camp, although a sizeable section did so. At best this is no more than a negative merit on their part. It is far from enough to convert them into a Bolshevik tendency constructed on Leninist lines.

The minority does not understand how centrism, which is masked revisionism, develops in reality. Centrist groups which have broken with Marxism and Bolshevism do not rupture all their ties with the past at one stroke. Different aspects of the new course assert themselves unequally, according to the specific conditions of their evolution.

The main body of the Shachtmanites are at the present moment suspended midway in the flight from the proletarian camp toward the bourgeoisie. Their degeneration has unfolded by stages in order to disguise their retreat not only from themselves but from others. The process of backsliding has been an unequal one. In 1939-40 they took a frenzied leap and wrenched themselves loose from the moorings of Marxism and the discipline of the Fourth International. Since this backward jump the Shachtmanites have been more or less content to drift with the tide, zigzagging here and there to accommodate themselves to shifting circumstances. This is the characteristic form of behavior of centrism. This change in pace has served to deceive a few gullible individuals, some because of inexperience, others through inclination. Unfortunately a few of these are to be found within our own ranks.

But, judged by Marxist standards, despite all zigzags the main direction of the WP's politics has been away from Bolshevism and the program of the Fourth International toward a growing reconciliation with the ideas and methods of the renegades from Marxism, the left Social-Democrats, sceptics of Souvarine's school, the anti-Bolsheviks of all varieties.

In the second place our party too has undergone enormous changes—changes for the better. No sooner did the petty-bourgeois opposition quit us than our movement surged forward against unfavorable conditions. Five years later the results are observable to all. These achievements have been set forth by

Comrade Cannon in his speech and it is not necessary to repeat them here. One aspect of these changes is the fact that the ranks of our party have become so proletarianized and educated in Marxism that they have become immunized against the virus of conciliationism. They clearly recognize the alien petty-bourgeois centrist character of the WP. That is why the minority has from the first found itself so isolated and uninfluential within the party. *What they mistake for signs of the ideological backwardness of the party membership actually provides the best evidence of its theoretical seriousness.*

Finally, there has been a distinct change for the worse in the leaders and partisans of the minority faction. Although they fought with us against the old petty-bourgeois opposition, they have either not assimilated or have forgotten the main lessons of that fight. Today they feel far closer to the Shachtmanites than to the overwhelming majority of the party. Our proletarianization and growing ideological homogeneity have made it increasingly difficult for petty-bourgeois tendencies to operate within our ranks. These must seek other fields in order to function and flourish. In the United States today one of the favorite habitats for elements who want to shake off Marxism and cannot stomach Stalinism is becoming the Shachtmanite Sanitarium for Political Invalids.

The Real Perspectives

Up to now the differences between the majority and minority remained episodic and undeveloped. We were well aware of their symptomatic significance but waited to see their further development. Theoretical differences need not always and invariably mature into political and organizational differences, although they contain that potentiality. How far and in what direction such differences will assert themselves and what forms they will take depends in the last instance upon a whole series of material conditions governing the conflicting forces and individuals concerned.

We hoped that new experiences would make these comrades see their errors and induce them to retreat. Unfortunately they have continued to pile up one error upon another. The road they are traveling has led the minority farther and farther away from the proletarian core of our party and toward unabashed reconciliation with the methods, ideas, and movement of the petty-bourgeois radicals. The perspective of the minority is an utterly hopeless one inside our party. They cannot realistically expect to grow in influence or in numbers, or even to hold their own. Our proletarian ranks, equipped with the weapons of Marxism, are too strongly armored against their arguments.

The minority has therefore arrived at the crossroad. It must either return to the highroad of Marxism or sink ever deeper into the swamp of petty-bourgeois radicalism. Such are the real alternatives confronting the opposition.

As for the proletarian mass of the SWP, whatever be the outcome of the present discussions with the WP, it has already made up its mind to move with greater energy and determination along the course which has produced such brilliant results since the Shachtmanites left our ranks over five years ago.

The Bureaucratic Tendency in the S. W. P.: An Answer to J. Lyons

By A. STEIN, New York

In his article, "Is there a Stalinist Danger in the S.W.P.?", Comrade Lyons has proven by means of a formal syllogism that a bureaucracy does not exist in our party. While his conclusion is formally correct, given the premise that a bureaucracy cannot exist without a material basis, Comrade Lyons' line of reasoning is totally irrelevant to the issues at hand. For Comrade Goldman has called the attention of the party to specific acts of a Stalinist nature committed by the leadership, and has branded them as harmful to the growth of a revolutionary party. A party like ours must strive for the highest degree of conscious participation on the part of the rank and file in making its political and organizational decisions. The Stalinist acts or, if you please, "germs", to which Comrade Goldman has called our attention, indicate a tendency on the part of the leadership to create an atmosphere favorable to a monolithic organization where opposition is barely tolerated and the leadership does all the thinking and makes all the decisions.

Lyons has decided to take a "fundamental" attitude on this issue. The specific incidents attacked by Goldman are not worthy of attention unless... Goldman proves there is a bureaucracy at the head of the party. We have only to apply Lyons' reasoning to specific issues to see how absurd and dangerous it is. Does the comrade think that the "build-up" of Comrade Cannon by Hansen in his now famous article is unimportant in and of itself? Comrade Martin, in one of his letters from jail, went out of his way to praise this kind of article and declare that more of its kind were needed. Indeed Martin went so far as to say that he who did not see the need for such articles could not be considered a Bolshevik. We say that this article constitutes a Stalinist "germ". And Comrade Lyons? To him it remains unimportant until... until somebody proves there is a material basis for a bureaucracy in our party, or that such a material basis is coming into existence..

We condemn Cannon's disgraceful attack on James T. Far-

rell which, in effect, prohibits intellectuals sympathetic to the party from participating in its discussions in any form whatsoever unless they present a certificate proving that they have had twenty years of practice in the esoteric "technique" of politics. That Cannon has gone much further than the Stalinists and elaborated a scandalous theory that confines the right to take a part in revolutionary politics only to an "elite" group of practitioners cannot be very important to Comrade Lyons. And why? Because, you see, Goldman and his supporters have failed to prove the existence of a material basis for a bureaucracy in our party. Could anything be more absurd than this kind of reasoning . . . or more dangerous?

Comrade Lyons cannot understand why we insist on calling these bureaucratic acts "Stalinist germs" or Stalinist in character. Why don't we call them "social-democratic" or "trade-union" bureaucratic germs? We call them "Stalinist" acts for some very good reasons. The Social-Democratic leaderships, while they are bureaucratic, do not strive under normal conditions for a monolithic party. Do we not always deride the loose, impotent, organizational form of the Social-Democratic parties? Only Stalinism, masquerading as Bolshevism, proclaims the monolithic party as the "norm" of a revolutionary organization. And in the past two decades, the influence of the Stalinist parties among radicalized workers has far outweighed the influence of the Social Democracy. To the worker who has little knowledge of the revolutionary movement, the Stalinist movement speaks in the name of communism, and with it go all its organizational practices, until the worker learns better. Let us also remember that our leadership had its own origins in the Stalinist parties in the days when Zinoviev's arbitrary version of Bolshevism was in full sway, and was subjected to the influence of the methods and practices that then prevailed. Lest some comrades become too indignant on this score, let us make the point clear. We do not accuse the Cannon leadership of being Stalinists. But we are warning the party that certain acts of the leadership follow the pattern we have always identified as the method of Stalinism which, if carried out consistently, must result in the caricature of a living Bolshevik party.

In his theoretical pursuit of "bureaucracy", Lyons challenges Goldman's statement that one of the conditions favorable to the development of a bureaucratic tendency is the backwardness of the American workers. Thereby, says Lyons, Goldman reveals that he does not even understand the causes of Stalinism in the Soviet Union. Lyons then goes on to quote Trotsky in order to prove: (1) the international defeats of the proletariat; (2) the "growth of alien class influences" were the basic causes of bureaucratic degeneration in the Soviet Union. In a word, the backwardness of the Russian workers did not contribute to the triumph of the bureaucracy. Surely, Comrade Lyons was joking when he wrote in this fashion, or perhaps we have misunderstood him. For, many, many times, Trotsky listed among the conditions that led to Stalin's success the following factors: (1) the death of a good part of the small vanguard on the battlefield during the Civil War; (2) the death of another part of this vanguard through sickness and exhaustion; and (3) the exhaustion of the Russian workers after the trying years of revolution and civil war. How does Lyons explain the famous "Lenin levy" of 1924, when the triumvirate brought no less than 240,000 workers into the Bolshevik party and thereby increased its membership by 50% at one stroke? Who were these workers? They were people who had worked in the same factory for at least ten or fifteen years. People who had stood aside in the time of revolution and civil war without actively participating in the struggle. These, Comrade Lyons, were backward workers.

What Comrade Lyons does not seem to understand is that the working class, like every other class in society, is heterogeneous in its composition and is subject to different influences at different times. What Comrade Lyons does not seem to understand is that, under capitalism, the "normal ideology" of the working class is bourgeois in character. The ideology is not outside the working class, but is part and parcel of its consciousness, as Lenin pointed out in "What is to be Done." Only when the vanguard party stands at the head of the class does the class liberate itself from "alien class influences", that is, bourgeois ideology.

It is no contradiction to say, therefore, that the Stalinist

bureaucracy was a product of the backwardness of the Russian workers, as well as of "the alien class influences". Under the conditions of the ebb of the revolutionary tide and the pressure of alien class influences, the mass of workers succumbed to the "nationalist" outlook of the Stalinist leadership. Stalin did not succeed by violence and violence alone. Nothing else explains why the "triumvirate" carried out the "Leninist levy". According to Lyons' reasoning, Stalin and his cohorts should have brought 240,000 peasants into the party, and not workers, in order to exert "an alien class influence".

Lyons is willing to concede that the American workers are backward. But, "backwardness" is a relative term. And, says Comrade Lyons, the backwardness of the American workers has been in the process of being dissipated since the depression of the early thirties. According to Lyons, if we want to base the existence of bureaucratic tendencies on the backwardness of the American workers, then those tendencies should have flourished more strongly in the past two decades, when the leftward swing of the American workers had barely begun. Now and in the future there will be less room for bureaucratic tendencies on the part of our leadership because of the radicalization of the American workers under the impact of the war and the economic crisis. So reasons Comrade Lyons.

In order to prove his reasoning, Comrade Lyons calls attention to the fact that in the past, when the backwardness of the American workers was more and not less than now, there was greater democracy, more looseness, than there is now in our party. To Lyons this proves that our attempt to connect the bureaucratic tendency of the leadership with the "backwardness" of the American workers is incorrect.

Comrade Lyons has constructed a simple scheme which does not correspond to the facts and ignores the real relationships between the Trotskyist movement and the working class. The relationship between our party and the working class is not so simple and direct as Lyons would have us believe. In the first place, we did not have a party in the period of which Comrade Lyons speaks. It would be more correct and accurate to speak of the Trotskyist movement then as a propaganda group. The main task of that period was the formation of a cadre. We appealed, not to the main body of the working class, but to the most advanced sections, to the politically educated elements who were capable of reacting to international as well as national events. The shaping of a cadre could only take place through a thorough discussion of ideas. Comrade Lyons also ignores another important factor—the participation of Trotsky in this task. Trotsky could lead the political discussion and thus leave the organizational tasks to the American leadership. So long as Trotsky lived, Cannon and his followers did not have to "organize" discussions in order to artificially maintain their authority. Under these conditions, the bureaucratic tendencies did not come to the fore.

Is Lyons correct when he asserts that the leftward swing of the American workers provides less room than hitherto for the growth of bureaucratic tendencies in our party leadership? We think the opposite. It is more correct to say that an influx of workers into our party can be used to strengthen the bureaucratic tendencies in the leadership. The truth is that from a political point of view, the workers who will enter our party will be raw material. Their political consciousness, in the majority of cases, will be at the level of recognizing the class struggle. They will have a militant desire to struggle against the capitalists and their social system. And to this task, they will bring all the ingenuity and energy they display on the picket line. This, of course, is the great asset of the American workers, but it would be fatal for us to ignore the other side. Because of the given peculiarities of the American economy, the American class lines have never been sharply drawn, and consequently, the American workers have never had to think about the fundamental questions of political power—the general theoretical ideas and their concrete application. Here is the source of the American workers' "empiricism", the day-to-day approach.

In terms of politics, the lack of class consciousness has also meant the lack of a political tradition. The American workers do not have a tradition of mass radical parties based on a socialist perspective. And the American worker is conscious of his inadequacy in this sphere. When he enters a radical party,

he does not question what is handed down as the tradition of the party. Everything at this point depends on the leadership. Everything depends on what kind of attitude it fosters in the party toward discussion, the responsibilities of a member, the role of the leadership. It is from the tone set by the leadership that the worker-recruit absorbs what he thinks is the Bolshevik attitude.

That is why a leadership which wishes to foster the idea of a "strong", "authoritative" leadership as a necessary part of a revolutionary party can get the workers to accept it. They may feel uncomfortable about the idea, but they will not challenge it, feeling their lack of political competence on such questions. Particularly will this be so when bureaucratic acts are accompanied by "revolutionary" phraseology. A worker thinks a long time before he joins a radical party, and he thinks twice as long before leaving it. That is why, Comrade Lyons, the tendency towards bureaucratism can grow in a period when the American workers are moving leftward.

We have shown that the leftward turn of the workers is not, as Lyons claims, an obstacle to the development of a bureaucratic tendency in the leadership. But even if this should be so, why should the leadership adopt a course which steers the party in the direction of the monolithic type of party? Since our leadership is not defending material privileges, since it does not use physical and economic coercion to maintain its control, and since (as even this article shows) an opposition exists and expresses its opinion, how can anyone possibly talk about the existence of a bureaucracy or a bureaucratic tendency? To Comrade Lyons, this is the nub of the question.

But, Comrade Lyons, a leadership does not have to have a privileged material basis in order to commit a number of serious political errors. Very good revolutionists can do that. All we are duty bound to show is that these errors are not isolated or accidental, but flow from an inadequate political method. That, in turn, this political method (which alternates between sectarianism and abstentionism when confronted by concrete political issues) is the product of a one-sided development of our leadership. Furthermore, we are confronted by the fact that the leadership refuses to correct the errors and the method from which they flow. And when a leadership mistakenly believes that admission of errors and open discussion in the ranks of the party to correct the line undermines its authority, then bureaucratic controls over party life become inevitable. For by the bureaucratic tendency we mean nothing more than the attempt to use organizational means to defend and bolster up the authority of the leadership. An artificial "build-up" of certain key leaders in the party press, refusal to answer criticisms in a political dispute, silence when confronted by political errors that have been made, the abuse of moral authority to isolate and discredit a loyal opposition on every ground but the right one, namely, political grounds. These are some of the features of an attitude which has as its driving force but one end—the artificial propping up of the leadership on the grounds that it is the leadership.

When we check the history of the party for the last two years, we see that this has been the case. Has Comrade Cannon clarified the discussion of the slogan of "defense" by admitting his blunder, or does he try to give the impression that he arrived at the new position simultaneously with Comrade Natalia? And has our leadership led a discussion on the trend of events inside the Soviet Union? It has contributed nothing to the discussion on the Russian question. Was there an honest discussion on the European resolution? Has the leadership, after more than a year of equivocation, as yet committed to paper its attitude toward certain democratic slogans? One month the party ranks were told that there was a fundamental difference on the political plane between the majority and the minority. We branded it as a sheer fraud. The next month, the ranks were told that the differences were secondary. Who decided and when? Isn't the membership entitled to know how this change was made? Isn't it entitled to know why such eminent leaders as M. Stein, E. R. Frank, Warde, Frankel, were wrong in their statements to the convention? But the point is obvious and we need not belabor it any longer.

The bureaucratic means are needed to conceal errors in political judgement. The errors flow from an inadequate method. The method expresses the one-sided development of the leader-

ship. As for the one-sided development, it is a fact; it exists. The "advanced" economic conditions shaped the political backwardness of the American working class. This backwardness, in turn, was an objective factor in determining and shaping the outlook and make-up of our leadership as it now stands—or its decisive majority. Neither the class nor the party exists in a vacuum.

As everyone knows or should know, the Trotskyist movement came into being in a period of defeats for the international working class. Simultaneously the power of Stalinism flourished. That was a decisive reason for the isolation of the Trotskyists in almost every country. In the United States this isolation was aggravated by the relative political and economic backwardness of the American workers. That was an additional force working to isolate the Trotskyist movement in this country. To break out of this isolation and find an avenue to the workers was as important as hammering out the program and shaping a cadre.

From the very beginning of the American Trotskyist movement, one section of the leadership (Cannon, Dunne) occupied itself almost exclusively with trade union and organizational affairs as a means of getting at the workers. Unlike Europe, where political questions are practical questions, where the state power falls into the street every so often, so to speak, the central question in the United States has been the organization of the class on the union level. Anyone who spoke authoritatively on such questions could get an immediate hearing from the workers indifferent to politics. As for politics, the fairly static situation could be dealt with from year to year in programmatic documents that had an abstract character. There was no need to apply accepted generalizations or to modify them in the light of new situations. That is why the political method of the majority tends towards sectarianism at its best, and complete abstentionism at its worst. For what the repetition of "the finished program" hides is the inability to apply principles to specific political situations; a lack of experience in dealing with new problems.

We have shown why a bureaucratic attitude on the part of the leadership will tend to be accepted by worker-recruits. We have shown the attitude of the leadership to be a defense of its prestige and a cover for an inadequate political method. But, what is common to the attitude of both the worker-recruit and the leadership is the origin in the same social condition—the relative political lag of American society, the arrested development of the class struggle in the United States.

The party has succeeded in finding an avenue to the workers. We are on the way towards becoming a workers party. But just because of this, we are confronted by a new problem—what kind of a party do we want the worker-recruit to come into? The Cannon group indicated what kind of a party it wants to build in the course of the disputes on the European question. That the Cannon group committed serious blunders is not as important as the manner in which it responded to criticisms of the errors made. It interpreted all criticism of the minority as an attack on the leadership and on its "authority". To correct the political errors did not seem half so important to the majority as to maintain its prestige.

If the leadership pursues its present course, it will indeed continue to maintain its authority. But only at the expense of the party. To stifle the independent thinking of the rank and file by labeling it as "kibitzing"; to artificially counterpose discussion to activity; to answer a criticism by remaining silent on the issues at stake; to "build-up" the leadership through artificial campaigns inside the party is to turn the party in the direction of a monolithic organization. Such a method does not have to drive an opposition out by physical means. It merely teaches the party to ignore it. Such a method will preserve the authority of the leadership, but it will also condemn the rank and file to an intellectual passivity of the worst sort. Such a party can grow—but it will not be a Bolshevik party.

We do not think such a course is inevitable. We do not think the political errors committed by the Cannon group are a crime. Only their defense by bureaucratic means is a crime that can hurt the party. Through mutual cooperation of the different tendencies in the leadership, through honest discussion in the ranks of the party, all this can be corrected. We are Marxists, not Fatalists. But there must be a will, a desire to correct what-

ever needs to be corrected. Perhaps Comrade Lyons, you disagree with our description and analysis of the "bureaucratic tendency"? We shall be glad to continue to discuss this with you until there is mutual agreement. But that should not prevent us from fighting together now against any incident or idea that is alien to Bolshevism. That should not prevent us from seeing to it that there is an honest and open discussion of all differences. When Cannon concocts a theory that would bar anyone without twenty years of special training in the "technique" of politics from participating in our discussions, let us condemn him. No matter what name we give to his attitude. When Can-

non opens up the discussion on unity with the Shachtman group by calling Goldman a "stooge" and "agent" of the Workers Party, let us condemn him. When the Militant falsifies a story by omitting the fact that the Workers Party conducted a picket line in front of a fascist meeting in Los Angeles, let us condemn it. In that way, whatever our differences may be on the plane of explanation, we shall be fighting against those specific ideas and acts that bring harm to the party. In this fashion, we shall give new worker-recruits the best example of how a real Bolshevik party functions.

August 9, 1945.

Petty-Bourgeois Politics and the War

By MILTON ALVIN, New York

In a conversation with one of the members of the minority faction I have discovered some erroneous impressions regarding the Shachtmanite position on the present war and particularly on the Proletarian Military Policy.

When our Party adopted its present position on military training of the workers the question of raising a conscript army in the United States was in the foreground of events. Just before that, France had capitulated to Hitler and the American bourgeoisie sensed that they would have to enter the war soon. The idea of raising a conscript army before the formal entry into the war met with some opposition from pacifist groups and the so-called isolationists. The daily press was full of pros and cons on the question of conscription.

In accordance with the fundamental program of the Fourth International as stated at its founding conference in 1938, our Party adopted its present position, that is, to advocate the military training of workers under union control. Everyone realizes that in present-day society a knowledge of the military arts is of vital necessity to the working class as a means of defense in a world torn by wars and where capitalist armies are being constantly used against the workers. The experience of one country after another in Europe teaches that the existing military apparatuses, led by officers who come from the rich classes, go over to the side of the fascists in any deep crisis. Spain and Franco, Germany and Hitler, Italy and Mussolini are clear examples of where fascists were able to count on the support of the existing military organizations. In each case, the workers had only their unions and political parties to depend upon. In Spain, the unions and workers' parties had to build military organizations from the very bottom with untrained and inexperienced material. In the U. S. the army is used to break strikes as it was recently in Chicago. Armies trained by the bourgeoisie are inculcated with reactionary ideas. To this our party gave a positive answer.

In adopting our policy on the question of conscription, the party took note of current developments and called for trade union control of military training. This is an extension of our basic policy based upon the concrete realities of the time. In the U. S. the unions are the only existing mass organizations of the workers. To oppose conscription without giving a concrete answer to the fact that workers need and want military training is to adapt oneself to pacifism. Such a position gives a negative answer without coming to grips with the real living problem.

When the dispute over whether or not to raise a conscript army in the U. S. reached its height, John L. Lewis announced that he was against conscription. He had no positive answer to the problem of providing military training for workers. Immediately, the Shachtmanites rushed into print with the assertion that they "support John L. Lewis 100% in his opposition to conscription." Comrade Trotsky observed this and replied that we do not even support Lewis on this question to the extent of 1%.

The Shachtmanites ran a campaign in their press against our position. Shachtman called it "giving a finger to social-patriotism." However, they had no alternative to offer the workers with the exception of a few ritualistic statements that they were for a "peoples' army." Naturally, this proposal did not fit the then existing situation.

The Shachtmanites were compelled to hold a discussion on this question within their own ranks. This brought out some revealing viewpoints of some of their leaders. During a debate

between Henry Judd, one of their pompous "experts", and myself on this question he made the assertion that Trotsky had been a social-patriot during the First World War and he was now going over to a similar position in this war. This is an example of the class hostility held by this individual against us. He blurted out a bald-faced lie in desperation.

Goldman has given a great deal of undeserved credit to the Shachtmanites for being opposed to the present war. However, we do not base our analysis of their position only on what they say about the war in general, but on what they do on specific questions affecting the war. On the question of conscription, the best we can say for them is that they took a semi-pacifist position having nothing in common with our position.

The minority will counter with the assertion that Shachtman wrote he was in favor of military training of workers under their own control. True he made the record. But he went no further, he did not implement his position but stopped short of making a concrete proposal as to how this was to be carried out. He left the whole thing hanging in mid-air. It is revealing to examine the objections of the Shachtmanites to our position. They held that since the unions were under the leadership of people like Murray and Green who were rabid patriots, it was impermissible to advocate placing military training in their hands. We, on the other hand, explained that Murray and Green would not accept our program any more than Roosevelt would, that the struggle within the unions to achieve acceptance of our position would unmask the role of the labor fakery and consolidate the forces who understand the imperialist nature of the U. S. government and all its instruments including the army. The Shachtmanites, on the other hand, took a completely formalistic position: Murray and Green control the unions today, Murray and Green are patriots, therefore, do not advocate placing anything in the hands of the unions. It is this method that led them to the false position on the Soviet Union which they identify with Stalin, and the Labor Party which they identify with its present leaders. It is the method of petty-bourgeois formalism and not the dialectical method of revolutionary Marxists.

This false method has now been adopted in toto by the present minority which advocates a fusion with the Shachtmanites: They are against the war; therefore, their position is identical with ours. Actually, in its concrete and not imagined activity, the Shachtmanite position can best be described as a petty-bourgeois protest against the war and not revolutionary opposition to it.

Taking each question that affects the war concretely and examining the Shachtmanite position on it, reveals the petty-bourgeois nature of the group. In their trade union activity during the war they have behaved in an irresponsible manner. In one instance after another they have taken part in adventurist local actions that endangered the unions and the militants in them by pitting them against superior forces before the workers were ready to take decisive action. Petty-bourgeois formalism is here too: We are against the no-strike pledge; therefore, we must advocate a strike despite the heavy odds against its success. Small wonder that the Shachtmanites were compelled to organize a traveling circus that ranged up and down the country, getting thrown out of the unions one after another. We can sum up their union activity only with the conclusion that they were making a typically petty-bourgeois pro-

test, making the record, so to speak, without taking responsibility for a real struggle.

Sincere revolutionists do not enter the unions with a blitz program for solving all problems over-night. Nor are we obliged to "make the record" once a day and twice on Sundays. For us, functioning in the unions means a long-range perspective, hard work among the militants and patient explanations. This kind of work, which has as its goal the eventual winning of decisive influence for the party and the carrying out of its program, has nothing in common with the petty-bourgeois sham heroics of the Shachtmanites which Goldman and Morrow so admire.

What Goldman has completely misunderstood is the nature of the Shachtmanite activity. He attributes their false policies in the unions to a "few mistakes." Not at all. If this were so, we would have to say that their revisionism on all the fundamental questions is a series of mistakes. But it is nothing of the sort. Far from being mistakes, they are the expression of petty-bourgeois revisionism known in our movement by the name of Menshevism. We cannot stress too strongly that any conciliationism towards Menshivism must be firmly rejected.

Just as the programmatic revisions of the Shachtmanites are not mistakes but the natural results of petty-bourgeois methods and practices in politics, so the conciliationism of the present minority towards Menshevism is no mistake. Goldman and Morrow are leaning on the support of the petty-bourgeois Shachtmanites against the party. At the present stage the Goldman-Morrow political position is much closer to ours than to Shachtman's. Yet they find it necessary to organize a closed faction within our party to wage a struggle for fusion with the Shachtmanites. This is very significant of the petty-bourgeois nature of the Goldman-Morrow faction.

In their resolution for unity with the W. P. the minority correctly states that the Shachtmanites revised our program in 1939 because of pressure from the bourgeois democrats. They also state that the Shachtmanites have revised some more of the program since. We would like to hear from Goldman whose pressure caused these further revisions. Was it the pressure of the workers that caused them to adopt a policy of no support to independent candidates of the ALP running for office? Whose

pressure caused them to adopt a semi-pacifist position on conscription? What kind of class pressure brought about Shachtman's adoption of the Three Theses on Europe? It would be instructive (to Goldman) to have some answers here, if he will be good enough to stop throwing mud at the party long enough to think a few things out.

Above all, we would like an estimation from Goldman on the Russian question and the WP position. When they split from the Party in 1940, the official position of the WP, at least Shachtman's position, was that the Soviet Union was still a workers' state. WHOSE CLASS PRESSURE CAUSED HIM TO ADOPT BURNHAM'S POSITION ON THIS QUESTION? A reply that the WP has made a "few mistakes" will not be acceptable.

Marxists understand that class pressure is always brought to bear heavily upon the revolutionary vanguard. From the bourgeois side it takes various forms, sometimes in open repression, sometimes in subtle forms. But it is constantly at work. We have always explained revisions of our program as being primarily due to giving way before this pressure. Apparently Goldman agrees with this, at least insofar as it applied in 1939-40. Now he must explain to us just what caused Shachtman's further revision of our program since the split.

While he is about it, Goldman might also explain to us just how much *weight* the WP gives to their political differences with us. This should be easy since he appears to be very well informed on matters concerning them. This is a decisive question for unity. In 1939-40 the minority split from us because the differences in their minds were so fundamental and deep-going that they found it impossible to live in the party. For 5 years they waged unrestricted warfare on the party. Now we have an official offer to discuss the question of unity with us. So far as is known all the political questions in dispute plus the additional ones developed by the Shachtmanites since the split, remain. Do the Shachtmanites now feel that their differences with us are of such a nature that they can come back to the party and be loyal, disciplined members, confining themselves to the expression of and discussion of their views to the proper time? As attorney for the WP in our ranks we give Goldman the floor.
Sept. 1, 1945

Fact and Fiction on the Workers Party

By JAMES CAMPBELL, New York

In his article "Some Facts About the Workers Party", Milton Alvin, as an ex-member of the Workers Party, purports to give us an authoritative account of the programmatic and organizational status of that party. However it requires neither a Shachtmanite-specialist nor an eye-specialist to recognize that Comrade Alvin has a bad case of myopia when looking in this direction. What the character of the "facts" that Comrade Alvin presents us with are we shall soon see.

It is worthwhile dealing at some length with Comrade Alvin's article because in answering his arguments we will be dealing with some of the commonest misconceptions about the nature of the W. P. Alvin in his article rehashes all the half-truths about the Shachtmanites that are peddled around the party and throws in a couple of original ones for good measure. All this he backs up with highly questionable "facts" and sometimes with no facts at all. In dealing point by point with Alvin's article we hope that we will be able to clear the air of most of the false ideas held by many comrades as to the political position of the Workers Party.

Now let us hear from Comrade Alvin.

(1) "Goldman breathes a sigh of relief because Burnham and Macdonald left the Workers Party. In vain! Carter remains with their program and, for the Workers Party, a good-sized faction. In addition Shachtman adopted and even extended Burnham's 1937 position on the Soviet Union. One would find it impossible to find any practical distinction between the Shachtman and Burnham-Carter positions. The spectacle of Johnson in our party holding the Soviet Union to be a Fascist State with monopoly capitalists at its head is too nightmarish to require comment."

So Carter remains with Burnham's program! If Alvin means Burnham's "program" of the "managerial revolution" or Mac-

donald's "program" of anti-Bolshevik eclecticism he is practicing outright falsification. If he means Burnham's 1937 position he is being deliberately ambiguous. And when he says that Shachtman has "even extended" Burnham's 1937 position and in the next breath that nevertheless there is "no practical distinction" between Shachtman's position and the "Burnham-Carter" position he clearly creates the impression that both Carter and Shachtman have developed their position side-by-side with Burnham towards the theory of the managerial revolution. All this is a rather shabby way of creating an amalgam between the present Burnham position and that of Carter and Shachtman.

When Goldman pointed out the departure of Burnham and Macdonald from the WP as being significant, he meant something altogether different than Alvin implies. He did not maintain that Shachtman and Carter had therefore abandoned the theory of bureaucratic collectivism; he emphasized that their departure was significant as an indication that the two outstanding representatives of petty-bourgeois politics no longer felt at home in the WP and that in departing, they and those who followed them left the Workers Party a healthier and more proletarian organization.

Shachtman and most of those associated with him are leaders of long training in the labor and revolutionary movement, and neither petty-bourgeois careerists like Burnham nor shopkeepers in political ideas like Macdonald. Despite their important differences with us on the Soviet Union they have maintained a consistently revolutionary course throughout the war and show no signs of departing from it. This key fact Alvin does not even see fit to mention!

There have been and undoubtedly still are within the International, groups that do not agree with our position on the Soviet Union. To Comrade Alvin differences within the party

may be a "nightmarish spectacle", but those who are confident of the correctness of their ideas and of their ability to convince the party ranks of that correctness will suffer an untroubled sleep.

(2) "Goldman gives some undeserved credit to the Workers Party for advocating a Labor Party. Formally, they do call for a Labor Party. But in actual practice there is not a *single instance* (my emphasis—J. C.) of the Workers Party supporting an independent labor candidate for office. Their position on this question differs profoundly from ours. They do not use the class criterion but decide solely on a programmatic basis. Naturally, this eliminates the necessity of ever giving support to any independent labor candidate or party whose program disagrees with theirs. Moreover, a sizeable group is opposed even to advocating a Labor Party. Actually the Workers Party carries out the policy of this group."

Let us start with Alvin's outright falsehood. The Workers Party has given support to independent labor candidates. They supported MCF candidates in the last election campaign, and did it earlier and more prominently than we did. (See *Labor Action*, Aug. 14, 1944.) What Comrade Alvin doubtless means (and it would have been far superior if he had said it) was that the Shachtmanites have not supported candidates of the American Labor Party. That their position was incorrect we all agree, but please, Comrade Alvin, do not erect this into a fundamental programmatic disagreement. How "profoundly" different the two positions are is demonstrated by the fact that until the last minute of the 1942 elections the majority sentiment in the PC was against supporting Alfange and only Comrade Goldman insisted upon the correctness of this tactic. As it was, the party did little more than "make the record" instead of conducting a real campaign around the elections. Although it was correct to support the ALP in this instance, it is fantastic to maintain that he who refused to support it under the peculiar circumstances that existed (Tammany candidate, an ossified Labor Party structure with no room to maneuver inside) is "fundamentally" opposed to supporting independent labor candidates. At any rate, Alvin's whole bubble is burst by the WP's support to the MCF.

There is more nonsense, however. The WP, says Comrade Alvin, doesn't use the "class criterion" but "decides solely on a programmatic basis". This would not only preclude them from supporting the MCF but also would prevent them from supporting Myra Tanner Weiss in Los Angeles. But they did support her. And we will inform Alvin, who should already know it, that while a minority in the WP is opposed to advocating a Labor Party, it is not opposed to supporting a Labor Party in elections once one exists.

Truly, there is not much left of Comrade Alvin's argument. And when he ends up by asserting that a party which calls for a labor party every week in its press is "actually" carrying out the policy of a minority that is opposed to advocating a labor party, he leaves the realm of political sanity altogether.

(3) "Our differences with the Workers Party on the Proletarian Military Policy reveal that, here too, we approach the question from totally different sides. Our method is the class analysis, theirs is eclectic. They rejected our policy because today the unions are under the control of Murray and Green".

Comrade Alvin thinks that he solves every problem with the magic words "class line". As a matter of fact Shachtman did not reject the Military Policy because the unions were controlled by Murray and Green—he would have rejected it even if the unions had been controlled by Cannon and Shachtman. What he rejected was any indication of support of conscription by the bourgeois state, even for training under trade union control; i.e., he drew the "class line". Shachtman's criticism was not directed at Trotsky's formulation of our military policy but primarily at certain formulations of Cannon.

In referring to Social-Democratic attacks on our anti-war policy in his speech on the military policy at the 1940 plenum, Comrade Cannon uttered these words:

"Well, we answered in a general way, the workers will first overthrow the bourgeoisie at home and then they will take care of the invaders. That was a good program, but the workers did not make the revolution in time. Now the two tasks must be telescoped and carried out simultaneously." (My emphasis—J. C.)

Shachtman attacked this conception of "telescoping" (and correctly so) as bordering on social-patriotism, but contrary to the prevailing view, he did not take a "pacifist" position on military training. Those who are interested can find Shachtman's position stated in his article "Working-class Policy In War And Peace", printed in the January 1941 issue of the *New Internationalist*. In the course of polemicizing against Cannon, Shachtman stated his positive position on military training as follows:

"It is necessary, we said, to utilize this sentiment of the masses, their hatred and fear of Fascism, for working class objectives. Given the world social crisis and the imminence of the second world war, knowing from old times the futility and worse of pacifist opposition to militarism and war, we raised the slogan of Workers Defense Guards and a People's Army. In effect, we said to the workers: You want to fight fascism, to preserve your rights and labor institutions? Good, so do we. We even want to go further, and extend those rights, make them more genuine and durable. Only, we warn you that under the leadership of the bourgeoisie, and in the course of the war that it will carry on in the democracies against Germany, we will merely end up under a totalitarian regime in our own country. Organize armed and trained forces of your own, under your own leadership and control, and then you will not only be able to meet the threat of fascism at home and abroad, but you will be assured that in the course of the fight imperialist interests will not be served and all democratic rights destroyed."

Does that sound like "petty-bourgeois pacifism", Comrade Alvin? Is there such a big gap between this position and our orientation towards military training of the proletariat?

(4) "The differences on China, Europe and other questions reveal the different methods employed."

As far as China is concerned, we have just learned that such theoretically well-equipped Marxists as the Indian comrades have taken a position against defense on precisely the same grounds as Shachtman. To raise this into a decisive indictment of the WP is fantastic.

As for Europe many comrades in the International (and not just the authors of the Three Theses) have taken essentially the same position on the national liberation question as Shachtman (contrariwise, there is a minority in the WP that has essentially the same position as the SWP). Comrade Alvin cannot even claim that the official SWP position was the position of the majority of the European comrades. We came out against the slogan of national liberation and against material support to the resistance movement. The WP came out for both of these. But, as Alvin can find out by consulting the introduction to the European theses and the theses' themselves in the March 1945 *FI*, the European comrades gave material support to the Maquis while coming out against the slogan of national liberation. So at best we have a fifty-fifty split with the WP on this question. But Comrade Alvin is intent on discovering "profoundly different methods" in every question.

(5) Says Comrade Alvin: "It is difficult to find where we agree on any important questions. There are deep-going differences all up and down the line."

At this point we are convinced that what Comrade Alvin needs is not a pair of spectacles but dark glasses and a cane. Since the paper shortage and life expectancy of the typewriter forbid listing all the points upon which the WP is in agreement with us, Comrade Alvin will have to content himself with these few "unimportant" questions:

Dictatorship of the Proletariat	Soviets
Hands Off European Revolution	
Workers' overthrow of Stalin	
Nationalization of industry under workers' control	
Revolutionary opposition to war	
Role of Revolutionary Party	
No support to bourgeois government	
United Front to fight Fascism	
Complete Negro equality through independent struggle	
Colonial independence	
Theory of Permanent Revolution	
For a Worker's and Farmers Government	
Repeal the No-Strike Pledge	

So much for this, the shabbiest of all Comrade Alvin's shoddy arguments.

(6) "The Workers Party concept of a party resembles the Norman Thomas type far more than a Bolshevik combat organization. Endless debating with no conclusions arrived at is the rule in the Workers Party. Violation of convention decisions is common and winked at by the unprincipled leadership."

For anyone credulous enough to believe this, we refer him to an article "The Party That Won the Victory" by Shachtman in the November 1944 *New Internationalist*, an article which polemicalises in a devastating manner specifically against the S. P. organizational methods and affirms Shachtman's concept of a revolutionary party. A few quotes will perhaps suffice.

"If we do not succeed in having at the crucial moment the kind of party the Bolsheviks had in Russia in 1917 the absolutely inevitable catastrophe that would befall us all would have disastrous effects. . . . Joining the Bolshevik Party meant becoming a soldier in a revolutionary army. It meant discipline and centralization of efforts. It meant the ability to say: my party has this clear-cut policy, that clear-cut program, this answer to this problem; this is what it calls upon the people to do in that situation; if you agree with my party, support it, join it. My party means business; it is serious; it doesn't fool around with the interests and struggles of the working class; it calls upon labor to act as one man and it sets an example of how to act as one man."

Does this sound anything like the Norman Thomas conception of the party? What a compliment to Thomas!

Perhaps Comrade Alvin will claim that although the Shachtmanites proclaim that they are for all these things, they don't live up to them in practice. If so, he will have to produce some evidence to support this contention, and evidence is precisely the ingredient that is left out of the whole of Comrade Alvin's article. In the meanwhile, we will offer some evidence to the contrary. So far as can be observed the WP functions in a disciplined, centralized manner. Discussions are officially opened and closed in the NI, and outside of the discussion articles every writer must present the position of the party. Two positions are not presented to the working class public by the WPers in their activity. Their trade-unionists must abide by fraction discipline. Their members participate in many activities, including protest meetings on Greece and anti-Fascist picket lines in Los Angeles; two things that our party did not do despite the absence of "endless debating". In other words, so far as can be determined, the WP functions as a disciplined party in action.

But perhaps it is the very fact that there is discussion in the Workers Party, and that educational discussions on such subjects as the National Question in Europe continue even after conventions—perhaps it is this fact that Comrade Alvin doesn't like. But if that is so, let him not compliment the S. P. again by hailing *this* as the distinguishing characteristic of a Thomas-type party. Far from it, the practice of building and educating the party through political discussion is part of the core of Bolshevism.

(7) Comrade Alvin thinks that he has scored a point when he states that the reason the Shachtmanites became proletarianized is because of our "pounding". But this is totally beside the point—what is important is that they *have* become proletarianized, that they have struck roots into the labor movement. And nothing is more sterile than to argue their mistakes as evidence that they are worthless. Undoubtedly they committed bad errors in several places, but it is not all such a bad picture as

that. In New York, for example, they have been successful in building sizeable fractions with many new recruits in three important plants where our fractions have dissolved. In Philadelphia, I have just heard, our comrades are now in the position of having to enter the WP-led caucus in one of the shipyards—a place where obviously the Shachtmanites have not been "shown the door". Even though they have committed more errors in trade-union work than we, this is a thoroughly senseless reason for indicting them as nothing but "petty-bourgeois adventurers."

(8) Finally, let us take up the minor question of membership figures. Comrade Alvin says that at their 1941 convention the Shachtmanites had 31 delegates on the basis of one for every ten or major fraction thereof and that this represented about 200 members. Now perhaps this is correct, but the figures add up somewhat suspiciously. If 31 is multiplied by 10 the product is 310 members, not 200. Our last convention, the delegates to which were elected on a basis of one to every 15 or fraction thereof, had 56 delegates, which would give a total of 840 members, a figure, which if anything, was probably somewhat below the actual membership. And since no major defections have hit the WP since the '41 convention, it is reasonable to allow for a certain growth. Taking it for what it is worth, the WP New York organizer recently stated that their national membership was between 350 and 500. An addition of 400 new members, many of them with valuable experience in the labor and revolutionary movement is certainly nothing to scoff at.

* * *

All Comrade Alvin's arguments against unity of the two parties boil down, in the last analysis, to opposition because of the fact that there are differences on several important questions between the two organizations.

The differences exist, but they are absolutely no bar to unity. Let comrades consider the fusion of the two Trotskyist organizations in England. Although there was no single difference between the two groups so important as the Russian question, there were important differences on a whole series of questions, on some of which the majority of the smaller party displayed a clear-cut sectarian tendency. Among the most important differences were those on Military Policy, Labor Party tactics, Workers Control of Production and Industrial Tactics. Other differences between the two organizations existed on such important questions as "sabotage" in relation to the Soviet Union, National Question in Europe, "Revolutionary Defeatism", Defense of China, estimation of the Italian Revolution, etc. Yet despite these differences, despite the fact that the WIL had a membership at least three times as large as the RSL and was growing while the latter was stagnating, and despite the fact that the RSL had been developing in a steadily sectarian direction, a fusion was accomplished. That there are some differences between the situation in England and that in the United States no one will deny, but they are not decisive—certainly they are not enough to make unity possible in England while ruling it out here.

A serious unprejudiced study of the situation (and that is far from what Comrade Alvin has given us) should convince every thinking comrade that unity between us and the Shachtmanites, if properly carried out, can help to build our party through the addition of many trained revolutionists. And if it can help to build the party we must carry it through!

An Answer to Comrade Weiss

By DAN LEEDS, Chicago

Comrade Weiss must think that by sheer verbosity and bombast he can answer the arguments of the minority. Under this ponderous mass of words he has hidden many half-truths and unfounded assertions which he hopes will convince inexperienced comrades. That is why he had to admit that he was not interested in convincing Comrade Goldman. No, this method of argument could not convince anybody with any experience in the movement.

Surely an argument which includes the unfounded and unjustified assertion that "Comrade Goldman writes like a man who has burned his bridges behind him, who has abandoned

his past as a responsible party leader in factional flight from our tradition and program" should be examined with great suspicion. With what aspect of our tradition and program has Comrade Goldman broken, in daring to disagree with Comrade Weiss and the Los Angeles branch? Are not tactical differences permissible within the frame-work of our common tradition and program? Comrade Goldman may be wrong when he proposes a united front demonstration and picketline against the fascists, but surely the differences are not programmatic. Presented baldly and without proof, this statement can only be looked upon as part of a rhetorical smokescreen to befuddle the new members of the party.

In the end of Comrade Weiss' article he triumphantly asks—in answer to Comrade Goldman's statement "under Lenin and Trotsky there were no rules requiring a party member to be loyal"—"Have you read the statutes of the C. I. under Lenin and Trotsky, Comrade Goldman? Have you read the 21 Points?" Good questions! But what is Comrade Weiss talking about? Does he think that the party members cannot read or are ignorant of the history of the movement?

Anyone who has read the 21 Points of the C. I. knows that they are the conditions of affiliation to the C. I. The 21 Points do not deal with the relations of the individual to the party at all. They deal with the relation of the party to the international. In no place do the statutes or 21 Points legislate loyalty or deal with the question at all. In view of this, it is incomprehensible that Comrade Weiss has dared to palm this falsehood off on the party. (Note: For the 21 Points read pp. 200-206 of Vol. X, Lenin's Selected Works).

This method of deliberate falsification is used over and over again in the two articles. It is no wonder then that to cover up, Comrade Weiss repeatedly and without proof accuses Goldman of being a constant, deliberate and malicious falsifier.

For example, on pg. 27 of the bulletin, Comrade Weiss says, "If now after the events the Shachtmanites claim they were working for the united front of the labor movement they simply lie as testified by the absence of any attempt on their part to raise the slogan of a united front of all working class organizations." This is clear: The W. P. lies if it says that its members worked for the united front of the labor movement. But Comrade Weiss should read his own articles more carefully. On pg. 20 in Appendix A to his previous article he refutes himself. The letter of the W. P. clearly proposes "The S. W. P. and W. P. (should) plan a joint campaign on this issue. We believe that such a joint campaign would strengthen the possibility of involving the labor movement in struggle." The W. P. may be wrong, they may not know the right tactic in the anti-fascist struggle, but surely if we are to take their word they want to involve the labor movement in anti-fascist struggle. Even in polemicizing with these "renegades," as Comrade Weiss so gratuitously refers to them, it is necessary to tell the truth.

An even worse example is found on pg. 28 of Comrade Weiss' article: "they (the W. P.) never tried to get the unions to act." On pg. 9 Comrade Weiss refutes himself when he says "they (the W. P.) proposed blocs to pass resolutions in the unions." Which statement does Comrade Weiss expect us to believe? Did they or did they not try to get the unions to act? As far as anyone can see, their proposal to act jointly with us in the unions means in plain English "trying to get the unions to act." It seems that the volume of words has confused Comrade Weiss more than it will confuse his readers.

Comrade Goldman wrote that the tactics of the Los Angeles branch flowed from an attitude of grudge and personal hostility to the W. P. Comrade Weiss has resented this accusation very much but the examples given above surely tend to substantiate the accusation. Petty and personal vindictiveness seem to permeate the whole polemic.

It is not enough to expose Comrade Weiss' contradictions and distortions. It is necessary to grapple seriously with the answer he has given to the position of Comrade Goldman.

First let us establish that no one has criticized the attempt to mobilize the labor movement in the anti-fascist struggle. On that aspect of the problem we all agree. *The basic approach made by the Los Angeles branch to mobilize the labor movement was correct.* The work done was commendable. But, not all the tactics employed were correct and that is what we disagree with.

Specifically, the errors which are criticized are (1) the failure to participate in the united front conference called by the W. P. before the first Smith meeting, and (2) the failure of the S. W. P. to participate in the picketline together with the W. P.

On the first question, Comrade Weiss completely ignores explaining why we did not answer the call for the united front. One can only assume that it is taken for granted that communications from the W. P. are generally put in the wastebasket.

Of course on this score Comrade Weiss raises the irrelevant argument that the C. P. and the C. I. O. were not invited. The minority will agree: the W. P. should have addressed the C. P. But comrades, that is no argument for refusing a united front

proposal. We could go into the united front conference and propose to invite the C. P. and the labor movement. The W. P. delegates could not have refused to make this gesture if we put pressure on them. What would be our role in *any* united front conference save precisely this one of urging the other participants to accept elements of our program which are not included in theirs?

On the question of non-participation in the picketline, there are two arguments: first, the "serious" workers are contemptuous of the policy of a show of weakness; secondly, he lectures us on putschism and the necessity of avoiding "hasty and precipitous action."

Our task in relation to the "serious" workers is to educate them and lead them, not to follow them in their vacillations. We have to show them the right way to fight. If the W. P. could mobilize 150 workers and a thousand onlookers, our party, which is far larger and has far more influence, could surely mobilize three to four times as large a turnout. That there was sentiment for such an action is admitted by Comrade Weiss. He states that a Jewish workers' cultural group stated they could get out 300 pickets. He proudly refers to the fact that Mr. Gatch, editor of the *Jewish Voice*, called for a picketline of 10,000. A little audacity, Comrade Weiss, would have shown the "serious" workers that our party is a serious organization in its own right. It would not alienate the serious workers but rather bring them closer to us.

On the question of putschism and hasty and precipitous action, Comrade Weiss' lecture to us is very good but entirely misses the point. This was not a question of a putsch at all. First, the Los Angeles branch is the second largest in the party. It concluded a successful election campaign, has numerous contacts in the trade unions and the mass movement. Surely a branch of this type can organize a successful picketline!

However, this matter of putschism is even ridiculous even if we assume that the Los Angeles branch has no influence. We are not proposing the seizure of power or a physical struggle with the fascists. All that is involved is the organization of a picketline. A picketline is the best way to avoid hasty and precipitous action. It does not have to be tremendous and no matter what its size it serves the purpose of the demonstrators. It also has within itself the dialectical possibility of being transformed into a demonstration. It would serve two purposes: (1) it would publicize our ideas and our name; (2) it would show the workers how to fight the fascists. In no way could it prevent us from carrying out the campaign which was proposed by Comrade Weiss. In fact, it would only have heightened the morale of the party and imparted to our agitation a concrete character.

In view of the above arguments, the question so exultantly raised: "Who was right, the WP or the SWP?" is meaningless. The WP policy complemented our policy and vice versa. A united front action based on the combined policy could have been valuable for our party and the struggle against fascism.

To summarize: The tactical problem before the Los Angeles branch was simple. Should we organize a demonstration with the most conscious anti-fascists and at the same time initiate a campaign to get the labor movement to act? Or should we initiate a purely agitational campaign to set the C. P. and their stooges into motion and take the chance that Smith and his fascist crackpots would go unanswered? Taking all possibilities into consideration, the first tactic is by far preferable.

Proof of this contention is to be found in the report printed in the Sept. 15 issue of *The Militant* on the mass meeting which was subsequently held by the Stalinists and representatives of organized labor. The Stalinists succeeded in putting their political imprint upon this meeting, converting it into a sterile peoples' front gab-fest. Our participation in the demonstration before the Smith meeting, strengthening it and giving it greater effectiveness, would have permitted our spokesmen at the later meeting to have pointed effectively to a concrete illustration of a correct way to fight fascism, going beyond words to action.

For our future course I believe we can conclude from Comrade Weiss' remarks on pg. 16 that the party can and will organize mass demonstrations and mass actions against fascism. With that we can all agree. Let us hope that henceforth the policy will be carried out with the audacity befitting a Trotskyist organization.

September 25, 1945