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The ILP -- A Reply to Stuart

By THE POLITICAL BUREAU of the RCP

This document is a reply to Comrade Stuart's criticism of the British Party in its attitude towards the ILP. We regret the delay which has been occasioned by the pressure of more urgent work. So far as the British Party is concerned, Stuart's document "The RCP and the ILP Left Wing" was so transparently remote from the real situation and the tasks facing us, that it was dismissed with a shrug of the shoulders by the overwhelming majority of the members. Pathetic attempts on the part of a section of the Minority to uphold what was an obviously false analysis and perspective, have already been dropped. There is not one comrade in the British Party today who would be so foolhardy as to endeavour to put forward his policy in relation to the ILP and fight for this policy in the Party.

Events have so overwhelmingly borne out the position of the RCP with relation to the evolution, the perspective and the tactics of the ILP that for the British Party there is no urgent need to dwell upon the subject. It is primarily for the record, and for the American Party members, whom we understand were influenced by Stuart's arguments, that this document will serve a purpose.

The delay, in one respect, serves a good purpose. For it has demonstrated in the only sure way for Marxists, by the test of events that Stuart's analysis was false, and his information incorrect.

WHAT WERE OUR GENERAL PERSPECTIVES AND PARTY WORK?

(Last 5 Years)

To understand the perspectives of work conducted in the ILP formerly and today, it is necessary always to take into account the whole background of development of the movement in Britain, and its relation to the ILP. Comrade Trotsky, evaluating the decay of the ILP in the years preceding the war, advised the British Trotskyists to abandon this field of work and concentrate on the work in the Labour Party because he considered the ILP was dead and would speedily disappear from the scene. One of the main reasons for this, he declared, was its sectarian refusal to face towards the mass organizations. He advocated this despite the fact that the Trotskyists were then far weaker, and without any real basis in Britain, and the ILP far stronger than it is today, both numerically and in influence.

Faced with complete collapse in 1939, the ILP leadership

prepared to surrender to the reformists, and affiliation negotiations with the Labour Party took place. These negotiations were interrupted temporarily by the outbreak of the war, which temporarily resulted in a different orientation on the part of the ILP.

The decline of the ILP led the British comrades to follow Trotsky's advice. They left the ILP to undertake entrust work in the Labour Party. (One group remained independent). However, the war cut across the development that might have been expected. Because of the coalition between the Labour Party and the capitalist parties, the local Labour Party organizations were completely paralyzed and inactive. Only a bureaucratic shell remained. Under these conditions, the Stalinists, and to a lesser extent the ILP, as anti-war organizations, began to grow.

The W.I.L. turned its attention to independent activity as the best perspective for building the party, and began to make substantial gains. Simultaneously with this, as the ILP began to attract fresh workers the W.I.L. turned its attention towards the ILP.

After the Stalinists executed their pro-war somersault, the only well-known anti-war organization was the ILP. This further increased its importance and possibilities of growth among leftward workers.

But it must be borne in mind, that while the ILP attracted some good militant elements, it attracted pacifist and middle-class elements in even greater measure. The anti-war position of the ILP remained purely superficial, and was watered down more and more as the war proceeded.

However, the W.I.L. succeeded in winning over the best elements in the ILP, who worked as a fraction, attempting to win the best sections of the Party to the ideas of Trotskyism. Their programme in the ILP was the programme of the Fourth International, to which they openly proclaimed allegiance and to which they strove to gain the support of the members of that party.

Though the ILP was considered an important field of work, far more important gains were being registered for Trotskyism in the open work of the organization and the building of a tradition for our tendency on a national scale. At that stage it would have been fatal to direct all the attention of the organization to the ILP, either by total entry, or turning the main attention towards that party. Despite the competition of the ILP, we still attracted the best left wing workers from the ranks of the disillusioned Stalinists, who were generally repelled by the centrist attributes of the ILP.

Far from being a complete handicap to work in the ILP (though it naturally, as always with faction work, laid the comrades open to suspicion and charges of being agents of an outside organization), the existence of a thriving outside organization in many respects helped the work inside the ILP. The proletarian elements could not but compare the flabby "New Leader" with the virile "Socialist Appeal." They contrasted the industrial activity of the Trotskyists with the formlessness of the ILP, the consistent anti-war policy of the Trotskyists, with the wobbling semi-patriotic, semi-pacifist policy of the ILP.

It is a very significant fact, that most of the gains for Trotskyism made within the ILP were made from the outside, open work and not from internal faction work.

The fact that the ILP contested by-elections against the Tories, naturally assisted them in gaining the ear of sections of the working class. But the programme on which they fought, was a reformist one. Towards the end of the war, even their anti-war propaganda was dropped entirely into the background — they proclaimed that support or opposition to war was not important — and their programme became almost indistinguishable from that of the Labour Party.

In the first period of the war, the leadership suffered from the illusion that broad sections of the working class would move away from the Labour Party and join the ILP. This was characterized in their "Socialist Britain Now" campaign. Their illusions were further fostered by the fact that a few local officials and prospective parliamentary candidates of the Labour Party broke away and joined the ILP.

But the period of growth and revival did not come up to expectations. The ILP did not penetrate the unions and factories, but only the fringes of the industrial working class.

Despite the by-election successes of the ILP, the leadership were becoming conscious of the impasse in which they found themselves. The Labour Lefts did not break from the Labour Party, and the leadership were impelled once again in a reformist direction. In this they reflected the logic of their position: as Left Reformists they could not maintain themselves indefinitely in separation from the Labour Party. The masses could not distinguish any fundamental difference between the Labour Party and the ILP. Thus, once the coalition was broken, the ground was cut from under their feet, and they found themselves in the same position as in 1938-39. Without clear perspectives, without a revolutionary policy, without theoretical understanding, with a terrible mixture of pacifism and sectarianism, ultra-leftism and opportunism within their ranks and in their policy, they could not hope to win the masses. Failing to understand the reasons for their isolation and decline, viewing things from the perspective of parliamentarism, their by-election experiences finally convinced them of the depth of Labour Party support among the broad masses.

Their earlier optimistic ideas of a mass turn from the Labour Party to the ILP during the war, were falsified. In by-elections and in their publication they painted themselves to look as much like the Labour Party as possible. Thus, in a panic, they looked for a way of salvation in the arms of the Labour bureaucracy.

That, briefly, was the background of the ILP during the war. A period of ultra-leftism, with great expectations of a mass swing against the Labour Party — disillusionment — and a sharp turn back to reformism.

THE ILP AND THE PROBLEM OF AFFILIATION

The key question of the ILP and of our work in relation to our work in this organization lay in the problem of affiliation or non-affiliation to the Labour Party. Ever since the faction in the ILP was organized, the question of the eventual affiliation of the ILP to the Labour Party has been recognized as

the touchstone of the orientation of our Party in relation to the ILP. It is this question which has dominated and guided the "plan" and "perspective" of our work in that organization.

Stuart (because of misinformation, and because he never bothered to discuss the problem properly with the leadership of the RCP) wishing to force a bloc between our Party faction and the totally insignificant Wicks grouping has actually suggested that we should have kept mum on the question of affiliation, or even opposed it. It is interesting to note that, in his "Report," he did not raise this important question directly and openly: he had to be smoked out from behind his vague formulations and cloudy suggestions, by the Reply of the P.B. Now he has come out with a full blown position. Let us see what he has to say. Not having a long range perspective in the development of the ILP, he discovers that this is a question of "principled politics"! "...The RCP comrades fall into the trap of unprincipled politics (Stuart's emphasis). At the last ILP Conference they lined up with the opportunist leaders on this question, thus strengthening them." In "uniting" with the ILP leadership on the question of affiliation "against the left wing," we have formed an "unprincipled" bloc. Such an attitude reveals the scholastic method of Stuart. Not operating on the basis of an analysis of the real movement of forces in the ILP, but weaving a pattern out of his own head as he would like to see it, it is natural that his conclusions should be so entirely anti-Marxian.

In reality, there is no question of "principle" involved here, but simply what would best serve the interests of the Party and the building of the revolutionary tendency in Britain. If we proceed from this correct premise, we will not fall into the childish errors of "principle" or even "tactics" so easily.

In endeavouring to build a case, Stuart quotes from Comrade Trotsky. Trotsky was in favour of affiliation, he says triumphantly, but only on the basis of the ILP having worked out a revolutionary programme!

In this connection, we have the entirely false and obviously unwarranted assumption made by Stuart, that affiliation was the programme of the RCP Faction! For the benefit of the American rank and file, who may not be familiar with our work in the ILP: the programme for which our comrades fought and endeavoured to gain support, was the full programme of the Fourth International including affiliation to the Fourth International and a correct attitude towards the mass organizations.

Stuart accuses us of separating the problem of affiliation from the programme. This is untrue. But it is precisely he who is guilty of separating this question from the one of general perspective, and thus, of programme. The question of affiliation was not artificially raised by our faction in the ILP. It arose out of the whole situation in which the ILP found itself. Realizing the blind alley in which the organization had developed, the problem of affiliation necessarily became the decisive question for the fate of the ILP. Naturally, this became the most discussed and burning question from the viewpoint of every tendency within the ILP. Every political tendency had to answer the question: for or against affiliation, if they were to show any serious concern about the future of the ILP.

To have refused to give an answer, to have kept mum, to have developed an equivocal position, to have falsely opposed affiliation, would precisely have been to adopt an unprincipled position for the sake of an unprincipled combination, which would have not even stood the test of events. Even from a practical point of view it would have been impossible to remain silent on a question which posed point blank, for immediate solution: which way for the ILP.

Stuart makes great play with the idea that our attitude

towards affiliation, separated us from the Left Wing within the ILP. He quotes the ILP Conference decision on affiliation:

"89 to 72! Nearly half the Party voted against affiliation! We know that the right wing leaders and their supporters were for the resolution. Is it wrong to attribute the bulk of the 89 votes — let's say 50 — to them? If we subtract these, we can say that of the remainder, the bulk, were votes cast against affiliation — let's say 72 out of 111. The comrades closest to the RCP supported affiliation but "for revolutionary reasons." Can they seriously believe that all those who opposed the ILP leadership on this issue were 'largely pacifists, sectarians, and a small number of confused lefts'?"

Without giving any analysis of the trends and tendencies within both the section which voted for, and that which voted against, Stuart airily juggles with figures. As a matter of fact, of that section which voted against affiliation, more than half represented the confused pacifist wing, more than a quarter confused sectarians, led by Ridley, Arthur Eaton, Gibson of Glasgow, etc., who perhaps are furthest in the ILP from a Marxist conception. Only from the remaining quarter were there elements who could be termed "confused lefts." Incidentally, not even these could be considered homogeneous or consistently moving in a revolutionary direction. We repeat, the statement that the opposition to affiliation was "largely pacifist, sectarian and a small number of confused lefts" was a sober presentation of the facts. If Stuart wishes to stick to his position, he has a very simple means of convincing us. Don't juggle with figures, name the genuine left wingers over and above the proportion given by ourselves. This challenge will not be accepted, because the real facts are entirely at variance with Stuart's metaphysical presentation.

But another consideration is also important. Almost as many of the best elements in the ILP voted for affiliation as voted against it, because of a healthy desire to get closer to the Labour masses. That too, should not be an unimportant consideration for us. But this was not the decisive question. Affiliation or non-affiliation really decided whether the ILP would play an important role in the coming period, or not.

Our approach was as follows: Outside the Labour Party — once the coalition had been broken — the ILP would be doomed to stagnation and would tend to disintegrate. Inside the Labour Party, the ILP could become the crystallizing centre for the left Labour workers dissatisfied with the Labour bureaucracy. This would have served a very useful role from our point of view. The fresh Labour workers moving left would have found organized expression. This would have hastened the process of differentiation within the Labour Party and within the ILP. It would have been a progressive step, and would have facilitated the work of our Party enormously.

These elements worth while could have been convinced by patient and systematic explanation, and by the test of experience.

Stuart's selection of reasons for those opposing affiliation is entirely arbitrary and one-sided, and for that reason fails to give a correct picture. Actually, even the confused but healthy lefts opposed for sectarian reasons. The basic argument of the anti-affiliationists (with whom Stuart wanted us to make a bloc) was that the Labour Party was stone dead and had no future; they opposed "Labour to Power;" many argued that there was no difference between the Tory Party and the Labour Party; that to support the Labour Party would open the way to Fascism, etc. (Stuart takes the carefully edited "New Leader" report which was written so as to give no offence to the Labour bureaucrats, as genuine. In fact, the affiliation issue was discussed in private session for the same reason.)

Stuart's further argument is one of a petty-bourgeois moralist, and not at all of a Marxist. He says accusingly:

"You and the leadership voted for affiliation against the Left wing: that was an unprincipled bloc."

The ILP leaders were motivated by opportunist reasons, he exclaims, piling up the "deviations" for which the British comrades can be charged!

The subjective motives of the ILP leadership were not, and could not be a decisive question for us. Of course, these should have been pointed out and exposed. Who did this better, both inside and outside the ILP, than the British comrades? In his eagerness to strengthen his indictment, Stuart adds:

"Regardless of how it may affect the possible left-wing allies full and unconditional support to the resolution of the principal political enemy!" Stuart's emphasis.

Perhaps some SWP comrades might accept this as good coin. The British comrades know that this is entirely untrue, to say the least! Our position on affiliation whether they agreed with it or not, was clear to every member of the ILP; more clear apparently than it still is to Stuart. At no time was either "full" or "unconditional" support given to the ILP leadership's resolution on affiliation.

Our criticism of the leadership's reasons for seeking affiliation was more critical, stronger and clearer in its analysis of the opportunist policy, than that of the anti-affiliationists. Our Newcastle comrades were expelled among other reasons, in order to prevent their amendment to the leadership's resolution on affiliation from appearing on the agenda and being discussed.

Stuart has constructed his case on the premise that were it not for the barrier of affiliation (wickedly placed in the way by the RCP) the "left-wing" would be only too eager to make an alliance with our comrades in the ILP. According to him only the question of affiliation divided us. Nothing could be further from the truth. On the question of affiliation to the Fourth International, attitude to the Soviet Union, towards the Communist Party, the European revolution, the question of the POUM, the colonial question, the military policy, and dozens of other questions — both fundamental and tactical — there could be no agreement. But the matter is not even as simple as that. No matter how they might differ with the leadership of the ILP, the bulk of the "Left Wing" would always unite with them against the consistent revolutionists. There was not a question of saying: "Here is our programme, do you agree with it? Let us unite on what we agree upon." Apart from the Trotskyists and a few sympathizers, they were not prepared to organize together on any single question, let alone a complete programme. Wicks tried to organize a meeting of anti-affiliationists at the Conference. On this question, on which they felt strongest, not a single delegate was prepared to meet and discuss and plan policy in an organized way.

Even on this question the left-wing were not prepared to organize against the leadership. For most of them, the quarrel with the leadership was not on a Marxist basis, but on minor differences of opinion. It was all a discussion between friends, into which the Trotskyists entered as a disturbing element. In fact, they mostly voted for the expulsion of the North East Trotskyists as blithely as the leadership — while of course professing "friendship."

Stuart holds up his hands in horror because we found ourselves (his version) in the same camp as the ILP leadership on the question of affiliation: what follows? In America Stuart and the American Party are attempting (correctly) to push the Trade Unions into forming a Labour Party. Is there any need to repeat the false argument of the ultra-lefts on this question? In Britain, Engels supported the attempts of the ILP to form a Labour Party — against the sectarians. Was

this because he thought their programme and policy correct? Of course not! It was because it was in line with the historical evolution and education of the masses. Thus it was the duty of Marxists to give an impulse, and to help in the acceleration of progressive tendencies in the movement, no matter the subjective motives, or even the programme under which the movement proceeded. True, it had to be subjected to Marxist criticism, but nevertheless supported, as against sectarians and other muddle heads. The dialectic here should be clear enough.

It was precisely because they saw the dangers in such a situation that the Labour bureaucrats drew similar conclusions. They demanded the expulsion of the Trotskyists so that the ILP would be rendered immune from the danger of revolutionary contagion among the Labour Party rank and file. Despite the burnt offering, the Labour leadership still decided against affiliation. They wished to see the result of the General Election first. But with the Labour Party in Government, it would be awkward for the bureaucracy to have an affiliated ILP, which would willy-nilly become the organizing centre of the left wing.

How have events borne out our prognoses and perspectives? The tremendous swing to the Labour Party has left the ILP shaken and confused. Many of the anti-affiliationists have joined the Labour Party. The "lefts" who opposed affiliation and who wished to fight the Labour Party "corpse" received a rude awakening. The ILP found itself facing a void. The life of the branches was virtually brought to a standstill and many branches have ceased to exist altogether. The ILP now exists as a stagnant isolated sect, divorced from the life of the working class, with the leadership openly proclaiming this situation.

Seldom can a political perspective have been so speedily shattered by events as that outlined by Stuart. We explained to Stuart that the question of affiliation was the decisive one for the future of the ILP; that without affiliation the ILP was doomed. Refusing to accept this, Stuart pointed to the by-election successes of the ILP; to its traditions, etc., as a guarantee that the ILP outside the Labour Party would prove a formidable barrier in the path of the revolutionary party.

In the General Election the ILP secured 46,000 or so votes nationally; it succeeded with difficulty in retaining their three seats in parliament; it lost two deposits in the other two seats which they contested. This was the smallest number of seats ever to be contested by the ILP in a general election since its foundation! The ILP received only somewhat over a half of the votes of the Socialist Party in the U. S. Presidential election (80,000). Yet Stuart has officially read the burial service over the corpse of the S. P., which the American comrades say no longer plays an important role in American class politics.

Far from "the next great political task facing the RCP," one of "burning importance," "full course towards the left-wing and the winning of a majority of the ILP" — the victory of the Labour Government and the failure of the ILP to gain affiliation turns it from an important field of work to an entirely secondary and insignificant factor for the British Party, entirely subordinate even to the factional work in the Labour Party. We can look back at our general perspective and evaluation, and we look to our membership to give the answer as to which perspective was right, with confidence.

Stuart's argument of a great swing to the left on the part of the ILP has been clearly shown as false. Oscillations to the left are counterbalanced by a steady drift towards the right. The great turn of the bulk or even a big minority of the organization to the left is a figment of his imagination. We ourselves spoke of the beginnings of a left-wing which would have grown and flourished inside the Labour Party given different conditions. But the left has been nipped in the bud by the cold frost of isolation from the mass movement. The cen-

trist flower is too frail and delicate to withstand the biting winds of the class struggle.

ELIMINATING AN OBSTACLE

Stuart suggests that the task confronting us is to eliminate the ILP as an obstacle on the road of the revolution. Let us remind him that when the ILP was much more of an obstacle, and the Trotskyists were far weaker, Comrade Trotsky argued for drawing the experiment of the ILP quickly to a close — turning our backs upon it with the utmost speed, in order to concentrate on more favourable fields. Like the Socialist Party of America, it might continue to vegetate for years. Just as it would be preposterous for our American comrades to "eliminate" the obstacle of the S.P. from the road by suggesting fusion with it at this stage, so with the ILP in Britain. Precisely here the question of time and conditions is important. Stuart has made his mistakes because of wrong evaluations.

The ILP could only assume importance again in the event of a left split in the Labour Party which moved in the direction of the ILP or if the ILP succeeds in gaining affiliation. Developments in the Labour Party seem to be rather of a long term than a short term perspective. The one unexpected factor in the situation which we did not foresee was the refusal of the Labour leaders to allow the ILP to crawl under their wing. This altered the situation for us decisively.

Trotsky's advice to turn our backs on the ILP and face to the mass organizations now assumes extreme urgency and point. Though unlikely, the ILP might revive again in the future and again assume an important place in our work. In one form or another the problem of centrism is bound to raise itself both in Britain and America. Neither the collapse of the ILP, nor the S. P. in America will, or can, prevent the rise of centrist groupings or currents in the future. What form they will take will depend on developments in the Labour Party in Britain, and in the mass organizations in America.

HOW TROTSKY APPLIED THE MARXIST METHOD TO THE PROBLEM OF AFFILIATION

In an endeavour to discredit the tactics of the RCP, Stuart tries to invoke the authority of Comrade Trotsky. In arguing that we should have soft peddled the question of affiliation; that affiliation cannot be a fundamental question for a centrist party, Stuart says:

"Can the question of affiliation to the Labour Party be applied to this centrist party in the same way as to a revolutionary communist party?"

"Obviously not. It is a tactical question, which gains decisive importance only when the question of program, of principles is settled. Just as it would be wrong to permit "tactics" to supercede programmatic questions in the revolutionary propaganda group, it is equally wrong to permit it to take first place in the struggle for a revolutionary solution in a centrist party. It cannot be divorced from the question of program, it has to be subordinated to it and applied flexibly taking into account concrete trends and developments — in line with program.

"Here we may hear an objection: Did not Comrade Trotsky raise the same question with regard to the ILP in 1935-36?"

"To be sure he did. But let's see how Trotsky raised it.

"From pacifism to proletarian revolution — such has indubitably been the general tendency of the evolution of the ILP," he wrote (New International, December, 1935). But this development has far from reached a rounded-out-program as yet . . . the leaders of the ILP have apparently halted in the midway, and keep marking time."

Stuart continues to give Trotsky's general criticism of centrism and quotes further from Trotsky:

"Question: Should the ILP seek entry into the Labour Party?"

"Answer: At the moment the question is not posed this way. What the ILP must do, if it is to become a revolutionary party, is to turn its back on the C.P. and face the mass organizations... But for all its activity, an absolutely clear program is the first condition. A small axe can fell a large tree only if it is sharp enough."

"The line cannot be mistaken;" Stuart triumphantly says. "The turn toward the Labour Party is posed in opposition to the leaders' turn to the C.P. The tactical turn is predicated on a Marxist program as a 'first condition.' The whole line is proposed for the ILP, 'if it is to become a revolutionary party.'"

"Nowhere is 'affiliation to the Labour Party' raised as decisive in itself. Nowhere, as applicable to a centrist party."

Stuart goes on to refer to the history of Bolshevism by pointing out that Lenin and the Bolsheviks had consistently demanded that the centrists break with the reformists; now the RCP is doing the reverse, it thus proposes a fundamental revision of Marxism.

"When applied to a centrist party, (Stuart's emphasis) this tactic runs counter to, and not in line with, the traditional policy of Bolshevism."

Thus Stuart contrasts Bolshevism to the revisionism of the RCP.

"In their 'Reply' the RCP comrades not only propose a new tactic in this respect, but also a new theory."

Trotsky has written on more than one occasion on the question of affiliation. It is apparent that Stuart is not familiar with the material.

Permit us to inform you, Comrade Stuart, that at one stage, because of the isolation of the ILP from the masses, Comrade Trotsky even raised the question of affiliation as an issue on which the Trotskyists should organize a split from the ILP. ("Unprincipled" politician!) In answer to the question: What issue can we raise in order to split from the ILP? Trotsky replied:

"It is essential to choose a political issue comprehensible to the broad mass of workers. To raise a fight on the existence of legal groups within the ILP would be completely useless. I can only offer some suggestions from this distance (compare Trotsky's caution after discussing the issues with the leadership of Britain, with Stuart's method). A struggle raised to commit the ILP to the positions of our thesis at our recent conference is one possibility, particularly the thesis on the revolutionary upsurge already printed in the French paper. Possibly, however, a better example would be the question of ILP affiliation to the Labour Party. The question we must pose immediately and as strongly as possible."

Trotsky developed the idea further. Far from demanding programmatic conditions for ILP affiliation to the Labour Party, he was willing to push the ILP bureaucrats into unconditional surrender to the Labour Party bureaucracy because of the possibilities this would open out for work among the Labour Party rank and file. In answer to the question: "SHOULD THE GROUP PLACE ANY conditions upon the entry of the ILP into the Labour Party?" Trotsky replied:

"That type of knightly courtesy has no place in politics.

Since the ILP bureaucracy have made our group illegal and have suppressed our paper, it would be ridiculous for us to fight for privileges on behalf of the ILP . . ."

Only Stuart could find a contradiction between the two positions as put by Comrade Trotsky. In reality Stuart's

method is entirely opposed to the dialectical one of the Old Man. His whole bulletin shows this. Everything must be repeated in exactly the same way — the American way. It happened like this in America — therefore it must happen the same everywhere.

Let us assume for a moment that Trotsky had only dealt with the ILP from the first angle. We can be sure that Stuart would be raising hell and high water about the fundamental revisionism of the RCP. We venture to predict that this method will lead him to some very curious positions in the future, unless he changes his method. No doubt if Trotsky had not written on the Labour Party question in America more than once (Trotsky originally opposed the conception of fighting for the building of a mass Labour Party in America) we would have had some wiseacre wagging a finger sternly at the "anti-Trotskyists" who dared to raise the demand for the creating of a Labour Party.

The important question for us is not this or that isolated quotation from Lenin or Trotsky, but the Marxian method of approach. The problem of affiliation could not be considered as an abstract question in and of itself, but only in relation to the broad strategy of our work in the Labour Party; just as it can only be considered in relation to our entire strategy within the Labour movement as a whole.

IS THE BRITISH PARTY ULTRA-LEFT?

The Stuart method of manufacturing a case is best shown by his quotations from Lenin's "LEFT WING COMMUNISM" and his dishonest isolation of the argument from the context. We quote Stuart:

"Thus the problem of a leftward-moving ILP at present is regarded as a fit object of solution only in the 'music of the future'! Clearly, it is a case of mixing up one's tenses."

"But the right tense is of the utmost importance in politics no less than in grammar. With that in mind, let's turn our attention once more to the other grounds given for rejecting the policy proposed in the "Report." Summing them up we get the following specifications:

- a) It will 'exaggerate the revolutionary potential of the ILP';
- b) 'Confuse our sympathizers on a national scale;'
- c) 'It is impossible to effectively shatter the ILP and remove it as an obstacle in our path at this stage.'
- d) Even if we succeed, 'the ILP will still be an attractive force for the leftward moving Labour workers when it is inside the Labour Party.'

"In one form or another, these arguments have been used since the beginning of the Bolshevik movement by opponents of the tactics that fall into the category of 'manoeuvres.' Lenin wrote a whole book 'Left Wing Communism' on the subject, devoting a section to England, among other countries. The comrades in their 'Reply' as well as in their whole press and literature show that they have learned the specific lessons that Lenin taught there — the necessity of working in the Labour Party, in the reformist trade unions, in the parliamentary arena — exceedingly well. That is why it is all the more inconsistent for them to make the general objection to the proposed tactic — a "manoeuvre" — that it would strengthen the opportunist leadership and confuse our ranks.

"Is this objection in any way qualitatively different from the objections raised by the "Left Wing Communists" in 1919-20 that participation in parliament, and work in the Labour Party would strengthen Henderson and Co.? Or that this manoeuvre would disorient the masses?"

It is a sad state of affairs when polemical methods such

as these can creep into a discussion between Fourth Internationalists.

Stuart is perfectly correct! Mixing up one's tenses in politics is as bad as mixing one's arguments and quoting from the wrong page on the wrong subject. Stuart's long and irrelevant quotations from Lenin are deliberately calculated to create the impression that here we have a bunch of complete ultra-lefts who have not yet learned that Bolsheviks use "manoeuvres" and "tactics" in relation to the reformists and centrists. He is perfectly well aware that this is not the position in Britain, either "generally" or "specifically." But precisely here is the all important question — where and when — time, place and circumstances!

The whole question revolves around the question of the objective situation and the possibilities — given a certain relation of forces, moving in different directions and a certain strength of one's own forces etc., etc. It is a question of estimation of the objective situation. For example, an attempt on the part of the American comrades to enter the Socialist Party in 1933, say, would have been entirely false; or of the French to enter the SFIO in 1930. But precisely here it is a question of timing. Today, one may turn one's immediate attention to the Communist Party, yesterday to the ILP, tomorrow the Labour Party. It all depends on the trend of developments. On yet another occasion possibilities might be present simultaneously in all three directions. But what has all this to do with the sectarian attitude towards the Mass Organizations, with the sectarian attitude of the ultra-lefts in Lenin's day who refused to work in the reformist organizations; or to have a united front with them or operate the tactic of "Labour to Power," or with teaching the masses the futility of reformism and parliamentarism?

The question: when to turn full attention to an enemy organization is an important one; in fact, in a given situation is decisive. While one may reject entry today, it may be posed tomorrow. Surely this is elementary. So with all tactics. The tactic of critical support for the Labour Party can be, under given conditions, transformed into the organization of an insurrection against it. What has all this to do with the ultra-lefts against whom Lenin directed his arguments?

Was Trotsky an ultra-left, who did not understand the need for "manoeuvres" against the ILP when he said to the British comrades in 1936:

"The idea of remaining inside the ILP for a further period in order to win a few more wavering elements, whilst the C.P. is rapidly penetrating into the mass organizations, is ridiculous . . .

"The argument that it is still possible to win a few more of the waverers in the ILP is sheer formalism, as for every one that we might win in the ILP there are hundreds in the Labour Party. The argument that we may be able to capture the apparatus of the ILP is at best hypothetical, and even if successful must mean a struggle of years in view of the strength of the bureaucracy. We have not eternity before us . . ."

With Stuart's method there would be a contradiction between Trotsky and Lenin — and Trotsky and Trotsky, if it comes to that. How does Stuart get himself into such a ridiculous position?

While at one stage Trotsky advocated full entry into the ILP, at another stage he advocated a precipitate and sharp abandonment of work in the ILP and a turn in a different direction. What has this method in common with Stuart's method — entirely unrelated to the specific circumstances, about which, permit us to say, he has not bothered to familiarize himself.

The mechanical posing of entry or fusion into a centrist

or reformist organization is merely Oehlerism in reverse; placing a plus where they place a minus, and vice versa; it has nothing in common with Trotsky's method.

HAS THE RCP SURREPTITIOUSLY CHANGED ITS POSITION?

In an endeavour to find a justification for the fact that neither he nor anyone else in the American or British Party raised the question of what were the Party's perspectives at the time of the Conference (his British friends supported it entirely) Stuart now pretends that the British comrades have changed their position surreptitiously, or that there is a contradiction in the Conference resolution. This, of course, is to cover up the fact that it is Stuart who has changed positions.

The perspective at the Fusion Conference were absolutely clear — even to those who disagreed with them — (The Militant Group and Left Faction). In order to answer Stuart's malicious distortion of the British party's position, we reprint here in full our Fusion Conference resolution on the question. We quote it in full to expose Stuart's method of conscious distortion, there is no softer way of characterizing his portrayal of our position. British comrades, of course, particularly those who were present at the fusion, know the position. The American comrades can judge on the basis of the document: (We reiterate it is a very unfortunate fact that the documents attacked by the American comrades are not published for the SWP members.)

RESOLUTION ON ENTRIST TACTIC, RSL - WIL FUSION 1944

"Conference holds that:

whereas the acceptance of the principles and programme of the Fourth International are sufficient to establish the revolutionary basis of our tendency, this is not sufficient to win the leadership of the working class and that for this purpose it is necessary to correctly apply the international programme to the national conditions and operate the correct tactics that flow therefrom;

whereas the Trotskyist forces are numerically weak, with little contact and support among the masses, it follows that the penetration of the mass by our organization and the winning of the masses to the banner of the Fourth International requires a clear grasp of the perspectives of the period and the operation of skillful political and organizational tactics flowing from these perspectives;

whereas a serious revolutionary party must learn from the experiences of the workers of the world, it must also be able to utilize these experiences in relation to the actual conditions in which revolutionary work has to be conducted;

whereas the entry of the revolutionary cadres into the mass organizations of the working class is one of tactics and not of principle it follows that to raise the tactic of entry as a question of principle is extreme sectarianism whether it comes from the entrists or anti-entrists and must therefore be combatted as harmful to the revolutionary party;

whereas the Labour Party is the mass political party of the British working class, it follows that a correct attitude to the Labour Party — as to the trade unions — provides the key to the tactics of any organization claiming to be revolutionary in Great Britain;

whereas it is considered in our perspective that although the workers and lower middle class elements are not turning in

masses towards the Labour Party in the present period, but on the contrary are turning away from it in large numbers and joining other working class organizations and even the middle class Common Wealth, nevertheless, in general, the masses will again turn to the Labour Party in the coming days of class struggle, and the Labour Party will again become a mass active organization of the working class;

Conference holds, however, that this perspective must be concretized so that the best results from the orientation and deployment of our forces can be gained for the Fourth International;

whereas the Communist Party is rapidly gaining in numbers and growing into a mass political party of the working class whilst hundreds of its best revolutionary members are leaving it and seeking a new revolutionary party, it follows that an organizational split in the mass movement is inevitable unless the Communist Party is liquidated into the Labour Party and that, in any event, its best militants who have in general passed through the school of labourism, will not easily be influenced by the "Socialist Left" in the Labour Party, but can and must be won directly to the open banner of the Fourth International;

whereas the past perspectives of our tendency were for the complete collapse of the centrist party — the ILP, in fact the ILP has grown in numerical strength and influence among the workers and is attracting fresh support from growing sections of the left labour and socialist conscious workers, and therefore offers an important field for faction work on the part of the Fourth International;

whereas, the ILP will most likely apply for affiliation to the Labour Party and be accepted when the Labour Party breaks the coalition and achieves its independence, it follows that the ILP will become the main left-wing organizational base for the leftward moving workers and that the 'Socialist Left' and similar paper organizations set up by the Trotskyist entrists will play no role in the Labour Party during the period of mass swing, but on the contrary, will be a hindrance to our penetration of the Labour Party and must therefore be abandoned in favour of our factional entry into an affiliated ILP;

whereas the perspective of a mass left-swing to the Labour Party may at a later stage necessitate a total entry of our forces into the Labour Party such a perspective is most unlikely, but if this situation arises our forces will probably enter the Labour Party through the affiliated ILP;

whereas these perspectives must be continuously before our organization and our tactics must be constantly reviewed in the light of experience in line with the development of the real movement of the workers. At the present stage of the class struggle in Britain the Labour Party is almost dead and is losing the confidence of the workers as witness the support of the Scottish Nationalist candidate against the Labour Party candidate in Kirkcaldy, and therefore is not a major field for our political faction work at the present time;

whereas the main field of revolutionary activity at the present period lies on the industrial front, the factories, shop stewards movement and trade unions and will continue so in the immediate future, it follows, therefore, that our party must turn to the industrial movement of the working class which we

can influence by our ideas and by our participation and that the main axis of our activities demands the raising of the independent banner of the Fourth International and the recruitment of the revolutionary industrial militants, many of whom have already passed through the Labour and Communist Parties and the ILP, directly into the British Section of the Fourth International;

whereas wide sections of the workers are critical of labour reformism and are turning to communism in its perverted Stalinist form, thousands of women and youth are skipping the Labour stage and are seeking a militant revolutionary communist lead, it follows that the strata which is the most exploited section of the working class, form virgin soil for revolutionary propaganda and thousands can be won directly into the party on the basis of our militant directives and our unstained banner;

whereas the existing political organizations of the working class are all fields for guerrilla faction work on the part of the British Section of the Fourth International, the Labour Party is the least favourable field for the present and immediate period ahead and that the ILP is the most fruitful; our forces must be directed, therefore, on the basis of this appraisal;

"Conference, therefore resolves: that the main task and the main tactic of the R.C.P. in the immediate period is to build the independent revolutionary party of the British working class; to directly raise our banner before the British workers; to direct the maximum energy for the achievement of this task, and to subordinate all factional work in the existing political organizations of the working class, to that end."

This perspective may have been correct or it may have been incorrect. But one thing stands out; there can be no ambiguity as to what the perspective was. The main emphasis for work in building the independent party on the basis of the independent tactic with necessity for work in the ILP as the main faction field. Everyone in the party was clear — everyone interpreted it as it could only be interpreted.

It is a curious fact, is it not, that Stuart was in agreement with the above resolution. Yet today Stuart writes:

"What, then, can the resolution mean? If we did not scrutinize it so carefully, if we were not already enlightened by the further interpretation in the 'Reply,' we could say; while the resolution is not flawless, while it has a number of faulty and even contradictory formulations, it is acceptable because we glean from it the following orientation: (!) 1) The ILP is looming up as the "most fruitful" field of activity for us; 2) We must concentrate on this task; 3) Meanwhile we are going to consolidate the fusion, carry on our independent agitation and industrial work in preparation for the next step; 4) By this work, by our ILP work and by our work in the Labour Party we will speed the building of the independent workers party.

"That is, indeed, how the resolution looked to us after the fusion. But the subsequent developments show that the RCP comrades either had something else in mind when they wrote it or that they are now interpreting it differently.

"The interpretation by the RCP comrades shows that their line is fundamentally different from ours."

Stuart knows that the main tactic adopted by the RCP was the building of the independent party (as it is at present) and that faction work in other organizations was subordinate to that. And of the political organizations, faction work in the ILP was the most important.

DO THE BRITISH COMRADES COUNTERPOSE THE TASK OF BUILDING THE PARTY TO THE MANOEUVRES WITH THE REFORMISTS?

With an air of great wisdom Stuart lectures the British Trotskyists:

"Building the 'independent revolutionary party of the British working class' is not a tactic. It is a process. It is our task, not only in the 'immediate period,' but at all times. It cannot be counterposed to manoeuvres with the Labour Party and the ILP. These manoeuvres are tactics used to accelerate the process of building the 'independent revolutionary party of the British working class'."

Can the American rank and file really believe that the British party is as backward as this? That we do not understand even the A.B.C. of Trotskyism? The Wise Man of the Western Hemisphere patiently explains what every 12-year-old understands. This argument is nothing but sophistry, unworthy of a revolutionist.

Many times, Comrade Trotsky in dealing with the entrust tactic, spoke of the "temporary liquidation" of the independent organization. A wonder Stuart never got around to teaching the Old Man that he was a terrible liquidator, you see, you never liquidate the independent organization; the building of the independent revolutionary party is "not a tactic," it is a "process" which goes on "at all times," whatever tactic you may be employing in the reformist or centrist organizations.

Isn't it fantastic that time, paper and patience should be spent on such frivolous arguments?

"GUERRILLA TACTICS" - WHAT THIS MEANS

It would be fruitless, from our past experience of Stuart, to ask him to "stop," and "turn," and use honest arguments. The Stuart tradition is carried on from his original "Report" to his document on the ILP. His references to "guerrilla faction work" provide another example of his method.

He contrasts "organized political warfare" to what we term "guerrilla tactics." The idea of "guerrilla tactics" is clearly explained in our resolution on the entrust tactic. Not a single member was in any doubt what it meant at the time. **Guerrilla faction work was contrasted with the previously expressed tactic of "full strength at the point of attack," or full concentration on one sector of the front, i.e. entry into the Labour Party or ILP.**

Because of the smallness of our forces and the rich opportunities offered on various sectors of the front, our forces were split up: the main detachments would concentrate on the most important field — the building of the independent organization; the most important detachment would be sent into the ILP, and a lesser detachment would work in the Labour Party. Does it follow that either the Labour Party faction, or the ILP faction's work was aimless, or that we pursued a policy of "body-snatching"? Perhaps the formulation is imperfect, or open to misrepresentation? Five minutes discussion could have settled that question with any enquirer who wished to have it put right.

Stuart uses this formulation to cover up his blatant mistake on the question of "haphazard work," and a "policy of sporadic withdrawals." As he ingeniously remarks in this connection: "As an example of their 'guerrilla faction work' (I called it 'haphazard work' and a 'policy of sporadic withdrawals'), I cited in the 'Report' the case of Comrade Tearse.

However, Stuart's reference to the question of Tearse is no less fortunate than on the previous occasion.

"It appeared to me to be symptomatic. Here was a first rate leader in the ILP where Trotskyist leaders are as yet

very scarce. Instead of being assigned to intensify his activities there, he is not only permitted to lapse this work, but is withdrawn altogether from it and assigned to the post of Industrial (Trade Union) Organizer in the RCP.

"What do the comrades answer? I am interfering in 'minute organizational details' of the RCP! But this is the only instance I cited. And it is far from 'minute'. An outstanding comrade is involved. Is it symptomatic or not? — that is the question. What was the reason for his withdrawal. Wasn't it that there are more favourable fields of work? Isn't that in line with the comrades' 'perspectives' of 'independent work' first? Isn't that part of their 'guerrilla faction work'?"

Isn't it symptomatic, of Stuart, comrades — of his carelessness? Tearse was not withdrawn from the ILP to become Industrial Organizer of the RCP. Comrade Tearse had long left the ILP before the fusion, in the old days of the WIL. We repeat, at the time of the fusion Tearse was not in the ILP. And, yes, Comrade Stuart, in the given case, better results were gained for the Party, in line with the perspective of the Party by withdrawing Tearse from the ILP. Events have proved this was so. The Barrow strike, the Tyneside Strike and the Newcastle case were landmarks in the history of British Trotskyism. A great part of this work was carried out by Comrade Tearse. Stuart of course, thinks it would have been better that Tearse was a member of the ILP!

In retrospect, Stuart must revise the past as well. If he wants to be consistent, then he must put forward the idea that the work of the party in the independent field was wrong. He was full of praise as was the whole American leadership for our open work at that period. He was in full agreement with our tactic of building the independent party. Our general policies were determined by the main tactical task. Why then, the accusing finger? "Wasn't it that there are more favourable fields of work? Isn't that in line with the comrades' 'perspective of 'independent work' first?" Of course, Comrade Stuart. That was our tactic. That is our tactic now.

"I have not had the opportunity of following the practical application of RCP policy day by day," he says in excusing himself. But in that case, international collaboration and solidarity would require that a comrade from another section at least familiarize himself and discuss with the leadership concerned, before rushing into print. However, happily, Stuart finds new "proof" of the fact that we are carrying out our declared tactic in the North-east incident:

"The Brockway-McNair leadership trapped them into expulsion on a minor organizational issue."

Once again, the facts are wrong, comrade. This is getting very tiring. The North-east comrades were not expelled on an organizational issue, minor or major. The attempted frame-up on the organizational issues completely failed. The ILP leadership were compelled to abandon it. Our comrades were expelled because of their PROGRAMME, the programme of the Fourth International. Because they had carried resolutions in their Division for adherence to the Fourth International; for the revolutionary military policy; for the correct attitude toward Labour to Power and affiliation to the Labour Party from a revolutionary point of view.

The ILP bureaucrats were afraid of being compromised in the eyes of the Labour bureaucracy and gave this sacrifice as a guarantee against revolutionary, or Trotskyist tendencies in the ILP in pleading their case for affiliation. Our comrades were expelled for being Trotskyists.

For Stuart to have told the American party members the truth on this would have undermined his whole picture of how the British Party were not conducting "principled political"

struggles in the ILP, of how the be-all and end-all of their policy was "affiliation to the Labour Party."

Stuart continues:

"By their fine work, our comrades have gained the support of numerous ILPers in their section of the country, who demand their reinstatement and want to fight the ILP leadership in the whole party for it. At the last national ILP conference, delegates from many parts of Great Britain expressed sympathy with these comrades and similar sentiments for their reinstatement.

"Now, then, what do the RCP leaders propose? Isn't it a fact that they propose to pull all these comrades out, like Tearse, for "more favourable fields of work?" Isn't it a fact that they argue that a campaign for reinstatement is not worth while, because twelve months would be lost in which those comrades could do no 'independent' work in the North-east? That building up the 'Socialist Appeal' there, etc., etc., is more important than work in the ILP?

"I hope that the comrades will not again resort to the argument that I am 'interfering in minute organizational details.'

"This is clearly a much more emphatic symptom of the policy of 'sporadic withdrawals.' It is based on a tactic which is false to the core. It is a piece of 'guerrilla faction work' which can only undermine even their own perspective of a future orientation to the ILP, if this perspective is at all seriously meant."

The above statement gives an entirely false picture of the situation that existed. All the leading comrades in the North-east were expelled. (These comrades were all originally won over to Trotskyism from the ILP, they were not 'imported.') What remained? Rank and file comrades, completely inexperienced, and who, without leadership, were not capable of waging a struggle on their own. It was impossible for the comrades to get back into the ILP, comrade Stuart. They had been expelled by Party Conference by an overwhelming vote. To have left the rank and file comrades in the North-east to conduct the struggle, would have been to expose them to demoralization. Moreover, nothing could have been gained thereby. For these comrades to have continued as expelled members would have been precisely to play into the hands of the bureaucrats, without any compensation whatsoever.

Incidentally, who told Stuart that "our comrades gained the support of numerous ILPers in their section of the country, who demand their reinstatement and want to fight the leadership in the whole party for it.?" This is laying the colours on thick. It is true that many delegates at the National Conference expressed sympathy with our comrades, but there's a great difference between "sympathy" and being prepared to "fight the leadership of the whole party for it." Those ILPers who sympathized with our comrades expected them to join the RCP as a result of their expulsion, and could therefore not be antagonized thereby. McNair had read out to the Congress extracts from an RCP Internal Bulletin which proved that the RCP had a fraction in the ILP. (One of the hazards of faction work.) To suggest that these sympathizers could not be approached by our comrades as members of the RCP, was ridiculous in face of the events that transpired.

What has transpired in the North-east since that time? Our comrades have reinforced the open group — yes, comrade, in line with our general perspective — and the ILP in the area has virtually collapsed. The comrades there thank Stuart for his advice that they should have wasted 12 months of work, working for the ILP as . . . expelled members! "We have no eternity before us..."

SUMMING UP

Starting off with a wrong method, and in an attempt to defend this method, Comrade Stuart has landed himself in sorry straits. One blunder leads to others — errors of organization, theory, fact and method. If Stuart does not learn the lessons of his mistakes, it will reflect itself not only on this question, but on other questions as well.

Instead of analyzing in a Marxist way, the evolution of tendencies and groupings, he grabs at episodes, distorts them out of all proportion to their real significance, and weaves his fancy constructions. In his argumentation there is neither discipline, nor dialectical method. We can give no better illustration of his method than to quote a concluding paragraph of his own document:

"Not only the Labour bureaucrats look for a left cover in the opportunists of the ILP. The imperialist ruling class is also interested in the problem. In the periodical "News-week" we read that even in his busiest moments at the Quebec Conference, the arch-imperialist Churchill anxiously took time out to read the daily bulletins concerning the then sick James Maxton, the 'revolutionary' leader of the small ILP. At first glance, this seems astonishing. Is it? Not at all! It is symptomatic. The arch-imperialist, fearful of the future, looks for help against the coming storm-tide from his parliamentary friend, the opportunist leader of the centrist ILP."

The picture of Churchill, a serious bourgeois politician — looking to Maxton for help in the coming storm evokes uproarious laughter. The Tories regard Maxton as a harmless eccentric. Haston and Tearse also enquired about Maxton's health, and even visited him in hospital. Let Stuart weave a political theory out of this!

Are there no limits to the lengths he will go to erect a picture of an ILP as a gigantic obstacle, preventing the growth and development of British Bolshevism?; an obstacle of "such burning importance for the development of the Fourth International in Great Britain . . ." that it is "the most important question at the moment . . ." To use the incident of Churchill's concern for the health of his friend Maxton, as an indication of the importance of the ILP, demonstrates his complete lack of understanding of British parliamentarism. Had Stuart consulted more closely Lenin's "Left Wing Communism" he could not have made such an absurd comment. This incident is a classic example of the rottenness of reformism and ILPism, of how parliament is used by the bourgeoisie to corrupt the reformist leaders. That was its only significance. It did not indicate the importance of the ILP in British politics at all.

DID THE BRITISH TROTSKYISTS HAVE NO PERSPECTIVE FOR THE ILP?

The assertion is made that the British comrades worked from day to day in the ILP without any perspective or plan of work. Let us examine this proposition:

Let us quote from the last three Conference documents dealing with this problem. In 1943 the following was our perspective:

"I.L.P. — REVOLUTIONARY WORDS — REFORMIST DEEDS. Precisely when the proletariat is moving towards revolution, the leadership of the I.L.P. chooses this moment to take a step in the direction of reformism. They are describing a similar evolution on a new historical background to that of the ILP in 1920-1923, when on the revolutionary wave which followed the last war, they moved away from reformism to a position of applying for affiliation to the then revolutionary Communist International. But unable to ac-

cept the revolutionary conditions of the International, the ILP swung back to the bosom of the Labour Party as a reformist body. Now, even before the eve of revolutionary upheavals, the ILP is preparing once again to return to the bosom of reformism. But here too, while the leadership is moving right, the rank and file are moving left.

"Once the coalition is broken, the ILP will no doubt move into the Labour Party. This is the most likely perspective in the coming days and is in line with the policy and traditions of the ILP and Labour leaders. The Labour leadership will need a left face to turn towards the masses, and this face will be provided by the ILP leaders.

"From the viewpoint of revolutionary socialism the entry of the ILP into the Labour Party would constitute a progressive step. It will hasten the differentiation within the ILP on the one hand and facilitate the emergence of a mass left within the Labour Party, on the other. The leadership will swing even more openly to the right, making themselves indistinguishable from the pseudo-lefts in the Labour Party. The worker members in the ILP will begin to understand what is meant by the Bolshevik characterization of this party as a centrist party. But this process of clarification will depend largely upon the growth and development of a revolutionary wing within the ILP.

"Within the Labour Party, the ILP would act as the gathering point for all the left elements. This would facilitate the education of these elements as well. The leftward moving workers would find in the ILP merely a transitional phase of their development. One thing centrism cannot face up to: that is mass action. For this is what exposes its inadequacies, its vacillations, its refusal to face up to events on the revolutionary programme of Marxism."

In 1944 the foregoing analysis was endorsed at the Fusion Conference.

In 1945 the following analysis was made:

"As a current separate and apart from the reformists and revolutionaries, the ILP will not be able to maintain itself. Like its brother parties on the continent of Europe it will disappear ignominiously from the scene.

"The refusal of the Labour Party leadership to accept ILP affiliation before the General Election and the hopelessly muddled and confused reactions of the ILP leadership to the refusal, has already begun the process of demoralization and disintegration. The defeat suffered by the ILP in the General Election where they only succeeded in retaining their three seats has speeded up the process. The coming to power of the Labour Government seems to exclude the possibility of affiliation for the next immediate period. This will sow further confusion, lead to a greater isolation and speed up the process of internal degeneration of the ILP.

"Separated from the Labour Party in the next period, only the possibility of a split-off left wing grouping from the Labour Party fusing with the ILP, would restore it to an important factor. The Labour lefts, however, would not necessarily be attracted towards the ILP but might move

towards Stalinism, towards the revolutionary party or might form a new centrist organization.

"The failure of the ILP to strike roots among the industrial workers, its stagnation and decay, its isolation from the real movement of the workers in the immediate period ahead leads it to become an entirely secondary and subordinate field of activity for the Party."

Both these analyses were made on the basis of the objective evolution of the ILP, of the tendencies within it, and the possibilities that were offered for British Trotskyism. Had Stuart raised the problem of the ILP in the way he has done in 1941-42 it would have been a serious proposition to discuss. (Indeed the possibility of entry into the ILP was raised at that period in the old WIL P.B. — but was rejoiced quite correctly as events now show, in favour of greater possibilities for open work — Stuart's inference that the matter was only discussed after he had raised it here, is a figment of his imagination).

If Stuart finds a contradiction in these two perspectives, let him consult the writings of the Old Man on the ILP. In analysing a centrist phenomenon like the ILP, careful attention must be paid to its evolution under the pressure of objective conditions. This, the RCP did conscientiously and soberly.

Events are tests of "perspectives and plan of work." On the background of the even speedier decay and disintegration of the ILP than we anticipated, Stuart's remarks, at a time when this process was already on the way, make curious reading today.

When Brockway, not so optimistic about the ILP as Stuart, has to confess at a Divisional Conference that they are losing members all over the country, when the sale of the "New Leader" is rapidly falling, when the situation has become so bad that Brockway pessimistically and resentfully remarks: "You Trotskyists are waiting to bury us." If comrades want facts of the marked decline and disintegration of the ILP since the failure to gain affiliation to the Labour Party, we can supply them with details of every important area in the country.

Stuart's mistakes on the ILP arise because of a lack of a serious Marxist approach. We repeat our advice in our Criticisms of his "Report:" first get your facts right, comrade; second, don't look at problems in isolation but in their broad process of evolution and development; third, don't allow your estimate of one particular period to dominate your future strategy and tactics. In other words, apply the serious method of Marxism.

To conclude: In our first criticism of Stuart's "Report" the RCP outlined in great detail his methods used in this country. We must say in all frankness that the question of the ILP was a minor question among those we raised. We believe that Stuart has erected in the ILP, a skyscraper to bury the real issues between us. These issues still remain; Stuart's footnote threatening the RCP "reserving the other points in dispute for subsequent articles" does not frighten us. We await his answers to the other, more important questions — to the real issues in dispute.

March 1946.

A Letter from the PB of the RCP

National Secretary
Socialist Workers Party

London, June 1, 1946

Dear Comrade Cannon:

We have received no acknowledgement to our letter of 23rd December, 1945, or to the cable sent to you from our Central Committee some months ago suggesting that we take advantage of the opportunity provided by the Nuremberg Trial to conduct a campaign of exposure of the Moscow Trials. We

have received no direct communication stating the attitude of the leadership of the SWP to this campaign.

We have, however, received the letter of the PC of the SWP to Comrade Goldman circularised to SWP Branches, also some correspondence between leading SWP members which defines the attitude of the PC to "the action initiated by the RCP of Britain."

After full consideration of this material, it seems to us that your leading Committee is in an untenable position.

Comrade Stein wrote to Comrade Goldman:

"We thought it would be best to wait for the end of the Nuremberg trials, and then to point out in our press and in our agitation generally that here was a chance for the Stalinists to disprove the findings of the Dewey Commission that the trial was a frame-up and to cross-examine Hess on his alleged dealings with Trotsky."

Apparently your Committee was apprehensive lest any agitation on our part directed at this stage against the Moscow frame-up trials, would be an invitation to the Stalinists to cook up documents or extract further lying confessions from Hess or the other Nazi criminals. But do you not think that under the existing conditions, and particularly in the light of the relationships between the powers, such dangers are remote? After all, if the Stalinists could have utilised the Nuremberg Trial to improve their position vis-a-vis the principal opponents in the working class movement, they would not wait for a signal from us.

Assuming, however, that there exists a danger such as you fear, the situation was entirely changed once the British Party and other sections of the International had brought out the issue in public. The risks in forewarning the Stalinists — if there were any — were already taken. Had you joined with us in the campaign, the "risk" would in no wise have been increased.

It is not through forgetfulness or indifference to their own interests that the Stalinist bureaucracy has remained silent on Trotsky's alleged connections with the Nazis at the Nuremberg Trial. Experts in the art of frame-up, they know better than anyone else that a frame-up based on perjury and false confessions can be successfully carried through, only under a given set of conditions. There has to be complete agreement between the witness and the prosecutor. There has to be unity of purpose between the judge and the prosecutor. There must be complete harmony in detail among all the participants — prosecutors, witnesses and judges, and defense counsel.

None of these conditions exist at the trial in Nuremberg. Far from the existence of a unity between the prosecutors and the accused, there is not even unity among the prosecutors themselves. While the Russians take a sly dig at their "allies" by disclosures of the association of British capitalists with the Nazis, the Anglo-American imperialists retaliate by exposing the secret Treaty between Stalin and Hitler. The divergence of interests among the prosecuting powers, the relationships between the accused and the prosecutors, the character of the court — all render impractical, if not altogether impossible, any attempt on the part of the Stalinists to stage a new frame-up on the Stalinist model. It is the Stalinists who would have to take risks, not we.

Your PC also objected to the campaign on the grounds that it was unnecessary and did not offer fruitful possibilities, since nothing had been alleged against the Trotskyists at the Nuremberg Trial. In the letter to Comrade Goldman from Comrade Stein previously quoted, he says:

"No-one but the die-hard Stalinists believe in the Moscow Trials and many of them do not believe it, but they make unscrupulous use of them in an effort to smear our movement."

So far as our movement is concerned, of course the Report of the Dewey Commission provided complete and conclusive proof as to the frame-up nature of the Moscow Trials. We have made this perfectly clear in our propaganda in the present campaign. But there are tens of thousands of workers who accept wholly, or partially, the Stalinist version of the Moscow Trials who have never even heard of the Dewey Commission. It is these workers to whom we are addressing our propaganda campaign. In this connection we subscribe to the letter of

Comrades Allen, Jeffries and Lyons to your PC of February 8th, in which they write:

"Since the Nazi-Soviet war, apologists for Stalinism like Davies, Pope, etc., have succeeded in bamboozling large sections of the population who never before believed the authenticity of the Moscow Trials, into accepting them as measures which wiped out the 'Nazi Fifth Column' in the Soviet Union. In France today the whole of political and intellectual life is dominated by Stalinist ideology and anti-Stalinist voices find it difficult to get a hearing. In England a short while ago the situation was much the same. Stalin's prestige has risen as a result of the war, and his success has had the retroactive effect of inducing large masses of the population to accept the justice of the Moscow Trials."

That the Stalinists are even now "making unscrupulous use" of the Moscow Trials is evident from the editorial in *The Militant* of February 16th, 1946, entitled "Red-Baiting Slander — Stalinist Style." The editors of *The Militant* write:

"Or take this more recent brazen lie in a leaflet signed by Ralph Shaw, Chairman of the Communist Party of Missouri, and distributed a few weeks ago at an SWP meeting in St. Louis. Shaw states: 'Documents discovered in Berlin and produced at the Nuremberg trial of Nazi high criminals, reveal to the whole world how Trotsky plotted with Rudolph Hess to organize a Fifth Column in the Soviet Union in order to open the gates to the Nazi invasion'."

Here was an opportunity for *The Militant* to expose this Stalinist lie by pointing to the challenge of the British and other parties directed to the Russian prosecution at Nuremberg. Precisely this campaign and the silence of the Russian prosecution should have been the offensive weapon of the American Trotskyists in their rebuttal. But *The Militant* remained silent on the activities of other sections of the International. All it had to say was:

"Every informed person knows that no such documents have been produced at the Nuremberg trials, nor has there been any mention of their existence in the world press, including the *Daily Worker*. To be sure the Stalinists are fully capable of forging such documents, as they are of making such false accusations, but in fact they have not done so. Yet this hasn't prevented the CP leader of Missouri from uttering this foul falsehood."

The defensive attitude of the SWP has not prevented the Stalinists from making such a statement; but the offensive campaign of the RCP has completely silenced the British Stalinists since the Nuremberg campaign commenced, despite repeated challenges as well as pressure from their own members. Your attitude seems to us inexplicable, in the light of the activities of the other sections. In Britain we can say that whereas in the past it was the Stalinists who were on the offensive as regards the Moscow Trials, today the position is reversed; it is the Trotskyists who are on the offensive while the Stalinists are entirely on the defensive.

Your Committee raises certain criticisms of the way in which we have conducted our campaign. In the letter to Comrade Goldman, Comrade Stein writes:

"The approach of the English comrades appears to be one of an attempt to vindicate Trotsky. This, we believe, is false. It is particularly bad to call on the officials of the Nuremberg trials to intervene in order to prove the truth of the Moscow Trials. In reality it means an appeal to the very people guilty of the frame-up. . ."

It is possible that our letters and documents could have been more skilfully drafted. But surely this is a secondary question — the fact that you did not see fit to raise the matter with us indicates this — to the main problem — getting the campaign of exposure under way. Let us assume that the

criticisms of the PC are correct. This is no excuse for not doing a better job than the British comrades.

However, there is nothing in our campaign which gives you the right to draw the conclusions you do. Comrade Trotsky was never afraid to call upon the hangmen to produce their "evidence." Our whole movement is steeped in examples of a similar character, which we can discuss if needs be.

The orientation of the SWP can only be characterized as nervous, and entirely lacking in boldness. Trotskyists must know when to be audacious, and here, in our opinion, is an occasion when our movement must go on the offensive. The reactions of the Stalinists prove conclusively the correctness of this orientation.

Once the voice of Comrade Natalia Trotsky had been added to that of the European parties, urging the widest publicity for the campaign, we had hoped the SWP would vigorously enter the campaign. But alas we were mistaken. It is distressing indeed, that the American workers learn of the campaign

conducted by other sections of the Fourth International only through the press of the Shachtmanites. It is bad enough that the initiative for the campaign in America should have fallen to the WP because of the failure of the PC of the SWP — but how explain the fact that once the campaign was under way, our American section should boycott it?

Now that the issue has been raised in the USA, our American section cannot continue to stand aside. It has the duty to participate and take a lead. We appeal to you once again to line up with the French, Dutch, Belgian, British, Irish, Indian and other sections. Seize this unique opportunity offered to our movement to expose to the world working class the monstrous frame-up character of the Moscow Trials and vindicate the name of Leon Trotsky,

Yours fraternally,

For the PB of the RCP,
JOCK HASTON, General Secretary

Resolution on the Jewish Question

EUROPEAN JEWRY

Rising capitalism brought about a partial emancipation of the Jews from their feudal restrictions. The expanding economy required that feudal barriers, limitations and concepts be abolished; it demanded the creation of national markets and economics, greater freedom of opportunity than feudalism had offered, so as to speed up its own development; it demanded the abrogation of laws restricting freedom of movement and action. The Jews, who were caught in the web of lawful discrimination under the feudal system, benefited greatly from the rise of capitalism. Blinded by the glorious French Revolution and the Declaration of the Rights of Man, this long persecuted minority finally considered the millenium to be at hand.

But as soon as the capitalist system began to decline through the clashes between the growing productive forces and the outmoded property relations, the Jews began to be forced out of their unstable positions. The sham of equality of minorities in a class society was fully revealed when the contradictions inherent in the anarchic capitalist system of production finally came out into the open and established themselves as the dominant features of society. Concentrated in secondary industries, politically and socially powerless, subject to increasing discrimination and oppression, the Jews were the first to be blamed, the first to be driven out, the first to be crushed in the maelstrom of the economic structure toppling overhead.

In this period of capitalist decline and protracted doom, the inertia of Jewry's "mind" — the superstructure lagging behind actual development — still forces them to operate with such outdated commodities as emancipation, assimilation, equality and freedom. But reality eventually forces thought processes to obey it. The cruel reality of declining capitalism shows the fate of modern Jewry to be the complete opposite of the glorious promise of the French Revolution. From the Declaration of the Rights of Man, Capitalism has led six million Jews to death in gas chambers and pogroms.

With more than six million Jews killed by the fascist scourge, the last remnants of European Jewry are getting the full measure of the Allied victory. Completely destitute, ridden with disease, and spiritually broken, these emaciated survivors find themselves in concentration camps set up by the Allies. What is left of European Jewry finds itself completely uprooted and without means of livelihood, their property stolen by the Nazis and not returned to them — outcasts of a society in the throes of a precipitous decline. The continued existence of anti-semitism in Western and Central Europe offers them concrete

proof that capitalism and anti-semitism are twins. Likewise, anti-semitic outbreaks in the Soviet sphere of influence give added proof to European Jewry that the end of fascism does not signify the end of their suffering.

Having no homes to return to, the memory of Nazis gas chambers and slaughtered families still fresh in their minds, with the reality of Allied concentration camps before their eyes, these pariahs have but one wish; to escape Europe.

Recognizing these conditions, the party advances the following program for the Jews of Europe:

- 1 Free Immigration to all countries of the earth including Palestine. We oppose the exit and inter-continental travel prohibitions and limitations for these people; the visa and quota system as well as other immigration restrictions. We urge the world labor movement to adopt this slogan and to demand of their respective governments and the Allied overlords to open the doors of all countries to these outcasts.

- 2 The party demands the break-up of the fascist-like concentration camps.

- 3 The party will expose and combat any anti-semitic acts perpetrated in Europe. It calls upon the European workers to stamp out anti-semitism around which neo-fascist trends are bound to crystallize.

- 4 The party calls upon all Jews left in Europe to fully participate in the class struggles of the European proletariat — as far as their anomalous position in present-day Europe permits them to. It calls upon those Jews who tasted the full meaning of "democratic" victory to ally themselves with the European workers in the class struggle; to support the slogan of "Withdraw the Occupation Troops;" to support the struggle against Allied imperialism and Soviet aggrandizement and for a free socialist Europe — which alone can give the Jews the chance to live freely.

AMERICAN JEWRY

Despite a transitory economic prosperity period, capitalist post-war America cannot escape the consequences of its own internal contradictions in the long run. When the inevitable economic depression strikes the U. S., the 1929-1933 catastrophe will appear as mere child's play by comparison. Contraction of the economy, a minimum of 45-50 million unemployed; the discharged war workers and the jobless veterans — the combination of these factors could provide fertile territory for the native American fascists. The utter disillusionment with the "fruits of victory" will have turned into ever-increasing resentment against the "war for democracy."

It is against this somber background that American Jewry's fate in the post-war period has to be evaluated. The economic crisis will bring as its inevitable concomitants a tremendous growth of racial tensions, anti-semitism and discrimination. The forerunners of these tendencies are already evident. Contraction of the economy will mean to Jews as it does to Negroes: "Last to be hired, first to be fired." Gang assaults on Jews and pogrom-like outbreaks will mount as the Jews will continue their customary role as the scapegoat for the crimes of capitalism. Because the main struggle in this period is the one between the capitalist forces of reaction and the power of the American working class, led by the revolutionary party, the struggle of the Jews will be successful only if tied to that of the working class. Without the destruction of the decadent capitalist system, American Jewry's position will become ever more precarious and unstable.

To provide an answer to American Jewry's need in the post-war period, the SWP advances the following program:

1 The struggle against anti-semitism and discrimination. The party will intensify its persistent struggle against social, political and economic discrimination and against anti-semitism in all its forms. The party will fight discrimination in jobs, housing, schools; it will take concrete actions on behalf of the Jews; it will protest all oppressive measures instigated by law-making agencies and join in or organize the struggle against anti-Jewish political propaganda and activities. It will continue the struggle against the native fascist groups such as Coughlin, Smith, Rankin, etc. It will coordinate this activity with the party's over-all struggle against fascism.

By carrying out this program in action, the party will give the lie to those "assimilationist" American Jews who still deny the existence of a Jewish problem. The party will thereby fight the ostrich policy of "hush-hushing" the problem out of existence. The party thereby states openly that there is a specific Jewish problem which requires specific measures to solve it.

2 Open the doors to the U. S. The party stands for the right of free immigration into the United States and opposes the present stringent restriction on immigration as well as the entire repressive quota system. For the free and unlimited immigration to America of Europe's homeless Jews! We will oppose the cruel sham of the Roosevelt and Truman policy toward Jewish immigration. While mouthing countless honeyed words and sugary phrases they have not taken one serious step to allow any part of the Jewish refugees into this country. American imperialism would like to embarrass British imperialism by appearing as a supporter of Jewish immigration into Palestine. American revolutionists will expose this hypocrisy and demand the lifting of all barriers to immigration into the United States.

3 The community of interests between Jews and American working class. In its approach to American workers the party will point out to them the historical identity of interests between the working class and a persecuted minority such as the Jews. The party will point out to anti-fascist workers the close relations between fascism and anti-semitism and the necessity for fighting the one as well as the other. The party will, in its propaganda, explain the need for the breaking down of racial and national prejudices within the working class and the necessity for the unity of all workers and oppressed minorities against the capitalists. Conversely, in its approach to Jewish workers, the party will stress the common needs of the entire working class, of which the Jewish workers are a part. While fighting for specific Jewish demands, the party must point out to the Jewish workers that they are not a separate entity, but a specific group within the U. S. working class. In order to gain the alliance of the American workers in the struggle against anti-semitism and discrimination, the Jewish

workers must ally themselves with the former in their class struggle against the common enemy of both — the capitalist class of the United States.

The Jewish question has its root in the capitalist system and especially in the exacerbated decline of the capitalist system. The key to the solution of the problem — the only road to the normalization of Jewish life — lies in the struggle against capitalism and its final destruction.

Capitalism can offer no solution to the Jewish problem. The economic "maladjustment" of the Jews, which is the cause of their specific problem in class societies, cannot be removed by capitalism in its decay. Instead of abolishing discrimination, destroying anti-semitism and giving the Jews the right of free self-determination decaying capitalism provides them, as it does the rest of mankind, with protracted world crises, recurrent wars and the specter of world fascism.

Bourgeois pen-prostitutes in the Jewish field no longer dare speak even of "equal rights" for Jews. Their "cure-all" for Jewry's needs is expressed in the call for "mass migrations." But the period of mass migrations is at an end. Liberal capitalism will never return. To speak of migrations at the present moment as a solution to the Jewish problem means to fight for capitalist reconstruction. However, it is impossible to "escape" capitalism, utterly utopian to emigrate from world fascism. To ask of anarchic capitalism in its decay to carry through the "peaceful" and "organized" migration of millions of Jews is thoroughly utopian and reactionary to the core.

With the need for refuge greater than ever, more and more Jews begin to see in Palestine their Promised Land. Under Zionist leadership they have — with but a small minority dissenting — proclaimed as their aim the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. We are presented with the tragic historical picture of the Jewish people setting up a goal which is unrealizable under the capitalist system both in terms of the conflicting (and dominant) interests of Great Britain in Palestine, as well as in terms of the interests of the Palestine Arabs. Not only do Zionists fail to understand imperialist England's role in Palestine, but — themselves the butt of national persecution for the ages — are now ready to ride roughshod over the interests of another people: the Palestine Arabs.

GREAT BRITAIN IN PALESTINE

Palestine lies at the crossroads of the continents in more ways than one. Its position vis a vis the narrow Mediterranean and the Suez Canal gives it strategic importance in imperialist world politics. Guarding the Suez and hence the shortest route to India, Palestine is one of England's principal bases. It represents the very key to empire politics especially in view of Egypt's changed position. In its recent treaty with Egypt, England granted that country a sham independence, consisting of continued economic subjugation accompanied by a partial withdrawal of troops to appease the nationalist sentiment. Since England intends to hold on to its empire, the troops to be withdrawn are to be shifted to the other side of the Suez: Palestine. Thus Palestine has become the focal point in Great Britain's empire communication system with India. Palestine is being transformed into a veritable armed camp with new English troops constantly pouring in. Newly built sea bases, air ports and pipe lines from the oil wells of the Middle East round out the picture. Never was the ludicrousness of the Zionist dream of an "independent Jewish State" in Palestine more fully exposed than at the present moment.

In this period of the Empire's worst decline, the British — in order to hold on to the tattered shreds of their domain — are faced with the inevitable necessity to appease the Arab world. While the Jews are weaker than ever and carry no weight in the game of power politics, the Arab states with

their vast oil regions, their strategic location; their as yet weak but budding nationalism, are forces to be reckoned with. England as well as the United States, also view with some concern the behind-the-scenes get-togethers between the Soviet Union and the Arab states. This, coupled with the other factors drive the British on to the path of anti-Jewish and apparently pro-Arab politics. In reality, however, the real policy is determined by what suits imperialist England best. As many concessions as are necessary to harness the Arab ruling classes to England's chariot are being made. Hence, the treaty with Egypt, the leniency to the Mufti, the anti-Jewish White Paper and Britain's continued adamant stand against further Jewish immigration.

England's efforts to form a bloc of Arab states to support her policies in the Near East (the Arab League) help her traditional divide and rule policy. As with the Moslems and Hindus in India, Kurds and Arabs in Syria, so also with the Jews and Arabs in Palestine. Great Britain hopes to keep them at each others' throats instead of unitedly fighting England. Thus England erects artificial barriers between the two peoples, deepens existing ones and introduces further points of conflict. The fanning of chauvinistic sentiments and racial prejudices as well as the continued separation of the two peoples are furthered by and of immense benefit to Great Britain and its imperialist rule in Palestine.

ZIONISM AND THE JEWS IN PALESTINE

Today as it has been since 1917, Palestine remains a British colony guarding Britain's life line to India and "promised" by British imperialism to both Jews and Arabs. On the basis of the Balfour declaration, continuous waves of Jews have entered this feudal Arab country until today one-third of the population consists of Jews. This newly created community of almost seven hundred thousand people introduced capitalist methods of production into a feudal country, converted swamps and arid land into fertile agricultural regions; has lowered the mortality and disease rate, improved housing and living conditions; has resulted in the creation of a strong working class with powerful trade unions and political parties. While the Arab ruling classes are uniformly opposed to the Jewish community due to their fear of a rival basing itself on a more progressive mode of production, the Arab masses have in part benefited by Jewish immigration. Of all the Arab countries, Palestine is the only one that shows a high yearly immigration of Arabs from surrounding countries. Health, schooling, living conditions have been improved for the Arabs. Concomitant with the rise of the Jewish working class has been the growth of the Arab proletariat. But these partly good results of Jewish immigration are more than offset by the rest of Zionist policies.

The program and policies of political Zionism are, if analyzed from a Marxist point of view, thoroughly reactionary, Zionism is revealed as a bourgeois movement, a status-quo ideology that bases its solution to the Jewish problem on the continued existence of capitalism and follows a class collaborationist policy within Jewry as well as with the imperialist powers. It has always been the tool of imperialism. Zionism supported the imperialist war and in the face of reality continues to pretend to the Jewish masses that capitalism in its decay can provide the Jews with freedom and a homeland. Zionism stands in inverse relation to social progress; every defeat of the working class has meant an increase in the need for emigration to Palestine.

Zionism reveals itself openly in Palestine where it sets Jewish against Arab workers for the sake of the "Jewish National Home." The reactionary Zionist slogan of "Conquest of Labor" has meant a driving out of Arabs from employment, inter-working class competition for jobs on a racial basis,

establishment of all-Jewish trade unions and other measures used to "cement" the Jewish National home.

Zionism must be openly exposed and combatted by the party as a nationalistic trap for the Jewish masses, whose problems cannot be solved in this manner. Zionist aims, dependent for their realization upon a historical impossibility — the peaceful perpetuation of bourgeois democracy — count for nought. The decay of capitalism has wrung the main weapons out of the hands of the Zionists. Mass migrations have become impossible, while a "free" Palestine is inconceivable unless coupled with the struggle to oust imperialism from the country. Zionism has reached a dead end in theory and in practice.

THE PRESENT STRUGGLE IN PALESTINE

Like all national oppression, the subjugation of the Jews at the hands of the brutal British overlords in Palestine has given birth to a renewed national consciousness and national struggle. In countless struggles, from the hopeless battle of the Warsaw Ghetto to the present day fight in Palestine the Jews have served notice that they will not go down without a fight. Their striving for national freedom will, if directed along correct lines, be a significant part of the struggle for the revolutionary transformation of society.

The Jewish workers and farmers were not slow to react to the dictatorial and terroristic rule of the British — especially to their cruel attacks and imprisonment of incoming refugees. An underground defense movement formed many years ago for the protection of Jewish settlement — The Hagana — developed into the main core of opposition to Britain's immigrant restrictions. It is a mass organization with unquestioned support of virtually the entire Jewish population. It is in many respects similar to the European resistance movements and carries on a campaign, not of individual terror as does Irgun Tzvai Leumi and the Stern gang but of mass terror, designed to open an avenue for Jewish immigration. To that extent it must and does fight against British imperialism. With its branches and ammunition depots in every Jewish communal settlement, with its roots in every city block and union, with its strict discipline and its heavily armed and tightly-knit membership, the Hagana represents the real ruling force of the Jewish community today.

But in spite of its predominantly proletarian and working farmers composition, the Hagana, in its program, carries out the class collaborationist and chauvinist line of the Zionists. It has the complete confidence and support of the Zionist movement; for it is a subservient agent of the policies of the Zionist movement. Its program is the official Zionist program of immigration, land purchase, domination over the Arab and — collaboration with imperialism: British and American. It does not advocate a joint struggle with the Arabs. The class struggle finds no place in its program. Despite the anti-imperialistic mood of the Jewish masses, the Hagana has not adopted the slogan of "Drive the British out of Palestine." The source of the present conflict lies in Britain's determination to maintain its position by denying free immigration to the Jews. The Hagana is brought whether it likes to or not to challenge the British by its activities to continue the flow of immigration. It thereby, in spite of itself, heightens the anti-imperialist mood of the Jewish masses.

As long as the Hagana continues its present challenge to British rule in Palestine it is our revolutionary duty to critically support it. At the same time we must expose Hagana's Zionist program. We can be certain that the Zionist bourgeoisie would at any moment forsake the struggle against Great Britain and accept some cheap compromise — if they can get it. The dynamic factor in this situation is that Great Britain is hardly in a position to offer a suitable compromise. For

this reason, the Hagana may very well become the force around which the Jewish people will gather in an effort to throw off England's rule. By weakening the British military machine in Palestine, Hagana prepares the way for such an upheaval, even though that is not the design of the leadership. Today the avowed aim of the Hagana is only to force the British to allow unlimited immigration within the framework of the Balfour declaration. Tomorrow when the struggle rises to a higher level the working class rank and file, whose interests differ from those of the bourgeoisie may force the leadership to pose the problem as one of throwing the British out of Palestine. It is our duty to be in the forefront of such a struggle and to focalize the anti-imperialist aspirations of the Jewish masses.

To support the present struggle of the Hagana with our program does not mean support of Zionism. It means that we consider the present struggle of the Hagana against the British forces to be progressive.

Our support of the Hagana would necessarily include an uncompromising criticism of its Zionist program. We would repeatedly demonstrate the utopian and reactionary character of Zionism. We would show how its position on the Arab question dooms the Jews of Palestine to constant struggle with their neighbors. We would constantly recall the Zionist attitude to Great Britain before, during, and after the war. We would prove to the masses that Great Britain was always the enemy of the Jews as well as of the Arabs in Palestine. Most important of all: we would tell them that the Zionist movement, though now engaged in a skirmish with Great Britain is organically incapable (because of its bourgeois character) of conducting a finish fight against British imperialism. We would show them how such a fight is necessary in the defense of the rights of the people of Palestine and prove to them that only by breaking with the Zionist movement; by following the leadership of the revolutionary socialist party; by substituting class struggle methods for the present terrorist methods could they consummate the struggle successfully.

Support of the Hagana with our program means then, not support of Zionism, but a tactic to dislodge the hold of Zionist ideology on the Jewish masses — to drive a wedge between reactionary Zionism and the Jewish masses of Palestine and the world. To abstain or to be hostile to what is clearly a progressive struggle is to doom ourselves to impotence in relation to the Jewish masses and to allow a clear field to the Zionists.

THE ARABS IN PALESTINE

The rise of Arab nationalism, though reflected but weakly in Palestine, introduces a new phase in the historical development of the Near East. We face a period of turbulent struggle — on the one hand on the part of the Arab ruling classes, at present supported by the proletariat in an effort to win greater concessions from the imperialist powers; on the other, the class struggle of Arab proletariat and peasant against his native oppressors, as well as against the imperialist rulers. The Arab landlords and their satellites, the compradores make every effort to suppress the mass movement, to keep it within bounds. At the same time they use its potential as a threat in the bargains with the imperialist powers. They fear the masses most of all and are quite content with a "place" — though they would like a larger one — in the British Commonwealth of Nations.

The bourgeois and even radical press have attempted to create a myth about the Arab people — the myth of homogeneity. The truth is that the widest possible gap separates the Arab fellah from the feudal landlords, the effendis. The effendis own the land, loan the money, market the product and perpetrate the blackest exploitation of the fellahin. They in

turn work the land, and give as much as 60% of the produce to the effendis in feudal tithes and interests. The fellah himself lives on the lowest of human standards, constantly mortgaging himself and his family into greater debt.

The growth of industry in Palestine highlights the same divergence of interests between the rising Arab bourgeoisie and the rudimentary Arab proletariat. Whereas the effendis and the bourgeoisie are only interested in perpetuating their rule, in keeping the masses suppressed, the workers and peasants are interested in the very opposite. Whereas the former wants to keep England as a senior partner in the business of domination, the latter need more than anything else to break the chains of colonial rule and exploitation. The class line is drawn no less sharply in colonial Palestine than any where else.

The Arab upper classes (whose representatives sit in conference with England) are 100% opposed to Jewish immigration. The Jewish bourgeoisie and landlords represent to them not only economic competitors, but also competitors for the good graces of the imperialists. The Jewish proletariat and working farmers, with their European background, appear as a constant threat to unquestioned domination. Their standards of living, their trade union and political experience will without doubt "infect" the Arab masses, who will in turn threaten the existing class rule.

Do the Arab masses share these presentiments? Beyond any doubt the influence of the effendis (until recently the sole source of propaganda among the Arabs) is strong. Without doubt many fellahin continue in the traditional path of following their lord blindly. However, the growth of industry and of the Arab proletariat has rent asunder the shell which enveloped the Arab masses and isolated them from the currents of class struggle and progressive ideas. As a result of the recent industrial development and the growth of the Arab proletariat, Arab trade unions and Arab socialist organizations have appeared, by means of which the Arab masses are becoming vocal for the first time. These are the bodies, which must speak for the Arab masses.

A TROTSKYIST PROGRAM FOR PALESTINE JEWRY

1 For the independence of Palestine from all imperialist domination. For a Jewish-Arab anti-imperialist struggle: Drive out the British!

This slogan must represent the fundamental axis around which our program is to revolve. Without a break with British imperialism and a Jewish-Arab struggle for independence there can be no talk of Palestine's future except in terms of its existence as a British colony.

The existing Jewish and Arab national struggles must be transformed into this all-embracing anti-imperialist struggle. To the Jews — while participating in Hagana and supporting any anti-imperialist act on its part, the limited nature of such terroristic acts and the ineffectual episodic "needling" of Great Britain must be explained; the vast scope of an anti-imperialist struggle must then be counterposed to it. To the Arabs, the correct program for a national struggle for independence must be pointed out. At the present stage, the Arabs' weak but growing national movement, is being conducted under the slogan of "No Jewish Immigration." It must be understood, however, that this anti-Jewish slogan, originates to a great extent in the equally reactionary anti-Arab policies of the Zionists and the Jewish labor movement. Far more important, however, is the fact that the slogan "Drive the British out of Palestine" has been introduced into the Arab national struggle. However demagogic the use of such a slogan on the part of the Arab upper classes may be, it must be grasped and fought

for in earnest by the progressive Arab elements — for the realization of this goal is the precondition for the solution of all the Arabs' as well as the Jews' problems.

Despite the partly contradictory slogans under which the two movements are launched, Trotskyists must critically support the national struggles of both Jews and Arabs and must transform them into a genuinely anti-imperialist mass movement by uniting these two struggles under the only slogan that can bring victory to both: **DRIVE OUT THE BRITISH.**

2 For unity between Jewish and Arab workers! For a United Labor movement and multi-racial unions! Against the slogan of Conquest of Labor! For equal rights of Jews and Arabs to jobs! For a united Jewish-Arab class struggle against the Jewish and Arab exploiters!

It is here that revolutionists must draw the sharpest line between themselves and the chauvinistic Zionists. The latter intend to rule over the Arabs. We have as our aim that Jews will rule Palestine together with the Arabs.

The precondition for Arab-Jewish unity is the abolition of all chauvinistic measures, especially on the part of the Zionists. The regulations which prohibit Arabs from joining Jewish Unions, segregate them in "Jim-Crow" locals of the Histadrut, and try to exclude them from working in Jewish-owned enterprises must be unconditionally abrogated. The first steps in uniting the masses of both people will have to be taken by the urban and rural proletariat. On the job — where class interest overshadows artificial barriers and the need for class unity becomes part of the very struggle for existence — will the ground for the united struggle be broken. If unity can be cemented on the lowest level of economic struggle, this can be taken as an example for the political struggle to be waged.

3 The convocation of a constituent assembly based on universal suffrage and majority rule.

The party opposes the demand for the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine. The party opposes the sham of "bi-national" state proposed by the left-wing Zionists which is based on equal representation of Jews and Arabs although the Jews constitute but one-third of the population. The party counterposes to these reactionary dreams the democratic formula of: the problems of Palestine (including state form, immigration, etc.) must be freely and democratically solved by the people of Palestine.

The party favors a constituent assembly based on majority rule to determine Palestine's future. A "Jewish Home" cannot be established as against the majority of the population. It can only come about as a Jewish-Arab home in Palestine — i. e. through equal rights and full equality of Jews and Arabs in Palestine, regardless of numbers and subject to the democratic decisions of the whole population. This type of "bi-national state" represents the only solution to the Palestine problem. It can only be achieved in the framework of a Socialist federation of the Middle East which in turn will form an integral part of the coming of USS of Asia.

4 For free immigration into Palestine as to all other countries! Against the British White Paper! Against the machinations of the imperialists and their "plans" and "inquiries!"

Following the first world war, the revolutionary movement opposed the slogan of "Free Immigration into Palestine" as advanced by Zionists. There was still a reasonable possibility for the Jews to stay in the various countries and fight for socialism where they were, instead of lending aid to the Zionist movement. With the continued deterioration of the situation of European Jewry, the justification for this slogan grows until today the catastrophe of continental Jewry makes it imperative that the doors of Palestine as of all other countries be opened to them.

Revolutionists must be advocates of the demand for unrestricted Jewish immigration. But we do not become advocates of free Jewish immigration in the Zionist way — a "plea" di-

rected to imperialism without consulting the Arabs. In our hand the slogan becomes another expression of the demand "British hands off Palestine." We do not hail even as a partial victory the decision of the Anglo-American Committee to allow 100,000 Jews into Palestine. We challenge in principle the right of the British to set any limits — be it even one million — to immigration or to anything else in Palestine. Given continued British rule, the admission of 100,000 Jews by British consent is a provocation to end an imposition upon the Arabs who have no control over a country in which they are a majority. It facilitates throwing the Arabs into the arms of the chauvinistic Arab League, which dangles before them the specter of a Palestine dominated by their Jewish counterparts, the Zionists. We emphasize that the problem of Jewish immigration can be solved only in the framework of a free Palestine.

The slogan of "Drive out the British" must be made the rallying point for the masses of both Arabs and Jews. The joint struggle and the obvious community of interests will eliminate the present sources of conflict and antagonism between Arabs and Jews. For the Arabs will see that if the British are driven out, they (being a majority) would have nothing to fear from Jewish immigration — since they would be in position to permit or prohibit such immigration. No longer under the imperialist yoke and freely deciding the country's destinies, the Arab masses would more objectively evaluate the benefits of Jewish immigration in the form of more advanced productive methods, higher living and health standards, etc. The Jews, on the other hand, would become aware that the very course of this joint struggle changed the attitude of the Arab masses — once the dagger of Zionist domination was taken from their throats. The Jewish masses would then be able to demonstrate that the immigration of politically advanced workers, even if they become a majority in the country, could not be detrimental to the interests of the Arab masses, but to their exploiters.

What would be the place of the demand for free Jewish immigration in our program? Our fight for this demand would be accompanied by a determined struggle against all discrimination and against all barriers to cooperation between Arab and Jewish masses; by a struggle to get the British out of Palestine; by a struggle for a Constituent which for the first time would allow both peoples to determine their own destiny.

The key to a solution of the whole Palestine problem lies in the revolutionary party itself. The party must regard itself from the very beginning as the direct organizer of the Arab-Jewish struggle. No one else will accomplish this task — neither the Arab nor the Jewish nationalists. The revolutionary party puts itself forward as the most consistent and intensive organizer and supporter of both Jewish and Arab demands. The unity of the two struggles will be achieved through the revolutionary party itself. All philistine assertions that uniting the two struggles constitutes a practical impossibility, stem in the last analysis from a conception of the party as a tail-end of these struggles instead of its vanguard.

To become the champion of all the oppressed everywhere and not to permit one to be set off against the other; to become the force which combines all progressive demands and through which are eliminated all reactionary antagonism; to struggle for racial and national equality, against chauvinism and for international solidarity — such is the task of the Fourth International. This task is clearly epitomized in the Jewish problem where the Fourth International can ignore the legitimate demands of either section of the oppressed (Jews or Arabs) only at the cost of throwing them into the arms of the reactionary demagogues and thus disarming the revolutionary vanguard. The Palestine problem thus becomes a touchstone for the ability of the Fourth International to become the champion of oppressed mankind.

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