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WHAT THE NEW YORK DISCUSSION HAS REVEALED

By Joseph Hansen

The discussion that has developed in the New York Local over the "Report and Tasks" submitted by Comrade Bartell is as heated as our party has seen in a good many years. Invective, flareups, strained personal relations -- these appeared, not at the conclusion of a bitter factional struggle, but during the first weeks of discussion on perspectives and orientation of the New York Local. The tone, set by Comrade Bartell and his supporters, is in complete contrast to the calmness and objectivity that governed our discussion over the class character of the East European countries. The subjectivity of the current discussion appears still stranger in view of the length of that earlier discussion and its profundity. How are we to account for this difference?

An easy answer, of course, is to hold Comrade Ring and Comrade Stevens responsible. They questioned the orientation outlined by the New York Local Organizer. Instead of orientation they should have concerned themselves only with immediate, "concrete" questions because orientation concerns the party as a whole and cannot be resolved by a part. Therefore indignation over their ill-advised temerity is completely in order. There is a certain justification for this feeling, no doubt. The question of Comrade Bartell's proposed orientation has proved unresolvable on the local level, just as he maintained. But then how could Comrade Ring and Comrade Stevens know this in advance? How could the Local itself know it in advance of discussion? Was it excluded that Comrade Bartell would recognize the incorrectness of his orientation and change his mind?

This favorable variant -- resolution of the question on a local level -- was not realized; but that does not discredit the position taken by Comrade Ring and Comrade Stevens. In fact the insistence of Comrade Bartell that this is a national issue involving the entire party's position on Stalinism demonstrates how correct they were in questioning the orientation of the New York Organizer even though it now means that the dispute transcends the local level. Thus, if we approach things objectively, it is clear that we cannot put the blame on Comrade Ring and Comrade Stevens for the heat in the discussion. Whether their views on Stalinism turn out to be right or wrong, the party really owes these comrades a vote of thanks.

Our attempt to save ourselves the trouble of thinking got us nowhere, as was to be expected from such a superficial approach. We have to dig deeper. Where such heat is generated in a dispute as we see in the New York Local, a Marxist must ask himself, "Is this perhaps the form taken by a political difference not yet brought clearly, fully or consistently into the open? If so, what is the political difference?" From this viewpoint, the heat is only a surface manifestation of no more than symptomatic interest. Our task is to try to determine its political content. Once this is done and the real difference becomes clear, we must then account for its origin. Finally, we must decide what to do about it.

Manifestations of a Tendency

First of all, let's attempt to get at the gist of the position represented by Comrade Bartell and his supporters. I propose to do

this by making abstractions from the Organizer's report and remarks. To this I will add further abstractions from speeches of his supporters and from arguments they advance in the corridors. I will leave aside subsequent assertions that certain remarks were not made, or if made were only "half-baked," as well as contentions that no departures from the traditional fundamental position of our movement are involved. My aim is to synthesize a structure that will stand or fall by its internal consistency. I recognize that the result as a whole is likely to be challenged by Comrade Bartell and his supporters as unfair and unwarranted and perhaps worse. Some may agree that parts truthfully reflect their views but that other parts do not. They may contend that they cannot be held accountable for them and reject them out of hand. However, this procedure is not intended to win friends and influence people by diplomatic means. The purpose is to show the logic of the tendency and where the various arguments that have been advanced fit in.

1. It is contended that the deepening reaction in America has so profoundly affected the workers that opportunities for fruitful work in the trade unions and other mass organizations at present are extremely limited if not nil. Consequently we must adjust our tactics accordingly.

2. It is argued that "The American population in general is neither able to understand nor is interested in studying the conceptions of the Third World Congress. But since we are only able to recruit or expand our circle of sympathizers today on the basis of our world program, we are of necessity very isolated."

3. We must break out of this isolation. Otherwise we face the danger of degeneration. We cannot adjust our press and other mediums to the new level of thinking of the American workers. On the contrary, we must make our press, especially the paper, more theoretical; because --

4. Fortunately a milieu is presented to us for possible recruitment -- the "politically conscious" circles. If this does not hold true for the country as a whole it is at least true of New York which in this respect "resembles more a European city than any other in America."

5. The politically conscious circles consist primarily of the Stalinists and their periphery. They are equipped to understand our ideas.

6. Even more, they are willing to listen to our ideas. In fact Trotskyism can be said to have become "legitimized" among many Stalinist members and sympathizers. "Indeed, their movement could be said to be rife with 'Trotskyist conciliationism.'"

7. In the view of some, this manifestation is due to fresh currents appearing among the Stalinist ranks in opposition to their counter-revolutionary leadership. But others tie it in with the dual character of Stalinism. They say that besides being counter-revolutionary, as we have long recognized, Stalinism is also revolutionary.

8. Under present conditions -- the lack of basis for a deal with imperialism -- the revolutionary side of Stalinism tends to come

to the fore. Thus, regardless of their subjective attitude, the Stalinists can go objectively only to the left. They can no longer betray. In fact, the Stalinists are eventually capable of projecting a revolutionary line in the United States.

9. In proof of this, it is contended, apart from ourselves Stalinism remains the only current of conscious opposition to imperialist war and the witch-hunt. Thus in America they are on the side of the revolutionary forces. They haven't buckled under the war pressure.

10. And abroad, the Stalinists have led or are leading successful revolutions in Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia, China and Korea, as well as defending the Soviet Union.

11. In addition to this, at least two practical considerations demand that we place major emphasis on work in this field: (a) As the witch hunt deepens we are going to be persecuted more and more; therefore, we must seek allies who will help defend our rights. These, of course, they say, are the Stalinists who are similarly hounded. (b) An internal crisis, especially in the periphery of the Stalinist circles, offers us a golden opportunity to win recruits.

These eleven points represent, in my opinion, a reasonable facsimile in essence of the position that is erupting in the New York Local and around which the discussion is now revolving in the corridors, in comrades' homes and partially on the branch floor. True enough, it is not pressed with the crassness and consistency this bare outline suggests, but as I said before I am not concerned here with filling in the diplomatic niceties that are used to make it more presentable. It is more important to state the issues in skeleton form as we see them. To get any clarification at all, we must first say what is.

Before characterizing this position, it might be well perhaps to look at its symmetrical complement, the explanation offered for the resistance displayed to going along with it.

Their View on What's Wrong with the Party

1. It is contended that those agreeing with Comrade Stevens and Comrade Ring have a hopped-up view on what can be accomplished at present in the trade unions and other mass organizations, either seeing ferment where none is present or unrealistically visualizing an early upsurge which will open up big opportunities for us.

2. This out-of-the-world view leads such comrades to cater to certain prejudices of the politically backward sections of the American working class.

3. Among these is reactionary opposition to Stalinism. Concessions to this take the form of Stalinophobia in our ranks.

4. This is only one manifestation of a sectarian attitude long evident in the leadership of the party, a consequence of prolonged isolation and the concomitant growth of habits, moods and methods characteristic of an ingrown sect.

5. This explains the unreasoning resistance to taking advantage of the opportunities presented by major concentration on politically conscious circles. In fact the comrades really oppose even a secondary tactic in this direction for fear of being tarred with the Stalinist brush.

6. Despite the subjective revolutionary views of such comrades, their fear of Stalinism and resistance to work in that field represents objectively a buckling to the war pressure of American imperialism.

7. Among the evidences of this unhealthy sectarian and Stalinophobic tendency can be cited: (a) The fantastic line on trade union and other mass work presented by Comrade Stevens, Comrade Ring and others. (b) The insistence on largely meaningless and costly election activity in the style of the Socialist Labor Party. (c) The resemblance of our paper to the De Leonite Weekly People, a typical instance being our failure to get in on the ground floor on the Rosenberg case. (d) The monotonous insistence on the "independent role of the party" and the resistance to a new, fresh approach in propaganda work. (e) The presentation of Stalinism as counter-revolutionary "through and through." (f) The sterility displayed by a section of the leadership over a period of years in analyzing the great new events of our time.

Now that we have been wised up on what's wrong with the party, we may feel prepared to go still further along this unaccustomed line of thinking.

Far-reaching Generalizations

Certain comrades are already making far-reaching generalizations by combining their views about the revolutionary role of Stalinism with their conclusions about the sectarian impasse they think our party faces:

1. Three revolutions have taken place in the post-war period -- Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia and China. But the Trotskyists did not lead them.

2. World Trotskyism made a historical contribution by keeping alive the body of Marxist thought. But if every Trotskyist were to drop dead tomorrow, the revolution would continue.

3. The victory of socialism is not only inevitable; it is now automatically assured. Capitalism has become so decrepit it faces a hopeless situation today. Even under Stalinist leadership, the masses will down it.

4. Any dispute over the "independent role" of the party is largely meaningless in the light of the invincible world upsurge now brewing. Objective conditions today assure victory despite anything and no matter what.

5. We can still play a role however by fructifying the politically conscious currents with our ideas. To do this we must end our isolation and put ourselves in contact with the circles where advanced

thought is going on and we have a receptive audience. Our problem is to develop (a) skillful propaganda and (b) a tactic that will assure contact with politically conscious people.

Does all this sound far-fetched? I assure you I did not draw it out of the air. It represents the "thinking" now going on in a section of the New York Local. I have only boiled it down and put it together in a certain order.

The Real Trouble

What it points to is graphically illustrated in the case of one comrade of a serious and logical turn of mind. Not having lived through any mass upsurge such as the rise of the CIO, he does not know from personal experience what power resides in the workers as a class. He doubts anything will come from them, at least in America in the coming period. He is wholly disillusioned and thus agrees completely with the bleak perspective painted by Comrade Bartell. On the other hand he agrees with the emphasis on the "revolutionary" character of Stalinism and does not differentiate the Kremlin clique and caste from defense of the Soviet Union. As a matter of fact he has "no differences" with Stalinism and is "prepared to enter the CP." That he has not done so indicates that he has some doubts in the back of his mind and that what he is really doing is simply presenting what he considers to be conclusions consistent with the position now being pushed by Comrade Bartell and others. I am sure that Comrade Bartell does not agree with this comrade and in explaining the "dual" nature of Stalinism to him will lay heavy stress on its counter-revolutionary side. For my part, I hope the comrade will closely follow the development of the discussion now unfolding and try to gain a better grasp of Marxist method. This should help him, we may hope, to reconsider his present extreme position on the character of Stalinism.

Aside from such an embarrassingly consistent view, however, which may, moreover, turn out to be an isolated case, it seems clear to me that the tendency which has appeared in New York and which may have adherents elsewhere must be characterized politically as conciliation to Stalinism. This holds whether you regard Stalinism as more revolutionary than counter-revolutionary or vice versa. This political difference is what is at the bottom of the heat in the New York Local.

The question of tactics toward Stalinism or a maneuver in that direction does not enter in. I, for example, am in complete disagreement with the political appreciation Comrade Bartell has of Stalinism and yet wholeheartedly favor work in this field. I will say more about this later.

The Origin of the Differences

At this point let me make a concession to Comrade Bartell. I agree with him that the history of the difference in orientation and the difference in political positions behind it does not begin with his report as Organizer to the New York Local. The differences have been some time in gestating.

No serious difference has yet appeared in our party without previous intimations. Every comrade trained in the Marxist method and familiar with the history of our movement is aware of this. When a dispute breaks out, one of our first concerns is to link it with the past. Often this will at once cast a revealing light on the issues and in any case help fit them properly into the ideological development of our movement.

I trace the current differences back to the discussion on Eastern Europe. It was there they made their first appearance although in a form quite different from their emergence today. First of all, in taking the position that Stalinism had brought about an overturn in property forms in these countries, I raised the question myself as to how this affected our estimate of the political character of Stalinism. My answer was that the power to make such changes did not require us to revise the concept of Stalinism developed by Trotsky. Stalinism still remained counter-revolutionary to the core.

It was precisely this question that caused me to hesitate long before reaching a definitive position on Eastern Europe. I felt I had to be absolutely sure of my ground. It was necessary to think things through over and over again and test the conclusions from every side. In my opinion, a cautious attitude was not only justified but thoroughly called for, especially on the part of those with a keen sense of responsibility for the integrity and continuity of our theoretical heritage. While I am on the point, let me add parenthetically that I was confident the party would eventually reach a correct decision. This was assured by the full and thoroughgoing discussion possible under the regime in our party, by the traditional interest of the party membership in theoretical questions and by the general recognition that we consciously sought a model discussion with no factional alignments, no needling, no pressure other than continued friendly and democratic discussion. The comradely atmosphere facilitated my reaching a deeper understanding of the role of Stalinism in Eastern Europe as I am sure it did everyone else.

I was able to foresee the danger that might arise from drawing illicit political conclusions about Stalinism from the sociological changes taking place in Eastern Europe under Stalinist auspices. When Comrade Clarke, who was then the most outspoken defender of the position that nothing basic had happened in Eastern Europe and that these countries were still capitalist in character, taxed me in debate with the charge that my position meant assigning a progressive role to Stalinism and called in question the whole role of Trotskyism, I had no difficulty answering him. It was clear to me that he had taken a superficial view and had not thought things through to the end. From the viewpoint of Trotskyist theory, the overturns in Eastern Europe did not mean Stalinism had become revolutionary. They simply indicated that the desecrated and strangled October Revolution of Lenin and Trotsky was still alive. It was not that the character of Stalinism had changed. It was simply that the social foundations laid down by the October Revolution forced the bureaucracy to make these changes.

As Pierre Frank later formulated it in his report adopted at the Third World Congress of the Fourth International, "It goes without saying that in recognizing the character of the bureaucratic action

in the buffer zone countries we not only do not attribute any progressive character to it, not only do we continue to consider it counter-revolutionary as a whole, but we underscore the limits of bureaucratic possibilities. They were brought to bear on bourgeois countries in full decomposition where social relations had already been very unstable before the war and where the bourgeoisie had been considerably undermined during the war."

It now appears that the argument about the danger of characterizing the Eastern European countries as "workers states" because this would mean assigning a progressive role to Stalinism and call in question the whole role of Trotskyism has been brought up to date in a bold new way. You change the minus sign to a plus like this: "Yes, the role of Trotskyism is somewhat obscure, but fortunately at the very moment this became clear, Stalinism showed that it could play a progressive role, thus cancelling out part of its counter-revolutionary character. So all is well, even though it's not the way we would have liked it. Old, outmoded formulas prevented us from seeing what happened in Eastern Europe while it was going on, but at least we are in the lead today in drawing all the necessary political conclusions. Now let's have no more sectarian dragging of feet in lining up on this new estimate of Stalinism."

Comrade Cannon especially was concerned about the danger of this type of thinking appearing in our movement. In his opinion this danger far outweighed any progressive element in the overturns in Eastern Europe in and of themselves. And in this he was dead right, in my opinion.

He raised the question several times in the Political Committee to my knowledge and at least once in a Plenum of the National Committee in the sharpest form. He acknowledged that these territories could be assimilated into the Soviet Union, but that Stalinism could convert them into independent workers states -- isn't that a concession to Stalinism? The reaction was varied among the comrades who held that the buffer zone countries were deformed workers states. One at least, appeared to take it as a charge with personal imputations and responded accordingly. For myself, I did not especially appreciate having my position questioned as a concession to Stalinism but it occurred to me that aside from the degree of "independence" of these states, and aside from whether it was personal or not personal, Comrade Cannon was asking a political question. He knew where we stood subjectively; he wanted to know if we had thought this through politically and had fully appreciated the danger and if so what was our answer. At the Plenum my response was along these lines: "Yes, if you follow formal logic and identify Stalinism with the Soviet Union, then you can make the error of conceding it can play a progressive political role. But if you approach it dialectically and differentiate Stalinism from the property forms it rests on, then you can account for the overturns without granting Stalinism one ounce of credit. In fact you can put a fresh edge to our attack because the conclusion is that the counter-revolutionary political consequences of the overturns far outweigh the progressive sociological aspect."

This should be sufficient to indicate that the main issue in the current dispute in the New York Local is not exactly new. The pattern now being "thought out" by a section of the New York Local, offers

few considerations that have not already been brought forward in essence either in the form of prognosis, query or warning. What has happened is that the potential danger foreseen during the discussion on Eastern Europe has become actual.

The Pessimism over the American Workers

In tracing the origin of the present differences, it would be quite one-sided to confine our attention to the development of attitude toward Stalinism. Even more decisive in my opinion is the attitude toward perspectives and present possibilities lodged in the class struggle in America. The pessimism over the so-called "backward" anti-Stalinist worker observable in the position of Comrade Bartell and his supporters is intimately related to the optimism they express over the so-called "politically conscious," in reality Stalinist, petty-bourgeois circles. The ratio between the two, indeed, appears to be a direct one. The more profound the lack of faith in the one, the greater the hope and confidence in the other.

I am not against turning a dark cloud inside out in order to find a silver lining, but this is not always realistic in politics. Comrade Bartell's effort to rationalize his position by explaining to us how desirable a "heavy overcoat" is during the molecular process leading from the winter of reaction to the spring of upsurge is particularly ludicrous. "It has reached the point around here," he tells us, "where you cannot give a straight clear answer to questions without being called 'non-dialectical.'" And, as his version of a straight clear answer combined with the utmost tactical flexibility, he offers us the politics of the weather vane.

The whole question of the status of the class struggle in America, its perspectives and our orientation, is so important that it must be considered separately. I can mention it here only in passing and for a more realistic approach than that offered by Comrade Bartell and his supporters refer you to "Perspectives and Tactics in the Unions," the report made by Comrade Dobbs to the New York union fractions published in the No. 11 January Discussion Bulletin.

Let us return to our main theme, the problem of the character of Stalinism.

"Through and Through"

When Comrade Stevens in his debate with Comrade Bartell mentioned that Stalinism is counter-revolutionary through and through, it was like tapping a hornets' nest. The response was immediate. What! Counter-revolutionary "through and through"! Why, that concept has been "outlawed" in the world Trotskyist movement! This, the first reaction, is by itself sufficient to indicate the hypersensitivity of these comrades and their resistance to calling Stalinism by its right name. Such a danger signal should serve to alert the entire party to the political softness that has appeared in our ranks toward the gravedigger of the world socialist revolution.

Comrade Bartell, thinking it over, put down the following reply: "Why is it that Stevens and Ring who see two sides to every question, see only one side when they look at Stalinism? How do parties (Note

the slipshod identification of Stalinist parties with Stalinism in general. -- J.H.) which are counter-revolutionary 'through and through' become transformed into parties which lead revolutions? Is it not the logical conclusion of this conception that all revolutions or transformations carried through by Stalinist parties or by the Kremlin, or by a combination of both, are in reality counter-revolutions (China, Yugoslavia, Korea, Eastern Europe)? What has such a view in common with basic Trotskyist conceptions, or with the real facts of the class struggle?"

These cautious questions do not help the discussion very much; least of all do they help Comrade Bartell. Let the comrades who believe that Stalinism is subjectively counter-revolutionary but objectively revolutionary turn back and read those questions again. Don't they imply that a force which can "lead revolutions" is not counter-revolutionary? Isn't the leadership the subjective factor in a revolution? Isn't Stalinism therefore subjectively revolutionary? Isn't this confirmed in America by the opposition of Stalinism to the war and the witch hunt and their refusal to buckle under the war pressure? And if Stalinism is both objectively and subjectively revolutionary isn't it revolutionary "through and through"? Comrade Bartell, of course, does not hold this view; he holds only the premises for it. But what do such premises have in common with basic Trotskyist conceptions, or with the real facts of the class struggle?

We had better turn back to our basic Trotskyist conceptions in order to gain the theoretical clarity needed to find our way in the real facts of the class struggle. Before referring to the views developed primarily by Trotsky, however, let us consider briefly the position of our co-thinkers abroad on this important question.

The Inside Dope on the Third World Congress

The documents of the Third World Congress were published in a special 64-page issue of Fourth International (November-December 1951) They have been read, studied, digested and assimilated by the American Trotskyist movement. Yet certain comrades, including Comrade Bartell I believe, hold that our party as a whole has not really grasped the full meaning of the positions reached by the Third World Congress and that one of the evidences of this is our alleged reluctance to engage in any tactical maneuvers whatsoever with the Stalinists in America. And even if we agree to work among the Stalinists, the way we drag our feet indicates that we have not understood the new world view of Trotskyism on the character of Stalinism as propounded by the Third World Congress -- that's the claim. According to these interpreters of the texts, the Third World Congress went beyond Trotsky's basic analysis of Stalinism, bringing Trotsky's teachings on Stalinism "up to date" and working out a new program in relation to it from which a new estimate of the role of our movement and tactics toward Stalinism flow on a world scale.

How these interpreters of the texts of the Third World Congress hope to convince anyone with an open mind, I do not venture to guess, although I will admit that some people are strangely impressed with information that is labelled "the inside dope" and can be lined up on that basis. Abern proved that some years ago and it appears that the disease has reappeared in our ranks.

What was new in the documents of the Third World Congress? First of all, it brought up to date, as do all such gatherings, the Trotskyist analysis of world events. It recognized the vast acceleration of the tempo toward another imperialist war under the leadership of American imperialism. It analyzed the tremendous mass upsurge, especially in the colonial countries, and the consequent pressures that tend to pass beyond the control even of the Kremlin. It declared that the new imperialist attack on the Soviet bloc and colonial countries would tend from the very beginning to become transformed into civil wars in which the proletariat would prove victorious over both imperialism and Stalinism. In the words of Michael Pablo, "In general, we say in the Theses and in the Political Resolution, our movement will have to struggle from now on against the war of imperialism and attempt wherever possible to itself organize and lead this struggle, to act as the revolutionary leadership of the proletariat in these countries." The Congress "wanted to arm our movement with a longer revolutionary perspective" that "combats the species of defeatism which takes the form of a 'now or never' attitude." And corresponding to this, it outlined in a broad way the present tasks of the Trotskyist movement in a series of countries.

Secondly, it took the position that the buffer zone could now be characterized as "deformed workers states," thus summarizing the discussion that had been going on in the Trotskyist movement. It accounted for errors in our previous theoretical estimate of the sociological character of these countries and explained how the overturns flowed from the dual character of the Soviet caste.

Thirdly, while recognizing that "the fundamental policy of the Soviet bureaucracy at the present time is determined by its fear of the revolutionary consequences which would arise from a world war with imperialism" and that therefore the Soviet bureaucracy has "abstained from exploiting the unfavorable relationship of forces for imperialism," still this is not the whole picture. The Soviet bureaucracy, "faced with the obvious and accelerated preparations of imperialism for war and with the revolutionary reactions of the masses, is obliged to carry on a real struggle against these preparations through the medium of the CPs and to a certain extent to take into account the reactions of the masses." Thus we can expect that the Soviet bureaucracy, despite the dangers that it runs in its relations with imperialism and by the extension of the revolution in the world, is obliged not to purely and simply sabotage these struggles but rather to try to use them to its best advantage."

Finally, it visualized the possibility "under certain exceptional conditions" -- and this limitation is underlined in the original -- of Stalinist parties under the impact of mass upsurges "projecting a revolutionary orientation, i.e., of seeing themselves obliged to undertake a struggle for power."

This variant, which some comrades have taken as the occasion for a flight into the wild blue yonder, is a development foreseen by Trotsky himself. Commenting in the Transition Program on our demand that all the traditional mass parties "break politically from the bourgeoisie and enter upon the road of struggle for the workers and farmers government," Trotsky says:

"Is the creation of such a government by the traditional workers organizations possible? Past experience shows, as has already been stated, that this is to say the least highly improbable. However, one cannot categorically deny in advance the theoretical possibility that, under the influence of completely exceptional circumstances (war, defeat, financial crash, mass revolutionary pressure, etc.) the petty bourgeois parties, including the Stalinists may go further than they themselves wish along the road to a break with the bourgeoisie. In any case one thing is not to be doubted: even if this highly improbable variant somewhere at some time becomes a reality and the 'Workers and Farmers Government,' in the above mentioned sense, is established in fact, it would represent merely a short episode on the road to the actual dictatorship of the proletariat."

So far as the political tasks in the buffer zone are concerned, the Third World Congress made no changes. Here is how the International Executive Committee summarized it: "The report defended the designation of the 'People's Democracies' as having acquired, beginning with 1949, a definitive character as 'deformed workers' states,' and envisaged the defense of these countries against imperialism, as well as a program of political revolution against the bureaucracy similar to the Trotskyist program for the USSR. The slogans of independent Socialist Republics for Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Hungary, etc., and their voluntary federation were to remain as previously the central slogans for these countries."

On the tactical side, the Third World Congress stressed the importance of the workers in the ranks of the Communist Parties and called attention to the need, bearing in mind the relation of forces, for the Trotskyist parties to follow their development and intervene actively in the process wherever possible. Here too, the Congress essentially followed a line developed by Trotsky himself.

All these decisions of the Congress were important and far-reaching, but abstracting them from the concrete world events under analysis, and looking at the decisions in the light of our theoretical heritage, not a single change was made in the fundamental position laid down by Trotsky, particularly Trotsky's theoretical appraisal of the character of Stalinist politics.

In fact, the Third World Congress stressed that no fundamental change was involved. Pablo, the main reporter declared: "On the character of the USSR and of the Soviet bureaucracy, we do not add anything new to what has already been said in the past. We do not alter any of our fundamental programmatic definitions of the past. But we stress the defense of the USSR as well as of the 'People's Democracies' and China against the war of imperialism. This defense is to be understood as in the past not as a slogan as such but as a strategic line of our International whose practical application remains subordinate as in the past to the general interests of the world socialist revolution."

That is clear enough, but Pablo emphasized and underlined this point: "So far as the anti-bureaucratic meaning of this defense is concerned, this is clearly explained in the Theses as well as in the Political Resolution and in the amendment we propose to include in the latter with the aim of removing all ambiguity on this question. We

want to remove all grounds of criticism from those who are afraid we are lightmindedly abandoning even a particle of the attitude which Trotskyism has had in the past toward the Soviet bureaucracy."

Pablo even spelled it out for those capable of reading. Explaining what was meant by the formula about a Stalinist party in completely exceptional circumstances seeing itself obliged to undertake a struggle for power, he said:

"How should it be understood? Can the Communist parties transform themselves into revolutionary parties? The experience with the CPs does not permit such rash and dangerous assumptions. These parties can in exceptional circumstances (advanced decay of the bourgeois regime, a very powerful revolutionary movement) project a revolutionary orientation, but the question of their transformation into revolutionary parties, especially into Bolshevik parties, has not been answered in the affirmative, not even in the most favorable cases known thus far (Yugoslavia, China). On the contrary.

"These instances, Yugoslavia in particular, demonstrate that while these parties can, as a result of exceptional conditions (and in the absence of any other revolutionary organization), be obliged to open up a struggle for power and even to attain this end despite their opportunism; when conditions change and become difficult they prove incapable of pursuing a consistent, revolutionary policy to consolidate and extend this power. They remain centrist parties subject to new retrogressions. However, the fact that under exceptional conditions these parties can project a revolutionary orientation retains all its importance and should act as a guide in our line toward them."

While we are checking the position taken by the Third World Congress -- the real position down in black and white and not the version being peddled as the "inside dope" -- let me call attention to the remarks of Pierre Frank who reported on the "Class Nature of Eastern Europe."

"Ascertaining the existence of such transitional regimes does not at all upset our evaluation of the counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism nor our evaluation of Stalinism as a disintegrating force in the USSR and as a force organizing defeats of the world proletariat.

"(a) An evaluation of Stalinism cannot be made on the basis of localized results of its policy but must proceed from the entirety of its action on a world scale. When we consider the state of decay which capitalism presents even today, four years after the end of the war, and when we consider the concrete situation of 1943-45, there can be no doubt that Stalinism, on a world scale, appeared as the decisive factor in preventing a sudden and simultaneous collapse of the capitalist order as a whole in Europe and in Asia. In this sense, the 'successes' achieved by the bureaucracy in the buffer zone constitute, at most, the price which imperialism paid for services rendered on the world arena -- a price which is moreover constantly called into question at each new stage.

"(b) From the world point of view, the reforms realized by the Soviet bureaucracy in the sense of an assimilation of the buffer zone to the USSR weigh incomparably less in the balance than the blows

dealt by the Soviet bureaucracy, especially through its actions in the buffer zone, against the consciousness of the world proletariat, which it demoralizes, disorients and paralyzes by its whole policy and thus renders it susceptible to some extent to the imperialist campaign of war preparations. Even from the point of view of the USSR itself, the defeats and the demoralization of the world proletariat caused by Stalinism constitute an incomparably greater danger than the consolidation of the buffer zone constitutes a reinforcement."

I think our co-thinkers abroad would agree possibly that nothing in the positions taken by the Third World Congress would contradict the following summary statement about Stalinism:

The ferocious desire of the bureaucracy to preserve its privileges and its power against imperialism, that is, of defending the Soviet Union in its own manner, may lead it to actions that seek to give an impetus to the class struggle. The mounting war danger tends to produce differentiations within the Communist parties and within the caste itself. It is not excluded that a part of the Stalinist structure will split and take the road toward a revolutionary orientation. Stalinism can no longer betray with the same facility as when it could maneuver between opposing imperialist powers and make perfidious deals with one camp or another. But the same general conditions that narrow the possibility of a long-term deal also foster revolutionary movements which the Stalinist caste fears. Hence the betrayals of Stalinism tend to take other forms besides open deals with imperialism at the expense of the proletariat. It is evident that in the period now facing us of settlement of final accounts, the Soviet bureaucracy will provide us with some demonstrations of the most abominable betrayals ever perpetrated by it against the world socialist revolution.

In the light of this brief review, the talk about a basic revision in our views taking place at the Third World Congress is clearly nothing but fantastic nonsense.

The Real Objective Frame

The Third World Congress, I repeat, did not depart from Trotsky's basic views on the character of Stalinism. In fact, it utilized them in considering the new world situation that faces us. We can check this for ourselves by once again reviewing our basic concepts.

What is Stalinism? This could be answered easily enough with a definition. However, let us take the more difficult course of determining what it is through objective analysis.

To discover what it is from the qualitative side, we must find out what its social base is, for it is classes that set the characteristics of the political superstructure. The base of Stalinism consists of a peasant and labor aristocracy on which rests an enormous state bureaucratic apparatus. This is topped by the Bonapartist oligarchy. The social base of Stalinism is the petty bourgeois formation which has arisen in the Soviet Union.

Trotsky continually stressed the colossal size of this formation. In 1936 he estimated the top ruling circle at a half million, the

bureaucratic apparatus at five or six million, the labor and peasant aristocracy at another five or six million; all these, together with their families, amounting to 20 to 25 million, some 12% to 15% of the Soviet population. Following World War II it has swollen even more in the Soviet Union and expanded into the buffer zone.

Trotsky also continually stressed the enormous privileges of this formation which measure the deepening differentiation in Soviet society. In 1936 he estimated that this 12% to 15% of the population enjoyed as much of the wealth of the country as the remaining 80% to 85%.

The Soviet bureaucracy is composed of first and second generation White Guards, Mensheviks, former capitalists, degenerated Bolsheviks and fascist types, together with a small passive minority that reflects the social interests of the workers. This counter-revolutionary grouping governs through the Bonapartist dictatorship of Stalin. By Bonapartism in this case we mean a counter-revolutionary regime resting on property forms that are the product of revolutionary conquest. While defending these, it does so through political forms that are the antithesis of those seen during the rise of the revolution. The usurpation of power by this caste represents the first stage of the bourgeois restoration in the degenerated workers state.

The caste has all the vices of a ruling class and none of its virtues. It clings to its social position, its material privileges, with a desperation and fury exceeding that of any ruling class yet known. Viewed politically it is counter-revolutionary to the core, its methods paralleling most closely those of the Nazi regime. It is no exaggeration to say that the oligarchy headed by Stalin as semi-crowned emperor is the scourge of the Soviet Union. Only capitalist counter-revolution based on the destruction of the present property forms could prove worse. (Trotsky excluded the possibility of feudal counter-revolution.)

The objective frame of Stalin's politics is determined by the interests of the caste. The limits are set by the new social relations in the Soviet Union. It is extremely important to note this well.

Having arisen in struggle against revolutionary socialism, in fact having usurped power by smashing the Bolshevik party of Lenin and Trotsky, Stalinism is in mortal opposition to world revolution. A river of blood marks the boundary it has drawn against the movement founded by Leon Trotsky.

It is true that representing only the first stage of the bourgeois restoration, the horde of rapacious, gangster-minded bureaucrats constituting the caste is still forced to operate through property forms that are socialist in principle. This is its basic contradiction. It has progressively undermined these property forms inherited from the October Revolution until today they are extremely weakened and from the viewpoint of socialist content scarcely recognizable. Nevertheless, it has not destroyed these forms up to now, and, in pushing beyond the frontier of the Soviet Union under the impact of World War II, has even exported them. In relation to the property forms, the caste thus plays a dual role -- it will fight for its

power and privileges against both the workers and imperialism.

In the Soviet Union the growth of the working class, fostered both qualitatively and quantitatively by the successes of planned economy on which the privileged bureaucracy rests give this contradiction an explosive character, inducing the most savage political measures by the caste.

Viewed from the interests of the Soviet Union as a whole, the politics of the Kremlin appear irrational, even "fantastic," as I heard one comrade say on seeing the headlines about anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union. From the viewpoint of the privileged caste, however, Stalin's political course is self-consistent, even shrewd and brilliantly calculated. For instance, unable to get a deal with Anglo-American imperialism at the close of World War II and unable to share power with the native bourgeoisie of Eastern Europe, the caste found it in line with their own ravenous appetites to climax plundering the regions by toppling the regimes they had propped up in the occupied zones. This also coincided with their idea of the right way to defend the USSR. The frameups and blood purges, aimed at smashing potential centers of resistance in the working class and periodically undertaken as preventive civil war measures, are a logical continuation of the same policy in the eyes of the caste as a whole. They really see Stalin as their own benevolent despot.

Self-destructive? Yes. That is one of the characteristics of parasitism -- it devours the base that sustains it. Like the ruling classes whose vices it shares, this petty bourgeois caste refuses either to dissolve itself or to defend the Soviet Union in a way corresponding to the interests of the country. That is why we call for a political revolution in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe. The overthrow of the Kremlin oligarchy by the Soviet masses, coupled with the program of world revolution, is the axis of our defense of the social conquests of the October Revolution.

Using the concepts derived from this analysis it is not too difficult to understand the pathological hatred of the Kremlin for Trotskyism (revolution) and such counter-revolutionary policies of the Kremlin as the deliberate use of anti-Semitism. We can even foresee worse to come. The increased danger to the Soviet Union arising from the war preparations of world imperialism is transmitted through the oligarchy and bureaucratic caste against the Soviet workers. Far from a revolutionary course, the tendency under the pressure of mounting war danger is to step up the purges and terror. The aim is to counteract and reduce the threat of forces tending to disturb the status quo.

Let me summarize -- the Kremlin's politics derive from the enormous caste of millions upon millions of privileged bureaucrats on which it rests and are in strict accord with the interests of that caste as a social formation. It is the parasitic caste that determines the objective course of Stalinism in relation to both world capitalism and the international working class. Marxist method, analyzing the social base of Stalinism, yields this as its first and main result. Further differentiation can reveal some modifications such as restraint by Stalin of the most unbridled bourgeois wing of the caste but nothing in the main "law" will be changed essentially.

What About Foreign Policy?

Foreign policy is simply the extension and development of domestic politics. This holds true for all states including the Soviet Union. In the early days of Lenin and Trotsky this meant above all a policy projected through the international working class to which diplomacy was strictly subordinate. With the smashing of the revolutionary socialist party under the blows of the counter-revolution led by Stalin, this was reversed. Narrow diplomatic considerations came first, the world working class second. Since the interests of the privileged caste now dominated the government, foreign policy reflected this change. The aim became maintenance of the status quo. The Communist parties abroad were converted into border patrols. It would be a mistake to consider that the Stalinist machine was not motivated at first by subjective revolutionary aims. But limited by the caste, these were converted so that objectively they had counter-revolutionary results. And the Kremlin gang of usurpers eventually became consciously counter-revolutionary. This shift in outlook reached its culmination in the planned sabotage of the Spanish revolution and the deliberate butchery of the flower of the Spanish working class, one of the crimes of Stalinism that paved the way for World War II.

The contradiction in the Kremlin's foreign policy resides in the antagonistic need of the caste to maintain the status quo while still appearing as the banner bearer of socialist revolution in order to attract the necessary following of masses desirous of changing the status quo by ending capitalism. As a consequence Stalinism has played an especially odious and perfidious role in the working class outside the Soviet Union. Trotsky characterized it as the "syphilis" of the workers movement and this was no epithet but an analogy that applies rigorously. How many revolutionary workers have we seen infected by Stalinism who ended up with general political paresis as the final outcome of this foul disease? In my opinion it would be correct to say that no one, not excluding Hitler, has dealt socialism such deadly blows as Stalin.

Because a Stalinist party requires a mass following which can be bargained off or manipulated to serve the interests of the Soviet caste, all of these parties tend to suffer from a fundamental contradiction -- the antagonism between the servile leadership controlled by Stalin's GPU agents and the ranks, attracted by the communist or socialist slogans, who feel the pressure of working class opinion and desires. It is this contradiction which opens up the possibility for our active intervention as well as such developments under strictly limited conditions as we have witnessed in Yugoslavia and China. In face of the current illusions in a section of our ranks in New York about grandiose possibilities among workers deluded by Stalinism it might be well to remind ourselves of the other side of the picture that not once but hundreds and even thousands of times the subjective revolutionary aspirations of such workers have borne objectively counter-revolutionary consequences under the guidance of the agents of the Kremlin. That happens to be the lesson of history. An example that should be fresh in everyone's mind is the counter-revolutionary course played by Stalinism in America during World War II. Will anyone in our ranks venture to deny the frightful cost of that course to the American working class as well as workers elsewhere, including the Soviet Union?

The Test of Recent Events

While not overlooking the progressive side of the overturns in Eastern Europe and the fact that the Kremlin, faced with grave dangers, can give an impulse to the class struggle and some CPs in circumscribed conditions can project a revolutionary orientation, let us review some other facts of far-reaching import. What have been the consequences since the end of World War II of the repeated purges inside the Soviet Union and the GPU's encirclement of the Soviet workers against the workers abroad? The renewed credit won by the victory of the Soviet Union in the struggle against German imperialism was dissipated in a few short years. For millions of workers the Soviet Union does not represent an attractive beacon -- 35 years after October! -- but a land of police rule, concentration camps, blood purges and now officially instigated anti-Semitism. This sentiment cannot be brushed aside as simply "reactionary" -- it must be taken into account as an objective fact that is not without a healthy meaning. (Yes, I know that the imperialist war-mongers try to capitalize, and not without success, on this sentiment for their own utterly reactionary ends.)

In Eastern Europe the political consequences of the overturns are not less dismal. Within these countries the first bright hopes of the workers and peasants have been smashed to powder. In other countries delusions were first created about the possibility of revolution by bureaucratic means from the top with possibly the help of the Soviet Army. These delusions played a role in helping Stalinism to sabotage socialist revolution in Europe. Later, Eastern Europe became a new horrible example to workers in other lands demonstrating what to expect when "socialism" comes to power. This, in political language, is known as muddying up the consciousness of the workers.

The fact that the majority of workers and peasants in Eastern Europe think the sociological changes were progressive and are prepared to defend them against any attempt of imperialism to restore the hated former regime does not alter our estimate. These same workers are, by and large, opposed to Stalinism, for they can appreciate at first hand its counter-revolutionary political character. Our estimate is not even altered by the fact that many workers in other lands, especially the colonial areas, regard the changes as progressive. Any conclusions they may draw from this about a revolution being possible in their countries under Stalinist leadership shows how the changes muddied up their consciousness and is thus evidence of the unfavorable political consequences of the overturns.

And while the bourgeoisie which the Kremlin first propped up in Eastern Europe had the crutches kicked from under them, what did Stalinism do in Italy and France? In both countries, the workers surged forward in a series of mighty nationwide strikes into the very seats of power -- and Stalinism stood in their road like a boulder in front of an express train. Due to this policy, demoralization set in, especially among the vanguard, a demoralization that has not been overcome to this day, as we can see from the skepticism with which the French workers viewed Stalinist appeals for action during the past year in relation to the diplomatic needs of the Kremlin's foreign policy. Substituting leftist adventures for the free development of

the class struggle does not mean initiation of a revolutionary course. Like countless previous similar adventures it can mean further dampening of the class struggle. This is the objective result despite any subjective revolutionary desires suddenly felt by some Stalinist bureaucrats.

If Stalinism had not prevented Italy and France from going socialist as the workers desired, what changes it would have made on the face of the world political map! By now all of Europe would be working out the problem of constituting a Socialist United States in collaboration with the Soviet Union and China. Against that colossal power American imperialism would never have dared raise the threat of another war. It would have been too occupied at home with the repercussions in the American working class.

The counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism in world politics has played a tremendous role in paving the way for World War III. By restraining the workers, sabotaging their drive toward power, by taking posts in capitalist governments and helping to bolster European capitalism, by limiting the Chinese and Korean revolutions in the international political arena, by the false, delusory slogans of disarmament, peaceful co-existence, maintenance of the status quo -- by these policies and much more, Stalinism freed the hands of world capitalism and permitted it to openly prepare for atomic slaughter. The crimes of Stalinism in this respect become all the more enormous in light of the weakness and decay of capitalism and the mounting power and dynamism of the movements of the workers and oppressed peoples.

Let us add the Yugoslav revolution to the picture. What did the Kremlin do there but deliberately attempt to drive this new workers state into the arms of American imperialism? Thereby they tried to discredit it and prevent it from extending, especially into the buffer zone. This undermined not only the defense of Yugoslavia against imperialism but also the defense of the Soviet Union. Could Wall Street's hired State Department brains have devised a foreign policy better fitted to serve the interests of American imperialism and the preparations for war in the given circumstances?

As for the Tito regime, it has revealed that an education in the school of Stalinism does not exactly constitute a guarantee that the graduates will follow a revolutionary course even if, under mass pressure, they take the road of independence from the Kremlin and come to power. Our co-thinkers now call for a political revolution in Yugoslavia such as we advocate against the Kremlin. This means that the Tito regime is judged to be politically counter-revolutionary.

The unfavorable turn in Yugoslavia after the promising beginnings -- a Stalinist-trained leadership that headed a revolution and actually broke from the Kremlin! -- should serve to remind us to be doubly cautious about China. There the relations between Peking and Moscow remain enigmatic and the leadership of the Chinese revolution up to the present stage has far from made clear what its ultimate program will turn out to be. I for one am not yet prepared to give them a vote of political confidence -- and that does not alter my recognition of the colossal significance of the Chinese revolution and its world-shaking potential.

While we are ranging about the world, we might as well check up on one more revolution that is missing from the references that have thus far appeared in the speeches and arguments of Comrade Bartell and his supporters. I refer of course to Bolivia.

You might think that of all places the Kremlin would be especially concerned here to give an active revolution a push -- at least a bit of nominal aid. After all Bolivia can prove to be the Achilles heel of U.S. imperialism -- it is only necessary to visualize the consequences of that revolution catching on in other Latin American provinces of Wall Street's empire. Yet the Bolivian Stalinists are in the camp of President Paz who is now receiving aid from the State Department which obviously hopes to utilize him to contain the revolution and later liberate the tin mines. Here, the Stalinist ranks, so far as I am able to determine from following the press of our Bolivian co-thinkers, are not exactly rife with Trotskyist conciliationism, although the Trotskyists are a power in the working class and clearly playing both a subjectively and objectively revolutionary role.

The case of Bolivia demonstrates how far the Kremlin is prepared to go to block proletarian revolution, even in the very foundations of American imperialism, even in a land distant from the Soviet bloc area, and even while the danger of another imperialist assault on the Soviet Union grows in acuteness.

The main lesson to be learned from our brief analysis of Stalinism is that it is counter-revolutionary in essence, deriving this character from its social base, the parasitic caste that is devouring the remaining conquests of the October Revolution. Despite its desperate efforts to maintain the status quo, in accordance with the interests of the caste, Stalinism must be viewed dynamically as a process. It fosters the tendencies within the Soviet Union toward bourgeois relations. It is in violent contradiction to the planned economy, to the needs of the Soviet masses, and to the interests of the international working class. Insofar as it defends the remains of the October Revolution against imperialism its actions have a progressive content but we do not place this aspect on an equal plane with its counter-revolutionary role. The caste has a dual character but the duality is not of two characteristics about the same size and weight which alternately come to the fore like the interconnected and interrelated little figures in the Swiss clock that foretell the weather. It would be more accurate to say it is a fusion of opposites but of opposites of disproportionate size, degree and dynamics. The counter-revolutionary pole is the active and predominant one. Even this does not quite give the full picture, for counter-revolution permeates Stalinism, so that everything it touches becomes contaminated. Even such actions as can be considered progressive in and of themselves are infected by counter-revolution and in relation to other factors are not progressive. Hence the paradoxical character of the categories required in our theoretical appraisal of Stalinism and its role.

The Source of Our Appraisal

Stalinophobia is a blind, unreasoning rejection of Stalinism, the chief fault of which is an unscientific refusal to put on rubber

gloves and go to work on the foul and dangerous disease with the aim of stamping it out. Our approach has nothing in common with this emotional attitude. Our approach is based on programmatic norms which are in turn grounded in the development as a whole of world capitalism and its antithesis, the socialist revolution.

Let's refresh our memory. As against imperialism we have defended from the very beginning the new property forms that came into being following the advance of the Soviet Army in Eastern Europe on the heels of the defeated armies of German capitalism. Our stand is based on the fact that these property forms are superior to capitalist forms and in principle constitute an essential step, on the economic and social side, of the socialist revolution. But we never advocated that the Kremlin undertake the overturns, we opposed the extension of Kremlin influence and, consistent with this position, we advocate the independence of these countries from Moscow.

There's no deep mystery about our reasons for this. On the political plane, the steps taken by the Kremlin dealt a first-rate injury to the defense of the Soviet Union and did incalculable harm to the development of the world socialist revolution. In exchange for territories, Stalin gave world capitalism time to recover from the devastating political effects of World War II and time to reorganize itself for a combined assault on the Soviet Union. Without a formal pact as in 1939, Stalin repeated with Truman what he did with Hitler, only on a bigger scale. Stalin's actions were in accordance with the interests of the Soviet caste. In contrast, our stand -- defend the new forms, oppose Stalinism -- was an extension of our principled defense of the Soviet Union and accorded with the interests of the world working class.

Our defense of Eastern Europe is subordinate to our defense of the Soviet Union. But even our defense of the Soviet Union is relative. Here is how Trotsky put it in 1939:

"Mistakes on the question of defense of the USSR most frequently flow from an incorrect understanding of the methods of 'defense.' Defense of the USSR does not at all mean rapprochement with the Kremlin bureaucracy, the acceptance of its politics, or a conciliation with the politics of her (bourgeois) allies. In this question, as in all others, we remain completely on the ground of the international class struggle. . .

"The defense of the USSR coincides for us with the preparation of world revolution. Only those methods are permissible which do not conflict with the interests of the revolution. The defense of the USSR is related to the world socialist revolution as a tactical task is related to a strategic aim. A tactic is subordinated to a strategic goal and in no case can be in contradiction to the latter."
(In Defense of Marxism, pp. 16, 17-18.)

Just what did Trotsky mean by this? Was he simply taking a noble stand, counterposing good proletarian policy against the bad policy of Stalinism? Did Trotsky have in mind that the methods he advocated would shorten the pain and travail -- cut down the overhead cost -- in contrast to Stalinist methods which mean a more difficult and costly route but which get us there inevitably just the same?

Was it a question of a short cut versus the long way round? Or was Trotsky referring here to a life and death question on which the very fate of civilization hinges? To understand fully what Trotsky meant, we must turn to the level where the antagonism between Trotskyism and Stalinism is most fundamental.

The Strategic Concept of World Revolution

Viewing the fate of world capitalism from the long-range historic point of view, revolutions such as the one in Russia as well as in China and the entire colonial world are only partial and therefore far from decisive inroads into the capitalist system. You cannot speak either of the actual definitive doom of capitalism or of an actual definitive base for socialism until the socialist revolution conquers in the industrially advanced countries. The ultimate decision rests with the working class of these countries, above all the United States. Until they move, the fate of revolutions elsewhere remains in doubt. Among the most striking evidences of the peripheral character of these revolutions is the bourgeois character of some of their main slogans (democracy, nationalization of the land, national independence, etc.) and the transitional character of the regimes they erect even under the best of leadership. The main struggle still remains before us. It will be fought out in the very heart of the world capitalist structure.

From this fact, with which all our comrades are no doubt thoroughly familiar, flows our programmatic norm -- the main weapon of the proletariat is politics, i.e., consciousness combined with the will to change the capitalist status quo. Thus Trotskyist politics, the politics of the world socialist revolution, is the expression of the interests of the international working class. That is the objective frame controlling our methods of struggle. All our tactics are subordinated to achieving the final victory. Put in another way, all our tactics are designed to smash the obstacles in the way of that victory. That is what we mean when we say that only the Marxist program can assure the victory over capitalism. And that is why we run into head-on collision with Stalinism. Its tactics are designed to maintain the position of the parasitic caste in the Soviet Union and therefore objectively to prevent the defeat of capitalism. Thus it bars the victory of world socialism. In this way Stalinism is an instrument of world imperialism -- and a most effective one, it should be added.

Our world strategy calls for sweeping out the parasitic caste in the Soviet Union with an iron broom. The political reasons for that from the viewpoint of the revolution in the main centers of capitalism are obvious. If we could hold up the Soviet Union once more as an example of what we mean by a workers state, it would give incomparable force to our propaganda and agitation. Look at the Soviet democracy, we could say; the high cultural level, the rights that children enjoy, the provisions for women workers, the freedom from national and racial oppression, the great achievements in art, in literature, in scientific thought, in new contributions to Marxism. And if that can be accomplished in a backward country, think what can be done in America and a whole world with the workers in power. As the miserable reality of the Soviet Union stands before us, we have to start by explaining, no, that's not what we mean by socialism -- we

don't mean concentration camps, purges, anti-Semitism, the stifling of all creative thought. We're against all that. Yet despite this degeneration, look at the amazing accomplishments of planned economy even under police rule -- see what power it displayed in war and vitality in restoring the country after -- and try to visualize what could be done in a free America with planned economy. We do the best we can, naturally, but the sample of our wares is not exactly something to stir an American worker's enthusiasm. Even if he's fed up with the pressures and tensions of life under capitalism and worries about the threat of depression and war, the thought of the slave labor and police rule in the USSR causes him to hesitate. That's why it's necessary that our defense of the Soviet Union be geared in direct opposition to Stalinism. The immediate interests of the Soviet workers demand it. The interests of socialist revolution in America demand it even more imperatively.

Let's consider one more fact. Unless the international working class drives forward in the main capitalist centers under the program of revolutionary socialism, then not only will China, Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union go down, but all of civilization may be levelled under the impact of atomic war. That is a possible outcome of the unity -- or dual danger if you prefer -- of Stalinism and imperialism against revolutionary socialism, a unity deriving from their common opposition to proletarian revolution and the threat it holds for both capitalist exploitation and bureaucratic parasitism. I do not think this is probable, for the coming struggle is bound to unleash political forces beyond the control of either of the antagonists in which Trotskyism will inevitably come into its own as the subjective factor. And in that case, even though the opening of the war may in the worst event destroy the work of centuries and exterminate mankind by the tens of millions, socialism will make it possible to recover within decades and then to open up the dazzling possibilities foreseen by Marx and Engels a hundred years ago. But this probability hinges not only on the new opportunities but upon us -- our capacity to maintain our theoretical conquests and to advance them in the class struggle.

As yet our generation has not experienced personally the full power of proletarian politics -- we have not lived through a revolution. We could catch the feeling of the power of it through the personality of such figures as Trotsky who was saturated to the bones in it and personally participated in the leadership of the October Revolution. But only when it breaks in America will we be able to really appreciate what explosive potential resided in the molecular forces surrounding us in 1953. Meanwhile we must argue with some comrades who have grown pessimistic about the American workers and come to think that perhaps there might be something revolutionary in Stalinism.

Applied in Practice

Let's get down to cases now and at the same time answer an argument advanced by a comrade in the New York Local: What are you going to tell the North Korean worker -- that his leadership is counter-revolutionary?

The North Korean upsurge is a good example of the explosive potential that has been building up in the colonial world during the

past decade. It is not difficult for anyone acquainted with the program and deeds of the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky to visualize what world-shaking consequences this upsurge would have had under their guidance.

The evidence shows, however, that Stalin tried to contain this revolution. We do not know the facts as yet about the exact relations between the North Korean leaders, the Mao regime and the Kremlin, but there were indications at the very beginning of dissatisfaction with Moscow and particularly with the limited military aid that was forthcoming -- even when paid for. It was lack of such aid that barred an early and decisive victory of the North Koreans in the civil war with the Syngman Rhee regime.

Since then, it appears that the Kremlin has been interested in maintaining a strictly limited war. The Third World Congress of the Fourth International observed in its resolution of the international situation:

"The Korean war itself reveals how mightily the colonial revolution comes into conflict today directly with the armed forces of imperialism. The Soviet bureaucracy has been unable to openly betray a movement of such scope without placing its own existence at stake, and it has taken care to intervene as little as possible in the conflict while favoring the exhaustion of both the imperialist and revolutionary forces."

Furthermore, "the assistance of the Soviet bureaucracy has been dispensed only in doses, deliberately calculated to permit the war to continue but insufficient for victory."

The reactionary role of the Kremlin in the Korean conflict is even clearer on the political plane. The contrast between the line of Lenin and Trotsky in the face of the invading armies of imperialism and the line of the Stalinists could not be sharper. The Bolsheviks explained their revolution besides defending it militarily. They explained it to the workers of the entire world, above all the troops in the invading armies. They pointed to the model legislation of the Bolshevik government as an example of what they were fighting for. They invited workers in to take a look for themselves. They asked them to help in every way possible and especially by advancing the class struggle at home and in the armed forces. And they got help, including arms and contingents from the invading forces. The imperialist powers eventually were compelled to withdraw because on the political plane the Bolsheviks were more powerful than they were.

In Korea, however, the emphasis is on the alleged bestial nature of the American soldier, his similarity to the Nazi storm troopers, his lust for rape and cold-blooded murder. It is true that American prisoners of war are treated well and some attempts have been made to utilize them to demonstrate that the North Korean and Chinese governments are not barbarous as the American brass tries to make out, but the propaganda is not designed to explain to the American soldiers what is involved fundamentally and it thereby plays into the hands of the imperialist powers. Instead of fostering the legitimate desire of the American soldiers to find a great cause, it muddies their consciousness and even stands in the way of the logical development of

their urge to get out of Korea and return home. Still more, the absence of revolutionary socialist propoganda along these general lines facilitates the foreign policy of American imperialism now being advanced under the slogan of "Let Asians fight Asians" which is aimed at consolidation of Japan as a spearhead in the projected new assault on the Soviet Union and China. Only revolutionary socialist politics can effectively counter this imperialist course.

It is ABC politics for a revolutionary socialist in these countries to point these things out according to time and place and with due regard for his own safety and the sensibilities of those he hopes to win to his views.

The plain fact is that the socialist revolution can be won in these lands and on a world scale only by consistent development on the political plane. Episodic gyrations taken by the Kremlin cannot be substituted for this. At best, some of these gyrations can only provide an opportunity for hardened revolutionary socialists to build their own party. To overturn world capitalism and lay the basis for a new order requires a steady course, a Marxist program, complete theoretical clarity, the physical presence of a revolutionary leadership -- in brief construction of a revolutionary socialist party. Hard as it may seem to accomplish this task, no one has yet devised a substitute.

Trotsky's Concepts Confirmed

The validity of Trotsky's basic concepts, it appears to me, have received fresh confirmation in the explosive new developments that are heaving the foundations of world capitalism. The role of Stalinism in particular confirms Trotsky's teachings. Using Trotsky's concepts it is not too difficult to follow the course of events no matter what secondary errors we may make in determining the qualitative point of change in some of the more complex happenings. For example, although we were slow in reaching a correct appraisal of the sociological changes in Eastern Europe; nevertheless, the SWP took a correct political position in the main toward these countries as well as toward China, Korea, the Soviet Union, the colonial lands. We have consistently defended them against imperialism without losing the capacity to differentiate both Stalinism from the property forms and the colonial bourgeoisie from the nations temporarily dominated by them. Above all, in the erupting revolutionary situations abroad, Trotsky's concepts have enabled us to follow and understand Moscow's principal motives.

We have seen how the Kremlin in accordance with the interests of the parasitic caste attempts to contain and behead the masses in order to eliminate and forestall the danger to its own rule. Where this was not possible and it has been forced to go along, it has sought to keep them within bounds, mindful at the same time of the possibility of throwing them on the bargaining table in deals with the imperialist foe.

Where the revolution continued to well up despite everything, then Trotsky's concepts enable us to understand why, under the impact of forces beyond the immediate control of either the Kremlin or Washington, Stalin's native agents can come into collision with the home

office, if they show enough intelligence to see it is a question of their own necks. Under such special conditions, Stalinist parties can go much further than they wished or expected, as Trotsky himself foresaw might be the case (the opposite phenomenon to the inclination of some Stalinists in the main centers to go over to the bourgeoisie).

Trotsky's concepts enable us to peg these steps as partial, contradictory ones that by no means signify a historical mission for Stalinism. Stalinism is congenitally unable to lead the workers in the industrially advanced countries to victory because this transcends the interests of the parasitic Soviet caste.

Finally, under the terrible exigencies of the mounting threat posed by the world coalition of capitalism, even if the Bonapartist oligarchy dreams of raising the specter of revolution behind the imperialist lines, we can understand why the Kremlin's previous course militates against the realization of such a turn and how in fact adventuristic impulses can lead to still further defeats and setbacks, playing an objectively counter-revolutionary role. (I am not referring here to impulses given the class struggle under certain conditions which lead to actions that pass beyond the control of the Kremlin.)

Thus we are able to account for the role of Stalinism in the world of today without violating any of the fundamental concepts of Trotskyism. In fact it is only through these concepts that we can reach a clear understanding of that role.

One more possibility remains open -- that the Bonapartist oligarchy has turned against its own social base and is now developing politics in opposition to the interests of the privileged caste and in favor of socialist revolution. I suggest the possibility of this alternative to Comrade Bartell for theoretical consideration, but warn him that such a concept is anti-Marxist to the marrow. It would not be far different from imagining that Eisenhower would become a peace-lover and turn away from the war danger because of the catastrophic consequences it can have for American capitalism. Just as Eisenhower's politics is bound by the frame of the narrow interests of the American capitalist class, so Stalin's politics cannot pass beyond the frame of the narrow interests of the Soviet parasitic caste.

The Question of a Maneuver

It may seem like an anti-climax now to turn to the question of tactics toward the Stalinists, particularly the "concrete" work of the New York Local in this field. So long as we do not have agreement on our political attitude toward Stalinism there is not much point in discussing fifth-rate tactical matters. However, the discussion in New York started on this level and now we can return to it with a better understanding of what is involved.

To try to work out tactics from blueprints can lead not only to tactical errors but to strategic ones. Tactics must be related to real, specific situations -- that's why tactics toward the Stalinists differ so profoundly for the Trotskyist movement from country to country.

In the USSR and buffer zones, the fountainhead of Stalinism, our co-thinkers seek to overthrow the bureaucracy; the pressure of the masses finds its political medium in underground Trotskyism and takes its clearest form in the revolutionary struggle for power. In China, where the Communist Party was carried to power on the crest of a revolution and in the process underwent a change in political physiognomy under pressure of the masses, the Trotskyists give critical support and seek to collaborate with the Mao government. In such countries as France and Italy, where the Stalinist organizations dominate the labor movement and our forces are relatively weak, the Trotskyists follow an entrust tactic of special type aimed at capitalizing on the contradiction inherent between the Stalinist bureaucrats and their mass base in the working class. Contrariwise, in England -- which has cities resembling "more a European city" than any in America -- no such tactic is called for in relation to the Stalinists, who constitute a miserable, discredited minority outside the Labor Party.

In the USA where the Stalinists are likewise a miserable, discredited minority without a mass following and the apparatus is among the most strictly controlled of all by the Kremlin, and where Trotskyism over a quarter of a century has built up precious political capital among advanced workers, our major tactic is open struggle for political leadership of the working class. This still leaves open the possibility in America of subordinate maneuvers in their direction, but the condition is ideological clarity about Stalinism, otherwise we can dissipate our hard-won political capital over night.

For example, we are not attracted to the Stalinists because of the fact that they inscribe the word "peace" on their banners. This is simply the Russian word for "status quo" rendered in English. To put our concept of the word "peace" into this treacherous form of the Kremlin slogan would be to delude ourselves and fall into a deadly trap. Peace cannot be won until capitalism in its main strongholds is replaced by socialism. The Stalinists are incapable of accomplishing that task -- in fact, as I have already stressed, aside from the trade union bureaucracy, they constitute the principal obstacle to it in the working class movement. The same goes for Stalinist "opposition" to war.

To seriously think that they can project a revolutionary orientation in America reveals a lack of understanding of what a revolutionary orientation really means in this stronghold of world capitalism and a lack of understanding of the relation of class forces in America and the composition, size and reputation of Stalinism. This fatuous belief prepares nothing but the loss of a number of comrades to Stalinism. If it were accepted by the party as a whole it would mean cutting the throat of American Trotskyism. To include the Stalinists among the "revolutionary" forces in America is not qualitatively different. Even to believe that they will really come to the defense of our civil liberties displays ignorance of the character of Stalinism and considerable political naivety.

Don't get me wrong -- I'm not against the cherished New England custom of bundling up on a sleigh ride when the roads are frozen over; but with characters contaminated with Stalinism I believe in first taking a few precautionary measures. The whole success of a

maneuver in the direction of Stalinism -- and that's all it can be in America is a maneuver of secondary importance -- depends on the thoroughness of our understanding of its limitations plus granite hardness about the strategic objective of the maneuver: to help the American workers in the necessary task of eliminating Stalinism as a political force in this country.

I readily admit that some comrades who support Comrade Bartell visualized the tactic as such an operation. But I think they tend to overlook a slight contradiction. The very arguments used to try to facilitate the maneuver, like the undue emphasis and painting up of the possibilities of the maneuver, stand in the way of its success. They reveal a grave theoretical and political weakness on the part of those comrades most enamored with carrying it through. This signifies that the overhead costs of the maneuver can exceed anything to be gained from it. That is why it is necessary to pause for station identification so to speak, announce once more just who we are and where we can be found on the political dial.

These conclusions are not simply theoretical. They also represent hard historical experience -- our own experience in maneuvers with the Socialist Party in the Thirties and the experience of our world movement during left turns executed by Stalinism. To argue that our party is weak and small and we can gain new recruits in a hurry by such a get-rich-quick maneuver is not an argument in favor but one against. A maneuver is most dangerous of all for a weak and small party, particularly if it reveals ideological weakness. This arises from the fact that a maneuver to be successful requires formal concessions, even formal adaptation (but no concessions or adaptations in essence). These, understood wrongly by those who lack hardness, can pave the way to capitulation to the enemy. And so your scouts and foragers are absorbed and you end up in disaster.

Thus from the viewpoint of the work of the New York Local itself in this field I come to the conclusion that the discussion is not at all "mystical and confusing" as Comrade Bartell seems to think. Comrade Bartell is simply projecting the mysticism and confusion in his own mind about the character of Stalinism and some other matters. Perhaps the development of the discussion will help dissipate these mists. In this respect the discussion represents part of the essential preparation for any serious work among the Stalinist groups and especially among Stalinist workers on the job and in the unions.

In Defense of Trotskyism

It is obvious that our party now faces an internal discussion of the most serious kind. The party as a whole and every comrade in it will receive one more test, determining how well he has assimilated the lessons of the past, how well he or she has withstood the fierce pressures of our terrible epoch, what qualities of leadership they have. Each one will establish criteria by which to judge the arguments, the speeches, the documents, the positions taken. It is best to state these openly and before the whole party. Mine are as follows:

1. Stalinism, viewed historically, is a temporary reaction that set in after the high point of the October Revolution. It will fall

at one point or another with the revival of the political upsurge of the masses. It has no historic mission whatsoever.

2. The current world struggle catches Stalinism between the millstones of imperialism and the world revolution. It will be crushed between them in the relatively near future.

3. In its desperate efforts to survive, the privileged Soviet caste will use any means that do not conflict with its own interests. It thus fights against both imperialism and the proletarian revolution, but if the danger from imperialism becomes especially great it is capable of trying to give an impulse to the class struggle. However, its counter-revolutionary political character puts strict limits to the extent of the impulse it can give. Above all, it fears doing anything which would enable the Soviet workers to settle accounts with it.

4. We are prepared to take full advantage of the difficulties faced by Stalinism. This requires (a) opposition to Stalinophobia and (b) opposition to conciliation toward Stalinism. A repetition of Stalinophobia would mean the reappearance of a form of Oehlerism in our ranks, which rejected a maneuver in the direction of the Social Democracy simply because it was headed by Social Democrats. Full-blown conciliation toward Stalinism would mean the reappearance in our ranks of a tendency not seen since the days of the Left Opposition, when many revolutionaries were taken in by Stalinism simply because it made a left turn. In both cases -- Stalinophobia and conciliation towards Stalinism -- the basic error is identification of the bureaucratic leadership with the revolutionary-minded masses it temporarily heads.

5. The same basic error is apparent in the unfounded pessimism (even cynicism) over the character of the mass movement in America. The defeatist mood, sluggish mentality, concern for privileges and reactionary politics of the trade union bureaucracy are identified with the ranks it heads. The American workers, in fact, preserve their full revolutionary potential and are even now gathering their forces in molecular fashion for great new steps forward that can place the whole question of the socialist revolution on the agenda in the not too distant future.

6. Besides pessimism about the American workers, the danger at present in our ranks is conciliation towards Stalinism. Turning away from the workers, a section of the party is inclined to see hopeful signs in Stalinism. The adaptation of either the Kremlin or the Stalinist bureaucracies of certain Communist parties to conjunctural phases of the new war danger or to mass movements that seek the abolition of capitalism is misinterpreted as a basic change in the political character of Stalinism. This danger in our movement must be squarely faced and defeated.

7. In the coming showdown on the world arena our task is (a) to oppose the imperialist war preparations with all our strength, (b) to do this by sinking our roots further in the mass movement, attentively following the course of the class struggle, and extending and deepening it in every way possible.

8. This means giving political expression to the genuine grievances of the workers through every possible avenue, particularly our press.

9. In line with this perspective, our paper should turn more consciously toward the masses.

10. Our major orientation must continue to be toward the unions and mass organizations of the American working class and oppressed minorities, with any tactics toward the Stalinists strictly subordinated to this perspective. This means constant close attention to our work in the unions and in mass organizations of Negroes, Puerto Ricans, and other minorities. And it means maximum utilization of the election arena, participation in struggles for civil liberties and civil rights, campaigns to widen the circulation of our press, and in general the conscious development of the independent role of our party in America.

February 23, 1953.

HOW SHALL WE CONDUCT THE PARTY DISCUSSION?

By Harry Frankel

The party is about to begin a national discussion. A baseless, factionally motivated attack against the responsible leadership of the New York Local has brought two divergent trends in political thinking into conflict. Despite the fact that clear and unambiguous issues by no means exist, the present situation imposes upon the parties to the dispute an obligation to clarify their viewpoints insofar as this is possible at the present stage of the differences.

Fights which take place around tendencies instead of around issues are the most difficult to clarify and resolve. Such disputes, if they cannot be avoided (as this one apparently cannot), are bound to be ferocious and abortive if they base themselves upon anticipations and suspicions. They can be fruitful only if each tendency develops its own thoughts with honesty and expresses them with frankness, and if in addition the contending groupings show a willingness to let the differences develop naturally in order to see where they lead, instead of trying to impose doubts and suspicions on the party.

This has always been the accepted method in our party. In accordance with this method, several leading comrades representing one tendency in the present dispute have announced that they are preparing to submit a document clarifying their views as fully as possible. Comrade Hansen, in hasty anticipation, has rushed to put a document before the party with the obvious intention of placing a certain political stamp upon these comrades before they express themselves. Under the pretext of explaining "what the New York discussion has revealed," he has tried to provide his opponents with a program. The alleged program is a Winchellized concoction. This method is alien to our movement.

What is the method? Comrade Hansen says: "First of all, let's attempt to get at the gist of the position represented by Comrade Bartell and his supporters. I propose to do this by making abstractions from the Organizer's report and remarks. To this I will add further abstractions from speeches of his supporters and from arguments they advance in the corridors." Later on in the document he adds that he has also drawn upon discussions "in comrades' homes." Has a ubiquitous and stenographic Hansen been ever-present in the corridors and "homes" or is he the all-too-willing victim of heated factional accounts brought to him by inexperienced people? He does not say. Which of his "quotations" are from the documents and which from the corridors? He is careful not to separate the two.

Of all the "sources," only one can be said to furnish the basis for a party discussion: the report of Comrade Bartell in his capacity as New York Organizer and his published documents in defense of that report after it was placed under attack. All the other "sources" exist only as bitterly disputed "reconstructions" of speeches, gossip reports as to what "was said" by one person to another, atrocity stories cooked up by inveterate factionalists, honest misunderstandings on the part of inexperienced people whose minds have been prepared by others to misunderstand, and finally pure figments of the imagination.

Hansen tries to launch a discussion on this shoddy and unprecedented basis; even more, he hastens to jump the gun in order to assure such a basis. Further, he insists upon rejecting in advance any authentic documents in the following way:

"I will leave aside subsequent assertions that certain remarks were not made, or if made were only 'half-baked,' as well as contentions that no departures from the traditional fundamental position of our movement are involved. My aim is to synthesize a structure that will stand or fall by its internal consistency. I recognize that the result as a whole is likely to be challenged by Comrade Bartell and his supporters as unfair and unwarranted and perhaps worse. . . . The purpose is to show the logic of the tendency and where the various arguments that have been advanced fit in."

Here is the "synthetic structure" in all completeness. A "program" is concocted that can only be called the crassest falsification of an opponent viewpoint, nothing in this "program" is demonstrated by quotations from documents or by showing the logic of the documents themselves. "Arguments" which no one has advanced are assumed to be the "arguments that have been advanced," and the only duty of the bland and innocent Hansen is to "show" where these "arguments" "fit in."

Experienced comrades know and all others should learn that this is considered a false method in our movement. Whenever in the past any thoughtless factionalist tried to "discuss" on the basis of corridor gossip, he has never boasted of his method, but taken the greatest pains to conceal it. We have something to be thankful for in Comrade Hansen, at any rate. He certainly has enough brass.

Comrade Hansen may now try to defend his method by saying that he is only trying to draw Bartell's arguments to their logical conclusion. That is a worthwhile attempt, but is that what he has done, or even claims to have done? Has he taken the Bartell documents and shown where they lead? Not at all. Has he waited until national documents appear in the discussion dealing with broader questions and shown where they lead? Had he done that we could recognize in his work an attempt at political analysis. There is a difference between political analysis and political frame-up. Comrade Hansen may not see this difference, but the party will.

Comrade Hansen has "synthesized a structure." Now let him synthesize a faction to defend it. Between him on the one hand and this synthetic faction with its synthetic structure, a very good discussion may take place. It should be amusing. But we will go ahead to inaugurate a separate discussion about our own views.

Why is it necessary for Hansen to invent an outlook on Stalinism and on world perspectives for his opponents? Bartell and his supporters have taken a firm stand for the analysis and orientation of the Third Congress of the International. Their views on Stalinism and our role in the world are fully defined in the documents of that Congress. They have defended these views against critics, most of whom are now in the camp of opposition to Bartell. I repeat, why invent views and ascribe them to the supporters of the Congress documents? This question is not without interest.

It has been the conviction of every sectarian and Stalinophobe opponent of the reorientation adopted at the Congress that this reorientation leads to or contains pessimistic, liquidationist and Stalinophile conclusions. Some opponents have fought the Congress openly on this basis, while others, such as the Bleibtreu-Lambert tendency in France which has split from the International, have "accepted" the Congress while conducting a relentless war against its proponents under the guise of "warning against dangers," "emphasizing basic fundamentals" and guarding against Stalinist tendencies." The latter have agreed to the reorientation in words, only to sabotage it in practice. But all types of opponents of the Congress, whether direct or indirect, display the same general characteristic: war against the reorientation under the slogan of war against "liquidationism, pro-Stalinism and pessimism."

Does this mean that Hansen is an opponent of the conceptions of the World Congress in the French style? Comrades who have carefully studied his entire document and its approach to the world may have drawn their conclusion. I prefer to reserve this question for a full examination at a later time. But I would like to point out here that Hansen's document leaves him in a very equivocal position on this score. He couples an endorsement of the Congress, the very essence of which is reorientation of the movement, with an extended cry that nothing has changed, and with a bitter hostility to any kind of reorientation. He says he favors an understanding of the changed reality of the present period, but he concentrates his fire exclusively against the very concepts which are essential to an understanding of the changes. Assuredly this is a most peculiar way of educating the party in the spirit of the Third Congress. Even more striking is the deadly parallel between the "position" he constructs for the Congress supporters and the position seen as the logical outcome of the Congress orientation by all of its opponents without exception.

A.P. of Detroit, a Johnsonite enemy of not only the Congress but also of our entire position on the Soviet Union, wrote in a discussion article prior to the last party convention (Internal Bulletin, June 1952) that Pablo displays "a continued movement towards complete capitulation to Stalinism." In Pablo's view, according to A.P., "Stalinism and the Stalinist parties are the historically certified vanguard." As "synthesized" for us by A.P., Pablo's outlook is that "we have no place except as visionary and idealist critics." Pablo also is pessimistic about prospects for the American working class.

Now in view of the fact that a Johnsonite sees precisely the same thing in the Congress that Hansen sees in Congress supporters here, have we not the right to place his entire "structure" under a cloud of doubt, and consign it to the ash can if he has no better proof against Bartell than A.P. has against Pablo?

It must be said in fairness to A.P. that he did not maintain that he drew this picture from corridor gossip. He tries to take the Congress views and draw them to what he considers to be a logical conclusion. But the French anti-International tendency furnishes us with a critic more akin to Hansen and to Hansen's methods. Daniel Renard, speaking for the Bleibtreu-Lambert faction, wrote in a Feb. 16, 1952 letter to Comrade Cannon that he too is fully in favor of the World Congress and the proposal to orient towards an entry into the French

CP. (Hansen assures us he is for all the work on the Stalinists that Bartell favors.) He then went on: "For Pablo it is quite another thing that is involved. It is a matter of pure and simple integration into Stalinism, ascribing to the latter the accomplishment of a certain number of historical tasks that Trotskyism is incapable of fulfilling." Lest the comrades become confused as to which document I am quoting from, let me remind them that this is Renard speaking. The logic of politics is stronger than that of "synthesis."

We return to the method. How does Renard know all this about Pablo? From Pablo's writings or from International documents? No, he has "synthesized a structure" out of "remarks made at meetings," "moods," etc. It will be well to quote here in full to show again how similar the thinking of Pablo and his supporters (as uncovered by Renard) is to that of Bartell and his supporters (as synthesized by Hansen) and to show also how alike are the methods:

"Politics has its own logic, and particularly the politics of Pablo. Did he not state to the CC of the 19th and 20th of January that 'the Transitional Program' was an inadequate instrument for effectively judging what Stalinism is at the present time? This may appear as a momentary error of Pablo, but since this statement, this idea has made its own way, and at the last meeting of the Parisian region, Comrade Frank, a member of the IS, stated that it is an incorrect idea of the Transitional Program when it states that the 'Third International had definitely passed over to the side of the bourgeois order.' And has not Comrade Corvin, member of the Central Committee, also said that to speak of the oscillation of the Stalinist bureaucracy means to put in question the worker's character of the USSR, adding that we will no longer see oscillations, but hesitations by Stalinism in accomplishing the tasks of the revolution. Has not Comrade Mestre, member of the Political Bureau, stated that entry sui generis has become necessary because 'Stalinism has changed' ? All this is evidently not a product of chance. All this only expresses, in our ranks, the growing pressure of Stalinism upon the petty-bourgeoisie of Western Europe which finds its echo in our organization."

That was Renard, who at least confines himself to speeches made at meetings, gives us (purportedly) direct quotations, and tells us the name of the speaker, not forgetting to add the official "title" of each cited individual. This is a far superior form of synthesis to that practiced by Hansen, but we prefer to have neither in our movement.

Now Hansen may again object that all this is pointless, since Pablo is innocent of the charges directed against him, while Bartell and others are guilty. It remains to be seen whether anyone will succeed in differentiating between the position of Pablo and that of Congress supporters here. But in the meanwhile, we have only a barefaced and unsubstantiated assertion on Hansen's part. And, as I have shown, Renard's evidence cited against Pablo and other leading co-thinkers abroad is far better documented, even though essentially of the same type, as that cited by Hansen. Why should we accept Hansen and reject Renard? Why indeed? Perhaps some of Hansen's supporters are already troubled by this question.

What was the attitude of our party towards Renard and the other alien elements who split the French party? Well, we didn't go with the splitters. Evidently we needed more proof to show us that "Pab-
lism," which in essence is the comprehension of the changed reality and the fight against all sectarian resistance to the required changes in orientation, "leads" to "pessimism, liquidationism and conciliation towards Stalinism." Some of us expressed ourselves on this at the time. For example, Comrade Cannon wrote in his reply to Renard:

"We judge the policy of the International leadership by the line it elaborates in official documents -- in the recent period by the documents of the Third World Congress and the Tenth Plenum. We do not see any revisionism there. . .

"I am sure that the International movement will not sanction or support a factional struggle based on suspicion of future intentions which cannot be demonstrated, or even deduced, from present proposals and positions formulated in documents. Nobody can learn anything from such fights, and the party is bound to be the loser."

Will the party membership now refuse to judge a political view-
point in this party in the same way? Will it sanction or support a struggle conducted in the Renard-Bleibtreu-Lambert manner in our party?

It is very hard to write moderately about so unprecedented and false a move as that made by Hansen; a move made at the beginning of a party discussion. I have tried my best to be fair and objective. If the language of this warning has been at times sharp, it is the most restrained that can be used against an attempt to stampede the party by slanderous concoctions.

In the course of the discussion, the party can be confident that the real positions of both sides will become clear. The party will not judge by declarations of "support" but by the actual reasoning and content of the documents, as we judge all positions. We pledge ourselves to do our best to clarify our views on all points under consideration. That, for Marxists, is the first pre-condition of principled politics. What would it avail us if we convinced a grouping of a position that is not really ours? Serious Marxists have nothing but contempt for subterfuge and evasion. We shall speak our minds, and we shall reply to all arguments raised against us.

But it is now necessary to warn the whole party: the Hansen picture of a "position" in the party is counterfeit! It has been concocted by a method alien to our movement. So far as all responsible comrades on both sides are concerned, the party discussion must open with the statement of positions by the contending viewpoints. Insofar as the Hansen document contains a statement of his own viewpoint, it will be given full consideration and reply. The rest must be cast out of the discussion along with the method which gave birth to it.

February 27, 1953

WHERE DO YOU STAND POLITICALLY, COMRADE FRANKEL?

By Joseph Hansen

I want to thank Comrade Frankel for his cooperation in making it possible to get this issue of the Internal Bulletin out speedily. After reading the first nine or ten pages of my article as it came off the mimeograph, he asked me to hold up publication long enough for him to write a reply and to facilitate his getting the rest of my manuscript so that he could finish reading my contribution to the discussion before working out his reply. I have respect and even admiration for the facility with which Comrade Frankel can turn out an article, but doubted that in this case he could do it within the promised few days -- if he were to begin thinking things through -- and that the bulletin might thus be unnecessarily delayed. I therefore refused to accede to his request. Whereupon Comrade Frankel promised to have his reply in by the very next morning (this was late afternoon). He succeeded in accomplishing the feat.

Ordinarily I would not attempt to now write a rebuttal for inclusion in the same issue of the bulletin -- any of the coming numbers would do -- but I happen to find myself in the fortunate position of having anticipated what he would say in his reply.

Is the method I used in presenting the arguments now being advanced by a section of the New York Local "alien to our movement"? In his haste, Comrade Frankel seems not to have noticed that he is echoing some of the outcries that went up in 1939 and 1940 when Trotsky began answering arguments of the petty-bourgeois opposition that were not included in their official documents. He did not do this by being "ubiquitous" or "stenographic" or "Winchellian." He got these arguments of the petty-bourgeois opposition by mail from those who were interested in collecting them from the corridors, discussions on branch floors and comrades' homes. I know this because I happened to have had a hand in it. And when the petty-bourgeois gossips made this an issue in the dispute, claiming a foul, Trotsky responded:

"I collect political information through the very same methods that I use in my work generally. A critical attitude toward information is an organic part of the political physiognomy of every politician. If I were incapable of distinguishing false communications from true ones what value could my judgments have in general?"

Now my information on the New York discussion is not gathered by mail. I happen to be in New York and with my hearing still in fairly good condition.

Is it a "frameup" to report the arguments that are being advanced by a section of the New York Local in other ways than in official documents? If you take that position, Comrade Frankel, in strict consistency shouldn't you then also insist that arguments not be advanced anywhere except in documents prepared for publication? But in that case how could Comrade Bartell and his supporters have ever made the headway they have in New York and elsewhere in synthesizing a faction? To discuss and argue in the corridors, over the telephone, and at dinners to which people are invited for purposes of lining them up and then to put on a show of moral indignation when some of

the arguments used are brought out into the light of day for all to consider openly seems to me to smack of hypocrisy, if you will permit me to use such a strong expression, Comrade Frankel.

I don't insist that it be called hypocrisy, of course, for another interpretation of your reply is theoretically possible: you may be incapable of distinguishing between a political "frameup" and a political challenge.

I think that possibility is rather remote, however, and I doubt that Comrade Frankel was blind to the political challenge my article presents to Comrade Bartell and his supporters. In fact I think that precisely because it was a political challenge Comrade Frankel considered it inadvisable to answer it politically and instead reached for the first juicy word in his arsenal in order to answer it by denunciation -- a device that is known in polemics as sophistry.

Had Comrade Frankel chosen to answer me politically, he would have gone through the arguments I listed and stated which ones he agrees with and which ones he disagrees with. He would have finished by taking up the points I list as my stand and stated which he agrees or disagrees with. Then the whole party would know where Comrade Frankel stands politically in relation to the arguments now being advanced by Comrade Bartell or some of his supporters.

For instance, I listed among the points the argument advanced by Comrade Bartell that Trotskyism can be said to have become "legitimized" among many Stalinist members and sympathizers. "Indeed, their movement could be said to be rife with 'Trotskyist conciliationism.'" Does Comrade Frankel agree with this? Yes or no? His answer is "frameup!"

I listed as an argument -- and this one also happens to be one advanced by Comrade Bartell himself -- that "The American population in general is neither able to understand nor is interested in studying the conceptions of the Third World Congress. But since we are only able to recruit or expand our circle of sympathizers today on the basis of the world program, we are of necessity very isolated." Does Comrade Frankel agree with this? Yes or no? His answer is "frameup!"

I listed as another contention advanced by Comrade Bartell or his supporters that we cannot adjust our press and other mediums to the new level of thinking of the American workers; and that we must make our press, especially the paper more theoretical. Does Comrade Frankel agree with this? Yes or no? His answer is "frameup!"

As a final example, I listed as another contention that has been raised that world Trotskyism made a historical contribution by keeping alive the body of Marxist thought; but if every Trotskyist were to drop dead tomorrow, the revolution would continue. Does Comrade Frankel agree with this? Yes or no? His answer is "frameup!"

Why did Comrade Frankel choose this type of answer? I will not venture to say what went on in his mind even if I could keep up with the enviable speed and agility of Comrade Frankel's thought processes. But looking at it politically I can see where certain answers he

might have given would have caused dissatisfaction among other supporters of Comrade Bartell, if, as I judge, this factional grouping is an unprincipled combination.

That is the difficulty, politically speaking, in such a combination -- a statement that pleases one part of the combination displeases a different part. For example, consider the difficulty in saying something to please those comrades who think the Stalinist ranks are rife with Trotskyist conciliationism without displeasing those in the same grouping who think this is nonsense, or at least New York nonsense. That is why such combinations find it so difficult to agree on a common platform they can announce publicly and why, when they are faced with a political challenge as to their stand, they tend to yell, "frameup!"

In his haste to measure up to the emergency created by the article I submitted to the Internal Bulletin, Comrade Frankel thought up another truly brilliant argument. He tries to link up my position on the Third World Congress with that of the disloyal Bleibtreu group in France; that is, agreement in words, disagreement in practice.

I frankly am unable to see what point Comrade Frankel is trying to score. The Bleibtreu group refused to accept the entrism tactic toward the Stalinist party which happens to be a mass party in France. Does my article indicate refusal to follow a similar tactic toward the Stalinist party in America and insistence on the independent role of our party? Is this the accusation? If so, I plead guilty. I don't think entry is the correct tactic for us to follow in America and consider work among the Stalinists subordinate to our main orientation toward the masses outside the Stalinist periphery. But then what do you propose, Comrade Frankel, that in America we should follow an entrism tactic toward the CP as in France? Is that your position? If not, what's the point of the analogy? Your obscurity in this is only matched by the general muddiness of your entire reply.

February 28, 1953.