

INTERNAL

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ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW YORK DISCUSSION
AND THE ATTACK ON THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE PARTY

By Duncan

(Based on a speech at the meeting of the Downtown Branch, Feb.19,1953)

It has been necessary to review at frequent intervals the entire course of the discussion which has been proceeding in the New York Local. Some discussions develop in a generally self-explanatory manner; the discussion grows, enlarging itself and proceeding from one stage to a new and fuller stage in what seems, to the comrades involved, to be a consistent and natural development. The present discussion, however, has progressed differently.

To some comrades its development seems to have been marked by a lack of consistent direction, by abrupt and unnecessary changes of course, even by arbitrary manipulation of the discussion. Other comrades, not going so far, have in any case found the discussion developing in ways quite unexpected, and, to that extent, confusing. It is precisely because of this confusion that I propose once again to review the course of our discussion.

It would be impossible to cut through the existing confusion if the discussion were allowed to bog down -- as it has frequently done -- into questions of procedural disputes, trivial organizational details, personal charges and counter-charges, arguments about whether comrades are "serious" and "responsible," plots to "dump the organizer," etc., etc. Only if we steadily approach the discussion with a political perspective, concentrating on the political issues in dispute, can we hope to achieve some measure of clarity.

The Objective Logic of Discussion

During the 1939-40 fight with the petty-bourgeois opposition, Trotsky had occasion to make a critical analysis of the nature and course of development of discussion in general. I quote here several sentences from the passage in his open letter to Burnham where he deals with this question:

"Every serious discussion develops from the particular and even the accidental to the general and fundamental. The immediate causes and motives of a discussion are of interest, in most cases, only symptomatically. Of actual political significance are only those problems which the discussion raises in its development. . . The nub of the matter however consists in this, that discussion has its own objective logic which does not coincide at all with the subjective logic of individuals and groupings. (My emphasis.) The dialectic character of the discussion proceeds from the fact that its objective course is determined by the living conflict of opposing tendencies and not by a preconceived logical plan."

Let us now examine the objective logic of the discussion in New York in the light of Trotsky's observations.

The discussion began with a criticism by two City Committee members, Stevens and Ring, of the City Organizer's report which opened our pre-convention discussion period. Their criticism revolved essentially around the question of basic orientation.

(1) toward our work in the trade union movement and (2) toward our work among the Stalinists and Stalinist-influenced circles.

They expressed the opinion that, in the first case, Comrade Bartell's report revealed a generally passive and negative attitude, lacking "a positive perspective for fruitful work within the limitations of the situation in the trade unions and shops," and evidencing "a largely one-sided, pessimistic view of the state of the workers today." In the second case, they found in Comrade Bartell's report an "over-evaluation of the opportunities inherent in work directed toward the 'left-wing groups,'" and an "absence of a sober and realistic estimate of the situation in the Stalinist circles." Moreover, they pointed out that "the national orientation of the party clearly and correctly characterizes work in the trade union movement in this period as primary, and propaganda work in the Stalinist and liberal circles as an important but supplementary arena of activity" whereas Comrade Bartell's report "reverses this relationship"; and stated, therefore, their belief that the basic orientation of Comrade Bartell's report was not in line with national party policy.

Comrade Bartell did not like these criticisms. In fact, he reacted so sharply against them that he immediately demanded a full-dress debate before the membership, as well as presentation of separate resolutions and election of delegates on the basis of slates from the two sides. Bartell began by demanding that comrades line up on one side or the other?

He himself tells us -- much later in the discussion -- that "he proposed to debate -- and for his part did debate -- in the original presentation, the question of our local tactical orientation and defended the past activities and proposals for future work in the New York Local. It was his opinion that since the work and stewardship of the New York Local had been attacked by two leading comrades that the local membership should register its opinion on these questions and elect delegates and a new City Committee on that basis."

He does not tell us here how he proposed to impose his "logic" on the discussion. That is, to limit the discussion to "our local tactical orientation" when precisely the point at issue was the opinion of a number of comrades that his "local tactical orientation" was out of line with that of the national party.

In any case, two general membership meetings were held at which the debate was conducted; and in the course of these meetings the objective logic of the discussion asserted itself and gave a new and sharp turn to the discussion. Regardless of the subjective desires of some comrades to confine the discussion to our "local tactical orientation" toward trade union work, or our "local tactical orientation" toward work in the Stalinist circles, many comrades found it impossible to discuss the former except in relation to the latter, and vice versa; and, moreover, found it impossible to discuss either without raising the much larger -- indeed, the basic -- question of Stalinism. Suddenly, and quite unexpectedly to some comrades, Stalinism had become an important issue in the discussion.

Was Stalinism "Introduced" into the Discussion?

Now the question of Stalinism did not appear in our discussion by artificial "injection" as numerous comrades of the Bartell tendency still insist. It was not "introduced" by "irresponsible" comrades who should know better, who should understand that such questions "cannot" come up in a local pre-convention discussion. The simple fact is -- the "concrete reality" which they so insistently demand we confine ourselves to -- that the question of Stalinism did arise in our discussion, inevitably, out of the objective logic of the developing discussion. That is, the discussion of our tactics in opponent organizations, which in the main are Stalinist or Stalinoid peripheral organizations, inevitably involved our estimate of the character and role of Stalinism. And no subjective wishes, no pleadings or threats, no maneuverings, no legislative edicts could banish it.

As a matter of fact, in the earlier stages of the discussion we heard many comrades of the Bartell tendency take the floor specifically to discuss the question of Stalinism in its broadest aspects. (At that time, apparently, it was still in order to discuss the subject.) We heard a comrade take the floor, for example, to instruct us that "to call Stalinism counter-revolutionary through and through is outlawed in the world movement." We heard another comrade read to us at considerable length excerpts from various documents of the world movement, excerpts dealing exclusively with the question of Stalinism -- apparently with the intention of "setting us right" on our "incorrect" estimate of the nature of Stalinism. We heard, in the Downtown Branch, a comrade explain to us his position on Stalinism, which included such statements as "Stalinism can only move left" and "Stalinism can no longer betray."

And then, suddenly, the discussion takes a curious turn. After the discussion on Stalinism has begun -- with their participation -- and with many comrades feeling a real sense of relief that now we will be able to have some clarification because we are coming to grips with the real issues in dispute -- Comrade Bartell and his supporters suddenly decide that the discussion is out of order and must be brought to an abrupt halt. The question of Stalinism, we are now informed, does not "properly come before the New York Local Convention"; to "introduce" such questions was a "thoroughly irresponsible procedure."

But let us repeat: these questions were not introduced. The question of Stalinism arose in the discussion because (1) Comrade Bartell made a certain kind of report; (2) Stevens-Ring made certain criticisms of this report; (3) the attempt of the comrades on both sides to arrive at some clarification of the issues in dispute inevitably led to a discussion of differing points of view on Stalinism. This was the "objective logic" of the discussion. Comrade Bartell does not like the fact that this objective logic "does not coincide at all with the subjective logic" of his grouping. But I am afraid that what he likes or dislikes in this connection is immaterial. The discussion has proceeded and will continue to proceed "from the fact that its objective course is determined by the living conflict of opposing tendencies and not by a preconceived logical plan."

Even Comrade Bartell, despite his protestations, shows himself to be captive of the objective logic of the discussion, and incapable of arbitrarily excluding the question of Stalinism from his argumentation. For in his "Reply to Stevens," immediately after indicting Stevens-Ring for their "thoroughly irresponsible procedure" in "introducing" such questions, he plunges in himself. True, he says he will "limit himself to a few questions on the subject of Stalinism" (though of course if he wished to confine himself to a few questions, that was his own choice; others might with equal right choose to ask many questions -- or even make some positive statements).

In any case, Bartell does pose several questions, leading to the final one in which he asks us "what such a view (which he has formulated in his questions and attributed to us) has in common with basic Trotskyist conceptions?" Well, Comrade Bartell, are we discussing Stalinism or are we not? Can you pose important questions in relation to Stalinism and then tell us we must not answer them because the whole discussion is out of order? The situation would appear to be ludicrous, until we remind ourselves that not Comrade Bartell, nor any individual or group, is outside the objective logic of the developing discussion.

* * *

But I do not propose to go into a discussion of Stalinism in this article. I have been concerned with the general development of the discussion and how, in the earlier stages, Stalinism inevitably became a part of it. I wish now to turn to another basic political question which similarly has arisen as a result of the developing objective logic of the discussion itself.

At this point in our analysis of the discussion we have arrived at the following situation: the Bartell tendency wants to exclude Stalinism from the local pre-convention discussion; the Stevens-Ring tendency answers, Stalinism is in the discussion whether you wish it or not, it cannot be ruled out, we intend to proceed to discuss it whether we are a majority or a tiny minority.

The Challenge to the Organizational Structure of the Party

And what is the answer to this? A whole series of moves and proposals the sum total of which reveals that a second new political issue has entered the discussion. Another basic issue, which is no more being "injected" into the discussion than was Stalinism, has now entered the discussion out of the objective logic of development. You will not be able to rule out this issue any more than you could rule out Stalinism. This new political issue involves the entire character, role and organizational structure of our party.

In their frantic efforts to control and curb a discussion which they should have known was objectively beyond their power to control, Comrade Bartell and his supporters have made a series of moves and proposals which are a direct challenge to our basic concepts of the character and structure of our party.

I shall cite and discuss five examples of this challenge.

1. The Proposal for a "Practical" Convention.

When is a "practical" convention possible? The answer probably is: Most of the time. That is, when there is full agreement in the City Committee on general orientation and policy -- which is usually the case. With the leadership in agreement on orientation and policy, the convention quite naturally devotes itself almost exclusively to the practical problems of local work and local tactics.

But is it possible to have a "practical" convention when there are serious political issues in dispute in the leadership and among the membership? Here we can say: On the basis of common agreement between the two sides to exclude the disputed issues, a "practical" convention would be theoretically possible (though the election of a new City Committee without taking into account the two opposing positions would seem to be well-nigh impossible).

But though perhaps theoretically possible, the obstacles and difficulties in the way of successfully carrying through such a "practical" convention, even by agreement of both sides, would be enormous. The example of the New York local convention during the 1939-40 fight, which has been cited by comrades of the Bartell tendency as an example of a "practical" convention staged in the midst of a political dispute only confirms this.

But if one group does not agree to such a "practical" convention and insists that the disputed issues be discussed and carried to the convention? One would have supposed that, in our party, the proposal would be dropped then and there. Not so. The Bartell group now attempts to enforce a "practical" convention by throwing their support to the so-called compromise Fields proposal, the essence of which was to legislate a "practical" convention! Had this proposal been adopted by the City Committee and been carried out, the effect would have been to legislate a group into silence. This attempt to legislate the character of a convention, though unsuccessful, was a direct and unprecedented attack on the democratic aspect of the democratic centralism which is the heart of our party structure.

The Bartell tendency contends that the discussion of such questions as Stalinism should not take place as part of the local pre-convention discussion. We replied: That is your opinion. But our opinion is that such discussion is proper, fruitful, and in any case has now become inevitable. We therefore reject your whole idea of a practical convention. That would seem to have been enough. But when the Fields proposal -- which in itself is in contradiction with the democratic practice and tradition of our party -- is defeated in the City Committee, they still will not drop it, and proceed to their next move.

2. Proposal for a Referendum on a "Practical" Convention.

Not content to abide by the decision of the City Committee majority in rejecting the Fields proposal, Comrade Bartell now makes the proposal to go over the head of the CC and take the rejected Fields motion to a referendum of the membership!

It would not seem necessary to discuss at any length the question of referendums in our party. We can limit ourselves to urging the comrades to reread what Trotsky had to say on the subject in In Defense of Marxism (p. 33), and quoting the first paragraph:

"We demand a referendum on the war question because we want to paralyze or weaken the centralism of the imperialist state. But can we recognize the referendum as a normal method for deciding issues in our own party? It is not possible to answer this question except in the negative."

After Comrade Bartell's proposal for a referendum is rejected in the City Committee he shifts ground and comes forward with a "new" formula. Still attempting to overthrow the authority of the City Committee, he again insists on moving over the head of the committee, this time by going to the separate branches for "ratification" or "endorsement" of the Fields proposal. In no uncertain terms the statement of the City Committee minority "calls upon the membership . . . to clearly express its position on the Fields proposal."

Now what does this mean? If Comrade Bartell and his associates felt so strongly that the decisions of the City Committee majority were incorrect and harmful to the party, what should they have done? They should have taken the issue to the Political Committee. In cases of serious dispute where one group, whether majority or minority, feels an issue to be so important that the majority decision cannot be accepted without protest, the normal procedure in our party is referral to the next higher body.

This course was always open to Comrade Bartell. And in view of the seriousness of his charges that the majority was making "arbitrary use of its legal power for factional ends" and was "determined to use its accidental majority to prevent an expression of the real sentiments of the membership" -- that is precisely what he should have done. But this was not his course. When the City Committee majority, because of the critical situation in the leadership, makes the motion to request an opinion from the PC, he and the other minority members of the committee raise a scandalous uproar in the committee, vote against the motion, and when the motion is carried, proceed with their thoroughly demagogic "appeal to the membership."

Going over the head not only of the City Committee but this time of the Political Committee also (since the matter had been referred to the PC), they enter motions in each branch meeting the following week to put the branch on record as endorsing the Fields proposal! It hardly need be said that in every case the branches voted to table these motions.

The essence of this entire maneuver (fiasco though it turned out to be) was an attempt to destroy the authority of the highest local elected body, the City Committee. That this is no exaggerated statement is amply confirmed by their analysis of the CC majority as being a "purely accidental one" -- which is our next point.

3. The "Accidental Majority"

Comrade Bartell's position on this question is presented in Section 6 of his "Reply to Stevens" and in the last two paragraphs of

the statement by the CC minority in support of the Fields proposal. In the former, he charges that Stevens, in claiming to represent a majority of the CC, is stating only a "quarter-truth." But at least Bartell does tell us what this "quarter-truth" is and which he himself admits: that "since Stevens and Ring and their four supporters on the committee are all regular members, they do have a 6 to 5 majority of the votes." A strange argument indeed, in our movement! One would have thought, according to our long-tested concepts of the organizational structure of our party, that the whole truth about a majority is -- that it is a majority.

The logical conclusion of Bartell's argument can be only this: that in the present situation (that is, when he and his supporters have a minority of the votes) the distinction should be wiped out between the regular -- that is, the voting -- members of the CC and the alternate -- that is, the non-voting -- members.

Comrade Bartell confirms this conclusion with a very interesting sentence: "The four alternates, all of whom support my Report, are seasoned comrades with years of experience in the unions." True enough, Comrade Bartell, but what is your point? What is the relevance? Why do you cite their qualifications? This is nothing but an indirect way of saying that in your opinion these comrades, "all of whom support your Report," should be voting members of the committee.

Now I am sure that almost every comrade in the party must have his own personal opinion about the relative qualifications of the members elected to the various party committees -- branch, local, district and national. I am sure that after every convention, local or national, where a new leading committee is elected, there are comrades who believe that certain mistakes were made in the election, that someone who was elected as full member should have been an alternate, or vice versa, or that some other more highly qualified comrade had been ignored altogether.

Such personal opinions are of course the privilege of every comrade in the party. But such opinions do not alter the fact that a committee was elected, with a certain number of voting members and a certain number of non-voting members, and that this committee stands as a duly constituted authority until such time as the party membership, through its delegates at another convention, decide to alter the makeup of the committee.

That is the way we proceed in our party. That is the only way we can proceed if we are to maintain a democratically centralized organization.

The term "accidental majority" can have only one meaning to justify its use: that is, if one means that the majority was elected many months ago, that it is therefore "accidental" in relation to a present situation which did not exist when the committee was elected, and that this majority does not now represent the sentiments and opinions of the membership.

Is that your opinion? Good. There are comrades who share your opinion. There are others who do not share it. And how do we

resolve such differences over whether a leading committee represents the opinions of the membership? In convention, where after discussion of the issues in dispute the membership through its delegates will elect a new committee. Meanwhile, until the new convention, the duly elected committee stands and must stand with all of the authority invested in it by the previous convention.

That is our method and our procedure. To act otherwise, to challenge the authority of a committee and attempt to alter its composition any time you happen to be in a minority on it -- this is to challenge the entire centralized organization of our party. Such procedure certainly does not flow out of an understanding and acceptance of how and, we may even say, for what purposes, our party is organized.

4. The Feb. 18 City Letter

We will touch on this very briefly, and simply as the latest example of the numerous moves to undermine the authority of the CC by going over the head of the committee to the membership.

It is unnecessary to discuss here the nature or content of the motions and proposals made at the CC meeting which is reported on in the Feb. 18 City Letter. The essential facts are these: Comrade Bartell made a motion, ostensibly aimed at trying to reach an "agreement"; Stevens made a counter-proposal, though not in the form of a motion; after considerable discussion Stevens made a motion to table Bartell's motion until the PC (to whom the whole matter had previously been referred) had been heard from. The motion to table was adopted by a 9 to 2 (not 6 to 5) vote.

One would suppose the matter would have rested there. But in the City Letter, which Comrade Bartell prepares, the various motions and proposals tabled by the Committee is brought to the membership. Why? Does Comrade Bartell normally report the proceedings of the CC meetings in this detail in the City Letters? Moreover, this was a matter which had been tabled in order to await further discussion not only by the City Committee but also by the Political Committee.

To bring the matter to the membership under such circumstances constitutes nothing more than another attempt to mobilize the membership against the City Committee -- and, this time, the Political Committee as well.

5. The Challenge to the National Party Leadership

But the challenge to the national leadership of the party has been revealing itself in even more serious forms. This challenge has found expression in the frequently repeated formulation that "the party has no position on Stalinism." We have been told in the Downtown Branch that there is more than one position on Stalinism in the PC and NC, that there may be two, three, four, five positions, who knows? Now it is extremely hard to understand what this can mean. It is certainly clear that there are different positions on Stalinism in the national leadership. But does our party live in a vacuum? Does our party function with a vacuum in its leadership? Has our

party been functioning throughout the recent period without a position on a question so basic to us as the question of Stalinism?

The conclusion of some comrades from the fact that there are obvious differences in the leadership on the question of Stalinism is -- that the party has no position. But there is another, and I believe more correct, conclusion, namely, that the party does have a position on Stalinism and that that position is the position of the majority of the national leadership.

Or are we to begin hearing that the majority in the national leadership is a "purely accidental one"?

I had thought that our basic and fundamental analysis of Stalinism had been worked out, primarily by Comrade Trotsky, over a period of many years, and that despite new conjunctures and unforeseen developments which have necessitated tactical shifts and changes, our basic analysis of Stalinism remains unchanged, and hence our position on Stalinism remains unchanged. Moreover, I do not understand how we could deal in our press with any single event or development in the Stalinist world if we had "no position on Stalinism." Yet week after week our press deals with such events -- editorials and articles on the anti-Semitic blood purges in Moscow, on the Marty-Tillon affair in France, analyses of the present course of the American CP as indicated in their recent draft resolution -- one could cite examples endlessly.

True, none of these editorials or articles gives or attempts to give a fully-rounded exposition of our analysis of and position on Stalinism; but they all reflect, some more and some perhaps less accurately, our basic position on Stalinism. One may question the correctness of this position; this has already been done in the local discussion, and in the course of the continuing local and national discussion the entire problem will be explored and reexamined to the very bottom. But meanwhile to say that the party has no position on Stalinism is to challenge the authority of the national party leadership as expressed through its majority.

We have heard another expression of this challenge in the New York Local in the formulation that "the PC is not an impartial body." Since when has it ever been? Between meetings of the NC plenum the PC is entrusted with carrying out the policies and line of the party as established at our national convention, the highest body of the party. The PC is distinctly partial toward carrying out such policies correctly. If disputes arise which have to be resolved by vote, they are resolved on the basis of majority decision.

A plenum of the NC may of course reverse a decision of the PC majority, just as a national convention may reverse the previous decisions of an NC majority. But in no case can the authority of the particular committee involved be questioned on the grounds that there is a minority opinion in the committee. There is also a majority opinion, which, in our party, decides.

Conclusion

Any one of these various aspects of the challenge to our accepted organizational structure could perhaps, if taken by itself, be

ignored or at least overlooked. Taken together, in their development and relationship, they constitute a picture which cannot be ignored. It would be unprofitable and incorrect to try to explore subjective motivations. Every comrade will hope that we have been witnessing no more than an unfortunate and unintended by-product of a heated political dispute and an unusually heated local factional situation. But it would also be incorrect to allow the manifestations of such a challenge to appear in the discussion without recognizing them for what they objectively are, and without calling attention to them in the most unambiguous terms.

What is the political significance of this organizational attack on the structure of our party? What political conclusions are we to draw?

We will not speculate on subjective motivations. The objective fact remains that such an attack has been made; and as we have long since learned, a political position always lies behind an organizational challenge, no matter how vehemently this is denied and no matter what efforts are made to keep the position hidden.

There are many possible forms of organizational structure which may be adopted by a political organization. A political party will work out, whether through theory or the test of experience or both, that particular organizational form most suitable to its program, its perspectives, and the role which the party is to play.

Our party, with its enormous inheritance of Lenin's theory and practice, has always based itself unshakeably on Lenin's concepts of democratic centralism as the foundation on which our organizational structure rests and within the framework of which our party operates, internally and externally.

Democratic centralism has been the organizational principle of our party precisely because of our concept of the role of the party. We have conceived and we still conceive of the party as a combat party consciously preparing to play its role as the vanguard and leadership of the American workers in the coming struggle for power. Our party structure and forms of organization all flow from and are subordinate to this basic concept of our perspectives and our role.

A party which is not oriented toward playing such a role would have no need for a democratically centralized organization. A propaganda group not only doesn't need democratic centralism but would find it an intolerable organizational obstacle. A serious combat party which believes that its "immediate central task is to act from now on as the revolutionary leadership of the masses" will not lightly ignore a challenge to its tested and proven concepts of organization.

The attack of Comrade Bartell and his supporters on the democratic centralism of our party, regardless of their probable denials that they have made such an attack, has an inexorable logic of its own. It places a question mark over their concept of the role and the perspectives of the party. This now becomes an important aspect of the developing discussion.

COMMENT ON STEVENS

By Lou S.

With much reluctance I am writing this reply to Stevens, inasmuch as the national discussion dealing with some questions raised by Comrade Stevens has not yet been initiated by the leading body of the party. However, Stevens devoted a good half of his "rebuttal" in the debate of January 11 before the New York membership (which is printed in the previous Internal Bulletin #3) to an attack on my very brief remarks from the floor during the general discussion. If at least my own ideas had been correctly recorded by Stevens, I would not mind. As it is, his attack was based mainly upon misrepresentation.

First, it is shamefully obvious, that Stevens and Ring, being unable to defend their "positions" on the concrete work of the Local, found it necessary to escape into the loftier spheres of theory -- which only served to derail the pre-convention discussion, inasmuch as questions of general orientation and theory will not be decided by our Local. However, in the process, Stevens showed that he himself had been derailed.

Stevens claims that "the Stalinist program and leadership is counter-revolutionary through and through." Apparently he is dead serious about this revision of our traditional analysis of Stalinism. Or else, he is tinkering light-mindedly with our theory in pursuit of his factional ends.

Stevens says: "Lou proceeded to lambast the idea that the Stalinist parties are counter-revolutionary." (p.12)

This statement, among others of the same worth, was clearly intended for national consumption. Anyone who was present knows full well that I lambasted only the idea that the Stalinist parties are counter-revolutionary THROUGH AND THROUGH.

Trotsky taught us that Stalinism (program, leaders, parties, bureaucracy and Stalin himself) has a dual character, a transitory and contradictory character; that it is in essence a counter-revolutionary phenomenon which seeks to subordinate the interests of the proletariat to the interests of the bureaucracy; yet, when basing itself upon the conquests of October and in its own way defending and extending these conquests, the bonapartist bureaucracy is capable of giving a bureaucratic impulse to the revolution.

Stalinist parties, as the Third World Congress correctly points out, are even capable under certain exceptional conditions of projecting a revolutionary orientation.

In sheer self-defense Stalinism will wage war against the forces of imperialism. Is the waging of such a war counter-revolutionary through and through?

(Naturally, while waging a class war against imperialism, Stalinism may also engage in actions to control or strangle rising workers revolts,)

How can a force that is "counter-revolutionary through and through" destroy a series of capitalist states in Eastern Europe and replace them with workers states, in the face of imperialist opposition? Such a force can give birth only to counter-revolutionary states, that is non-workers states, which can mean only capitalist states.

In the present world conflict, any force that is "counter-revolutionary through and through" must also be pro-imperialist, or imperialist in its own right. In that case you simply dump our dialectical concept of the "dual nature of Stalinism" and all that it entails; and you open the door to alien conceptions.

Stevens says: "Comrade S. would have us believe that Stalinism is anti-imperialist and that with the approach of war, it must lose its pacifist character." (p.13)

Surely with the approach of the Third World War the Stalinist parties, and the CP-USA, will take an anti-imperialist position in relation to the war. The Stalinists may talk all kinds of nonsense about co-existence, but then we never did put much stock in what they had to say. When war becomes a reality, they will take a very definite stand.

Now does Stevens mean to say that Stalinism, engaged in a life and death struggle with imperialism on a world-wide battleground, is not anti-imperialist? Is Stalinism perhaps a neutralist tendency, abstaining from the struggle? No. There is still one possibility: that though engaged in a war with imperialism it is not anti-imperialist, then Stalinism must be another imperialist force. Which will it be, Comrade Stevens?

Stevens means to tell us that Stalinism, engaged in a world war, will be pacifist! Isn't this a contradiction in terms? What sort of new-fangled logic has Stevens found -- is it a faction secret?

Then Stevens continues: "What is an anti-imperialist party that loses its pacifist character? Revolutionary we must presume."

Well, Comrade Stevens, what do you think? Here is a party that is anti-imperialist and is not pacifist. Does your kind of thinking make out such a party to be revolutionary?

As I see it, although the CP is forced to take an anti-imperialist position vis-a-vis U.S. imperialism, that is, its own ruling class, it remains nonetheless a bureaucratically deformed party, opportunist and adventurist, giving primary allegiance to the Kremlin. A far cry from our conception of a consistent Marxist party, that is, a revolutionary party.

On a par with this mode of thinking is the following: "If Bartell and S. give a realistic picture of the CP-USA then we ought to consider some form of semi-entry."

Wrong again! No such conclusion was drawn even by Stevens himself when not so long ago he considered that things were so rosy for us in the Stalinist camp that we ought to get at least a hundred

new recruits there. I certainly did not share Stevens' unfounded optimism.

For many months now Stevens has been talking himself and others into the conviction that the "real" intent of our opponents work was to copy the French model; to somehow merge the SWP into the CP milieu!

Now wouldn't it give Stevens and his followers a leg to stand on if this were so? But I'm afraid we can't help them out here. The conclusion I draw from the "softening" of the Stalinist ranks and periphery towards us, is that we can profit from opponents work in their midst. That's all.

Pablo was absolutely right in warning that, "Even in countries where the CP represents a minority, and even an infinite minority, (CP'ers) have a special interest for us that it would be criminal to neglect. . ." (From his address to the Third Congress.)

Stevens, in order to instruct us as to what the real situation is in the CP-USA, jumps over to France (why not to Vietnam where Liu died at the hands of the Stalinists?) to Marty-Tillon, who were accused, among other things, of conciliation to Trotskyism.

Pablo uses this same example to prove that a more favorable atmosphere for us exists today in the CP of France, and to chastise the splitters in France, who, because of their Stalinphobia could not continue their existence in the Fourth International. (To my knowledge the French splitters never went so far as to claim that "Stalinism is counter-revolutionary through and through.")

Let me state that in guiding our opponents work I have never been called to book for wrong estimates of our opponent organizations if Stevens thinks now I have been wrong, let him state the case concretely. The opponents work has been an open book to the whole City Committee; I have made four reports on our opponents work in the City Committee in the past year; written reports by comrades assigned to the various organizations have been read by all interested members.

It is simply puerile of Stevens to be asking now with reference to opponents work with the ALP: "Now why should we do this? What's going on in there?"

Briefly: the ALP in New York City still has a registration of 52,000; had polled some 90,000 votes in NYC in the last national elections for their candidate for the U.S. Senate; numerous clubs dot the city, each having a core of activists. Right now the ALP is rent with internal differences. The CP in its last draft resolution has, at least literarily, come out in favor of a Labor Party based upon the mass trade unions, for the dissolution of the ALP, and the entry of its members into other mass organizations (read the Democratic Party). The CP is meeting now with resistance among its own ranks. The Marcantonio wing is furiously opposed to the dissolution of the ALP. The Huberman current, though quite small, wants the ALP to adopt a Socialist program.

The situation is favorable for us. With all their prejudices

and defects, the ALPers are anti-war; they are pro-Soviet; they want to fight the witch hunt; they are socialist-minded; and just now the ALP has announced its plans to carry on a vigorous neighborhood campaign against Eisenhower's Formosa Policy.

We should have comrades in there plugging our program. By now we should have had a group of comrades integrated and prepared to intervene in this internal struggle, which was anticipated, in the Organizer's Report.

Actually, WE HAVE ONLY TWO COMRADES ACTIVE IN THE ALP!

And this is what all the hullabaloo about submerging the SWP in the Stalinist milieu is about! Why do we have only two comrades active in the ALP? Not because we didn't know any better, or because we didn't try. But because opponents work has been an uphill job from the moment it was begun; because of the constant disparaging of this work; the gossip about the "real intent"; the fiction about disorienting the party; the false counterposing of opponents work to trade union work, one or the other!

In place of all this nonsense about sinister designs of making our main strategic orientation away from the mass of the workers and toward the Stalinists, we are in urgent need of some constructive opponents work in New York City.

My own estimate of the CP-USA coincides entirely with the position taken by our party at the last national convention: "What remains of the whittled-down party are a large cadre of corrupted functionaries, old case-hardened Stalinists, and others who are prepared to suffer the full consequences of the repressions, who completely identify themselves with the camp of the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China, and who tend to become more and more revolutionary in their outlook and conceptions than at any time since the ultra-leftist Third Period." (My emphasis)

Now there is a trend of opinion in the party, as yet unrecorded, which is very leery of our contact with the Stalinists, our defense of their civil rights and above all any united front activities with them. Particularly nowadays, when the Stalinists are most unpopular and despised, even by the workers.

The ingrained habit of seeing solely the counter-revolutionary aspect of Stalinism, which derived from our long and bitter experience over a period of many years, and under entirely different world conditions, has already done irreparable damage to the Trotskyist movement in a series of countries (China, etc.). From this schematic type of thinking there can only flow a sterile sectarian policy. In the U.S. this vulgar formulation of the nature of Stalinism leads to an adaptation to reactionary public opinion, to the political backwardness of the American workers.

There is little fear of our ranks softening toward Stalinism. That's looking the wrong way. The great pressure on the workers, the radicals, and on our movement -- is from the right, from the force which is really counter-revolutionary through and through -- imperialism.

And there is much to fear from a tinkering with our theory, in the wild pursuit of factional ends.

February 12, 1953
New York

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ON THE DIFFERENCES OVER OUR MAIN ORIENTATION

By Al Simmons

American imperialism in its drive for war has produced a sharp internal struggle in all working class parties and organizations. It has demanded and received from the parties of the Second International, the fringe radicals and the American Trade Union Bureaucracy all-out support for its war aims and its war program.

In the colonial countries (Asia, Africa, South America) the U.S. has met with open resistance. The European and Soviet workers have likewise met the U.S. war plans with open hostility.

At least for the time being this same objective reality has forced the Stalinist International to make what appears to be a genuine left turn. American imperialism has forced Stalin to abandon his class collaborationist policy temporarily.

It was to be expected that these same objective forces would also cause a sharp internal struggle in the world Trotskyist movement and the SWP. The vanguard could not escape the pressure of the present reality any more than its opponent parties. It did hold out longer than other parties because of the strength of its cadre and its program.

The class contradictions did, however, produce a sharp internal struggle in the Trotskyist movement. This struggle manifested itself over a struggle of entry into the Labor Party in England and, again, over work in the CP organizations in France. Now it arises in the SWP in differences over our main orientation today.

In the SWP this fight has broken out over what appears to be a struggle in the New York Branch on the practical tasks for that branch in the coming period. Beneath the surface, however, are implied, basic fundamental differences. The minority has attacked by implication and innuendo two fundamental propositions of our movement:

1. The basic nature of Stalinism.
2. The role of the American working class.

On the first point, the minority fails to understand the two-fold character of Stalinism: The basic counter-revolutionary character of Stalinism and that the present leftward turn of Stalinism is only in the interests of the Kremlin. They fail to realize the objective pressures that caused this turn.

Implied in their position is the assigning to Stalinism of a progressive historic role.

In a recent educational here in Chicago, one of the minority called the Rosenbergs class heroes. Implied in this characterization is that the Rosenbergs are more than just victims of America's witch hunt. They are, according to the comrade, "vanguard soldiers" in the impending struggle between the U.S. and the world proletariat. In essence the comrade took the Rosenberg case out of the realm of civil liberties and put it in the category of the world revolution.

The minority, under pressure of the coming war, is too easily impressed by the persecution of the Stalinists in the U.S. and their victories abroad. We defend Stalinist victims of American imperialism in the same way we defend all working class victims. We defend the Rosenbergs not because we believe them to be soldiers of the world revolution, but because they are victims of America's witch hunt. We do not assign any historic role to Stalinism. This we reserve for our party.

The fundamental nature of Stalinism is reactionary and counter-revolutionary. We have been teaching and saying this for years. The present shift of the Stalinists to the Left has not changed this. It has merely altered, and only temporarily, the relationship of forces between Washington and Moscow. Our characterization of Stalinism still holds true. We are irreconcilably opposed to them. The present leftward shift of Stalinism does not change its nature. We will defend Stalinist victims; we will make united fronts with Stalinists. But we will not give one iota of support to its program or its perspectives.

On the second point, the minority fails to understand the basic character of the American working class in motion. The minority speaks with disdain about the molecular process going on in the American working class. They speak about the conservative moods and the quiescence of the American workers. They give the impression that these moods are here at least for some time to come. On this basis the minority proposes that we orient the New York branch toward the ALP, Compass Clubs, etc.

They demand that we give them concrete evidence of the Molecular Process occurring in the American working class. It is, of course, impossible to exhibit like court evidence the movements of the workers. We know that the American workers are in a conservative mood now, that they are politically backward now. We also know why. We know they have had these moods before and yet they have been capable of snapping out of these moods and have made tremendous leaps forward -- formation of the CIO. Remember these are only moods of the working class now. This is not their basic nature.

We are confident that the American workers can and will come through again. They always have. Their present restlessness, their ability to make huge leaps forward, their groping for political answers, etc., is evidence of the molecular process at work. The movement of the American workers is decisive for us. They are headed toward independent political action. This is their direction!

It is imperative and necessary for us to be with them -- to lead this movement. It is mandatory that we turn our attention toward the American trade unions right now. The sharpening class battles in the world today are bound to produce a leftward movement among the American workers. Otherwise our whole political prognosis in the convention resolution is incorrect. Likewise, our whole estimate on the timetable of World War III is incorrect.

The minority, basing itself on the left turn of the Stalinist and the conservative moods of the American workers, proposes to shift our basic orientation toward more "fruitful" fields of work rather than toward the trade unions.

Historic evidence teaches us that Stalinism is reactionary and counter-revolutionary to the core. Its present leftward turn is only an objective twist under pressure of events. Historic evidence also teaches us that the American workers are basically revolutionary. Their present conservatism and backwardness is only a mood. They will take their rightful place in history and not in the too distant future. We are not impatient; we can wait. Our orientation must be and always should be toward the American worker and his organizations during periods of upsurge or conservatism. Our criterion is this basic revolutionary character.

We say in this period and every period: Irreconcilable opposition to all types of reformism including the Stalinist variety and onward with the American worker to the American Socialist Revolution!

February 28, 1953
Chicago

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THE BIOGRAPHY OF LIQUIDATION

By Dennis Vern

In politics, as in nature, there is no waste: in the far flung struggle between the classes all the bits of fluff and garbage soiling the house of one class are inevitably utilized in the attack of its class enemy. For this reason politics has a sure and evident logic of its own; and in the final analysis it is the only science that does.

The decisions of the Third World Congress were adopted with virtual unanimity. The NC of the SWP endorsed the general line of the congress resolutions without a dissenting vote. Nevertheless, history proceeded from the unanimous congress to the confusing and debilitating split of the French section. In the SWP two main factions are closing ranks, and rumor has it that a period of factional struggle impends. Clearly unanimity is not everything.

The factional friction in the SWP ostensibly concerns the question of whether or not to work in the Stalinist periphery; whether or not -- and how -- to participate in electoral activity; the conflict between the "young" and the "old" and between the efficient and the inefficient.

But it is evident to the comrades that these questions are not the real questions but only the manifestations of still other differences that the factionalists have not expressed. The party has never been opposed to work in the Stalinist periphery, and if possible in the CP itself in order to build the Marxist party. Whether such work was done or not was an entirely practical matter of forces and opportunities, of which there is always more of the latter than there is of the former. Both factions consider, I am sure, that a party which does not strive to participate in almost every possible election is not worthy of the name party. We need not only the unwilted activity and enthusiasm of the young but the experience of the old. And I suspect that the quality of efficiency (in doing what?) is hardly the exclusive property of either faction.

Behind the split in France and the factional formation in the SWP are political questions of great importance. I don't think that the factionalists know this. But it is a fact just the same; and the attitude of the factionalists toward these questions will determine the kind of struggle they will carry on in the SWP. In Marxist politics your best friends will tell you: in compliance with that role I am going to sketch below the actual questions that agitate and irritate the comrades.

Our generations saw the proletarian revolution triumph in Yugoslavia and either triumph or unfold (I say triumph) in China. We saw the Soviet bureaucracy maintain the USSR against Hitler's attack. In Eastern Europe we saw this bureaucracy, veiled by thin native formations, carry through the political and economic expropriation of the bourgeoisie.

A lot of ink has been spilled on these events. We have been told that the Yugoslav and the Chinese Communist parties weren't

really Stalinist parties. And no credit, we hear, should go to the Soviet bureaucracy for its role in Eastern Europe: after all it was Wall Street that forced the bureaucracy to oppose the bourgeoisie. (As well give General Motors credit for the sit-down strikes: after all didn't they force the workers to organize?)

The equivocations failed of their purpose (and in a way that is too bad because the intention was certainly praiseworthy). But the real question wasn't whether or not the Yugoslav and Chinese CPs were Stalinist parties -- (in my opinion they are both Stalinist parties in the only decisive aspect: both subordinate the class struggle to a governmental apparatus which is not Marxist) -- the real question arose from the fact that the revolutionary events in our time had not been carried through by a Marxist party but by formations that were non and anti-Marxist.

What we faced in all these events was the non-Marxist or even the anti-Marxist proletarian revolution, the proletarian revolution that was, because of its non-Marxist leadership, to one or another extent unconscious. We faced the unconscious proletarian revolution, and we had the same tasks that Marxists have always had facing the primarily unconscious class struggle: (1) to locate in the unconscious process the laws that determine history, and (2) to demonstrate the necessity of and the possibility of making history consciously.

The instrument for realizing both these interlaced objectives is the Marxist party.

The present factional alignment in the SWP reproduces, with the change of a person or so, the alignment that developed in respect to the unconscious proletarian revolution. For a lengthy period the Cannon-Weiss group denied the revolution primarily because the revolution was unconscious. (Refer to Comrade Stein's 1949 Plenum report -- accepted by the NC -- to the document of Comrade Wright, and to the convention opposition that Comrade Cannon declared to Comrade Marcy's 1950 Thesis). Facing the unconscious proletarian revolution the Cannon group insisted that because it was unconscious it couldn't possibly be revolution.

The comrades associated with Comrade E.R. Frank were undoubtedly much quicker in recognizing the fundamentally revolutionary nature of what had occurred. The Memorandum of Frank in 1949, his document in 1950, and the Thesis of Comrade Marcy, all presented in the SWP -- as a minority position, moreover -- the line that was later adopted by the Third Congress.

At the beginning of this discussion I, personally, and later with Comrade Ryan and others, supported the conclusions that Comrade Frank and the IEC had reached. (I even preceded them on some points). But I was careful to point out that the methodology that they had employed was not a Marxist methodology, and that it led, directly and indirectly, to the liquidation of the Marxist method and the Marxist party. (See the P.R.V.L. Resolution of July 1951).

They had re-baptized the old concept of the two-class state with the name "dual power," and had used it to present the same conceptions that reformism had always presented in its two-class or classless

states. They told us that the proletarian revolution had triumphed in Yugoslavia. . . when a capitalist minister resigned from the government! In the buffer countries where they denied that there had been any proletarian revolution at all, they discovered an "intermediate status" which was neither fish nor fowl and represented a concept that Comrade Trotsky had specifically, and in so many words, rejected as utopian. In the course of this "intermediate status," the IEC taught, the bourgeois states maintained by the Soviet bureaucracy in Eastern Europe had simply nationalized themselves to death.

Because I rejected such conceptions I was unable, though I agreed with many of its conclusions, to accept the line of Comrade Frank and the IEC. The unconscious proletarian revolution, like the unconscious class struggle, follows the laws of Marxism. Otherwise Marxism is simply an inspiration and never a science. If Marxism is not a science, then the Marxist party is unnecessary: any collection of rags and patches that gets the leadership of masses will serve.

These, comrades of both factions, are the questions that are irritating you. Comrades have seen the triumph of the unconscious proletarian revolution. It cannot and will not be ignored. It must be recognized as proletarian revolution. But its unconsciousness must not become our own norm. If there are actual political differences between the factions, I would say, in a very general fashion, that Comrade Cannon's group is a loosely sectarian group, inclined like all sectarians, to deny some aspects of the class struggle because of the struggle's lack of a Marxist leadership; and that the IFC and Comrade Frank's group is a generally opportunist group which has become more and more fascinated by the unconsciousness of the unconscious proletarian revolution.

Sectarianism and opportunism have always been two manifestations of the same errors. In our own case this is crystal clear. Both positions grow from an undialectical and incorrect conception that was long ago introduced into our party by both factions. This is the dictum that the Soviet bureaucracy is "completely (observe the violation of dialectic in that 'completely') reactionary." The unannounced doctrine of many comrades that Stalinism is or may become "completely progressive" has grown from that soil. The dialectic has more than once played such cruel tricks upon formalists.

I will sketch below the biography of liquidation.

THE CRISIS OF THE LENINIST STRATEGY OF PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION BEGINS WITH THE REVISION OF MARXISM ON THE STATE WHICH IS REPRESENTED BY THE CONCEPTION THAT THE SOVIET BUREAUCRACY IS "COMPLETELY REACTIONARY."

The Leninist strategy of proletarian revolution is based upon the paramount role that is played by the repressive apparatus that exists within society. In his early writings Lenin referred to this machine of suppression as the government. In later years he took up the term used by Engels and referred to it as the state. Our present day "Trotskyists" refer to it as the state apparatus, a piece of nonsense in itself since the state is an apparatus, a machine of suppression consisting of bodies of armed men with prisons, etc.

Whatever it is called, and there is no good reason to revise the terminology of Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, the repressive apparatus that exists within society and acts as a class instrument is the central strategic objective in the Leninist strategy of proletarian revolution. There can be no fundamental change in society or in the economy unless this machine of suppression is taken away from the bourgeoisie and a machine of suppression organized as the instrument of the proletariat. For that reason Lenin considered the Marxist party as a combat organization.

The Social Democracy always objected to this. In the person of Kautsky and Vandervelde they advanced against Lenin the conception of the state as "the nation as a whole" (see the appendix to Lenin's Proletarian Revolution) and in practice denied that the government, the guiding summit of the repressive apparatus, was a class instrument.

History, as Trotsky wrote, has rendered a clear and ineradicable verdict in the dispute between Lenin and the Social Democracy. In a number of countries the Social Democracy did come into ostensible governmental power, and it is unquestionable that they used this power to make many valuable changes in society and the economy. But they left the repressive apparatus, the machine of suppression that exists within society, the state, in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Because of this they were unable to expropriate the capitalist class and eventually saw all their gains wiped out by the bourgeois state.

In revolution Lenin took the machine of suppression away from the exploiters and created a new repressive apparatus as the instrument of the proletariat; and by means of this proletarian repressive apparatus Lenin and his party also made reforms in the economy and in society; and the most important of those reforms continue to exist to this day only because Lenin first destroyed the bourgeois state.

The Leninist strategy of proletarian revolution makes power in the state its central objective, and it defines the state as the repressive apparatus that exists within society.

The state that Lenin created degenerated. Though the Russian economy reached virtually complete collectivization and had an unmatched development, the state degenerated. When our generation of Marxists looks at Russia, we see as the repressive apparatus that exists within Russia's transitional society, the bureaucratized Red Army, the secret police, the slave labor camps, Lubianka prison, Vishinsky's "justice" and the concentration camps. Look where we will at the machine of suppression in Russia all we can see is one or another bureaucratized instrument of Stalin's despotism.

Comrade Trotsky insisted time after time that the USSR was a workers state. Did Comrade Trotsky really mean that the USSR was a workers "country," a workers "economy" or a workers "society"? Generally speaking, the Old Man, least of all, requires somebody to explain what he "really" meant; Comrade Trotsky knew languages, and words, and Lenin; and he never said economy, or country, or society; he said the USSR was a workers state.

Our leadership doesn't agree with the Old Man for a moment. They've seen or read about the Moscow trials, the totalitarian regime,

and the murder of Comrade Trotsky. Clearly a repressive apparatus as revolting and terrible as Stalin's can't possibly be a workers state!

But that raises a rather important problem: Lenin defined the state as a machine of suppression; Trotsky insisted that the USSR was a workers state. Our comrades don't want to oppose either Lenin or Trotsky. But they are even more determined not to call Stalin's terrible repressive apparatus a workers state (and Senator McCarthy does nothing, of course, to weaken this determination). Stalin's repressive apparatus is "completely reactionary"! But what then of Lenin or of Trotsky?

They have revised Lenin (and Trotsky too, since Trotsky was a consistent Leninist). It's Lenin, apparently, who needs somebody to explain what he "really" meant. Our leadership avoids the distasteful and unpopular obligation of regarding Stalin's bureaucracy, the repressive apparatus in the USSR, as a workers state by declaring that the term state doesn't refer to the machine of suppression in society: it refers to the economy (nationalized) or to society (transitional to socialism). In this way they can repeat Trotsky's words: the USSR is a workers state; but they fill them now with a different content: the USSR is a workers country or economy, etc. The USSR is a workers economy upon which there rests a "completely reactionary" state apparatus, variously described as bourgeois, petty bourgeois or classless. (That this brings them closer to the classic position of the petty-bourgeois democrats is just a happy accident).

However motivated, and capitulation to bourgeois pressure is not the only motivation, the fact remains: they have revised Lenin on the state.

Comrades can check this by reading Lenin: "Take the theoretical formulation of the question. The state, even in a democratic republic" -- (The state, observe, is in the republic, the whole nation) -- "is nothing more nor less than a machine for the suppression of one class by another." (Page 105, Little Lenin, Proletarian Revolution).

Contrast this with Comrade Pablo: "Marxists use the term state in a very precise sense: to indicate a society, etc." (On The Class Nature of Yugoslavia, page 27). In a subsequent article, Yugoslavia and the Rest of the Buffer Zone, Pablo makes his conception of the state quite clear: "Yugoslav society has ceased to be a capitalist state." (Page 2 -- my emphasis -- D.V.)

This was also the conception of Comrade Pierre Frank at the Congress. In his report he speaks of "The evolution of varied human societies, among them workers states." The state, obviously, is simply another name for society, the workers state is simply a certain society.

The same conception of the state is contained in the document of E.R. Frank. This is too long to quote here, but Frank's conclusion could be summarized as essentially Pablo's and Pierre Frank's: a workers state is a society in which there is a collectivized economy.

WHAT LENIN CONTRASTED OUR COMRADES IDENTIFY.

The comrades have revised Lenin and Trotsky on the state. This is not simply a terminological innovation. Reacting subjectively against Stalin's state, the comrades are compelled to go farther and revise the Leninist conception of proletarian revolution. To say society where Lenin and Trotsky said state is one thing; to focus one's attention upon society and to ignore the paramount role of the repressive apparatus is something else again. To consider that the USSR is "progressive" whereas the state in the USSR is "completely reactionary" is to learn and propagate a conception of the proletarian revolution that is distinctly non-Leninist.

THIS REVISION OF LENIN ON THE STATE IS MANIFESTED AS THE REVISION OF THE CONCEPT OF PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION.

Lenin's strategy of proletarian revolution is a dialectical unity of two opposites: revolution in the repressive apparatus that exists within society, evolution in society and its economy. The October Revolution triumphed in Petrograd and Moscow in approximately twenty-four hours and was extended to all of Russia in the course of the ensuing Civil War. For a year after October the economy was not transformed. During the period of the NEP the efforts of the regime were concentrated upon extending bourgeois property and not upon liquidating it. Complete collectivization in the USSR was achieved, to the extent that it now exists, only in the period of 1930-33 (and achieved, moreover, by the "completely reactionary" Stalin regime).

A socialist who fails to realize the decisive significance of the repressive apparatus is not a Leninist but a petty-bourgeois socialist (and in this connection it is necessary to understand that petty-bourgeois socialism is a bridge between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and that traffic across this bridge goes in both directions and is not determined by the intentions of the travelers). The essence of petty-bourgeois socialism is its inability to distinguish the tasks of revolution from the tasks of reform. The base of this inability is not the intention of the petty-bourgeois socialist, but his inability to understand and cope with the decisive significance of power in the state.

Revolution disappears. Revolution has to disappear. The economy and society can be transformed only by evolution, by reform, in a gradual process that adds collectivization to collectivization, one social change to another, and eventually produces a socialist society. If one's gaze is fixed stubbornly and exclusively upon society or the economy, then there can be neither need nor purpose in revolution. Only by realizing the paramount role of the repressive apparatus, the state, can one conceive the necessity of revolution.

The state passes from bourgeois to proletarian in a sharp, sudden, clearly marked transfer that can be placed in time to the exact hour and minute; society passes from bourgeois to socialist in a gradual, primarily non-violent evolution that exists for decades (possibly even "centuries").

This was the Leninist conception of proletarian revolution. It was counterposed to the strictly evolutionary policies of the Social

Democracy, and to the ostensibly strictly revolutionary policies of anarchism. Even a limited acquaintance with Lenin, Engels or Trotsky will substantiate this.

The Leninist conception of proletarian revolution is the Marxism of the epoch of war and revolution. Marxism is a scientific doctrine. Lenin's conceptions are not simply "the best way" of achieving socialism or "good ideas." Marxism is the conscious expression of the unconscious historical process. Any proletarian revolution, conscious or unconscious, will unfold in accord with Lenin's conceptions. That's what makes Marxism a science. Whether the proletariat understands Lenin's conceptions or not is not the point here: the proletariat and its various leaderships have participated in the class struggle for centuries without knowing that they were doing so, even at times denying that what was involved was actually Marxism's law of class struggle. The proletariat and its leadership can participate in the proletarian revolution in the same way, that is unconsciously. Nonetheless the proletarian revolution will proceed in accord with the Marxist schema.

The tasks of Marxists are the tasks of finding in the unconscious process the conscious laws of Marxism, of using these laws to illuminate the unconscious process, and thus to make possible more effective action in behalf of the struggle.

Our leadership has performed differently. They extend the term state to mean the country as a whole. They ignore the role of the machine of suppression that exists within society: they regard the Soviet Union as "progressive" but insist that the repressive apparatus that exists there is "completely reactionary." They picture the transformation of the economy and society of the buffer countries in a very nebulous fashion, never dreaming that such changes can be made only by a state, and that the states in the buffer countries indicate by these actions that somewhere before that action the states must have been transformed from bourgeois to proletarian. The resolution of the IEC, and the statement of Wright-Warde, is that the economy and the state apparatus were transformed "in a parallel process."

This picture of a parallel process that transformed both the economy and the state apparatus was the conception that Social Democracy advanced against Lenin in its opposition to the proletarian revolution. Our leadership is implicitly saying that reformism worked in the buffer countries (and in Yugoslavia and China).

Reformism can never "work." Reformism is not the conscious expression of the historic process. Reformism plays in relation to Marxism the same role that religion plays generally in relation to science. Religion can never explain the world.

The fact today that the buffer countries are transitional between capitalism and socialism, is due to the fact that the state expropriated the bourgeoisie and organized a planned economy; and the fact that the state did this is due to the fact that the state was a workers state; and the fact that the state was a workers state is due and can be due to one thing only: the proletarian revolution triumphed, not in the exact way that it triumphed in Petrograd and Moscow, but in the exact way that it triumphed in Tsaritzyn, Georgia, and all of

Russia in Asia. Twenty-five years counts as little in history as an instant in the life of a man. The struggle that was conducted by Deniken, Kolchak and Wrangel against Trotsky's Red Army was continued by the "super-Wrangel" Hitler against Stalin's Red Army. The difference is not in the essence of the process but in the consciousness of the participants: Trotsky was a consistent Marxist; Stalin is not.

Without an understanding of Marxism on the state the unconscious proletarian revolution is as inexplicable to our leadership as the unconscious class struggle has always been to non-Marxists.

This is clearly illustrated in the IEC's analysis of China. Not so long ago China also was declared to be on the "road" to structural assimilation. With a pun, the lowest form of humor and politics, the World Congress unloaded this whole baggage. But China today, like the buffer countries and Yugoslavia yesterday, is declared to be "dual power." Nor does this refer to the juxtaposition of Mao and Chiang (which is the only actual dual power that exists in China). The IEC calls the present Chinese state dual power because of the form of the "state apparatus," because there are bourgeois representatives within it, and because the economy is not yet nationalized.

This is to say, actually, that the state in its totality represents both workers and bourgeois. A two class state. Why not say so openly? The fact that the Chinese CP fought its way into power is not important here: it could have been peacefully elected, as similar formations have previously been elected in other countries, and the form of the state and the presence of bourgeois politicians within it, would not be different than it is today. If China today is dual power, then there has been a great deal more dual power than Lenin and Trotsky ever noticed.

With the actual conception that the Chinese state is a two class (or classless) state apparatus the IEC expects the revolution to triumph in China in exactly the way that reformism always expected the revolution to unfold: the "workers and farmers government" of Mao-tse-Tung (or the "socialist governments" of Ebert, Blum, MacDonald or Attlee, in reformist terminology) will purge, gradually or suddenly, the bourgeois representatives from the government, and in an evitably gradual process collectivize the economy and society.

This is the declared prognosis of the IEC. Obviously reformism is about to "work" again. Who knows -- perhaps the bourgeois politicians will facilitate the triumph of the revolution in China -- by resigning their posts!

In my opinion the proletarian revolution has already triumphed in China, and that triumph is as definitive as it can be, given the non-Marxism, the centrism and opportunism, of the leadership of the Chinese proletariat and peasantry. The elements of dual power which existed in the Chinese state in 1926-27 were forced by the coup d'etat of Chiang Kai-shek to stand out as real powers. The workers' half of this dual power was not entirely annihilated: it retreated from the cities, marched across China and maintained its existence as the Chinese Red Army.

What the line of Stalin and Bucharin was unable to accomplish in all of China -- the replacement of the Kuomintang government by a

proletarian repressive apparatus -- was thus accomplished, unconsciously, and in much smaller scale, in the areas occupied by the Chinese Red Army. The Chinese Communist Party became an army party, and the army had power in a certain geographical area, that is the army was a state. This unconscious and bastardized workers state existed during the instant in history that was represented by the period from 1928 to 1945. Its development paralleled the degeneration of the Russian state over this same period, and it conducted the same type of war against the Japanese and Chiang that Stalin conducted against Hitler.

The collapse of Chiang and the inability of the city proletariat to act (no party, no political action) enabled this degenerated workers state to extend its rule over all the Chinese Mainland. The Third Chinese Revolution is thus rooted in and a continuation of the Second. Haven't we always known that today is only yesterday's tomorrow?

The inability of the Fourth International leadership to understand the unconscious proletarian revolution in its Leninist essentials stems inevitably from the fact that they have revised Marxism on the state.

But one cannot stop there. IF HISTORY HAS NO LAWS, THEN CONSCIOUS PARTICIPATION IN HISTORY IS IMPOSSIBLE. IF THE MARXIAN LAWS ARE WRONG, IF REFORMISM IS WORKING, THEN A LENINIST PARTY IS UNNECESSARY. ANY COLLECTION OF RAGS AND PATCHES THAT OBTAINS THE LEADERSHIP OF MASSES WILL SERVE.

THE CRISIS OF THE LENINIST STRATEGY BECOMES THE CRISIS OF THE MARXIST PARTY.

I believe, without being able to prove at this point, that the split in France was caused by the fact that the French majority, willing to do fraction work in the French CP in order to build their own party, was unwilling to liquidate itself into the CPF and orient toward a French revolution on the order of the Yugoslav. The line of the French majority, as well as the line of the IFC, is not clear from the documents; but it is impossible to justify the split in France merely by the tempo with which the opposed factions moved to enter the French CP.

The entry tactic, to be effective, must be oriented firmly toward the building of the Revolutionary Marxist party and not toward some tepid reform of the French CP. To attempt to trick the French masses into following the Fourth International by making them think they are following the Third -- or in England the Second and a Half -- International amounts to the liquidation of Marxism. It is an unnecessary and fruitless activity: if history is going to continue to be unconscious, if the unconscious proletarian revolution is our own norm, then it is not necessary for us -- the Marxists -- to do anything at all, neither enter the CP, study Lenin, defend Trotsky or write or read documents.

But conscious participation in history is impossible without the Marxist party. It must not only be Marxist, that is, the conscious expression of the unconscious historical process, but it must also be a party.

Having driven deep wounds into the party's assurance that Marxism really is the conscious expression of history, the IEC is logically impelled to go farther and begin in France and China the liquidation of the Marxist party.

This is quite clear in regard to China. The IEC resolved: "The Fourth International and the Chinese Trotskyists will give critical support to Mao Tse-tung's government." On the Chinese Communist Party the IEC declared: "It is more likely that this leadership (of the CCP). . . will maintain its outward unity. . . and will preside in its great majority over the transformation of the Chinese CP into a left Centrist party." Speaking for the IEC in reporting on the resolution, Comrade Germain declared: "Our Chinese comrades. . . will be able to overcome pessimism and skepticism only by holding a clear view on the perspectives of the Third Chinese Revolution. By assimilating the analysis and perspectives of the International they will understand that the decisive phase, the phase of the demonstration of proletarian power, is before us. . . this phase will not unfurl in opposition to the CP but under its leadership and apparently at its initiative. To push the CP, its party organizations, the mass organizations, and the masses themselves ahead on this road of completing the revolution. . . there lies the task of the Chinese Trotskyists in the months and years ahead." (My emphasis -- D.V.)

As an oppositionist in the discussion Comrade Jacques stated: ". . . we must, alongside our internal work in Stalinist organizations, continue to conduct our independent work. . . I am of the opinion that we must work for the overthrow of the Mao government while giving attention to defending it at the same time from imperialist attacks." (Jacques' opinion of Mao is not important in this context).

However, Comrade Germain replied: ". . . such words are absolutely irresponsible. Such ideas, despite all restrictive formulas on the necessity of defending Mao against imperialism, are objectively, we must say it, counter-revolutionary ideas." (My emphasis - D.V.)

There you have it. And very clearly and openly. Marxism has obviously been found inadequate in China. The history of China, moreover, has not followed the Marxian laws. The period of the demonstration of proletarian power will unfurl, not under the banner of Marxism, but under the leadership of the Chinese CP. (I will wager my copy of "State and Revolution" that the IEC is going to be proved completely and undeniably wrong in this prognosis. I can see a lot of new puns coming up. "Unfurl?" "Demonstration?" "Proletarian power?" The IEC gives critical support not to a certain measure but to a government. The best that they can posit for the CCP is its transformation into a left centrist party. Nevertheless, "work for" the overthrow of Mao is counter-revolutionary. The Chinese Marxists do not seek power: they "push" the CP and the masses.

There you have it, comrades! A clear, present and unashamed capitulation to Stalinism, the same policy and conceptions which are represented in England by the process of submerging the Marxist party into Bevanism, and by spreading illusions about the British Labor Party ("a vote for the Labor Party is a vote against imperialist war and capitalist wage slavery": "the Tories won and war is nearer," etc.)

There you have it. This conception began with the dictum that the Soviet bureaucracy is "completely reactionary." This dictum has been logically and inevitably transformed in China into the dictum that Stalinism is or may become "completely progressive." This is not surprising. The two conceptions are not basically different: "completely progressive" is simply "completely reactionary" turned inside out. There isn't a particle of Marxism in either conception.

It is interesting to remember, in this connection, that Comrade Germain, the reporter for the IEC, was willing, only three years ago, to give "unconditional" support to a capitalist country against the USSR should the "completely reactionary" Soviet bureaucracy attempt to destroy its self-determination. In this he was supported, implicitly by our NC, and explicitly by Comrade Breitman. Today Germain brands "work for" the overthrow of Mao as counter-revolutionary. (Mao and Stalin will doubtlessly agree). Germain's are not two different policies: they are different manifestations of the same errors.

In Los Angeles the NC members have made an unwilling but uncrushed pariah out of me in the last three years with a disloyal, dishonest but sustained charge that I am "pro-Stalinist," "neo-Stalinist," a "capitulator to Stalinism," etc. and so on ad nauseum. This was because I insisted that the Soviet bureaucracy played a dual role, progressive and reactionary, was a workers state and able, in certain circumstances, to create other workers states, etc. All this was "pro-Stalinist."

Now we have an actual and unmistakable capitulation to the Stalinism (or opportunism, or centrism) of the Chinese Communist Party, and this capitulation comes, not from a rather lonely comrade defending Trotskyism but from the IEC of the Fourth International. Obviously our heroes should be heard from now. If I do not hear from Comrades Myra and Murry Weiss, Clarke and Kirk against the Chinese resolution and report of the IEC, I will be forced to conclude that their condemnations of me were nothing really. . . but slanders.
R.S.V.P.

This is the actual and not imaginary biography of liquidation. Because they reacted subjectively against Stalin's repressive apparatus, they revised Marxism on the state. Because they revised Marxism on the state, they are unable to maintain the Leninist conceptions of the proletarian revolution. Because they do not have the Leninist conceptions of proletarian revolution, they are unable to understand, maintain or build a Marxist party. This is the biography of liquidation.

The IEC travels this road of liquidation. Its closest co-thinkers undoubtedly push most aggressively in this direction. They want to work in the Stalinist movements not in order to build the Marxist party outside the Stalinist periphery, but with the conception that Stalinism (or Bevanism) may be reformed into a Marxist party, or at least substitute for it. They have the same line toward the labor bureaucracy: after all if the unconscious proletarian revolution could triumph elsewhere, why not here also? What is thus merely a remote historical possibility, and a largely undesirable one at that, is transformed into a prognosis and a norm. The IEC and its closest co-thinkers in this country travel to extinction.

They are opposed in the main by those who denied for as long as they could the revolutionary reality of the unconscious proletarian revolution. This group wants to maintain an independent party. . . at least in this country. But they support the IEC against the French majority. For England they support the line of subordination to Bevan (with Bevan subordinated to Attlee and Attlee to Churchill). For China I think it very unlikely that these comrades will oppose the subordination of our comrades to the party and government of Mao (who is himself subordinated to Stalin). All this to the contrary, they are the most rabid in affirming the "completely reactionary" nature of Stalinism.

Both groups travel to extinction. On one side liquidation of Marxism into Stalinism, Titoism or Bevanism (or a Labor Party possibly in this country). On the other side a sect, unable to understand the history of its time, unable to maintain Marxism, and forever on the unimportant sidelines of history. These are the basic lines that apparently exist within the Fourth International and are responsible for the factional friction therein.

I don't think that either group in the SWP will draw its line out to its conclusion. In this sense also America is obviously Marxism's chosen land: there is no Stalinist movement nor any Labor Party into which our leadership can dissolve us.

But these are the basic lines just the same. The IEC and its supporters travel the road to extinction. They travel, however, by MIG jet or rocket fighter. Their opponents prefer an ox cart. This naturally makes for some friction.

* * *

The difficulty begins with that undialectical and idealistic judgment of the Soviet bureaucracy. This bureaucracy is not only reactionary, it is progressive also. One of the equivocations that has been advanced in this respect is frivolous but revealing. According to Murry Weiss this bureaucracy is completely reactionary. . . but it does some progressive work. On my part as a Marxist I always considered that "progressive" and "reactionary" as judgments were rendered, materialistically, in accord with the "work" done, that is, by connections and inter-connections in the real world. If the bureaucracy does some progressive work, then how is it possible to regard it as "completely reactionary"? Reactionary? Yes. And on the basis of the "work" it does. Completely reactionary? No!

Murry's judgment is clearly not rendered upon the basis of the bureaucracy's work, that is its role in the real world. Apart from the real world there are only the various spirit worlds. Did Murry define the bureaucracy as "completely reactionary" on the basis, not of our real world, but from a point of view that derives from some place else, a world very similar to the one that today concerns. . . Grace Carlson?

Murry would agree that the Soviet bureaucracy does "reactionary" work. And how! Since it also does progressive work, we will define it, on the basis of the work it does, on the basis of its role, as progressive and reactionary. The Soviet bureaucracy thus plays a dual role, and that role is progressive and reactionary.

This dual role of the bureaucracy does not derive from its intentions or its ideas, but from what it is. The ideas and intentions derive from this. Well, what is it then? The Soviet bureaucracy is the repressive apparatus that exists in the Soviet Union. It is the only machine of suppression that exists in Russia. The Soviet bureaucracy is thus the state in Russia. It is an extension of that state, that repressive apparatus, that was established by the October Revolution as the new state in the Soviet Union. It is the same state in this respect: it is a proletarian repressive apparatus; but it is at the same time vastly different: the present Soviet State is not Marxist. A state can evolve from Marxist to centrist or opportunist; it can go from proletarian to bourgeois only by counter-revolution.

The Soviet bureaucracy is a degenerated (non and anti-Marxist) proletarian repressive apparatus. Its proletarian character is established by the criterion of Trotsky: the class nature of the state is basically determined by its relation to the forms of property in the basic means of production. The relation that the Stalin state has to the state-owned property is evident: the repressive apparatus that exists in Russia defends and even extends state-owned property, and this relationship identifies the Stalin state, the bureaucracy, as a workers state.

The non-Marxism of this state is not accidental. It does not derive from the "bad" intentions of Stalin and his clique. In the last thing that Comrade Trotsky wrote, the biography of Stalin, Trotsky states that if Stalin had known in 1925 where his course would lead, he would unquestionably have turned back. Today, says Trotsky, Stalin considers when he generalizes at all that his course is necessary to strengthen the Soviet state and thus build socialism in a single country.

The problem of the degeneration of the Soviet state is not to be solved in the realm of demonology. Not at all.

The dual role that the Soviet bureaucracy plays is simply the manifestation in Russia of a dual role that any workers state anywhere will have to play. The workers state achieves and guards the collectivization of industry, the inescapable property form for the transition to socialism. But there is no country in the world today that can produce enough so that all scarcity of all kinds can be eliminated. (Comrade Wright's assurance in The Militant that the USSR is not an economy of scarcity is ludicrous.) But abundance is a necessary precondition for socialism. The workers state, therefore, has the additional function of increasing production.

Production can be increased sufficiently only by increasing the productive forces. This "dead labor," new productive forces, can be gotten only from living labor. The workers must be impelled to produce more, and they must be prevented from consuming all that they produce. In addition scientists, technologists, engineers, etc. (trained for the most part by capitalism (or in a world where capitalism prevails) must be won to the service of the workers state.

In achieving this result the workers state has to resort to the time-tested methods of capitalism. Labor power is paid for, not necessarily at its value but in proportion to its value. The highly

skilled and the highly productive receive greater rewards than the unskilled or the non-productive. Whoever does not work does not eat. Whoever works well lives well. To maintain essentially bourgeois norms in distribution is an odious but inescapable function of the workers state.

Privileges in consumption have no meaning unless they are guaranteed. The skilled and productive minority must have their privileges in consumption protected. And by whom? By the workers state. From its first days the workers state has the function; (1) defending and extending state-owned property, and (2) defending a privileged minority in consumption against the majority of the nation.

This inevitable function of the workers state is the basic cause for the degeneration of the Soviet State in the conditions of isolation and backwardness. (On this point I urge comrades to study the two chapters in THE REVOLUTION BETRAYED, "Socialism and the State" and "The Soviet Thermidor." These chapters would make excellent articles for the FI).

In the USSR the democratic, Soviet form of the workers state came into conflict with one of the functions of the state. The defense of the privileged in consumption is obviously a task that cannot be performed democratically: the majority cannot be expected, over an extended period, to maintain the privileges of a minority. Democracy was replaced by bureaucratism, that is, compulsion in behalf of a minority.

At the same time, and for the same reason, Marxism was destroyed as the policy and the conceptions of the state bureaucrats. It was an inevitable development given the defeat of the international revolution. It was inevitable because even the most thorough and determined Marxist cannot think Marxistically and act bureaucratically over an extended period; and the defense of bourgeois norms of distribution is an essentially bureaucratic function. A workers state headed by Murry Weiss, George Clarke (or Dennis Vern) would unquestionably be a very wonderful thing; but this state too would perform a dual function, and one of these functions is a bureaucratic function and I consider it at least a two to one bet that at least two and very probably three of us, in an extended development, would generalize our bureaucratic function into a revision of Marxism.

This revision of Marxism would probably not become, in favorable circumstance, the monstrous thing that it has become in the USSR. But it would happen.

The bureaucracy of a workers state performs a dual function. One of its functions, the achievement and maintenance of state owned property can be carried out in Marxist fashion by the methods of class struggle (Russia 1918-1919) or in Stalinist fashion, bureaucratically (Russia 1930-33 and the buffer countries 1943-1950); but the other function of the workers state, the defense of bourgeois norms of distribution, can only be performed bureaucratically. (This analysis neither laughs nor weeps; it calls things by their names and thus understands).

The failure to understand the state, with its consequent inability to understand the workers state, lies at the base of both idealistic conceptions of the Soviet bureaucracy and Stalinism: that it is "completely reactionary" or may become "completely progressive." The method is identical. Each takes one aspect of the workers state, inflates it to undue proportions, and then counterposes this ballooned conception to the actual state.

In the strange and amusing "dialectic" of Myra Weiss (actually eclecticism) the Soviet bureaucracy is the "antipode" of the proletariat and therefore reactionary, completely even. That any workers state anywhere would have this aspect, in larger or smaller scale, never occurs to this comrade. But other comrades have taken another aspect of the Russian state, its defense of state owned property. Clearly the bureaucracy is the antipode of the bourgeoisie and therefore "progressive," if not completely then close enough as not to matter.

Both statements are formally correct. But employed by themselves they constitute half-truths, and a half truth is frequently more dangerous than a lie. The Soviet bureaucracy, or the state bureaucrats of any workers state, are counterposed both to the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Overcome by the bourgeoisie in counter-revolution the workers state can be overthrown; overcome by the workers in the transition to socialism the workers state withers away.

Our comrades noticed, in the period from 1923 to 1941, how the Soviet state, generalizing its bourgeois function, developed more and more in antagonism to the proletariat. Aha! we said, an obvious agent of imperialism! This was true. But in concentrating upon this role of the bureaucracy we lost sight of the fact that the bureaucracy played another role. The errors that all of us made in regard to the Yugoslav and Chinese revolutions, toward the evolution of the buffer countries, and toward the nature of World War III, are all traceable to the fact that we regarded the Soviet bureaucracy undialectically, out of contact with the real world; we concentrated upon one aspect of the bureaucracy's role and couldn't understand history when the bureaucracy was playing its other role.

This position was responsible for the dictum, so widespread at the beginning of the buffer zone discussion: "Stalinism cannot create workers states"; "If Stalinism can create workers states, what is the need of the Fourth International?" etc.

A large section of the party, a majority perhaps, still holds to these absurdities. They hold to them in spite of the fact that these conceptions specifically contradict the line of the Third Congress in regard to the buffer countries and China where Stalinism is regarded as having created, or of being in process of creating, workers states.

I think that this contradiction is responsible for the utter silence maintained by the majority of the SWP leadership for the last three years. Every single prognosis that they made in regard to the buffer countries, Yugoslavia and China has been crushingly annihilated by history. Instead of recognizing their mistakes, tracing them like Marxists to their source, and thereby learning something from them (and winning the real respect of the party in the process), the leader

ship has chosen instead to maintain a lofty but tricky silence, broken only by anathemas: "Capitulator to Stalinism!". (Senator McCarthy won more than he thought he did.)

I know, and others with me, that the Trotskyist position (mis-labeled as the Vern position) cannot be refuted except by separating oneself obviously and clearly from Marxism. If someone thinks this analysis can be refuted, let him take paper and ink and refute it.

Instead of an honest and objective correction of errors made and propagated, we have, on one side, the silence of the grave (and I hope that's a figure of speech). But on another side, we have comrades who know that the Soviet bureaucracy is not playing the role of an agent of imperialism as its major role at the present time. They know that this bureaucracy and Stalinism is not "completely" reactionary: only an ostrich could continue to assert that. These comrades have rejected this phobia. They think that analysis ought to illuminate the world and not befuddle it. They believe, apparently, in reason and not in faith. And they hold that theory is a guide to action. All very good traits.

But some of them -- the IEC certainly and probably the IEC's closest co-thinkers in this country -- have reacted not like a range finder but like a pendulum. They have reacted away from the concept that Stalinism is "completely reactionary" and swung to the concept that Stalinism may become "completely progressive." Where before we lost our balance by concentrating exclusively upon the bureaucracy's bourgeois role, these comrades run the danger of errors as serious, or more serious, by concentrating only upon the bureaucracy's proletarian role. The Soviet bureaucracy and Stalinism is now counterposed to imperialism and the world bourgeoisie. Aha! they say, clearly an agent of the proletariat!

Both positions are petty bourgeois in their basic methodology: one aspect of the Marxian analysis is seized upon idealistically, blown up to an extent not found in the real world, and then counterposed to Marxism as a whole. It is an old and familiar procedure, all the more dangerous because each position is composed of a half truth which can masquerade, to the uncritical, as truth.

Some comrades will never understand Marx's statement that everything that lives deserves to perish. The workers state is a very important thing. But it is not the only important thing in the world, and not even the most important. A workers state is the end of our struggle at a given time only to be transformed at another time into its means. But it is not the only means necessary for the socialist transition. The state by its very nature is a means of using force or threatening to use it. This can play at certain times and in certain circumstances a very important role in history. But in the long run force alone is not decisive.

We have got to understand, not only that the Soviet bureaucracy is not "completely reactionary" but that no workers state anywhere can ever be "completely progressive." An organization of compulsion (a state) is inferior in its historic importance to an organization of science and consciousness (the party). Where the workers state must inevitably generalize its dual role into one or another non-

Marxist doctrine (centrism), the Marxist party can maintain the necessary distinction between principle and expediency, base itself firmly upon the historic interests of the masses, and thus insure the continuity of science and consciousness.

The transition to socialism, in China, Russia, the buffer countries, Yugoslavia and others of a like development, will undoubtedly have as its basic dynamic the struggle between the Marxist party and the workers state. That is why the IEC's China policy is so -- we have to say it -- criminal. To give Mao's government material defense in a struggle with imperialism is an elementary obligation of the Chinese Trotskyists. To give critical support to certain specific measures of the government or the CCP is likewise necessary. But a party that gives critical support to a non-Marxist government or party is simply apologizing for its own existence (and taking a major step to non-existence).

It is certainly possible that Mao's government will execute a left turn and complete the expropriation of the bourgeoisie. This is possible, but it is not guaranteed. But, assuming this "best" variant, how will Mao's government and the CCP carry through this expropriation? In a Marxist fashion, designed to raise and reinforce the consciousness of the Chinese workers? To think so is to basically misunderstand the nature of the Mao state, a degenerated workers state counterposed by its very nature not only to the bourgeoisie but to the masses also.

An historical analogy offers itself: the USSR in the period immediately following the NEP was very similar to China at the present moment. Extensive bourgeois elements were lodged in the state apparatus of the USSR. The bourgeoisie had considerable economic power. The capitalist farmers played an important role in agriculture. And the Russian Communist Party, considerably closer to Marxism than is the Chinese party, was nevertheless controlled by the Centrist clique of Stalin.

In these circumstances Stalin carried through what Comrade Trotsky referred to as a supplementary revolution. The workers state survived. But Marxism in Russia received blows from which it never recovered: a large cadre of Left Oppositionists became reconciled to Stalinism and were eventually destroyed as Marxian revolutionists.

The IEC line, in very similar circumstances, is the line not of Trotsky but of Radek and the other "capitulators." Where Trotsky considered that the struggle against ruling centrism was the most important task for a Marxist, Radek and his co-capitulators considered that what was being done was more important than how it was done, by whom and for what reasons, gave their support to Stalin, critically of course, abandoned the struggle to sustain the Left Opposition, and ended in the prisoner's dock under Vishinsky's "justice." (Comrade Wright once produced, in wrong context, some quotations on this matter; possibly he could republish them now when they are appropriate.)

Mao's government will wage a fight against imperialist attack or against internal counter-revolution. Stalin also fought off Hitler. To defend Mao's state against imperialist attack, to fight under the

command of Mao's government (until they are able to replace it) is unquestionably the duty of the Chinese Trotskyists. But Mao will depend almost exclusively upon military means. The only political measures that he can take are the measures appropriate for a left centrist party, hesitating, half hearted, bureaucratic. We have, or should have, very little in common with such measures.

The key to this situation lies in realizing that any "work for" Marxism is work for the eventual overthrow of Mao. Mao probably understands this much better than Germain. One cannot educate the Chinese masses, or participate effectively with them, without affirming the Marxian fundamentals. One must inevitably counterpose "classes" to "intellectuals"; a transitional society or socialism to "New Democracy"; soviet democracy to bureaucratism. In short one counterposes Trotskyism to the Stalinist or Maoist version of petty-bourgeois socialism. All this brings one, no matter how carefully he watches his "language," into controversy and conflict with Mao's government and the Chinese CP.

The Chinese CP isn't going to be reformed into a Marxist party. Marxism is going to develop in China not hand in hand with the Chinese CP, or in critical support of Mao's government, but in struggle against the CP and the government. The Chinese CP is a government party; the state that it heads plays a dual role; and one of its functions can only be performed bureaucratically. How can this state be Marxist? If the state controls the party, how can the party be Marxist?

Or is that not at all the proposal of the IEC? Very well. But the construction of a Marxist party in China will inevitably collide with the government and the CCP. What then? In the long run, and that long run might be relatively short, the Chinese Trotskyists can build Marxism only by projecting the replacement of Mao's government. To brand work for this replacement or overthrow as "counter-revolutionary" is equivalent to binding the Chinese comrades hand and foot for years to come. The Trotskyists in China must counterpose Marxism to petty-bourgeois socialism. They must counterpose, not necessarily in suicidal fashion, the Marxist party to the CP and the government. The form of this counterposition -- illegal existence, civil war or the struggle between soviet parties -- is not up to us.

In my opinion the only conceptions that will not derail the Chinese Marxists are defense against imperialism, political revolution against the Mao government.

We are not a government party. We are the party of irreconcilable opposition even in the USSR, China, the buffer countries and Yugoslavia. We realize our tasks, not through the medium of the non-Marxist workers states, but exclusively through the education of the masses, through their struggle, by explaining to them what they must defend and what they must overthrow. In doing this our irreplaceable instrument is not the non-Marxist state but the Marxist party. When our ideas are victorious we will take the responsibility and the leadership.

Such a policy will not give immediate miraculous results. But we don't, I hope, pretend to be miracle workers. But this policy

will give results. In the long run it is the only policy that will.

* * *

I consider that the foregoing constitutes not only the basic questions but the Marxian answers in the political situation of our time. If there is a factional struggle in the SWP, I firmly believe that this basic doubt as to the historic validity, not of the Fourth International, but of Marxism generally, is its underlying cause.

Historic validity is not something you are born with, comrades, like a birthmark but something that you develop like muscles. A certain limited historic validity undoubtedly attaches to the Stalinist formations that have led the unconscious proletarian revolution. But the revolution does not have to be unconscious. It does not want to be. But the conscious proletarian revolution is impossible unless we understand and apply the laws of history. That is Marxism.

However history develops, ultimate historic validity does not exist apart from Marxian science. The world's masses will reach for and achieve full consciousness, that is, Marxism. They will receive it only from the party. In that sense the international (Marxist) party will be the human race. That ought to be validity enough for anyone.

February 26, 1953
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