

# INTERNAL BULLETIN

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SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY  
116 University Place  
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AN OPEN LETTER TO THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE

(From Sam Ryan and Dennis Vern)

May 25, 1953

Dear Comrades,

As party members for eighteen years and seventeen years respectively, we wish to raise some political considerations for the Plenum.

What are the issues in the present factional dispute?

This question is also asked by Comrade Breitman, a member of the National Committee. If Breitman doesn't know, does a majority of the party? It seems doubtful. Nevertheless the majority of the party has already been "lined up" without any political differences being posed. The failure of the faction struggle up to now to pose political questions openly and objectively for the judgment of the party cannot but appear as a clear danger signal for the party as a whole.

When a political struggle is necessary the creation of loyal party factions on a definite political basis is a party building activity. However, a faction struggle which does not pose political questions is not a political struggle between factions but a power struggle between cliques. Such a struggle could ruin the party.

Both factions support the same political line. This political line, in its significant fundamentals is contained in, and is implicit in, the decisions of the Third World Congress and the subsequent resolutions and proclamations of the IEC.

If this line is correct, then there would appear to be no base for the formation of the present factions. Since both factions support this line aggressively and entirely, then the present factional friction would appear to stem from essentially clique interests of a conflicting nature.

To anyone who honestly considers that the decisions of the Third World Congress were correct, the present faction fight must appear as essentially a clique struggle in which comrades of the party will naturally align themselves with the particular leaders who are "closer," "more sympathetic," or in whom they have greater "faith."

Such a struggle can develop Marxism in the party only in the way that his punching bags developed Joe Louis.

It is our own conception, however, and we have expressed it many times without drawing principled answers from either faction, that the decisions of the Third Congress and the subsequent resolutions of the IEC were incorrect and non-Marxist decisions.

It is our conception, and we will again develop it below, that the present factional formations are simply the expression of two kinds of revisionism which have developed in the SWP in response to the fundamental revisionism of the World Congress and the IEC.

The World Congress decisions have been discussed very sketchily in the SWP. It is time now for the National Committee to put an end to such a situation. If the decisions of the Congress were correct and Marxist, then the party and the Congress can only gain from a thorough discussion. On the other hand, if the decisions of the Congress were incorrect and non-Marxist, the task of straightening out the political line of world Trotskyism must and cannot help but take precedence over the personal interests of the two factions.

On our part we are confident of two things:

1. A thorough discussion of the World Congress decisions, and the Chinese resolution of the IEC would end the present confusing and non-political struggle between Cannon-Weiss, on one side, and Cochran-Clarke on the other;

2. The line of the Congress toward Eastern Europe and China would never survive such a test.

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Where we have been able to force defenders of the World Congress to take up the political questions, we have found that invariably they are unable to defend the line of the Congress without advancing basic, fundamental, anti-Leninist considerations of so clear a revisionist nature that we are amazed to hear them -- in 1953 -- in the party founded by Leon Trotsky.

As an example of this we refer you to the positions taken in Los Angeles by Comrades Myra Tanner and Murry Weiss.

Weiss, at a branch meeting, maintained that Leninism included the idea of "the transitional state." (Pinned later by some of the youth comrades Murry is said to have explained: when I said transitional state, I was wrong; I meant: state in transition. That's like saying: if I said "Our Heavenly Father," I was wrong; I meant: "Our Father Who Art In Heaven.")

Comrade Myra, replying to questions posed in the local-wide discussion, said: "Yes, the state is the nation as a whole, and also armed force"; "Yes, the state can be transitional for a brief period"; "Yes, the state can be in the hands of two classes for a brief period."

When you stop to remember that every single defeated revolution over the last half century broke its neck precisely on this question of the state and met defeat, moreover, simply because the leadership of the revolutions did advance and believe the conception that "the state can be in the hands of two classes," that the state can be "transitional" between the classes, then you can begin to appreciate the necessity of a political discussion conducted in principled, Marxist fashion.

But Comrades Weiss and Tanner did not advance these ideas from any organic or congenital Menshevism; these Menshevik ideas were forced upon these comrades by the necessity of defending, as they think good soldiers should defend, the revisionist conceptions of the Third World Congress and the IEC.

The rise of revisionism in the SWP, of which this is only one example, was foreseen by sections of the leadership in the very beginning of the preparations for the Third Congress, in the discussion of the nature of the Kremlin dominated "buffer zone."

We refer you here to the Political Committee meeting of Aug. 2, 1949, as reported in Volume 11, No. 5 of the Internal Bulletin.

This PC meeting opened in the SWP the discussion on the class nature of the states of Eastern Europe. To this meeting Comrade Cochran submitted a "memorandum." In this memorandum Cochran attempted to establish, with economic criteria, that all the buffer states were workers states. In this he was supported by Comrade Hansen. While these comrades did not assert that the proletarian revolution had been victorious in Eastern Europe, they did assert, at this PC meeting and later, that because of the economic changes the buffer states were workers states.

This conception was opposed by Comrade Cannon. The PC discussion quotes Cannon as follows: "If you once begin to play with the idea that the class nature of the state can be changed by manipulations in top circles, you open the door to all kinds of revision of basic theory." "It (a change in the class nature of the state) can only be done by revolution which is followed by a fundamental change in property relations."

This seems clear enough. It must have been clear to a large majority of the NC, which voted a few months later to accept the report of Comrade Stein repeating Cannon's basic conceptions and declaring that all the buffer states were bourgeois states. In Los Angeles Murry and Myra said many times, in the early stages of the discussion, that Cochran and Hansen were "playing with fire," that is, with revisionism.

That was likewise the opinion of Comrade John G. Wright. In his article, "The Importance of Method," Wright reproaches Cochran for wanting to "toss our Marxist formulas out the window."

We do not mean to say that the Cannon-Weiss-Stein-Wright position and method were in any way superior to those of Cochran-Hansen. Their brand of revisionism, exemplified by the idealism of Stein and Wright -- ("Historical results can never be superior to the policies that produced them") -- was, if anything, worse than the empiricism of Cochran-Hansen. Certainly today where the Cannon-Weiss tendency has presented a political position (we refer to Los Angeles) they have far outstripped the Minority in their flight from Marxism. We regard as an admission of their revisionism the fact that they have not dared -- (and we predict they will not) -- put their views on the nature of the state and revolution down on paper.

Cannon has proclaimed himself a defender of principled politics. In 1949 he branded the Cochran position an "open door" to "all kinds of revision of basic theory." He has since neither withdrawn nor sustained this characterization. Today, however, Cannon is again charging Cochran with revisionism. This time he accuses Cochran of revising Leninism on the party. Is there a connection between the two revisionisms? Is today's revisionism an extension, a logical continuation of yesterday's? Cannon doesn't say. Yet this is an important

question from the point of view of Marxist methodology, of actually principled politics. On the other hand, if Cannon was wrong in 1949 in characterizing Cochran as a revisionist, and does not examine and explain his error, what confidence can the Party place in essentially the same charge today?

The question of whether a proletarian revolution is necessary in order to establish a workers state is not only basic and principled, but even elementary. From the innumerable citations we could make from Trotsky on this point, we quote the following passage from The Spanish Revolution in Danger: "It is not the bourgeois power that grows over into a workers and peasants power and then into a proletarian power; no, the power of one class does not 'grow over' into the power of another class but is torn from it, rifle in hand."

Elsewhere in the same pamphlet the Old Man castigates the Stalinists: "...these people dream of a process of evolutionary transition from a bourgeois into a socialist revolution through a series of organic stages, figuring under different pseudonyms: Kuo-Min-Tang, 'democratic dictatorship,' 'workers and peasants revolution' -- (or 'workers and peasants government'?--S.R. & D.V.) -- 'Peoples revolution'-- and what is more, the decisive moment in this process, when one class wrests the power from another, is unnoticeably dissolved."

The decisive moment in the process of social transformation, the moment when one class wrests the power from another, was unnoticeably dissolved by the Cochran-Hansen analysis of the buffer zone "evolution."

Cannon obviously was on firm ground when he opposed the conception that workers states had arrived in Eastern Europe without proletarian revolution. His warning is certainly a Trotskyist warning: once begin to play with the idea that the class nature of the state can be changed by manipulations in top circles and you open the door to all kinds of revision of basic theory.

By "all kinds of revisions" we would, in general, expect the following ideas to develop: we would expect Cochran and Hansen, and anyone who agreed with them to reason that if workers states had come into the world without proletarian revolution, then the revolution is not indispensable. But the proletarian revolution is simply the highest point of the class struggle; if the revolution is not indispensable then the class struggle is not necessarily the driving force of history. If the class struggle is not necessarily the driving force of history, then the party is not necessarily a party of proletarian struggle or of proletarian revolution.

This seems irrefutably logical and the statement of the inescapable political principles that would have to be advanced in order to demonstrate that Cochran is revising Leninism on the party. (For an actually principled treatment of this question, we refer Cannon to "The Biography of Liquidation," Internal Bulletin No. 5.)

Why doesn't the Cannon-Weiss caucus develop its attack on the Cochran-Clarke caucus by pointing to the very clear and categorical warning of Comrade Cannon in 1949? The question may be embarrassing but the reason is very clear: The Cannon-Weiss caucus has adopted the position of Cochran-Hansen, the open door to revisionism.

They branded that position a revisionist one. They wrote against it and spoke against it. Yet when this position was presented by the IEC to the Third World Congress, the Cannon-Weiss leadership voted to endorse the "general line" of the Cochran-Hansen-Pablo resolution, entering a reservation only as to the label to be put on these states ("destroyed as states" rather than "workers states"). But it was not, of course, the label but the "general line" that they had previously called revisionist.

If the Cochran-Hansen position of 1949 was revisionist, it certainly did not cease to be revisionist simply by becoming the Pablo-Cannon-Cochran position of 1952 and 1953. If it was an open door to "all kinds of revision of basic theory," then the support of Cannon-Weiss simply opened the door wider. As a demonstration of this, we refer you again to the positions stated by Comrades Weiss and Tanner in the Los Angeles discussion, cited at the beginning of this letter.

Today the party is rent by factional struggle. Many comrades ask, together with Comrade Breitman: WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

Well, for actually principled politics, this is certainly one of the issues. The charge of each caucus that its opponent is revisionist is a political question that requires basic principled exposition. The buffer zone discussion cannot be eliminated from this.

Did Cannon-Weiss change their minds about the revisionist consequences of the Cochran-Hansen position? The only replies we have been able to get to this question in Los Angeles are epithets (Disloyal! Splitter! Pro-Stalinist! Stalinist!).

Did they change their minds? If they did, they have not informed the Party. But isn't this necessary? Do we want a party trained in principled politics, trained to view all positions critically? Or do we want a party that votes "Yes" today and "No" tomorrow, and anything at all the day after, simply on a signal from the leadership?

Is that the kind of party that we consider has "the right to exist" in America? Is that the kind of Party that can lead the proletarian revolution?

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Both the Cannon-Weiss and Cochran-Clarke factions accept a position on Eastern Europe which eliminates the proletarian revolution as the indispensable pre-condition for any fundamental transformation of society.

"The decisive moment in this process" (Trotsky), the moment, in actuality, for which the revolutionary party exists, "when one class wrests the power from another" was "unnoticeably dissolved" in the joint buffer-zone position of both caucuses and of the Third World Congress.

None of these "principled" politicians can tell to this day not only the "decisive moment," they cannot even point to the decisive day, week, month, or year.

Instead they picture the buffer states as changing their class nature by stages; they present the picture of an essentially "evolutionary transition" of these states from bourgeois to proletarian.

As with the Stalinists, whom Trotsky fought on this question, these stages "figure under different pseudonyms" -- "intermediate status," "dual power" (within a single state), or, in Germain's analysis, "workers and peasants governments." The original "bourgeois" states propped up by the Kremlin grew over into an "intermediate" status, (or "workers and peasants government") which in turn grew over into the present workers states.

This is the line of both caucuses.

If this anti-Marxist conception is not clearly evident in the intentionally ambiguous buffer zone Resolution of the Third World Congress, then it is certainly undeniable in the IEC Resolution on China.

China was ruled, under Chiang Kai-shek, by a bourgeois state. Chiang's regime was driven from power and replaced by the government of Mao Tse-Tung.

Was this the victory of the revolution? Was this the "decisive moment" when "one class wrests the power from another"? Or is that decisive moment still to come?

This whole problem, the problem in actuality of the revolution is dissolved by the IEC. The IEC doesn't hold that state power in China has passed from class to class (the social revolution). The IEC holds that the present Chinese state is "dual power," that is, the power of both the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. And it holds that this situation of "dual power" can be ended and a workers state created without a revolution.

Dissolve "the decisive moment when one class wrests the power from another" and you must inevitably also dissolve the whole question of proletarian revolution into a series of "evolutionary stages."

Involved here is a fundamental betrayal of the Marxian concept of dual power. Dual power can never mean one regime representing two antagonistic classes (an obvious absurdity), but two separate powers, two separate armed formations. These two powers can exist side by side without civil war only for a limited period.

Dual power, for example, existed in Russia after February, 1917. The Soviets and the Red Guards existed side by side with the police, Cossack regiments, and army officer corps of the bourgeois state. The Soviets, under the leadership of the SRs and Mensheviks accepted and supported the Kerensky regime, thus constituting a regime of dual power.

But this does not mean that the Kerensky regime was in any way a two-class, or transitional, or classless regime. The public power, with the consent of the workers, was in the hands of the bourgeoisie. The Soviets were regarded, and their leadership regarded them, as "private institutions." And the state is not simply power, but the single, unquestioned and established public power.

This regime of dual power could not last. But it also could not evolve by stages into the dictatorship of the proletariat. It had to be overthrown. The October Revolution was this overthrow, the "decisive moment" when the proletariat wrested the power away from the bourgeoisie.

Contrast this to the conceptions presented by the IEC in its Chinese resolution. The single state, according to the IEC, is neither the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie or the dictatorship of the proletariat. The state represents both these classes. So apparently does the government which is called "a workers and farmers government" but one in which the bourgeoisie shares power. (This strange government is not called "a workers, peasants and capitalists government," we suspect, simply from considerations of that "prudence" which Germain recommends.)

And the IEC, just like the Stalinists whom Trotsky castigated, does not see the necessity for an "October" revolution in China in order to liquidate this "dual power," and sees instead, just like the Stalinists, the transition from bourgeois to proletarian power as an essentially "evolutionary transition." And, again like the Stalinists, the IEC uses the concept of "the workers and farmers government" as an organic stage in this transition, as a pseudonym which "unnoticeably dissolves" the decisive moment -- (in China long past) -- when one class wrests the power from another.

The workers and peasants government, in the conception of the IEC, will "grow over" into a workers state and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In place of the clear and scientific conceptions of Lenin and Trotsky, we thus get from the IEC the basic ideas of Menshevism and Stalinism.

Seeing this, one can also see how truly correct Cannon was in 1949: once begin to play with the idea that the class nature of the state can be changed by manipulations in top circles and you open the door to all kinds of revision of basic theory.

Comparing the Chinese and buffer zone positions of the IEC and the World Congress with the basic theory of Marxism-Leninism, shows one how truly incorrect Cannon is in 1953 when he supports these revisions.

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The history of Marxism-Leninism-Trotskyism is permeated by the struggle against the idea of the transitional or class-less or two class state.

Is there any precedent in Marxist theory or in the history of the class struggle for the conceptions of the IEC or the ideas of Myra and Murry?

In all the great wealth represented by the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, these comrades have been able to find one paragraph which they consider as authority for their position. But



in order to so interpret this passage it is not only necessary to ignore every thing else that Comrade Trotsky wrote on this question, it is also necessary to commit a forgery, a very small forgery, with the passage itself.

In the Transitional Program Comrade Trotsky writes:

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

This is the paragraph in which Cannon-Weiss, Pablo, and Harry Frankel claim that Trotsky abandoned the conceptions which he had spent his whole life defending. But here is the forgery:

The term "workers and farmers government" is placed in quotation marks by Trotsky when it is used to describe not a slogan but a government. In the summaries of this paragraph presented by Pablo and Frankel, and in the oral reading by Murry Weiss, they do not mention these quotation marks. Are we merely quibbling or hair-splitting in calling attention to these quotation marks? No; they have an important place in this paragraph, even a decisive one.

"The 'workers and farmers government' in the above-mentioned sense," writes Trotsky. What is "the above-mentioned sense"? As a popular designation for the dictatorship of the proletariat. As a demand addressed to the petty-bourgeois parties: You say you represent the workers and farmers; very well then, break with the bourgeoisie and establish a workers and peasants government.

And if they do break? Will we still have the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie? The dictatorship of the proletariat? Or will we have something which is neither, a workers and farmers government?

The quotation marks have their meaning. There is a world of difference, for example, between these two statements: Norman Thomas is a Marxist and Norman Thomas is a "Marxist." By the second statement we mean that Norman Thomas is a so-called or self-styled Marxist, but not actually a Marxist at all.

Trotsky's quotation marks indicate that while the government of the petty-bourgeois parties, breaking with the bourgeoisie, might consider itself a workers and peasants government as distinguished from a proletarian or a bourgeois government, while even the workers and peasants themselves might consider it a transitional or in-between government, the Marxists would consider it a "workers and peasants government" only in the "above-mentioned sense" -- that is, as "a

popular designation for the dictatorship of the proletariat." The "workers and farmers government" then is the dictatorship of the proletariat wielded by the petty-bourgeois parties, a short episode to the actual dictatorship of the proletariat wielded by the truly proletarian, the Marxist, party.

Lenin in 1917 raised the slogan: All Power To The Soviets. Since the Soviets were under the control of the petty-bourgeois parties, the actual content of this slogan was the same as the slogan: For A Workers and Farmers Government raised under the circumstances envisaged by Trotsky in the Transitional Program. All Power To The Soviets was a demand, addressed to the Mensheviks and SRs: break with the bourgeoisie and take power.

Can anyone deny that if the Menshevik-controlled Soviets had broken with the bourgeoisie and taken power they would have constituted a workers state? Lenin was clearly of this opinion: in his April Thesis he affirmed "The dictatorship of the proletariat exists," but that the lack of political consciousness of the working class, embodied in the leadership of Mensheviks and SRs, prevented the workers from exercising their dictatorship. This is likewise confirmed by Trotsky who designates the pre-October Soviets as a "semi-state."

No, comrades! Leninism-Trotskyism considers that a workers and farmers government cannot and will not actually exist apart from the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is demonstrated again, among other places, in the Spanish pamphlet already cited. "We can say to the peasant with full right that our aim is to establish a workers and peasants republic, just as after the October revolution we called the government of the proletarian dictatorship in Russia a 'workers and peasants government.' But we do not counterpose the workers and peasants revolution to the proletarian; on the contrary we identify them. This is the only correct way of putting the question. Here we once more touch the very heart of the problem of the so-called permanent revolution." (Our emphasis.)

We certainly do. If the concept of the IEC, Cannon-Weiss, and Cochran-Frankel of China as an actual "workers and peasants government" is correct, then the Trotskyist theory of the permanent revolution is incorrect.

This is one of the issues before the Party: What conceptions shall we base the party on -- the correctness of the theory of the permanent revolution, or on the denial of this theory? This is not, however, an issue between the two major factions.

"It is the duty of the Left Opposition," writes Trotsky, "to uncover and reveal mercilessly, and once and for all to discredit in the minds of the proletarian vanguard the formula of a separate workers and peasants revolution distinct from the bourgeois and the proletarian. Do not believe in it, workers of Spain! It is a diabolical snare which will be transformed tomorrow into a noose around your necks."

It is the duty of actually principled politicians, that is, Trotskyists, to uncover, reveal mercilessly, and once and for all discredit the formula of a separate workers and peasants revolution distinct from the bourgeois or the proletarian. Both Cannon-Weiss and

Cochran-Clarke avoid this duty. How do they propose to build an independent party in this country? Upon the discharge of Trotskyist, that is, principled, duties, or upon the conception that actually Trotsky was simply (like Vern-Ryan) a hair-splitter who after all knew nothing of "the realities of living events" in the so very "exceptional" post-war situation?

And, let's face it! If there can be a workers and peasants government distinct from the dictatorship of the proletariat or of the bourgeoisie, as the IEC denominates China, then there obviously can be a distinct "workers and peasants revolution."

If the NC supports the IEC resolution on China, how can it carry out this "duty of the Left Opposition," the duty now of an independent Trotskyist party? If the NC has an incorrect conception of the revolution, how can it build a revolutionary party?

The question of the revolution, posed as the problem of the "workers and farmers government," is thus an issue before the Party. But it is not an issue between Cannon-Weiss and Cochran-Clarke. Both caucuses not only support the buffer zone position but also the IEC resolution on China. The question of the revolution in its Leninist-Trotskyist essentials is an issue between the Marxists in the party and both caucuses.

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Assuming for a moment that a workers and peasants government can actually exist, let us define the government as the party with governmental power. If the government is actually a workers and peasants government -- actually, and not simply as a popular designation for a workers government -- then the party is inescapably defined as actually a workers and farmers party.

The concept of the two class party, thrown out the window by the IEC, thus reenters through the open door. This will undoubtedly in its time produce its full measure of trouble.

But more than this follows. The government is simply the directing summit of the state. If you have a two-class government, then you can logically expect to encounter the two-class state.

But that brings us again (rather it brings Cannon-Weiss and Cochran-Clarke) into conflict with Comrade Trotsky.

"Only the dictatorship of the proletariat can overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie. There is not, there will not be, and there cannot be, any intermediary revolution more 'simple,' more 'economical,' more adapted to your forces. History will not invent for you any transitional dictatorship, a dictatorship of a second order, a dictatorship at a discount." (Our emphasis.)

Trotsky said this to the Spanish workers in 1931. Does it apply to China in 1946-53? If it does not, as the supporters of the idea of the workers and peasants government must maintain, then the permanent revolution does not apply. Trotskyism, whatever help it might afford in understanding past history, has no place in shaping the development of future events.

Here again we can see how correct Cannon was in 1949. Once begin to play with the idea that the class character or the state can be changed by manipulations in top circles and you open the door to all kinds of revision of basic theory. Naturally Comrade Cannon does not like to be reminded of these words. Naturally, since Comrade Cannon has embraced the revisionist theory, he blames the foulness in the Los Angeles air not on the revisionists but on the defenders of Marrxism.

It is two of Cannon's staunchest supporters, however, who have gone through the open door to defend openly (orally, that is) the idea of a transitional state.

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A few months ago the paper reprinted the protest of the IEC against the persecution of the Chinese Trotskyists by the Mao government. This manifesto contained in its concluding paragraphs the statement: "Nevertheless the Chinese Trotskyists will not range themselves against this leadership."

A subsequent issue of the paper declared that this sentence was a "faulty translation" and that the sentence should have read: "Nevertheless the Chinese Trotskyists will not range themselves against this revolution."

A faulty translation, apparently, produced "leadership" where "revolution" had been written.

Was this actually a faulty translation? None of the more or less make-shift linguists whom we have consulted have been able to supply from French, German or Greek the particular word that would mean "revolution" but which could faultily be translated as "leadership."

The word may exist. The translation may have been from some other language.

Just the same the sentence: "Nevertheless the Chinese Trotskyists will not range themselves against this leadership" got by the translators and also got by the editors of the paper.

The reason for this is not hard to find: the IEC resolution on China does not range the Chinese Trotskyists against the Mao government. The IEC declares that the Chinese Communist Party based itself in matters of doctrine "upon the plane of Marxism-Leninism" -- how can Trotskyists range themselves against that? The IEC declares that the Chinese Communist Party is going to "unfurl" the "demonstration" of "proletarian power" in China -- how can the Chinese Trotskyists range themselves against such a demonstration? And the IEC decides that the Chinese Trotskyists are to give critical support to the government of the Chinese Communist Party -- how can you range yourself against a government if you are giving critical support, not to specific actions or measures, but to the government itself?

If the sentence in the paper actually was a faulty translation, it was a faulty translation of the literal text but a correct translation of the actual political line of the IEC.

The resolution of the IEC on China, presenting a Menshevik-Stalinist conception of the Chinese revolution, could not help but present the same revisionist conceptions about the Marxist Party.

The IEC considers that the Chinese Communist Party, unquestionably a Stalinist party in, say, 1944, "outlined a revolutionary orientation," evolved into a centrist party and will evolve tomorrow into a left-centrist party; based itself in matters of doctrine upon Marxism-Leninism, and is about to unfurl the demonstration of proletarian power in China.

Clearly the Stalinist Party of 1944 has "gone left" and has become today "predominantly progressive" and will tomorrow become "completely progressive." The left centrist party of tomorrow will either be adequate for the needs of the revolution or will continue its evolution into Marxism.

Clearly a considerable "historic validity" did attach to the Stalinist Party of 1944.

And what about the Chinese Trotskyists? Oh. Them. They are to "push" the Chinese CP.

The world conception that Stalinism can "only go left" and constitutes the viable instrument of the proletarian revolution, will be developed, in most cases, country by country. If the picture presented by the IEC of the evolution of Chinese Stalinism into Marxism (or an adequate substitute for Marxism) is actually correct, then there is no reason whatsoever why this same evolution cannot unfold in any other country in the world.

The proclamation on a world scale that "Stalinism can only go left" will begin today with China, tomorrow with France, Norway and India, and eventually include all countries.

Both caucuses in the SWP, both the faction of Cochran-Clarke and the faction of Cannon-Weiss, support the resolution of the IEC. In the discussion in Los Angeles the Vern-Ryan supporters criticized the idea of giving critical support to Mao's government and declared that the line of Chinese Trotskyism should be the replacement of this government, peacefully if possible, with political revolution if necessary. A very revealing discussion developed. All of us were for material aid to Mao's government against internal counter-revolution or imperialist attack. All of us were for critical support to specific actions and measures of the government; and none of us favored supporting everything that the government is doing.

But both Cannonites and Cochranites insisted on giving critical support to Mao's government, both Cannonites and Cochranites opposed the slogan of replacing Mao's government with a Trotskyist government, and both caucuses branded our slogan of political revolution as sectarianism.

The present faction fight between Cannon-Weiss and Cochran-Clarke was temporarily ended in LA; both caucuses found unity in this joint attack upon Marxism.

There are important lessons for us in a serious study of Bolshevism. Was Lenin ready to give "critical support" to a non-Bolshevik Soviet government? This was maintained by Weiss in the Los Angeles discussion. He obviously assumes that his supporters can't or don't read. This is Weiss' version of Lenin's policy: "Lenin said to the Mensheviks and the SRs: take power and we will support you." He conveniently drops the phrase that meant everything to Lenin: "against the bourgeoisie."

Did Lenin mean that he was ready to give political support to a workers government of SRs and Mensheviks should they actually break with the bourgeoisie? That is not what Trotsky says in the "History." According to Trotsky the Bolsheviks would refuse to take any political responsibility for such a government, would refuse to give it political support, though they would, of course, give it material aid against bourgeois or feudal counter-revolution (just as they actually defended Kerensky's bourgeois government). But beyond that they made only one promise: we will not proceed with the armed insurrection if our democratic rights are not interfered with. That is a very important condition. Does it mean that Lenin was not determined to unseat the SRs and Mensheviks? The answer is self-evident: so long as Soviet democracy exists the Bolsheviks will carry on their struggle for power through democratic channels; if the Mensheviks persecute the Bolsheviks, then the Bolsheviks must use all means necessary to defend themselves and the working class, including armed insurrection. Lenin made the same promise to the Mensheviks that Marxists make, by implication, to the bourgeoisie when they insist that they do not advocate but only predict armed violence in the transfer of power from the bourgeoisie to the working class.

There certainly is no precedent in Lenin's position for the attitude of "critical support" that the IEC and the supporters of its position take toward the "workers and farmers government" of China; and still less does it justify critical support to the bourgeois government of Bolivia, or a readiness to form a coalition government with the MNR, the bourgeois government of Bolivia.

Comrade Germain can find no justification in Lenin for labeling "such ideas (working for the overthrow of Mao-Tze-Tung while defending him against imperialism)" as "counter-revolutionary." The Chinese Trotskyists must strive for power. No one will insist on violence if Mao accords the Trotskyists democratic rights. But the choice is not ours. Mao has made his choice and seems unlikely to change it.

But the question of our attitude toward the Chinese CP is not primarily a question of predicting what its attitude will be toward the Trotskyists. Whatever errors anyone makes on this score will be corrected by events. What is involved is not some secondary or tactical question (entry or non-entry, or half entry) but the Marxist position, program, and tradition on the nature and role of the Marxist party.

Marxists have never given critical support to any party or government. The only parties we have ever given support to (as distinguished from material defense or aid) have been Marxist parties. The only governments we have been willing to give political support to have been governments (actually only one government in history) controlled

by a Marxist party. Our position has always been that we give critical support to all specific, concrete progressive acts of any non-Marxist party or government, but we take no political responsibility for these parties or governments. Marxists have always strictly, jealously, even quarrelsomely guarded the political independence of their party. "March separately!" is the injunction of the Old Man, "Strike together!"

The Marxist party always strives for power.

The winning of reforms, pushing another, a non-Marxist party toward progressive actions, even pushing the masses on the road of revolution (pushing is done from behind) can never be the central aim of a Bolshvik-Leninist party, but incidental to its main and central aim: Winning the leadership of the masses; the taking of political power.

This tradition of our movement has also been rejected by the IEC. Cochran-Clarke support the IEC in this. Cannon-Weiss, so anxious to find threats to "the right of the Party to exist," in the USA, take with equanimity and actively defend this attack on the right of the Chinese Trotskyist party to exist. Obviously they feel that it doesn't matter what is done outside the USA, since it is the American working class that will save the world.

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Actually principled politics clearly establishes the basic revisionism which is involved in the World Congress and IEC positions on the buffer countries and China. Here it is clearly the function of orthodox Trotskyists to establish that the class struggle is really the driving force of history, to find that high point in the class struggle which equals proletarian revolution.

Failure to do this results inevitably in the conception that the buffer countries and China, once ruled by bourgeois states, had these states transformed primarily by manipulations in top circles.

Once begin to play with the idea that the class nature of the state can be changed by manipulation in top circles and you open the door to all kinds of revision of basic theory.

When you have opened the door to all kinds of revision of basic theory, the task of building and maintaining a Marxist Party is impossible.

If the history of the last decade has indeed outmoded or overthrown the basic Marxist conceptions as to the class struggle, the state, and the necessity of proletarian revolution, then it is impossible to base the party upon these outmoded conceptions.

Instead of the principled Marxist foundation, the party will have to find its base upon concrete, immediate and conjunctural issues; or it will have to base itself upon socialism as a moral ideal, it will have to depend upon the devotion and genius of infallible leaders who will substitute their genius for the outmoded laws of Marxism.

History will not disclose any other perspectives.

Both these non-Leninist conceptions of the party are present in the germ in the factions of Cochran-Clarke and Cannon-Weiss. But also present, unfortunately also in the germ, is the Trotskyist conception of building the party firmly upon the base of principled Marxism. The present plenum of the NC will undoubtedly play an important role in determining which of these tendencies will eventually control the party.

On our part we were and remain firmly of the conviction that Marxism as a scientific doctrine has not been outmoded but brilliantly confirmed in the post-war history. We consider that it is not only possible but necessary for the party to base itself firmly upon the basic Marxist-Leninist-Trotskyist conceptions; and we have unshakable confidence that such a party will stand erect and indestructible through all the conjunctures of capitalism's death agony.

Such a party cannot be built or advanced by shirking. Comrades who cannot defend Marxism for fear of offending friends and party leaders will never stand up under the coming persecutions of the bourgeois regime.

It is now the duty, the opportunity and the historic privilege of the National Committee to end the present clique struggle and inaugurate a principled political discussion.

We hope that the Plenum will do this. We hope that the Plenum will raise the political questions. But we have to say: should the Plenum fail to do this, we consider that the Marxists in the party will have no choice other than the perspective of a Marxist faction which will wage a struggle for principled Trotskyism in the SWP, independently of the leadership, and eventually against it.

With genuinely anti-revisionist greetings,

Sam Ryan  
Dennis Vern



## THE REAL SITUATION IN AMERICA

By A.P. (Detroit) and Dave Miller (Chicago)

The present discussion in the Party, if it follows its natural course, will eventually cover every basic question which has arisen in the history of the Marxist movement. It will be a recapitulation, in the light of the events and problems of today, of the struggle to achieve revolutionary theory which began in the middle of the 19th century, and which will be concluded only with the final victory of socialism on a world scale. It will involve the theory of the permanent revolution and the nature of our epoch; the nature of Stalinism and the Stalinist parties; the inevitability of socialism and the role of the party; the nature of the state and its relationship to society; the nature of capitalism, socialism, and the working class. Implicit, and perhaps also explicit in the discussions will be the nature of our world view, of dialectical materialism and the Marxist method.

The theoretical battles which led to the forging of Bolshevik theory and the Bolshevik party, varied as they were, covered all questions in the light of the struggle for the Russian revolution. Our task, the American revolution, must likewise provide both the point of departure and return for this discussion. It is only formalists who see in this a contradiction with internationalism -- formalists who have in actuality given up for today, for now, the major tasks of revolutionists everywhere, the revolution in their own country. This is above all true today in the tightly knit, explosive world which confronts us. This is above all true today of America, the strongest capitalist nation in the world.

But, as in the language of biology the birth is preceded by a recapitulation of the history of the race, we have every right to feel confident that our party will emerge from this discussion as the Bolsheviks emerged from theirs. We are confident that we will come out of this discussion theoretically re-armed and programmatically re-equipped to meet the current questioning, restless, and presently surging movement of the American workers; equipped to fulfill our historic role as the vanguard of the American, and with our co-thinkers, the world socialist revolution.

We begin the discussion somewhat angularly, but as the comrades will appreciate, with an approach that will bring us to the heart of the discussion.

### 1. The Johnsonites and the Minority

The cry "Johnsonite" comes with singular lack of grace from those who protest "amalgams" and "frame-ups." Unlike them, we propose to indicate that this amalgam is not only unwarranted but entirely misplaced.

It should be no secret in the party that serious differences existed among the so-called "Johnsonites." This was called very sharply to the attention of the party in the form of a telegram to the organizer of the Detroit branch in 1950, informing him that serious, long-standing and well known differences existed between A.P. and Johnson, and that therefore the organizer was not to permit A.P. to speak in Chicago on the question of state-capitalism. As a

matter of fact the differences were not well known in the party. They had not even been discussed within the tendency, but had taken the form up to that time of private discussions and letters. Nevertheless the telegram represented "expulsion," or more exactly, excommunication from the tendency. What were these differences which caused such extreme and peculiar methods?

Leaving aside questions of method and philosophy which are not immediately pertinent to the discussion, the differences can best be summarized in a letter to Johnson commenting on the document which was to provide the theoretical basis for their silence at the 1950 convention, and the subsequent escape from the lair, in their words, "of the dehumanized brutes" and the "weeping women."

"Dear J.

Detroit, June 25, 1950

". . . Germain and Pablo both base themselves on Trotsky, and that is right for Trotskyism has a dual character and heritage. On the one hand there is the theory of the permanent revolution, which to me remains despite minor modifications, one of the basic theoretical sources of the world revolutionary perspectives of the Trotskyist movement; there is the Trotsky of October, the Red Army, and the Third International; there is the Trotsky of the History of the Russian Revolution and the biography of Stalin; of the transitional program and the preceding conversations; of the dialectic method and the 1940 split; of the Negro question in the United States.

"On the other hand there is the Trotsky of the trade union dispute and of the nationalized property fetishism.

"That is point one. To ignore this, to attack the 'whole system of ideas of Trotskyism,' to equate Trotsky with Pablo is 100% false and gives away not only theoretically but concretely 90% of the struggle before it is well under way.

"For us as late as 1947 this was accepted. More than accepted, it formed the basis for many of our ideas; the world revolutionary perspective; the transitional program and the preceding conversations, the Negro question. For Trotsky as well as for the Fourth International, the world revolutionary perspective, the programmatic incorporation of the American revolution, outweighed in the balance the Russian question. This weighing was, as I understood it, not an abstract business. It was directly tied to our own evaluation of what the actual process of the class struggle, the revolutionary potential of the proletariat, would do for the dual heritage of Trotsky.

"Start from there. I do not believe there has been anywhere a thorough-going defeat for the proletariat since 1947; not even a decisive battle which would reflect itself sharply and irrevocably in the International.

"The division in the International, which the document ignores completely, if understood correctly in my opinion, is deep-going, and represents in its own fumbling way the struggle between the two aspects of Trotskyism, revolutionary self-mobilization of the masses vs the nationalized economy. . . Only a sharp defeat of the proletariat will make Pablo victor.

"It is in this manner that we must intervene, explaining to the participants the nature of the struggle they are engaged in, the struggle over the dual heritage. Otherwise we have the document, whether we like it or not, a split document. After its false and undialectic attack on Trotskyism, it gives to Tito the task of organizing a Fourth International, which makes it a minor league competitor with the Stalinists for the position of agent of state capital; it gives the imperialist war the task of re-enlightening the Fourth; the only way it appears that the Fourth can learn is through an added series of defeats of the proletariat. False, academic and defeatist from top to bottom.

"There are many other questions which should be discussed in detail -- the misconceptions and mechanism of the section on the role of the party. In addition they seem as if they were thrown in in passing. . . I hope the document as I have seen it never sees the light of day. Its consequences will be disastrous."

The first point to be made is that it is obviously no accident that the Johnsonites left, and the revolutionists remained. They left on the basis of the repudiation of the world revolutionary perspectives and traditions of Trotskyism, we remained to affirm them. That is one side of the business.

The other side is that they left on the same question on which they entered, the perspectives for the American revolution. The failure of the workers to make the revolution since 1947 -- the prospect of the Third World War and its concomitant for them, the end of hope in the American working class, drove them out of the revolutionary movement.

It is of the utmost importance in this discussion to understand their conception of the American revolution, which held within itself the seeds of its own destruction. It was one face of the coin of which economism is the other. Like the minority, and unlike Trotsky, they were overly impressed with prosperity, full bellies and the high standard of living of the American working class. Unlike the minority, they could not look to the Red Army and the Stalinist parties for comfort in their time of need. So they constructed an elaborate theoretical structure to compensate, in their fashion, for their inability to understand the transitional program, the nature of the epoch, and the nature of the thinking of the American working class. The German True Socialist and Feuerbachian "alienation of the human essence" became the source of revolutionary motivation and energy for the workers.

Along with this, seeing the relative lack of size of the revolutionary vanguard and overwhelmed by the immensity of the tasks, they developed like children whistling in the dark, the idea of the unimportance of the party. Instead of drawing strength and courage from the tremendous power of the masses in motion they hid behind it, lost themselves in it, at least in the theory of it, and drew the conclusion that the masses would somehow create the leadership, would reshape existing organizations to their needs, etc. They too, in the earlier stages of their development spent much time on the question of "Americanization" of Bolshevism, the propaganda nature of the party, etc. The impatient ones who demonstrate thus no

understanding, no faith in the action of the masses and in the historical validity of their program, always look for gimmicks and short cuts. We hope to be forgiven, but we cannot at this time refrain from saying that of all the "Americanizers," it is the Johnsonites who have to the present been most successful. Whereas the Bolsheviks had their "three whales" -- the republic, the 8-hour day, and the third which for the moment escapes us, the Johnsonites have Moby Dick.

Now the Johnsonites, and Morrow-Goldman, for example, despite the fact that one group held the position of state capitalism, and the other went to its political grave clutching the banner of Russia as a workers' state, had far more basic similarity than apparent differences. "Some may," Trotsky wrote in 1907, "consider paradoxical the statement that the psychological trait of opportunism is its inability to wait."

Let us at this point hasten to say that Trotsky was not thus praising the patient ones who are willing to receive their just rewards in heaven, nor those who are patiently waiting for the Fourth International to play its role after "centuries of deformed workers' states." In the early years of the Third International, Menshevik and Centrist tendencies of all sorts came to life, and presented their promissory note to history for immediate payment. They complained that the Bolsheviks had promised revolutions throughout the world and were not delivering. From many sides, in many disguises, the hyena chorus again sounded after the Second World War. God knows, they said in effect, we have been patient. We have suffered. We have sacrificed. (This last note is sounded most loudly in America.) Trotsky promised that the end of the war would see the Fourth International leading millions. Trotsky promised that the end of the war would see the destruction of Stalinism. The American leadership, even after the war, promised the American Revolution. And now look at the reality. The Stalinists, not we, are leading the millions. And most important of all for us here, not only has the revolution in America not taken place, but reaction is dominant, the working class is conservative and quiescent, lethargic, because well fed, and the war is on the way.

"Opportunism" Trotsky said, "devoured by impatience, looks around for 'new' ways, 'new' means to realize. It exhausts itself in complaining on the insufficiency and uncertainty of its own forces and seeks 'allies'." We know that just because sectarianism and opportunism, opposite sides of the same coin, are what they are, the reaction to the failure of the working class to revolt according to a timetable, takes on differing forms. The Johnsonite sectarians, first having tried a "new" way of Americanizing, a "new" means to realize, now have found their haven, their "new" allies, in God, Hegel, and Herman Melville. Some opportunists have found their way to American imperialism. Some are finding their "allies" in Stalinism and the Red Army.

No, it is not we who are akin to the Johnsonites. It is the minority which is repudiating the revolutionary traditions and ideas of Trotskyism. It is they who are denying the historic role of the Fourth International. It is they who minimize the role of the party, and hold that the masses have the power to create through transformation, the leadership necessary for the revolution. It is they who

repudiate the transitional program. It is they who are paralyzed by their fear of the war and have lost all perspective of mass movements independent of the Kremlin in Europe and Asia, and in America see only reaction and an inert working class. It is the minority which is presenting Trotsky's "promissory note" for payment. It is they who confront the majority with the theses on the "Coming American Revolution" of 1947.

We have defended the revolutionary ideas and perspectives of Trotskyism against the Johnsonites. We will defend them against the minority. For our part, we are prepared to bloc with anyone who seriously undertakes the theoretical and actual defense of the historic role of the Fourth International; who understands and insists that the Fourth act upon the perspective of mass movements independent of and against the Kremlin; who holds to the real perspectives for the American revolution. We give freely to the minority the privilege of howling about unprincipled blocs. Such a bloc is its own justification. If Trotsky could "bloc" with the Bolsheviks on the question of October, despite their opposition to the central theoretical prerequisite for October, the theory of the permanent revolution, we find not the least difficulty in fighting together for the party and the revolution.

Now we have made many generalizations about the thinking of the minority, some of which we assume, or hope rather, that those in the ranks of the minority will protest. Trotsky said of Stalin that if he could have seen the end result of the road he was following, he would have turned back. Surely we can say at least that of the majority of the minorityites, including those in the leadership. Much has been done to smoke out the real views of the one or two who know, or think they know where they are going, and who, typical of an opportunistic grouping, attempt in the early stages of every struggle to be all things to all men. Much has been done; more remains.

## II. The Real Views of the Minority

Every opportunist grouping, every centrist element in the history of the Marxist movement, has always given lip service to revolutionary perspectives. The Social Democracy, the Mensheviks, are for socialism, but not today. Reuther is, or rather was, for a Labor Party, for the 30 hour week, but now is not the time. They always have plenty of proof for their sense of timing, which in the last analysis boils down to the state of the masses, their lack of readiness, their lack of socialist consciousness, their backwardness; and the corollary, the weakness and insignificance of the revolutionary party. But because it is necessary to hide their real nature, even from themselves, they must engage in all kinds of fraudulent posing. Let us take just one example.

In their bulletin the minority constantly refers to the tactic of entry into the SP to demonstrate what they are aiming at, and to further illustrate the sectarian nature of the leadership of the Party for refusing to evaluate their approach to the Stalinists in the same light. In a later bulletin they publish the discussions with Trotsky on tactics toward the CP. Yet their major complaint is precisely that the Majority looks upon the conclusions of the Third World Congress only in the same manner as the entry into the SP, that

is as a tactical rather than a strategic line. They quote Trotsky, who time and again in the conversations insists in so many words that this is a tactical not a strategic question. Their real attitude as opposed to that of both Trotsky and the Majority, is expressed in their document on P. 13 as follows: "The Third World Congress was a landmark in the history of world Trotskyism. It was to inaugurate a reorientation in outlook and a change in tactics probably as significant as the turn toward the formation of a new international proposed by Trotsky in 1934 after Hitler had taken power in Germany." (Our emphasis.)

We have insisted from the beginning that involved here is no abstract tactical question of entry or no entry, which is no more a question of principle in relation to mass CP formations than it was with relation to the SP. We have insisted that hiding behind the formulation of this question as a tactical one lay a basic change in perspective with relation to the historic role of the Fourth, and the corollary, the historic role and nature of Stalinism. Here it is nakedly expressed.

The foundation of the Fourth International was not a "tactic." It proceeded from the conclusion that the 3rd International, as the Second International before it, had become historically counter-revolutionary, and that a new International was necessary to lead humanity to socialism. When we entered the SP, it was not based upon a "re-evaluation" of social democracy. Nobody called into question the validity of the forthcoming formation of the new international. Nobody explicitly or implicitly questioned its historic role. But it should be obvious that if the re-evaluation is made of the role of Stalinism, one of the contending elements for leadership of the proletarian revolution and not on a simple tactical plane, then also involved is a re-evaluation of the role of the other, the Fourth International. The theoretical foundation which has been established for this we will demonstrate below. Charles, the NC member who deserted as an individual, also "re-evaluated," except that since he saw nationalized property in Great Britain, he preferred that model of the "deformed workers state," and he placed the findings of the Third World Congress on a level not only equal in importance to the decisions to launch the Fourth, but also the Third, and forthwith, with more clarity and consistency than the minority, returned to the Second Internationals. Now, as day follows night, despite all the frantic denials on the part of elements within the minority, the Transitional Program which was the basis for the formation of the Fourth, is thrown out the window. On P. 20 of the "New World Reality etc." by Frankel we read that "Trotsky had the genius to foresee not the fact, but the 'theoretical possibility' in his own words. He called it ('the possibility that the petty-bourgeois parties, including the Stalinists may go further than they themselves wish along the road to a break with the bourgeoisie,' A.P. - D.M.) a 'highly improbable variant.' He did not build the transitional Program around this possibility but around its opposite." (Our emphasis.)

We will discuss the Transitional Program with relation to America below, but let us examine further the real views of the Minority.

Cochran and company, on p. 41 of "The Roots of the Party Crisis," have this to say: "They (the majority -- A.P., D.M.) cling to straws,

hope for miracles that will alter the trend in time; a deal between the Kremlin and Washington that will bring the splits needed to create big Trotskyist parties; revolutions in Western Europe independent of the Kremlin in time to create a new relationship of forces; a "Titoite" split of Mao Tse-Tung from the Kremlin. One by one these illusions are shattered and meanwhile the war and the world showdown come closer.

"The last straw is that the American working class will turn away from the great revolutionary upheavals which have altered the social structure of the world, and from which alone today American revolutionists can draw confidence in their program and hope for future victory. They are turned back to the U.S. where counter-revolutionary reaction rules supreme today, and will be jolted from its present stability by the contradictions of its world position and its clash with the revolutionary forces in the world. . . Irreparable harm and disillusionment awaits those with high expectations of great deeds from the American proletariat today. To believe that a working class can do anything at any time, that it can turn to radicalism, class politics and a revolutionary party in the midst of prosperity, witch hunt, and preparations for war is to have "faith in the proletariat" all right, but a mystical semi-religious faith, not a scientific Marxist conviction."

Good. This is clear. We will discuss our "faith in the proletariat." We will challenge the "realists" to respond. We will take prosperity, witch hunt, preparations for war, out of the vacuum into which the minority has placed them, and establish the real America in which this prosperity, this witch hunt, these preparations for war, take place. But we cannot take seriously the concern of the minority with disillusionment in the American working class. They are already disillusioned, just for today, of course, with the American working class upon whom they placed such great hopes in 1946, and apparently no great harm has come to them. This is, however, just the appearance. The reality is, that just as for the Mensheviks and Walter Reuther, the nows and today's are merely feeble disguises for their real ideas, which turn the nows and today's into the tomorrows and forevers.

We began with the unredeemed promissory note. The next step is the exclusion for today of any role for the Fourth on a world scale, or for our party in America. What of tomorrow?

In the article "Revolutionary Perspectives for America" we wrote that: "It is necessary to recognize that a smashing defeat of the American workers plays a central and necessary role in Pablo's underlying perspective of '200 years of degenerated worker's states.'" (Should read "centuries of deformed. . ."). He has never repudiated this thesis. His 'explanation' of his position only made matters worse. For in attempting to retreat, to disguise, to equivocate, what he actually does is to equate the States of Eastern Europe and Russia as they exist today with a general problem of bureaucracy in the transition to complete socialism. He is, in effect, equating the Russia of Lenin's time, "a workers' and peasants' state with bureaucratic deformations," with the Russia and Eastern Europe of Stalin under the guise of inevitable problems of bureaucracy in the transition period. No Stalinist could do more.

"Now any recognition of the real possibility of a revolution in America, with its immediate and immense effects throughout the world, would immediately destroy the illusion of strength with which Pablo is so impressed, the strength of the Red Army and of the Stalinist parties in general; and with the destruction of this illusion the '200 years of degenerated workers' states' would disappear forever. It would disappear forever unless -- unless Pablo doubts the ability of the working class in general to achieve anywhere anything more than a degenerated workers' state. It would disappear unless Pablo believes that even a revolution in America would lead, at best, to a degenerated workers' state."

In the same article we warned that the formulation advanced by Clarke of the transformation of the struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie, between workers and Stalinist oppressors, into the struggle between states, along with the express repudiation of Trotsky's formula that either the revolution would stop the war or the war would bring the revolution, meant the destruction of the world revolutionary perspective of our movement, as well as the end of perspectives for revolution in America.

Now the obliging Clarke has come through again. In the document "The Roots of the Party Crisis," in answer to the demand of the majority of the American party that "the perspective of 'deformed workers' states' as the line of historical development for an indefinite period ahead should not be recognized in the theses implicitly or explicitly," Clarke with the help of Pablo, we are given to understand, has this to say: ". . . It is ridiculous and to my mind somewhat childish to demand a guarantee in the Theses against the development of other 'deformed workers' states' through the projection of the most optimistic line of development. Of course, we all hope that history will take that line. But we already have a certain experience in this matter. . . It seems to me a flight of unwarranted audacity at this point to predict the precise course of the war and the convulsions it will carry with it. Will it last five years, or ten years or thirty years? And what colossal destruction will it bring in its wake? . . . I notice that Walter Lipmann consigns Europe to the same fate as Korea. And who can speak of the revolution in the USA in the same terms as October 1917 in Petrograd? It will be one of the bloodiest and most violent events in history. . . Is it possible to say that in such a period, or in its early aftermath that such a flowering of the productive forces will occur as to prevent the 'deformation of workers' states'?"

Thus the first part of Trotsky's formula, that the revolution will stop the war, is brushed aside as vain and annoying, hoping for miracles indulged in by mystics. The second part, that the war will bring the revolution brings the response in the form of the question "Will it (the war, A.P.-D.M.) last 5 years, or ten years, or thirty years?" and even then what kind of revolution will it be? No sir, say Messrs. Clarke, Cochran, and company. Trotsky fooled us once with his promises of what the last war would bring us. We ain't gonna be taken in again. What's more, look at what Walter Lipmann says.

The role of the Fourth was supposedly rooted in historical necessity. It was the crisis of revolutionary leadership in the advanced industrial countries which was the basis for the isolation of indus-



trially backward Russia, and therefore also the reason for the growth of the bureaucracy. Now, like the IKD, the minority sees capitalism developing backwards, bringing the advanced industrial countries of Europe and America, the theoretical and actual heart of the world socialist revolution, down to, or below the level of backward Russia at the time of October. The fact that these ideas, rather this mood, of the profoundest historical pessimism is introduced in a footnote points only to the intellectual cowardice of the leadership of the minority and its contempt for the ranks of the party. These ideas are introduced, but they are never discussed, never defended, and, we must add, hardly ever attacked. They are allowed to seep into the minds of the comrades to provide a psychological mood of receptivity for anything that follows. This is quackery, not scientific politics. This is the method of political charlatans, not Trotskyists.

Let us sketch out a little further this picture. After five or ten or 30 years years of atomic warfare, little remains of the industrial society as we know it today. Europe is altogether in ruins. In Russia and America something apparently remains. In America, the working class finally gets disgusted and hungry enough to revolt. Whereupon the resistance of the American bourgeoisie is so powerful that the pittance of the industrial technique which remains after 30 years of atomic warfare is just about destroyed. So we are left with a small balance on the side of Russia, which although it has also been ravaged by 30 years of atomic warfare, has had no civil or political revolution, and the nationalized economy proudly takes over, with Russia, as the most "advanced" country in a backward world, leading the march. This of course proves that Trotsky was right, that the theory of socialism in one country was wrong and the world revolution has triumphed, despite all.

Yes, the objective necessity for the Fourth, the transitional nature of the Stalinist bureaucracy, has now become a "hope," "a flight of unwarranted audacity at this point" which is questionable not only for America but especially for America. The humble request for a re-statement of the historical necessity for the Fourth is a "ridiculous" and "somewhat childish" demand.

Let us at this point take a deep breath and understand that we are witnessing in nightmarish detail the truth that politics has a logic of its own, that who says "A" must say "B." And while we are at it, let us take a great leap back into the world of revolutionary Marxism. What is for Pablo and Clarke a more or less necessary, though not particularly desirable transition period to socialism, was for Trotsky something different. In IN DEFENSE OF MARXISM he says: "The disintegration of capitalism has reached extreme limits, likewise the disintegration of the old ruling class. The further existence of this system is impossible. The productive forces must be organized in accordance with a plan. But who will accomplish this task -- the proletariat or a new ruling class of 'commissars' -- politicians, administrators and technicians? . . . If this war provokes as we firmly believe, a proletarian revolution, it must inevitably lead to the overthrow of the bureaucracy in the USSR and regeneration of Soviet democracy on a far higher economic and cultural basis than in 1918. In that case the question as to whether the Stalinist bureaucracy was a 'class' or a growth on the workers' state will be automatically solved. To very single person it will become clear

that in the process of the development of the world revolution the Soviet bureaucracy was only an episodic relapse. . . An analogous result (on the other hand, to the inability of the proletariat to take power -- A.P., D.M.) might occur in the event that the proletariat of advanced countries, having conquered power, should prove incapable of holding it and surrender it, as in the USSR, to a privileged bureaucracy. Then we would be compelled to admit that the reason for the bureaucratic relapse is rooted not in the backwardness of the country and not in the imperialist environment, but in the congenital incapacity of the proletariat to become a ruling class. . . If the world proletariat should actually prove incapable of fulfilling the mission placed upon it by the course of development, nothing else would remain except to recognize that the socialist program, based upon the internal contradictions of capitalist society, ended as a Utopia. It is self evident that a new 'minimum' program would be required -- for the defense of the slaves of the totalitarian bureaucratic society."

This then, is Trotsky's description of Pablo's centuries of deformed workers' states. We would recommend heartily to these gentlemen that they take Trotsky's advice, and in addition to singing hosannas to the progressive aspects of Stalinism, get busy and draw up the substitute for the "outlived" transitional program, the "new minimum program for the defense of the slaves of the totalitarian bureaucratic society." And, may we add, it is precisely the deliberate introduction of the "theoretical possibility" of centuries of deformed workers' states which alone exposes the fraudulent claim of the minority to have discovered the secret of the destruction of Stalinism in the process of its expansion.

Although we obviously cannot enter into such a discussion at the present time, it must be said that we do not hold with Trotsky's presentation of alternatives. We say with Lenin that without the revolutionary intervention of the masses, there is no hopeless situation for the capitalist class, and that without that intervention which of necessity includes the leadership of the revolutionary party, the bourgeoisie will cling desperately to life in whatever manner it has to, making use of whatever means it is able. The history of development of the capitalist class and of the capitalist system proves this.

On the other hand it must be recognized that Trotsky never discussed state capitalism, which retains and enforces the revolutionary perspectives, other than in a few passing sentences. This is not accidental. His attack was centered on those who were erecting a period of centuries in which the working class would be dominated by "commissars," administrators, technicians, bureaucrats, Stalinists. At the time he wrote they were called bureaucratic collectivists -- today, Pabloites.

It is our firm conviction, which again we cannot discuss within the scope of this article, that Trotsky, just as he subordinated nationalized property to the defense of the world revolution -- just as he admitted the coming of Thermidor to Russia before he was able to recognize it, would have been the first to make whatever adjustments in theory necessary to meet the reality -- but they would have been the direct opposite of those advanced by Pablo. This discussion

will come in due time. But we are now ready to counterpose the reality in America to the nightmares of the minority.

### III. The Real Situation in the United States

It has been reported that in Egypt, because of the relatively unorganized state of the workers and peasants, and because of the tremendous elemental power of the masses in motion, a party, rather a group of 50 with the correct program and ties to the masses, can become a decisive force in the revolutionary process.

We hope to demonstrate in the course of these remarks, that although for almost opposite reasons, the same is true of America. The key to understanding this lies in grasping the relation of party to trade union in the period of the death agony of capitalism, in a word, in understanding the transitional program. It is also only within the framework of the transitional program that we can hope to establish the real thinking, the real nature of the American working class today as it expresses itself at the moment for the most part in molecular fashion.

In Revolutionary Perspectives for America we began the discussion of economism, the concept that full bellies, prosperity, high standard of living, are the decisive criteria for judging the state of the mass movement in relation to upsurges. We will return to that. But there is yet another aspect of economism. Just as for this school, conservative thinking goes with full bellies and radical thinking with depression, the organizational expression of this same relationship sees trade unions growing in periods of prosperity, and radical parties in periods of depression. Trade unions struggle for immediate gains, parties for radical political reorganization of society. This classic dichotomy, which had some validity in the past, this conflict between the political and economic organs of the working class which was rooted in a relatively expanding capitalism, expressed itself differently at different stages in the history of the working class movement, in correspondence with the growing crisis of capitalism.

In the early years of the First International the anarchists, at least beginning with Bakunin, basing themselves solely on the trade unions, called for the economic general strike as the means for the transformation of society, while the Marxists, basing themselves primarily on the party, insisted on the necessity for political action and the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the period preceding the First World War the debate on this subject became transformed, and within the Marxist movement elements revolting against the reformist leadership of the 2nd International once again brought forth the issue of the general strike, this time in relation to its use as a weapon against the impending war. In 1905, the general beginning of the period of the death agony of capitalism, history settled the debate in a simple and decisive manner. In Russia, an economic general strike became transformed into a political strike, and gave birth to the Soviets, the organizational form of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

It is in the period of the death agony of capitalism, when the system has outlived itself, when the declining rate of profit becomes more than a general tendency but manifests itself in the immediate

life of the society, when real advances on the part of the working class as a whole become impossible -- that the struggle for immediate demands becomes transitional in nature, and constantly threatens to overflow into the struggle for power. This period, as Trotsky has put it, marks the end of the old minimum and maximum programs of the Social Democracy, and the beginning of the epoch of the transitional program: a program which is not merely a subjectively arrived at means of bridging the gap between the subjective and the objective, between the subjective understanding of the masses and their objective needs, but which is actually in full accord with the Marxist world view of the primacy of being over consciousness, and the nature of combined development.

It is this objective development, the death agony of capitalism, of which the transitional program is merely the reflection, which destroys the historically outlived contraposition of trade union vs party, of prosperity vs depression, of conservative thinking vs radical thinking, of immediate demands vs long range goals. It was thus that Trotsky could ask "What is a strike?," and answer "A strike is an embryo social revolution." It was for this reason that Trotsky at the 3rd World Congress of the CI could speak of the revolutionary significance of the influx of workers into the French trade unions. In the article TRADE UNIONS IN THE EPOCH OF IMPERIALIST DECAY Trotsky says: "Wholly possible are revolutionary trade unions which not only are not stockholders of imperialist policy but which set as their task the direct overthrow of the rule of capitalism. In the epoch of imperialist decay the trade unions can be really independent only to the extent that they are conscious of being, in action, the organs of proletarian revolution. In this sense, the program of transitional demands is not only the program for the activity of the party but in its fundamental features it is the program for the activity of the trade unions." We have indeed gone a long way from the early stages of the debate in the Marxist movement.

It is for this reason, plus another with which it is intimately connected, that our movement could analyze the CIO as the American version of the mass social democratic parties in Europe. But that this precious heritage never penetrated the minority is evident in the manner of their present analysis of the backwardness of the American workers, and their desire to find new milieus in which to work.

It is likewise for this reason, from this Marxist method of analysis, that we can assert that "revolutionary trade unions, that is trade unions under the political leadership of the Fourth International," to use Trotsky's words, become in America the most probable form of the mass revolutionary party. Whether or not this development formally takes the shape of a Labor Party is not decisive. It does not invalidate our tactical use of the slogan. It should, however, shape the manner in which we put it forth, that is, we must differentiate it from the British model by connecting it with the transitional demands, foremost among them the demand for workers control of production. We have not as yet been successful in working out the most effective approach. At the same time, these ideas of Trotsky's which are elaborated in the conversations around the transitional program, should serve as a rebuke to those of the minority who wish to use the Labor Party slogan as a means of demonstrating their belief that whenever the revolution in America does come, it will not be our party which leads it.

The notion of the unequalled power of the American working class in its economic organizations is given lip service by all. But the concept advanced by the transitional program, that implicit in this economic power without equal in the whole world, is revolutionary power, is not understood. But it therefore becomes doubly important to examine with great care the trade union movement of this country, the thinking of the workers in the trade union movement, if we are to properly orient ourselves in the struggle for the revolution.

Now we have mentioned another reason for the analysis of the CIO as the American version of the mass social democratic parties in Europe, despite the fact that the program of the CIO is in no way socialist, to understate the matter somewhat. This other reason is the theory of combined development in its subjective aspect, as it relates to the combined development of consciousness.

One of the major concepts of the reformists is that the workers in majority have to become socialist in consciousness before there can be any talk of a socialist victory. In the History, Trotsky speaks of the combined development of the Russian working class, who, coming into the world political arena only in 1905, in one leap caught up with and surpassed both in theory and practice, the most advance sections of the world labor movement. The October revolution proved for all time the primacy of being over consciousness, and the combined nature of the transformation of being into consciousness. It demonstrated, if further proof were necessary, that the Mensheviks were merely hiding behind their phrases -- about "backwardness"; lack of class consciousness; weakness of the revolutionary vanguard; their constant contrast of the Russian workers' movement with that of Europe and its mass Social-Democratic parties; etc. -- nothing but their basic lack of confidence in, and ultimately their fear of the masses. In the same speech at the 3rd World Congress referred to above, in answer to the Centrists who were presenting their promissory note for undelivered goods, Trotsky spoke of the fact that backward elements coming late into the unions and bringing all their petty-bourgeois prejudices along, nevertheless represented in relation to the class-conscious elements bound, and to some extent corrupted, by their social-democratic "socialist" consciousness, a fresh and vital element for the revolution.

Viewed in this light, as a whole and on a world scale, the American working class, the backward element coming late into the world political scene and bringing all its petty-bourgeois prejudices along, nevertheless represents in relation to the class conscious elements bound, and to some extent corrupted by their "socialist" and Stalinist consciousness, a fresh and vital element for the world revolution.

We should at this point recognize the motivation for Trotsky's challenging overstatement; that is, he wished to provide as clear an opposition as possible to the Menshevik tendencies arising in the 3rd International. There is however, a dialectical relationship which we must understand and apply, from the most generalized concepts to the day-to-day work in the trade unions. This is the relationship between the "advanced" and the "backward." The best elements of the latter provide the drive, the revolutionary energy; the best elements of the former the experience and perspective. It is a form of the same relationship which exists between the mass as a whole, and the party. In this mighty fusion lies the unfolding revolutionary process,

within a single country and then within the entire world; within the mass, and between the mass and the party.

But it is precisely the role of the "backward" elements which it is easiest, and for revolutionists, most fatal to overlook. This is especially true in a country like America with its deep rooted empirical traditions of which economism is but one facet. It is no accident that Trotsky insisted above all in America on the necessity for the closest study of the dialectical method. We have to examine this question not only as it relates to the role of the American working class in relation to the world working class, but, in the process of arriving at this evaluation, in attempting to understand the form and level of this consciousness with relation to the generally accepted notions of "public opinion" in this country.

The great decisive mass does not explain its thinking, nor can it. It does not write about its intentions, because it is uncertain of them. Until it acts, it is confused and contradictory, because action is the only catalytic agent for the great mass of human beings in a capitalist society. Very often a new recruit to the factories from the South will embody the contradiction between the backward, petty-bourgeois tendencies and the impelling desire for immediate action to remedy grievances which go far beyond the ability of the trade union movement to satisfy. Another aspect of the same phenomenon is seen in the casual acceptance of the younger workers of the gains won by the union -- they insist on the failure of the union to take action against speedup while the older workers, while agreeing, insist upon talking about what it was like in the days of the unorganized shop. And yet it is precisely the difficulty in properly evaluating things like this which sometimes catches even the best trained revolutionist off guard when the great mass movements "suddenly" explode.

Any damn fool can see when Cadillac square is filled with demonstrating workers. The Russians had a word for those who insist on "proof" of the revolutionary tendencies in the working class; khvostists, tail-enders, they called them. But it requires a revolutionary Marxist to see beneath the surface, to understand the contradictory, but ever-developing molecular process at work among the masses, and to base a perspective on this, the real basis of the mass upsurge. Trotsky once spoke for hours on tendencies within the working class on the basis on the one hand of his understanding of the logic of the objective situation, on the other on the basis of one remark made by one worker. We too, in the light of our understanding of the force and logic of events in America over the past several decades, the force and logic of the transitional program; in the light of our seeking for the concrete forms which combined development takes in the thinking of the American workers, must learn to listen, to take our part in preparation, and to be prepared.

And what then of the "progressive anti-Stalinism" of which the minority speaks? In the rounded, generalized, thought-out form in which they seek it, it will be found among the masses not even the day after the revolution takes place in America. The great mass is in actuality, in terms of general theoretical approach, no more pro-capitalist than they are anti-communist, no more pro-communist than they are anti-capitalist. They fill each generalization with different content. But the revolution will not be made with generalizations.

Many times has Ford been characterized as the "real communist." Many times has the capitalist state been attacked as more "communist" than Russia. We cannot predict, but it is not at all ruled out that the revolution will be fought out in this country with great sections of the masses considering that they are destroying what in their mind has come to be associated with the term "communist": greed, corruption, high taxes, speed-up, war, destruction of the right to strike, concentration camps, etc. This is not to say that we will adapt ourselves to any such backward prejudice about names, as one of the leading minorityites in Detroit proposed in the only presentation he ever made on Americanization. He complained that workers would not listen to his ideas because he was labelled, not a communist, but a Trotskyist; but the same ideas advanced by another worker would receive great response. What else he said in that discussion, nobody remembers, but we now know the latest "solution"; we will speak to those who are themselves "labelled," and thus will be assured of a friendly and sympathetic response. Now the major task of the trade union fractions has become the drawing up of lists of Stalinists to be contacted. We will return to this later. In any case, the great masses of this country will be no more "socialist," or "communist," no more "capitalist," than were the masses of Russia when they accomplished their October.

To all of this the minority repeats, parrot-like, prosperity, witch hunt, preparations for war, a backward, red-baiting, and conservative working class, a weak party.

In the last article we spoke of Trotsky's attitude towards prosperity, and how it acts as a spur, not a deterrent, to mass action. The only answer we have heard, mumbled though it was, is to the effect that Trotsky was speaking of alternating depression and prosperity, and that in America we have had prosperity for an unbroken stretch of time. The fact that the unparalleled "prosperity" of the British working class gave rise to Bevanism is of no concern to them. But it would be doing Trotsky a gross injustice to think he was speaking of a special situation which involved regular alternations of prosperity and depression marked every two years on the calendar. He spoke instead of the organic characteristic of the whole period of the death agony of capitalism, and of the organic reaction of the working class to it.

We recalled to the comrades the classic Marxist conception of war and the preparations for war as the greatest political and social crisis of the capitalist system, next to the revolution itself. We wrote not of one remark of one worker, but of the settled attitudes of whole sections of the American working class: "Compressed within the experience of living American workers, engraved upon their minds and within their hearts (and no one who knows the American working class can doubt this for one moment) are three great negative experiences with capitalist society and one great positive experience with their own power. The negative experiences encompass two immense world slaughters sandwiched around the great depression. It has become a commonplace with the American worker of today that wars are fought for the rich and mean nothing but blood and tears for the people. It is a commonplace among the American workers of today that if it were not for the preparations for war we would be in the midst of a depression which would make that of 1929 look like a dress

rehearsal." We might interject at this point that so powerful and real were these issues, that they forced themselves up through the innumerable screens, channels and blocks of the two capitalist parties, in a distorted and demagogic way, to become the major issues of the campaign. For the first time in American history have these two fundamental issues been joined in such an explosive manner; and this is certainly not because the capitalist class deliberately chose them. This is the key to a dialectical analysis of the last election. To consider the results as a continued trend to the right on the part of the American people is to remain on the surface of events. To continue: "The positive experience of these workers is the formation of the CIO; still as fresh in their minds as if it were yesterday is their 'instinctive attempt to raise themselves to the level of the tasks imposed on them by history.'"

On the other hand, the main obstacle to the concretization of the organic revolutionary tendencies of the American working class is the trade union bureaucracy. The Reutherites play however, the same role in relation to the American labor movement as did the Russian bourgeoisie in relation to society as a whole. They have arrived on the scene too late. In a single decade the American working class has gone through the experiences of 100 and more years of the European labor movement. They have undergone the experience of Stalinist leadership, and have already finished with their illusions in relation to the Reutherite bureaucracy. They expect nothing from the present leadership of the trade union movement but further betrayal. It is typical of the need of the mass for concrete alternatives, that they see in Lewis the prototype of the type of fighting leadership they want.

Another aspect of the same picture is the attitude which they have in large part adopted toward strikes. The only type of strike talk which meets positive reaction in the shops is that calling for general strike action. Strikes on a limited basis, for wage increases or fringe benefits even if won, in actuality lose more for workers today than they gain. The workers in overwhelming majority recognize this, and invariably add that in any case increased prices and taxes would more than wipe out any advances. No better example could be given of the validity of the transitional program, which takes as its point of departure the inability of the working class as a whole to make any real advances in the period of the death agony of capitalism. No better example could be found to illustrate the changes in the thinking of the mass, and the level at which it has arrived. No conclusions have been drawn, no far reaching generalizations have been made, but the concrete problem has been recognized. The solution will come in action. In any case they are poised for a leap, which will be qualitatively as far above the eruption in the sitdown strikes, as the sitdown strikes were, in their turn, above the general methods of the American working class prior to that eruption. In the face of the drastic changes which are impending, it is not surprising that the masses should hesitate for a time, look about carefully -- uncertain, confused, groping for answers -- searching for a leadership it can recognize and trust which can provide the answers. It is this factor, more than any other, which has led to the relative quiet in the class struggle. It is this and not prosperity, witch hunt, preparations for war.



We do not, on the other hand, think it necessary to belabor the question of what would immediately be involved in any large scale action today. Representative Hoffman of Michigan has tied in the so-called shortages of munitions in Korea with the steel strike. The capitalist class has set as one of its major objectives the destruction of whatever industry-wide bargaining exists. Reuther has proposed that instead of Board action, the whole of Congress act separately upon each strike. Whatever his motives, the very fact that he could seriously propose such a course, and the serious, though negative considerations given the proposal, shows the social crisis inherent in any large scale action. The small scale constitutional crisis involved in the strike of the steel workers, demonstrates the transitional nature of any struggle of major proportions, and if any were carried through it would rock the whole structure of American capitalism to its foundations.

Many of the attitudes of the workers are already beginning, even without a strong, well organized leadership, to manifest themselves on the surface. The opposition to 5-year contracts is so strong and obvious that the Reutherite bureaucracy, which could render no greater service to the pard-pressed ruling class than the delivery of a no-strike pledge, has been forced to attempt a strategic retreat even from the limited no-strike approach involved in the long term contracts. The demand at the recent UAW convention for 2 year terms for officers was turned down, with our limited forces playing a considerable role, and many UAW locals have already defeated the referred proposal. As a matter of fact, if it had not been for the opportunistic shortsightedness of the Local 600 leadership in obtaining a 2 year term in that local, and if they had seized this opportunity, they would have considerably strengthened the basis for a new, nationwide opposition in the UAW.

The situation at Local 600 is not the exception which proves the rule. It is rather an advance manifestation, no matter what happens to it from now on in, a surface expression of the molecular processes at work in the masses. That is why it should be examined in some detail. What of this "phenomenon"? How explain why this confused and opportunistic leadership has been able to withstand for 3 years the terrific pressure of the Ford Motor Company, the Capitalist State through the House Un-American Activities Committee, and the Reutherite bureaucracy with its administratorship, its bribes, its red-baiting, and its constant threat of expulsion?

How explain its emergence from the ordeal of the recent UAW convention more united, and more stable in its course than ever before, and with aims broader and more ambitious than ever before? It went into the convention having organized a caucus only in one region with the limited aim of gaining a place on the International Executive Board. It came out with a terrific beating and the aim of organizing in the two years prior to the next convention a nationwide opposition with the possibility of the defeat of Reuther himself an open subject for discussion.

These confused opportunists have gotten a flash of insight into the molecular processes at work among the masses. Not only do they have the backing of the Ford workers, but they emerged from the convention as the recognized opposition on a recognizable program of

opposition to Reuther and all he historically represents. They witnessed at the convention delegates who were in overwhelming majority secondary leaders, not rank and filers; who were under the direct pressure of Reuther and the whole concentrated bureaucratic machine; who were far more conscious than the rank and file of "prosperity, witch hunt, and preparations for war"; who were removed from the critical gaze of the rank and file, nevertheless turn to Stellato by the hundreds, and voice their sympathy with his struggle. Over 400 delegates asked to be placed on the mailing list of Ford Facts. We have already mentioned the attitude of these delegates on 5-year contracts and 2-year terms for officers. Through the distorting screen of delegates the real sentiments of the ranks, at least on these issues, managed to force their way. This is what the leadership of Local 600 saw, in its own limited way, and what gave it further encouragement to follow the path it has barely begun to tread.

This leadership is not revolutionary, not Trotskyist. It may crumble. Our group is not strong enough to intervene quantitatively. At present we are limited to the presentation of ideas -- influencing rank and filers here, leaders groping for an approach there. But even if it would fall apart tomorrow, an unlikely possibility, enough has been demonstrated to illustrate in practice many of the ideas we have been discussing. The program adopted by Local 600 with more or less understanding and enthusiasm, is also indicative of the level of the struggle: Against 5-year contracts; For internal union democracy; For the 30-hour week; For a Farmer-Labor Party. Even the question of war was taken up and discussed, though of course in a confused semi-pacifist, semi-Republican, and semi-Trotskyist manner. A serious struggle on any of these demands is a transitional struggle.

We have written that this leadership, or any leadership of a new left wing, is being and must be forced by objective events both past and present to seek a means of differentiating itself from Reuther and Wall Street on the one hand, and the Stalinists and the Kremlin on the other. Success in the mobilization of a nation-wide opposition to Reuther depends on the degree to which it can accomplish this in a progressive direction, and by the same token move even closer to our program, to us as the only recognized anti-imperialist and anti-Stalinist force in America.

For the information of the comrades, it was not the Stalinists, but our forces which provided the initiative for the adoption of the position on the Labor Party. The Stalinists sabotaged it. The recent events at the local involving the dropping of Rice and Hood represent not a victory for Reuther, but a defeat of the Stalinists. The non-Stalinist majority of the Progressive caucus, convinced that the real fight with Reuther is just beginning, put forth their most capable elements, to replace, in the coalition with Stellato, the incapable Pat Rice, and the scoundrelly opportunist Hood, who has since swung over to the support of Reuther, leaving the Stalinists in an utterly isolated position.

We have now a practical problem to resolve. The Ford opposition has adopted a perspective of building a new left wing in the UAW on a nation wide basis. The minority in its document says: "If all this were true we should be preparing right now to shift from propaganda to agitation, we should be actively seeking the forces to create a new left wing in the unions." Well, what do we do? Do we follow the

"program" of the minority and tell the Ford opposition that they are barking up the wrong tree? Do we keep our mouths shut and let them break their own necks? Or do we, with proper precautions, and in line with the strength of our forces, participate, help lead and shape the attempt to build a new left wing?

In Detroit, in practice, the minority has two answers, depending on which of the two main spokesmen is involved. For one, the major activity of trade union fractions now consists in drawing up lists of Stalinists. For the other, as well as for the overwhelming majority of the branch, the answer in practice is, as it must be, the constant "seeking the forces to create a new left wing in the unions." The consistent minority spokesman attempts to apply in life Bartell's conception of the demoralization of the more proletarian branches of the party, who according to him, wish they had a few Compass Clubs, universities, etc., they could work in, a few more Stalinists and intellectuals to whom they could appeal, not on the basis of building a left wing, but on the basis of our world program.

And now a few words on our party. Will it prove capable of meeting the coming events? We are numerically small. But the power of our ideas, the conscious expression of the objective process, is tremendous, and in the vast strength of the American working class, fresh, unbeaten; in its consciousness of the need for organization, for self-discipline; in its historically guaranteed movement toward our transitional program, our party will find its place and play its part.

The Americanizers have finally explained themselves. Their rump is exposed. What they mean by Americanization is that the party can no longer recruit Negroes on the basis of their problems in this country, but only on the Chinese revolution. What they mean by Americanization is that any American worker who is not conservative and quiescent must look to Eastern Europe to find the answers to his problems. What they mean by Americanization is that we can no longer recruit except on the basis of our world program.

But the Americanization of our party began with the adoption of the transitional program, the program which reflected the needs and the thinking of the American workers. It was confirmed and put into practice in the Minneapolis Trials. If the adoption of our program marked the conception, the trials represented the birth of our party as an American phenomenon. It marked the emergence of our party as a clearly defined and recognizable part of the American scene. The fact that it was, so to speak, not a birth of our choice, only bears out in a "unique" American manner, what Marxists have always understood: that objective events work for those who understand the laws of motion and proceed in line with them.

The Minneapolis Trials, which began the objective Americanization of the party once and for all, took place as a result of the work of our wonderful comrades in the Minneapolis labor movement. This numerically insignificant group, in a relatively insignificant segment of the American economy, took a numerically infinitesimal party, and made it a living part, the only revolutionary vanguard, of the American political scene. No better illustration can be given of the relationship between party and trade union in the epoch of the death agony of capitalism.

From that time on, especially where it counts most, within the labor movement, the SWP has become to anyone with the least degree of political awareness the "native, our own revolutionary party." The fact that it was two trade union bureaucrats, one in New Jersey, and the other in Michigan, who gave voice to this sentiment, does not in the least detract from its absolute truth. This immense political capital we have deepened and extended in the course of two election campaigns. We announced to America that we have arrived, we intend to stay, and "we mean business."

It is by no means accidental that the fight for civil liberties, not the least of the transitional struggles, which has received the widest support from all groups in America, have been campaigns which have been centered around Kutcher and the Trucks Act. All of this attests to our Americanization in the real sense. All of this attests to our great actual and limitless potential political capital. We must see to it that no one drags this banner in the muck of capitulation, either to American imperialism or to Stalinism, for it is the banner of the American Revolution.

The stage is being set for mass struggles of an unprecedented nature. On whatever issue they begin, wherever they begin, they will spread quickly and almost from the beginning take on a political character. We cannot guarantee whether they will begin in time to prevent the outbreak of war, although the bourgeoisie and sections of the labor bureaucracy, always more sensitive, the one to danger, the other to opportunity, than elements within the revolutionary movement who are turning away from revolutionary Marxism, indicate in their actions that they are keenly aware of the undercurrents in the masses.

We cannot guarantee that if they begin in time they will take on a deep enough character quickly enough to prevent the ruling class from plunging us into war as a check on the masses. The great wave of strike movements in Russia in 1914 were stopped by the war. But in 1917 came October.

Yes, despite Clarke, this is the formulation of our revolutionary perspective; either the revolution will stop the war or the war will bring the revolution. And as far as the concern with the destruction of the productive forces goes, the workers of America will prevent their destruction. Clarke sees with great clarity the strength of the American bourgeoisie in relation to the Russian. Does he not see the strength of the American working class today in relation to the Russian of October, in numbers absolutely, in weight proportionally, in culture, in training, in understanding the role of the productive apparatus? But this is precisely how capitalism trains the future ruling class, how it engenders its own grave diggers, and this in almost direct ratio with its own "strength."

In the coming mass struggles our party will find its place to the extent that it absorbs into its bones the revolutionary perspective, to the extent that it rejects with contempt the petty-bourgeois weaklings who are disappointed with Trotsky's promises; to the extent that it does its work in the trade unions and in all other secondary fields in line with this perspective, with the revolutionary reality. We are not "ordained" to lead the revolution; but it is only the party with the correct perspective, program, and ties to the mass movement which

can do the hard, daily work which will win us the respect and attention of the masses. We have made great strides in this direction. Today of all periods in American and world history, we cannot retreat from the important political bastions already won on the American scene.

May 14, 1953

ON "THE ROAD TO PEACE"

By Jeff Thorne

We in New York, who for 18 months had been selling "The Road to Peace" on mobilizations and at various outside schools, forums, etc., were quite amazed to read Comrade Cannon's charge (Internal Bulletin, Vol. 15, No. 12, May 1953, p. 21) that the pamphlet had been "suppressed" here "under the dominion of Bartell." Most amazed of all were the Cannonite literature agents of NY local and the Downtown branch.

But I had a greater concern than Jim's unfounded charge. I had just gotten around to read his "Road to Peace" -- jarred by the complaint of a young comrade just back from the military. It was the first thing he had read upon returning. It hadn't "set very well" after all the anti-red, anti-Soviet, hate propaganda that had been pumped into him. And little wonder!

The entire text of the first page pokes fun at the persecution of Stalinists as "bad luck (catching) up with those who deserve it most. . .all kinds of trouble for sure, and nobody seems to care. . . victims of misfortune. . .unattended by so many people, with sentiments ranging from indifference to delight. . .Never before. . .a group under persecution. . .so discredited, despised and abandoned . . .with every man's hand turned against them, they have to go it alone."

Can anyone miss the chuckles of delight in these words? The tone is anything but that of opposition to an all-out government drive to smash a working class party. First meeting us through this pamphlet, almost any worker could easily get the impression that we favor government persecution of Stalinists as their just deserts. A progressive worker would likely be disgusted.

On the second page we read: "Rank and file workers. . .hate (Stalinists) from memory. . .have for the most part welcomed the mopping up. . .The trade unionists have refused any support. . .although solidarity in the fight for civil rights and defense of anyone denied them, regardless of political difference, has long been a tradition of the American workers' movement, and one of the best. It took the Stalinists to so befoul even this issue as to turn the workers in anger against their own tradition, an action which, in the long run, will redound against them and their movement."

Here is, first, justification for sentiment against civil rights for Stalinists. Then the "best" "tradition" of "solidarity. . .for civil rights" is sandwiched in. Finally the blame for breakdown of this solidarity is laid wholly on the Stalinists, with no recognition that we are (and were in 1951) in the worst general reaction in American history.

Then Comrade Cannon reviews Stalinist support of the Smith Act against us in Minneapolis, with this conclusion on the third page:

"Now with a new turn of events, they are getting a dose of their own dirty medicine -- and many people think we should get a certain

satisfaction out of it, and even approve it. But we cannot agree with this line of reasoning."

Well, if even Jim can't agree with his first page, why was it not thrown out? Why was it ever written? All the chuckling satisfaction on the first page makes the third page denial more startling than convincing.

A more plausible appeal for civil rights then follows, leading up to this statement: ". . .we support the defense in this case, as in all others." But remember that on the first page ". . .nobody seems to care" and the Stalinists "have to go it alone." It is almost like writing: Yes, we have to support this case, but you can see for yourself how silly it is and how little our support amounts to, when "every man's hand" is "turned against them. . ."

The worker who gave up in disgust on page 1 or 2 may never learn nor suspect that "we support. . .this case. . ." If he continued reading, he could be simply incredulous: The man's spoofing. He couldn't mean it. How could anyone object to such traitors getting their just deserts?

A more thoughtful reader might even demand proof, which he will not find in these 48 pages.

Comrade Cannon states (same bulletin, p.3) that "Road to Peace" "wasn't written for the benefit of Stalinists" but "to inoculate militant non-political workers against Stalinism." Obviously it is more likely to inoculate against the SWP and Trotskyism. (Incidentally, Stalinists and their sympathizers were the main buyers of the pamphlet. The title appealed to them.)

In view of all the jingo press and witch-hunt inoculation against all reds, any workers still needing our kind of inoculation against Stalinism must be fairly advanced. They must be immune to the general hysteria. More than likely they have some wholesome thoughts about civil rights, as well as working class solidarity and opposition to imperialist war.

This pamphlet plays right into the Stalinists' hands, makes perversion of our line too easy for them. It turns our mutual contacts right over to them. Stalinists could quote whole passages against us and say, gloatingly, "You see? Just as we've always told you. Here in their own words these Trotskyite skunks are even opposed to civil rights," etc., etc.

Negroes, in particular, would not like this poking fun at civil rights -- for Stalinists, if you please. They remember the CP has led the most sensational Negro civil rights cases.

And it is not true that unionists have "refused any support" to the Stalinists, who control or influence unions with half a million members. The CP has many thousands of members and sympathizers who are rank and file unionists. They have rallied large mass demonstrations.

The Stalinists live in much the same reaction we do. They are partly responsible for it, but they did not create it. Civil rights

is one issue on which we have scored the greatest victory over the Stalinists, even to forcing a bit of conciliation on their party. If civil rights is a primary issue for a pamphlet on peace, let's make it a clear issue.

Jim's remarkable gift of humor might better be leveled at the militarists, the imperialist "peace" fakery and the hopeless predicament of imperialism. Or on the subject of civil rights a howling laugh at the witch hunters would be in order. By appealing first to some progressive sentiment of the workers, we might stand a chance of getting them to grasp our explanation of what is wrong with Stalinism.

On the rest of the pamphlet I will only say here that it lacks any clear program for a worker who may have to cope with Stalinists or their "peace" proposals in his union. But even if the rest were perfect, the first pages would destroy any effectiveness. I'm afraid too many comrades, including the leaders, just took this pamphlet for granted, the way I did for too long. What our press generally accomplishes, "Road to Peace" befuddles.

In 20 years acquaintance with this party I can't recall so grave an error, unless the one which prompted our trade unionists to burn a whole issue of the paper 13 years ago. I now learn there was a little flurry of protest when the first chapter of "Road to Peace" was first printed in 1951. But the protest then was ignored.

A good pamphlet on peace was sorely needed in 1951, and now more so than ever. Properly written, I believe it could have enormous appeal to wide audiences, since so many millions want peace, from various viewpoints, and oppose not only "the most unpopular war in all history" but also the prospects for a Third World War.

It is to be hoped that more careful writing, collective editing, polishing and rewritings when needed will save us from another such disgraceful publication.

June 22, 1953



BOLIVIA -- CLASS-COLLABORATION MAKES A RECRUIT

By S. Ryan, Los Angeles

"Without Revolutionary Theory there is no revolutionary practice." -- Lenin

1. What Do WE Know about Bolivia?

It is now sixteen months since the Bolivian revolution began. It is sixteen months since this little nation, of three and one-half million people, presented the Fourth International the opportunity of proving that Marxism -- Trotskyism -- can conquer the masses and thereby lead them to victory.

Considering the fact that a Trotskyist mass party, the POR, is involved in a revolutionary situation, we should expect by this time to have a mass of information from Bolivia, such information as would immeasurably enrich, deepen and concretize our Marxist theory.

How has the POR gone about the task of winning the masses from the MNR? from the labor-fakers of the Lechin stripe?

How has the POR dealt with the various concrete questions which arise with the various stages of the struggle?

Who controls the COB? What is the strength of Lechin? of the POR? of the Stalinists? How has their strength varied in the course of the past sixteen months?

What about the curve of strike struggles? How has the strength of the POR varied with it? Have political strikes been increasing in intensity? If not, why? What has been the role of the POR? of Lechin?

Have any disputes arisen within the POR? Surely we could learn much from listening to all sides of such disputes. Or has the POR, in a revolutionary situation, been completely monolithic?

These are just a few of the many questions on which we should by this time have a rich treasury of information.

Actually we have been given practically no information on the situation in Bolivia -- the one revolution in which the Trotskyists play an important role.

It is not true, however, that we know nothing at all about what is going on in Bolivia. For the past month detailed reports have been circulating about the activities of the POR. According to these reports received from non-Trotskyist sources, the POR is accepting posts in the governmental machinery; Guillermo Lora, former Secretary of the party, has been appointed the Stabilization Office; Comrade Moller, present Secretary of the POR, is director of the Workers' Savings Bank, which is controlled by Juan Lechin, a member of the Cabinet; Allayo Mercado, another POR leader, is a member of the Agrarian Commission. In the face of these reports the silence of the PC of the SWP and of the International Secretariat should cause deep concern to all comrades.

Silence is acquiescence. And those who remain silent before a policy which politically disarms the workers and peasants before their class enemy must share the responsibility for the inevitable results.

The reports of coalitionism and class-collaboration by the POR do not come as a bolt from the blue. This is the direction the political line of the POR has taken, with the encouragement of the leading comrades of the International, since the April 9th, 1952 revolution.

In May, 1952 the paper carried an interview with Comrade Lora. I wrote a letter to the PC, which was printed in the June 1952 Internal Bulletin, expressing sharp disagreement with Lora's political line. I stated then that I thought it was a conciliationist and class-collaborationist line, rather than the line of revolutionary Marxism; and I asked whether this was the line of the POR. The PC replied that this was "obviously a difference of opinion between you and Comrade Lora," and it, the PC, was in no position to participate in the discussion.

Now we have the official position of the POR, in the form of an unsigned article in the magazine ("One Year of the Bolivian Revolution"). This article, continuing Lora's line, unmistakably lays the basis not for leading the proletarian revolution but for propping up the bourgeois state. Immediately on reading the article, I prepared a criticism, intended for the Internal Bulletin. On hearing of the actual steps the POR has taken toward getting into the government, I refrained from sending in my article, waiting for a denial, or an explanation, or a criticism, by the PC or the IS. However, no comment has up to now been forthcoming; and this fact is in itself a harsh indictment not only of the policy of the POR, but also of the line of the IS and of the PC.

## 2. A "Classical" Revolution -- An Unclassical Policy

Since the Second World War, the International has been in the habit of finding "exceptional" situations in which, "exceptionally," the "classical" laws and traditions of Leninism do not hold. In Eastern Europe the denial of the revolution-war character of the Soviet-German war led the International to see the establishment of workers states without proletarian revolution. In China the International sees a transitional state, neither bourgeois nor proletarian, baptized "dual power" and "workers and peasants government." Furthermore, the International sees the Chinese Stalinist party reformed into a party that it expects will lead "the demonstration of proletarian power"; the role of Trotskyism is reduced from the struggle for power to that of "pushing" the CP and the masses. For these "exceptional" situations the International has adopted the concepts and methods of reformism. But a reformist course, once embarked upon, cannot be confined; it is not at all difficult to see every situation as "exceptional."

But the article ("One Year of the Bolivian Revolution") notes that we have here no exceptional situation. It sees the close resemblance of the course of the Bolivian revolution to that of the Russian revolution. One would think that much could be learned by studying the strategy and tactics -- and above all, the conceptions -- of the Bolsheviks in the February-October period.

The political line of the POR, however, is not that of Lenin but that of his class-collaborationist opponents, Kamenev and Zinoviev. The latter, in fact did not go as far as the POR; they did not accept posts in the bourgeois government.

"If that policy (of Kamenev and Zinoviev) had prevailed," says Trotsky, "the development of the revolution would have passed over the head of our party and, in the end, the insurrection of the worker and peasant masses would have taken place without party leadership; in other words, we would have had the repetition of the July days on a colossal scale, i.e., this time not as an episode but as a catastrophe. It is perfectly obvious that the immediate consequence of such a catastrophe would have been the physical destruction of our party. This provides us with a measuring rod of how deep our differences of opinion were."

The same measuring rod should indicate to us the very serious penalty our movement will incur as the result of a wrong policy.

Let me cite the three central paragraphs of the magazine article:

"The POR began by justifiably granting critical support to the MNR government. That is, it desisted from issuing the slogan 'down with the government'; it gave the government critical support against attacks of imperialism and reaction, and it supported all progressive measures. But at the same time it avoided any expression whatever of confidence in the government. On the contrary, it propelled the revolutionary activity and independent organization of the masses as much as it could.

"The POR limits its support and sharpens its criticism insofar as the government proves itself incapable of fulfilling the national-democratic program of the revolution, insofar as it hesitates, capitulates, indirectly plays the game of imperialism and reaction, prepares to betray and for this reason tries to harry and deride the revolutionists.

"The POR has been applying this flexible attitude which requires a carefully considered emphasis at each moment, one that is not confused but neither is it sectarian, and in applying this attitude the POR is demonstrating a remarkable political maturity. The POR has adopted an attitude of constructive criticism toward the proletarian and plebeian base of the MNR with the aim of facilitating a progressive differentiation within it."

Every sentence in these three paragraphs contains at least one assault on the theory and practice of revolutionary Marxism; the policy outlined is the direct opposite of the one carried out by Lenin. It has become the fashion here in Los Angeles to point out that Lenin is dead; but we can easily judge with what choice and pithy characterizations he would have answered anyone who called any kind of support of a bourgeois government "justifiable."

"Why didn't you arrest Rodzianko and Co. (the Provisional Government)?" he bitterly flung at the Bolshevik leaders on his arrival in Petrograd. The next day he wrote: "No support whatever to the Provisional Government." In the mass demonstration toward the end of

April the Bolsheviks raised the slogan: "Down With the Government."

Lenin withdrew the slogan "Down with the government." But this had nothing in common, as Trotsky points out in "Lessons of October," with the position of Kamenev that the slogan itself was an adventurist blunder. "Lenin, after the experience of the reconnoiter," says Trotsky, "withdrew the slogan of the immediate overthrow of the provisional government. But he did not withdraw it for any set period of time -- for so many weeks or months -- but strictly in dependence upon how quickly the revolt of the masses against the conciliationists would grow. The oppositionists, on the contrary, considered the slogan itself a blunder. (They favored critical support of the provisional government - S.R.) In the temporary retreat of Lenin there was not even a hint of a change in the political line. He did not proceed from the fact that the democratic revolution was not completed. He based himself exclusively on the idea that the masses were not at the moment capable of overthrowing the Provisional Government and that, therefore, everything possible had to be done to enable the working class to overthrow the Provisional Government on the morrow."

Lenin's "flexibility" in tactics has nothing in common with the "flexible attitude" of the POR toward the MNR government. Lenin was not at all flexible but very rigid in his attitude toward the Provisional Government. All of Lenin's flexible tactics were part of one unchanging line: overthrow of the Provisional Government.

Lenin reposed no confidence at all in the Provisional Government, nor in the parties that composed it; his confidence was entirely reserved to the Bolshevik party. This statement is a truism, almost a tautology. The magazine, however, feels constrained to protest that the POR "avoided (!!)" any expression of confidence in this government." What is this but the purely formal language of diplomacy? And like all diplomatic language, this passage is more useful in hiding than in clarifying the thought behind it.

What does this sentence mean? That the POR never said: "We have confidence in the government"? But there are many ways to express the essence of confidence, above all in action, while "avoiding" the form. First of all, in the April 9, 1952, revolution the POR, rather than striving for power for itself, for the working class, proposed that the MNR take power; that is, the POR proposed to maintain the bourgeoisie in power.

If confidence is not placed in the working class and its party, that they can take and exercise power, it is thereby given, like it or not, to the bourgeois government. Lenin understood this. When, in answer to his demand that the bourgeois government be overthrown, the Mensheviks asked the, to them, rhetorical question -- Who among us will form a government and rule the nation? -- Lenin shouted out -- "We will!" And he was answered by derisive laughter, for the Bolsheviks were but a small minority in the Soviet and in the country.

The magazine article itself exposes the glaring contrast between the attitude of the POR and that of Lenin.

"The direction of the Bolivian revolution up to now confirms step by step the general line of this type of classic development of

the proletarian revolution in our epoch. It bears more resemblance to the course of the Russian revolution, although in miniature, than it does to the Chinese revolution, for example. It began by lifting the radical party of the petty bourgeoisie to power (as was the case with the Russian revolution in a particular stage before October) with the support of the revolutionary masses. . . and of the still weak revolutionary party of the proletariat, the POR."

This is not "avoiding any expression of confidence in the MNR government!" Furthermore, it is arrantly false to imply that the Bolsheviks gave any support to any "radical party of the petty bourgeoisie" which ruled Russia "in a particular stage before October."

### 3. Whitewashing the Labor Lieutenants

Could the working class have taken power in April, 1952? The above-quoted paragraph implied that a proletarian revolution was not possible. But this is a hopelessly formalistic view of the matter. The working class was armed and had defeated the army and the police. Nothing prevented it from taking power except its own illusions and its own capitulationist leadership. Exactly as in Russia! The power of the working class is shown by the fact that it was able to force the MNR to admit two of its leaders into the government.

Nothing at all is said about this in the magazine article. The author speaks of a future differentiation within the MNR, of a future revolutionary wing emerging from the MNR, but he says nothing at all of the fact that this differentiation is already over a year old; that what the masses supported in April, 1952, was not the MNR but its proletarian (class-collaborationist) left wing. What were, and are, the relations between the POR and this already-existing left wing? This question is not even discussed. The article "avoids" mentioning the "expression of confidence" which the POR extended to the class-collaborationist labor leaders (and to the government) when it supported their entry into the government. And to this day the POR has not raised the demand that the labor leaders break with the bourgeois government and take power.

The decisive question of the revolution is not even mentioned! The struggle of the POR for power is concretely embodied in its struggle with the MNR left wing for leadership of the workers and peasants. Before the Marxists can take power they must defeat the Compromisers ideologically and politically. This is an integral and unavoidable part of the class struggle; the Compromisers embody the influence of the enemy class within the working class.

How did the Bolsheviks defeat the Russian Compromisers? The Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries also had the support of a majority of the workers and peasants. They also entered the bourgeois government. The Bolsheviks mercilessly attacked the Compromisers for their class treachery. They intransigently opposed the collaboration of the Mensheviks and S-Rs in the bourgeois government. When the Bolsheviks were in a small minority they insistently demanded that the Mensheviks and S-Rs break with the bourgeois politicians and take power, and not some time in the future, but now, immediately. Even if the Mensheviks and S-Rs had taken power in the spring of 1917, that would not have won them the confidence of the Bolsheviks, nor

a governmental coalition with them; the Bolsheviks promised only to overthrow them peacefully, insofar as that should be possible.

How is the POR going to expose and defeat the Bolivian compromisers? Far from attacking their class treachery, the POR demanded their inclusion in the MNR government. Far from calling on them to break with the MNR and take power (establish a "workers and peasants government") the POR relegates the workers and peasants government to "the final aim of the struggle." The POR speaks of the "collaboration of a revolutionary wing emerging from the MNR in a future workers and peasants government." It has thus solved the problem -- verbally. If the future left wing is revolutionary, all we have to do is merge with it and form a bigger revolutionary party. But to grapple with the present reformist left wing? This the POR fails to do.

The assumption that an MNR government was inevitable is an attempt to whitewash the false and treacherous leaders of the working class by blaming their class treachery on the "backwardness" of the masses.

#### 4. Critical Support and Class Collaboration

The question of critical support has become a difficult thing to discuss in our party; its meaning has become obscured since the International decided to give critical support to the Mao government in China and to the MNR government in Bolivia. Is critical support political support? Is critical support material defense against armed counter-revolution? Is critical support of a government merely support of its progressive measures? All these definitions are included in one brief and very confused passage in the magazine article.

In the Spanish civil war the Trotskyists were quite clear about the distinction between material aid and critical support. We gave material aid to the bourgeois Loyalist government; but we gave it no hint of critical support. Shachtman was sharply rebuked by Trotsky for proposing it. Our attitude toward the working class parties, including the POUM, the most left of them all, was the same: we refused to give them critical support.

Lenin likewise drew a sharp line between defense and support. At the time of Kornilov's attempt to overthrow Kerensky he wrote: "We ought not even now support the Kerensky government. This is unprincipled. You may ask 'Ought we not to fight against Kornilov?' Yes, of course. But these are two entirely different things. A boundary line divides them which some Bolsheviks transgress and fall into conciliationism, allowing themselves to be carried away by the flood-tide of events." Lenin's defense of Kerensky was an integral part of his struggle to overthrow Kerensky.

In the conception of the POR, as exemplified by the magazine article under discussion, the word "defense" as applied to the bourgeois government is nowhere to be seen. The word "support" is applied indiscriminately to mean both political support and material defense. Besides being an impoverishment of our theoretical heritage, this confusion gives aid and comfort to all the compromisers.

"The POR limits its support and sharpens its criticism insofar as the government proves itself incapable of fulfilling the national-democratic program of the revolution, insofar as it hesitates, capitulates, indirectly plays the game of imperialism and reaction, prepares to betray and for this reason tries to harry and deride the revolutionists."

What is this but political support -- that is, support of the policy of the MNR government, insofar as it does carry out the national-democratic program of the revolution? How reminiscent of the "insofar as" of Stalin and Kamenev, who, before Lenin's arrival in Petrograd, proclaimed their readiness to support the Provisional Government "insofar as it fortifies the conquests of the revolution."

What is wrong with both examples of "insofar as"? Just this -- to correlate "support" and "criticism" means that our support is political; how can you correlate physical defense with political criticism?

If, however, the POR means that we "limit" our material defense of the treacherous ally depending on their political policy or their attitude toward us, then this could only result in sectarian isolation and passivity at the very moment when material defense is necessary. This is another instance of the well-known fact that opportunism and sectarianism are carried in the same theoretical shell. Let us remember that Kornilov's attempt on Kerensky came in August, precisely during Kerensky's repression of the Bolsheviks; Trotsky was in prison, Lenin in hiding. Kerensky had certainly "proved himself incapable of fulfilling the national democratic program of the revolution"; he was certainly "harrying and deriding the revolutionists." Furthermore, Kerensky was actually plotting with Kornilov to destroy the Soviets. Wasn't this the ideal time for Lenin to "limit his support"? Yet if he had taken such "revenge" on Kerensky the revolution would have suffered a smashing defeat.

Before the recent plenum of our National Committee, the Los Angeles Local held a discussion in which the question of critical support of the Mao-Tze-Tung government figured prominently. "Critical support," said Myra Tanner, "is not political support." "Critical support," said Murry Weiss, also a supporter of the IEC position, is political support." And he castigated the Vern tendency as hopeless sectarians because they oppose giving critical support to a working class party which has led a revolution. Together with Comrade Vern I have written a reply to this position, which has been submitted but not as yet published in the Internal Bulletin ("Open Letter to the National Committee").

But the argument of Murry Weiss does not apply to Bolivia; and this was pointed out several times in the course of the discussion. When we asked "What about Bolivia?" our only answer was an embarrassed silence. And this silence has been maintained by Murry Weiss and all the comrades supporting the position of the IEC all through the discussion and to this very day!

The question whether critical support is political support could only arise because the traditional Trotskyist position on critical support has been overthrown. The question could not arise in the

past because Trotskyists have never before given critical support to a party or a government. We have never hesitated, however, to give critical support to all progressive actions of any party, any government. Giving critical support to President Truman's suggestion for an increase in the minimum wage, for example, did not imply critical support to the Democratic party, and did not raise the question whether or not we were giving political support to the government.

We give critical support to specific concrete actions, just as we make united fronts not on a general political program but on specific concrete actions. Any other course, either in regard to the united front or to critical support, leads and must lead to destroying the independence of the revolutionary party.

#### 5. Does the Third Camp Rule Bolivia?

Is the Bolivian government a bourgeois government? Does it serve one of the two major contending classes of modern society? On this question too the POR has abandoned the traditional and principled position of Marxism. And in making this "exception" it finds support in the other "exceptions" found by the International in the "intermediate status" of Eastern Europe in 1945-48 and in the "workers and peasants government" the IEC sees in China.

"The MNR," says the POR, "is a mass party, the majority of its leadership petty-bourgeois but fringed with a few conscious representatives of the nascent industrial bourgeoisie, one of whom, for example, is very probably Paz Estenssoro himself." And the government is, naturally, characterized as a "petty-bourgeois" government "fringed with conscious agents of the native feudal-capitalists and of imperialism." The agents of imperialism and of the capitalist class are on the fringes of the party and of the government! Such a ludicrous assertion is possible only in an atmosphere poisoned with neo-reformism. The bourgeois politicians are on the fringes of the MNR in exactly the same sense in which Henry Ford is on the fringe of the Ford Motor Co.

How do the leaders of the POR account for the fact that these agents of the bourgeoisie and of imperialism control the government, including in their ranks that prominent inhabitant of the "fringe," the president of Bolivia? Every successful and unsuccessful revolution since 1917 teaches us that the petty-bourgeoisie (and this applies doubly to the urban petty bourgeoisie) cannot have a party of its own; cannot establish its own government. This is the cornerstone of the Permanent Revolution.

Contrast the superficial approach of the POR with that of Trotsky:

"The revolution," he says in "Lessons of October," "caused political shifts to take place in two directions; the reactionaries became Cadets and the Cadets became Republicans against their own wishes -- a purely formal shift to the left; the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks became the ruling bourgeois party -- a shift to the right. These are the means whereby bourgeois society seeks to create for itself a new backbone for state power, stability and order." We should not forget that the counterpart of the Mensheviks and SRs is not the MNR, but its labor left wing. Trotsky does not



fail to characterize those Bolsheviks who favored critical support to the government: "But at the same time, while the Mensheviks were passing from a formal socialist position to a vulgar democratic one, the right wing of the Bolsheviks was shifting to a formal socialist position, i.e., the Menshevik position of yesterday.

## 6. The MNR Is our Deadly Enemy!

Why is it so important to understand that the MNR government is a bourgeois (and not a petty-bourgeois) government? Because the Trotskyists must be absolutely clear that the government is their deadly enemy. And the Trotskyists must be the deadly enemy of the MNR and its government.

This is not the conception of the POR. "In a more advanced stage of the revolution," says the magazine article, "it (the Paz Estenssoro government) will fall under the drive of the right seeking to impose a military dictatorship, or of the left to establish the genuine workers and peasants government, the dictatorship of the proletariat allied to the peasant poor and the urban petty-bourgeoisie."

What will the MNR do? Will it wait to be overthrown?

No. The MNR will tie the hands of the working class, entangle it in bourgeois legalism and red tape, using its labor lieutenants for this purpose. It will persecute the revolutionary militants, disarm the workers politically (again, using its labor lieutenants) then physically.

And the forces of "the right, seeking to impose a military dictatorship," who are they? With what will they impose this military dictatorship? Aren't they the officers, the general staff, of precisely this "petty-bourgeois" government? Don't the petty-bourgeois democrats always, like Kerensky, like Azana, like Paz Estenssoro, build up and conspire with their own generals? Kornilov was Kerensky's chief of staff. Franco was Azana's military ruler of North Africa. And let us not forget that most left of all democrats, the darling of the Stalinized Comintern, Chiang Kai-shek, who was his own Kornilov. That the future would-be military dictator of Bolivia is at present preparing himself and his forces under the protection of Paz Estenssoro is indicated by the recent attempt at a coup d'etat by army and police officers.

The MNR government is the deadly enemy of the working class. Its overthrow is an urgent necessity.

## 7. Conscious Planning or Fatalistic Optimism?

One of the most striking features of the POR line is its fatalistic optimism. One example: its attitude toward the impoverished petty bourgeoisie. "The urban petty bourgeoisie," says the magazine article, "is divided between a very poor majority, highly radicalized because of its unstable conditions and always available (my emphasis -- S.R.) as an ally of the revolutionary proletariat. . ."

But the impoverished petty bourgeoisie is not always available as an ally of the revolutionary proletariat. One of the major lessons

of the Russian October, and of the aborted German revolution of 1923, and of the rise of Hitler, is exactly this: The radicalized petty bourgeoisie, and the working class for that matter, cannot be regarded as so much bullion, always available to the Party once they have been convinced of the necessity for a revolutionary change. They have turned first to the social reformists. Disappointed in the reformists, they turn to the revolutionary Marxists. But they support the Marxists critically, suspiciously. If the Marxists prove timorous, hesitate in carrying out their allotted task of overthrowing the bourgeois government, the support of the masses will quickly melt away. The radicalized petty bourgeoisie then become easy prey for a fascist demagogue; the petty bourgeoisie is then "available" not for revolution but for counter-revolution.

That is why the insurrection is so very necessary a part of the revolution. That is why the moment of insurrection is the decisive moment in the life of the revolutionary party. That is why Lenin was so insistent that the Bolshevik Central Committee treat insurrection as an art.

"The persistent, tireless, and incessant pressure which Lenin exerted on the Central Committee throughout September and October arose from his constant fear lest we allow the propitious moment to slip away." This is Trotsky speaking, in "Lessons of October." "What does it mean to lose the propitious moment? . . . the relation of forces undergoes change depending upon the mood of the proletarian masses, depending upon the extent to which their illusions are shattered and their political experience has grown; the extent to which the confidence of intermediate classes and groups in the state power is shattered; and finally, the extent to which the latter loses confidence in itself. During revolution all these processes take place with lightning speed. The whole tactical art consists in this: that we seize the moment when the combination of circumstances is most favorable to us. . . Neither the elemental disintegration of the state power, nor the elemental influx of the impatient and exacting confidence of the masses in the Bolsheviks could endure for a protracted period of time. The crisis had to be resolved one way or another. It is now or never! Lenin said."

There is nothing of this sense of urgency in the line of the POR, as expressed in the magazine article. "The final aim of the struggle" is expressed as -- "the formation of a genuine workers and peasants government. This government will not arise mechanically but dialectically, basing itself on the organisms of dual power created by the mass movement itself. . ." "The workers and peasants government will appear tomorrow as the natural emanation of all these organisms on which it will base itself."

All the expressions used -- "formation," "arise dialectically," "appear" -- can describe an evolutionary process. The decisive question, however, is not how the workers state will appear, arise, or be formed, but how it will take power, become the ruler of the nation. What is missing is the consummation of the revolution, the consciously organized insurrection.

One possible reply to my criticism (if it is answered at all) may be that I am too critical of the POR; that the leaders of the POR

know what has to be done in a revolution; that they simply do not want to tell all their plans.

Unfortunately, such reasoning, alluring as it may appear, demands an exercise of faith rivaling that of the believer in the Immaculate Conception. For it is not the subjective intentions of the leaders of the POR which are at issue (I admit they are only the best), but the objective results of their neo-reformist conceptions.

It is a very difficult thing to shift a party's line from peace to war, from critical support to revolutionary overthrow. Even if the POR had the line of irreconcilable opposition to the government from the very beginning, the change from preparation to actual overthrow would bring with it a crisis of leadership, such as plagued the Bolsheviks in October, when a section of the Central Committee, led by Kamenev and Zinoviev, came out in public opposition to the insurrection.

"Each party," says Trotsky, "even the most revolutionary party, must inevitably produce its own organizational conservatism; for otherwise it would be lacking in the necessary stability. . . We have already quoted the words of Lenin to the effect that even the most revolutionary parties, at a time when an abrupt change occurs in a situation and when new tasks arise as a consequence, frequently pursue the political line of yesterday, and thereby become, or threaten to become, a brake upon revolutionary development. Both conservatism and revolutionary initiative find their most concentrated expression in the leading organs of the party."

In overcoming the opposition of Zinoviev and Kamenev, Lenin had this advantage: the publicly-stated party line was on his side. Six months before, in April, Lenin had rearmed the party; he had decisively defeated those who wanted to give critical support to the Provisional Government. Since then the party had openly agitated for and prepared the overthrow of that government.

## 8. The Seed and the Fruit

Who will have the advantage in the POR -- the partisans of conservatism, or the partisans of revolutionary initiative? The question is already answered. The POR is to the right of the right-wing Bolsheviks who, as Trotsky says, adopted a formal socialist position.

The POR occupies, on all major questions, the positions occupied by Menshevism in the Russian revolution, and by Stalinism in the Second Chinese Revolution of 1925-27.

The POR, in its reformist conceptions, its conciliationist attitude, and its class-collaborationist methods, bases and supports itself upon the neo-reformist positions adopted by the International since the Second World War. Such is the theory adopted by the International in explaining the transformations in Eastern Europe. This theory, which since its adoption has received no defense in our press, either public or internal, holds in effect that reformism worked in Eastern Europe; that the class nature of the state was changed without proletarian revolution, by manipulations in the top circles; that the state for three years was in an "intermediate

status." This revision of Marxism had its roots, like all revisionism since 1917, in the Russian Question; and inability or unwillingness to see the Soviet-German war as a class war -- that is, as revolution and counter-revolution.

The political line of the International in China brings its neo-reformism down from the realm of theory (or "terminology"), to that of political activity. The idea of a transitional state, a state that is neither a bourgeois nor a workers state, is made more explicit; through "critical support" of the Mao government the leading role of Stalinism is affirmed, while the crucial necessity of Marxist consciousness, embodied in the Trotskyist party, is thrown overboard. Revolutionary consciousness is to be replaced by the "pressure of the masses."

The POR has introduced nothing new. It is applying in Bolivia the revisionist line of the International -- moreover, with the support and encouragement of the International.

I have no doubt that a majority of the comrades are uneasy over the course being pursued in Bolivia; that they do not agree with the line of the POR. But an embarrassed silence is not enough. Those who remain silent for the sake of a false harmony cannot escape responsibility for the consequences of a wrong political line.

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