

# INTERNAL BULLETIN

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SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY  
116 University Place  
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SOME FACTS ABOUT PARTY HISTORY --  
AND THE REASONS FOR ITS FALSIFICATION

By James P. Cannon

(Note: The following Stenogram of my speech in the debate before the New York membership meeting on Sunday, May 24, 1953, is submitted as part of the record of the internal conflict prior to the Plenum which met a few days later. As an appendix, pertinent to one of the disputed events in party history -- our 1940 discussion with Trotsky in Mexico City -- I am republishing, from the Socialist Appeal of Oct. 19, 1940, my speech on "The Stalinists and the United Front," in which I reported this discussion to the combined Plenum and Active Workers Conference of the party at Chicago, Sept. 27-29, 1940. -- J.P.C.)

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The history of our party is the history of a consistent and uninterrupted fight for the program and perspective of the socialist revolution in the United States, without once making a single concession to American imperialism or to Stalinism.

This year we will celebrate the 25th Anniversary of our party, and we can do it proudly because there is not a single stain on our banner. I am here to defend the 25-year record of our party, and the leadership which has shaped and directed it in unbroken continuity for a quarter of a century, against any attack from any source.

At the 1946 Convention, our revolutionary program and perspective were formally stated in the "Theses on the American Revolution." We defend these Theses, against any opponents from any quarter, as the programmatic guide of the party in its struggle against American capitalism.

Within the framework of endorsement of our record, and agreement on the "Theses on the American Revolution," we have had differences of opinion in the past on this or that proposal or action. We will no doubt have other such disagreements in the future. We have discussed such differences in a fraternal way, and eventually resolved them. We never fought anybody, we never split with anybody, except those who challenged the program and perspective, and the record of the party in serving it -- and deserted the party because they no longer wanted to belong to it. That will be the case also in the future, I am sure.

Genuine revolutionists, hemmed in by a world of enemies, are privileged to differ and debate among themselves. They are not privileged to fight and to split. The party has always permitted differences of opinion, and has never expelled anybody -- not one single person -- because of his opinions.

But the SWP is a revolutionary party, and never pretended to be anything else. We try our best to keep people in the party on that basis. And as long as they remain revolutionists, they love the party and stay in the party. But experience has shown that when party members cease to be revolutionists their whole attitude toward the party changes. They begin to hate the party; the party becomes a prison to them, and they insist on breaking out. That -- and that alone -- is what causes splits, if you want to know the real reason.

## The Split of 1940

We did have a split in 1940. But it couldn't be helped. There was a fundamental reason for it. Burnham was a sick man when he took up arms against the party in 1939, and induced the dupe, Shachtman, to join him in the split. Burnham had a bad case of Stalinophobia, which is the starting point of social patriotism in modern times. I think he also had a touch of Cannon-phobia, but I didn't really hold that against him. I gave him plenty to be mad about.

Our fundamental explanation of the 1939-40 fight, made at the time, has been confirmed to the hilt by the subsequent evolution of the contending factions. Burnham openly joined the imperialist camp within a few months. The Shachtmanites went through a slower evolution; but they also arrived at the position of social-patriotism, masked by the formula of the "Third Camp," and that's where they are today.

Both sides seem to recognize that the present conflict also cries out for a fundamental explanation. Nothing less will do now. If Trotsky was right when he said in 1939, that every serious faction struggle in the party is, in the final analysis, a reflection of the class struggle -- and I think he was right; and if the seriousness of this present fight is to be measured by its intensity, by its factional antagonism and animosity, which comrades have described to me as "frenzy" -- then, it seems to me, it is high time to pass over from the discussion of incidents, details and secondary matters to a consideration of Trotsky's formula and to ask: What is the basic cause of all this factional frenzy, and this open talk of a split?

What class forces are contending here, and who represents which? The document of the minority -- "The Roots of the Party Crisis" -- gives one answer, which I will consider. My answer is different, and I will explain why.

Their document says: "Behind the present struggle is the shadow of the Third World War." That is correct, but it doesn't help much. It is merely a statement of fact which nobody could deny.

The world situation at the moment did not fall from the sky. It grew out of a long chain of preceding circumstances which we are accustomed to cite and to analyze, in explaining the present world crisis, which is due to explode in war and revolution. The present party crisis didn't fall from the sky either. It also has grown out of preceding events and objective circumstances, the accumulated effect of which is the factional explosion.

These preceding and causative objective factors ought to be considered at this time. When they are added up together, in all their accumulated power and immensity, their effect on the party, registered by the factional conflict, loses all element of surprise. The surprise is only that the party crisis didn't come sooner and strike deeper. I personally think the subjective factor -- the factor of leadership -- had something to do with that.

## Background of the Party Crisis

The background of the present party crisis can be summarized in the following five points:

1. This party and its leadership have been under social pressures of such power, intensity and unbroken continuity of duration, as have never been withstood by any other party in history. Beginning with the outbreak of the Second World War nearly 14 years ago, this party had to stand up against all the pressures of patriotic fury and intolerance which the government, the labor bureaucracy and the press could bring to bear.

2. The party had to fight for its revolutionary position in the trade union movement in Minneapolis, against a united front of the AFL bureaucracy, the employers, the Federal government, the Minnesota State government, the municipal police, a veritable army of imported gangsters -- and the Stalinists. The party had to suffer defeat, and the sacrifice of its trade union positions, in defense of its revolutionary principles, in its intransigent opposition to the war.

3. The party had to stand up against the indictment, trial, conviction and imprisonment of 18 of its leading people in the midst of the war.

4. The party has had to maintain its revolutionary position, and hold firm to its revolutionary perspectives, over an unbroken period of 13 years of war and post-war prosperity. This unprecedented economic boom has operated, not only to conservatize the general mass of the American working class, but has also exerted its conservatizing influence directly upon a section of our own party.

5. During the past six years the conservatizing and corrupting effects of sustained economic boom and prosperity have been supplemented by a reactionary witch hunt. This has brought the added pressure of intimidation to bear, and has had its intended effects on the trade unions, and in a certain measure, on a section of our party.

All this, in broad outline, is the background of the present internal struggle, and the source of its true explanation.

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### The Minority Version

The minority analyze the causes of the conflict by a different method than ours, and arrive at a different explanation. We see the conflict as the overdue and unavoidable result of the objective circumstances which I have enumerated. Their approach is more subjective. They see the party conflict as a calamity which might have been avoided, but has been artificially forced upon the party by the malevolent design of individuals, and their main concern is to fix the blame.

Thus we are told:

1. That the party leaders, with their inveterate factionalism and their abnormal and insatiable appetite for splits, provoked the struggle with the deliberate aim to make another split; and

2. That the reason for this irrational conduct -- I think they said "irrational" -- is an illness which has beset the party leadership. The name of this illness, they say, is Stalinophobia. Now,

that is a very bad sickness indeed. Stalinophobia turns into social patriotism as blood-poisoning turns into gangrene.

And that's not all. Stalinophobia -- as they tell it -- has not broken out suddenly in the party. It has been raging in the leadership for a long time -- and it has been determining their policy for years, and years, and years -- from as far back, at the latest report -- as June 12-15, 1940.

That's party history, as the minority tell it.

Just why they stopped their historical excursions on that precise date of June 12-15, 1940 is not clear. Perhaps their research is not completed -- and perhaps further revelations are yet to come. Certainly there is plenty of evidence of our attitude toward Stalinism earlier than 1940. I personally have left a trail a mile wide on this subject for 25 years hand-running. Ever since 1928.

I offer this information for the benefit and guidance of those members of the Cochranite research staff who want to trace my factionalism and my hatred of Stalinism to their "roots." The roots are deep.

Meantime, I would like permission to place on the table for examination, some historical exhibits which the minority have already introduced in evidence as proof of our Stalinophobia -- going back to June 12-15, 1940, but not one day earlier.

#### Party History Should Be Written Honestly

Party history is very important. But it ought to be written honestly. At one stage in the struggle of the Left Opposition against the Stalinist degeneration in the Soviet Union, Trotsky found it necessary to take time out from the current political and ideological battle to restate -- for the benefit of the Soviet youth -- some of the true facts about the history of the party and the revolution, which had been buried under the mud and filth of Stalinist lies. This endeavor of Comrade Trotsky took shape in a classic document called "The Stalinist School of Falsification." We published this work in the early days of our fight in this country. It became a textbook for the education of our cadres, and a mighty weapon in our fight against the Stalinist liars.

To my great regret, I have to take time out now to perform the same task about the history of our own party, which is the heir and successor of the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky; which has been the most faithful and consistent representative of the principles of Lenin and Trotsky of any party in the entire world; and which, moreover, has recorded its own history more fully and more completely, with documentary verification, than any revolutionary party in the entire world.

Our youth need to know the history of their own movement; they cannot learn to become Bolsheviks without studying this history, in which the basic principles have been demonstrated in action in their own country. We have to fight against the neglect and denigration of party history. And at this stage of our internal struggle, we have to fight against the misrepresentation and distortion of that history.

In the Stalinist Revised Version of the History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, and virtually all the other authentic leaders of the party and the revolution -- the Old Guard of the party -- are depicted as counter-revolutionists, who acted as agents of imperialism even during the revolution and the Civil War, which they had led and organized.

In the New and Revised Version of the History of our Party, compiled by the research staff of the minority, the leaders of our party, the Old Guard who founded the party; who led and organized the struggle of the party against the petty-bourgeois Stalinophobes; against the labor fakers; against the Federal prosecutors and jailors; against the war, and the cold war, and the witch hunt -- these same leaders are depicted as nothing but Stalinophobes themselves, and thereby -- here I quote literally from page 10 of "The Roots of the Party Crisis" -- "a transmission belt for alien class influences into the party."

### The Discussion with Comrade Trotsky

The first exhibit in support of this indictment deals with our discussion with Comrade Trotsky in Mexico City on June 12-15, 1940. Since I was a participant in this discussion; and since I am named in the indictment, to which I plead not guilty; and since I am deeply determined that party history shall be told honestly and not distorted -- I am taking this, the first occasion that has been offered to me, to tell the truth about that meeting and its aftermath. I will summarize my comment under a number of points, which I will enumerate slowly enough to be taken down.

Point 1. The question of our tactics in the fight against Stalinism was raised by me, as the rough stenogram shows. (Internal Bulletin No. 10.) But Stalinism, as a political movement, was not the main item of our discussions with Comrade Trotsky on that occasion. We had no fight with him about it, and we did not part as factional "opponents." We parted in basic agreement, friendship and mutual confidence.

Point 2. The main topics of our political discussions with Comrade Trotsky on that occasion were the perspectives of the Second World War and America's part in it; the proletarian military policy; the strategy and tactics in the post-split struggle with the Shachtmanites; the trade union question under war conditions; and the stabilizing influence of a central party leadership having close connections with the cadres in the field, and enjoying their confidence. The discussion on some of these questions was recorded in rough stenogram for further study; other discussions were off the record; and still other questions were discussed only in private conversations between Comrade Trotsky and me.

It is possible that I was mistaken, but I got the definite impression -- the same impression that Trotsky had given me many times before, not only in words but in actions which all could see -- that he had great confidence in the leading staff of our party and wanted to strengthen its hand in every way. His criticisms were always friendly -- to help us; never factional, to discredit us. Trotsky was a loyal collaborator; he never stabbed us in the back.

Point 3. The main purpose of our visit, however, was not any

one of these discussions, nor all of them together. The main purpose of the visit was the question of the Stalinists as a gang of terrorists and murderers. This charming characteristic of the Stalinists seems to have been forgotten lately by some people. But we haven't forgotten it. In May the Stalinists had staged an armed attack on Trotsky's household and made a determined attempt to assassinate him and Natalia.

We responded to that attack by reflex action. Comrade Dobbs and I made immediate preparations to go down there as soon as it was technically possible, to check the situation and see what we could do for the protection of Comrade Trotsky's life. The main purpose of our visit was the discussion of a plan to fortify the house, to strengthen the guard, and to provide every possible physical and technical safeguard. We agreed on the plan -- and as soon as we returned to New York, we subordinated everything else to the not-so-easy task of raising the thousands of dollars necessary to execute the plan of fortification.

Point 4. We did disagree with Comrade Trotsky about the proposal to give critical support to Browder in the presidential election. I don't know whether we convinced him or not. But I do know that he did not insist on his proposal, and told me in a personal conversation, that he would not raise any part of the question of Stalinism for discussion in the party; that he would leave it to the leadership to work out some kind of an approach to the Stalinist workers, who were far more numerous then than they are now, by united front tactics, etc. Trotsky never gave us any orders. There was not a trace of "Cominternism" in any of his relations with us.

#### A Misrepresentation of Fact

Point 5. The introductory note to the stenogram of this discussion, published in Internal Bulletin No. 10, refers to it as "a hitherto unpublished discussion with Leon Trotsky." That, I am sorry to say, is a misrepresentation of fact, which might give newer members of the party the false impression that the discussion was suppressed.

In the first place, the stenogram was not meant for publication, but was taken only at our request for further study, and for the information of those members of the NC who had not been able to participate. In the second place, the stenogram was mimeographed and circulated to NC members at the time. And, thirdly, I made a full and honest report of the discussion to the combined Plenum and Active Workers Conference at Chicago in October -- two months later -- which was attended by nearly half the party membership.

My speech on "Stalinism and the United Front," incorporating this report, was published in the Socialist Appeal of Oct. 19, 1940. I intend to republish this speech in the Internal Bulletin, in the further course of the discussion, so that the young members of the party can read it and judge for themselves whether any opinions of Comrade Trotsky were suppressed, and whether we had any real conflict with him on the question of Stalinism as a political movement. (Reprinted in this Bulletin, Ed.)

No matter how much time it takes, and no matter what other

important things have to be neglected, I am determined, for my part, to see that the history of our party is told straight and true. For to falsify party history means to poison the well from which the young party members have to drink.

Point 6. One has only to read my speech to the Plenum-Active Workers Conference to see that I gave a faithful account of the discussion with Trotsky. I even mentioned my subsequent personal conversation with the Old Man about the matter. He told me, as I reported in my speech at the Conference, that he would not make an issue or start a discussion about the question. But he did urge that we try to work out some kind of an approach to the Stalinist workers. He had raised this question even earlier in the faction fight with the petty-bourgeois opposition. (See "In Defense of Marxism.") My Conference speech, and the Plenum Resolution published at the same time, show that we did adopt a positive policy of united front toward the Stalinists and came out for the defense of Browder and Bridges against the government persecution.

\* \* \*

Fate of United Front Policy

Point 7. It is true that our united front approach to the Stalinists suffered a certain interruption a few months later. But that was not our fault. Our Minneapolis trade unionists turned out to be, not right wingers, as trade unionists often become, but genuine revolutionists. They got into a fight with Daniel J. Tobin, president of the Teamsters Union, over his attempt to push the Minneapolis Teamsters Local Union into line for the war. We were opposed to the war. That was the real basis of the fight.

The Stalinists were also supposedly opposed to the war at that time. But that did not prevent them from openly supporting Tobin in his fight against us. They formed a united front against us, howled against us and acted as stool pigeons for Tobin against us. How, under the circumstances could we have a united front with them?

Point 8. The Minneapolis Teamsters Local seceded from the AFL and joined the CIO. The Stalinists were also supposedly supporting the CIO as against the AFL. But that did not stop the then Stalinist-controlled Minnesota CIO Council and its official paper from campaigning viciously against our people, and openly solidarizing with the AFL fakers in the fight against us. This placed another obstacle in the way of the united front with the Stalinists.

Point 9. Additional difficulties were put in the way of our united front policy toward the Stalinists when, a few weeks later, we were indicted by the Federal government under the Smith Act. The Stalinist betrayers had not yet been told that they could "no longer betray." Or if they had heard it, they didn't believe it. They applauded our indictment, trial, conviction and imprisonment. They even campaigned against any financial support from the unions for our legal defense.

We have to plead guilty to the accusation that we didn't follow out a very effective united front policy with the Stalinists in these instances. But was it really our fault? We couldn't agree upon the issue for joint action. Their united front was with the AFL fakers,



the employers and the government. I don't think it would be fair to accuse us of Stalinophobia because we refused to join this united front against ourselves.

Point 10. On the same day that we were sentenced to prison after our conviction, the U.S. formally entered the war. The Stalinists promptly announced support of the government. We couldn't make a united front with them on that issue. Then, for the entire period of the war the Stalinists supported the no-strike pledge and the incentive-pay plan to speed up the workers; and engaged in a general program of strikebreaking, finking and fingering the militant workers for the FBI. We couldn't make a united front with the Stalinists on that ground because our party had a different policy.

If one wants to give an honest account of why our projected united front policy toward the Stalinists didn't work out very well during those years, and thinks the time has come to fix the blame, he ought, at least, to take into account these facts, and state plainly wherein we were at fault, and why. And, while he is at it, he might also explain wherein the Stalinists were right, and why.

Point 11. The statement in the "G.C." Introduction to the stenogram of the 1940 discussion with Trotsky, that it has "relevancy to some of the important issues now in dispute in the party," is also a misrepresentation which might mislead and deceive people, who are not familiar with the great differences between the Stalinists' position in the labor movement at that time and their position today.

The stenogram shows that we acknowledged the strong position of the Stalinists in the labor movement at that time as our "problem." I stated, in opening the discussion, that "the Stalinist party still has a powerful cadre of militants. It has a strong trade union machine which draws the workers," etc. They were really fooling the militant workers then with their "anti-war" line and were indeed our "problem." They dominated a rather formidable movement based on anti-war sentiments, expressed through the "American Peace Mobilization," and through the officialdom and press of a powerful trade union apparatus which they then controlled.

It was the mass strength of the Stalinists which determined the great interest their movement had for us in June, 1940, at the time of our discussion with Trotsky, rather than any political virtues which neither we nor Trotsky ascribed to them. They haven't got this mass strength today. And as for their political virtue, I personally don't see how that could have been improved by the long years of jingoism, strikebreaking and stool-pigeoning in which their cadres were conditioned throughout the years of the war and our prosecution and imprisonment.

All that is not to say that the Stalinist movement has no interest whatever for us. It still has an interest, but a decidedly secondary one, which is by no means comparable or "relevant" to the interest this question had for us in June, 1940.

Point 12. Our "estrangement" from the Stalinists after our discussion with Comrade Trotsky, our merciless denunciation and exposure of these traitors and scoundrels, which contributed so much to their discreditment -- had nothing whatever to do with sentiments of Stalin-

ophobia. It was not because we "had become a transmission belt for alien class influences," as is alleged against us on page 10 of the "Roots of the Party Crisis," the 1953 edition of "The War and Bureaucratic Conservatism."

The real reason was that the Stalinists were aggressively fighting on the side of the American imperialists on every front -- and we were aggressively fighting against the imperialists, and their faker and Stalinist agents, on the picket lines in Minneapolis, in the court room, in prison, in our press and in all our activity everywhere. There was no united front, there was no cooperation, because there was no basis for it. We were not "in the same class camp."

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### The "Auto Crisis"

The second count in the indictment brought against us for Stalinophobia relates to the discussion on auto policy at the August 1947 Plenum of the National Committee, which I now hear designated for the first time -- nearly seven years later -- as "the auto crisis." Under discussion on this occasion was the proposal to shift our critical support from the Reutherite fakers, whom we had supported in the 1946 Convention, to the Thomas-Addes group of fakers "in which the Stalinists were involved."

It says in the indictment on page 9 of "The Roots of the Party Crisis": "The proposal was violently opposed by Comrades Mills, Swabeck and Dunne, with Comrade Cannon giving them support until the very end of the discussion, when it had become obvious that the majority of the Plenum was going to support the position of Comrade Cochran and the auto fraction. Cannon then announced that he would go along with the decision."

Here we have tied together and identified at the scene of a monstrous crime, not one, not two, but all three of the Old Guard leaders of the party -- Swabeck, Dunne and Cannon. And just to cinch things up and make an absolutely airtight and foolproof case, they are linked with Mills, who was also at the scene of the crime and has since left the party. Then, having identified the criminals in this phony auto crisis by name and association, the indictment goes on to characterize their conduct, by analogy, as the same as that of Burnham and Shachtman in the real auto crisis of 1939. "This," we are told, "is more than a coincidence; in both cases a section of the leadership oriented themselves from Stalinophobe considerations against the policy of the auto fraction."

This is a really impressive job of prestidigitation, calculated to startle uninformed party members and set them to gaping like yokels at a county fair. Consider how much has been tied up in one package in a few short sentences. Stalinophobia, Mills, Burnham and Shachtman, and all three of the Old Guard party leaders -- Swabeck, Dunne and Cannon. All in one package deal; or, as they would say in France, in one "amalgam."

In journalistic circles there is a name for this kind of writing. In the publishing empire of Henry Luce, the master of Time, Life and Fortune, it is known as slick journalism, which is a euphemistic

name for crooked journalism. There is a saying among police and prosecutors, who are engaged in frameups against helpless criminals every day in the week: "Don't prove too much. You may leave some loose ends which can unravel your whole case." And there is a rule of Anglo-Saxon law, designed to protect defendants against perjurers, that if the testimony of a witness is proved to be false on one essential point, the jury has a right to disregard the whole of his testimony.

Unfortunately for this case of the phony "auto crisis," it proves too much, and includes testimony which is demonstrably false. It was carelessly concocted without regard to the fact that the discussion of the auto question in 1947 left a trail of evidence in the minutes of the Plenum and the Political Committee. The indictment makes allegations which are refuted by this record. I will summarize my answer to this second count in a false indictment also in a number of points, which I will enumerate slowly enough to be taken down.

### What the Minutes Show

Point 1. The question of the Stalinists -- who were backing the Thomas-Addes group -- was only one factor in the discussion at the 1947 Plenum, and not the main one. The main question at issue was the factual question as to which way the main mass of the non-Stalinist militants were lining up in the UAW pre-convention fight. In the 1946 Convention they had practically all supported Reuther on the issue of the GM strike, and we had gone along with them. The question at the 1947 Plenum was: Were they switching sides in their decisive majority or not? That was a factual question which the Plenum did not feel competent to answer and wanted more information from the auto comrades in the various localities.

Point 2. The indictment says on page 9 that Cannon came over to the majority and "the correct decision was taken." That's not what the minutes of the Plenum say. The minutes show that the Plenum took no decision at all. The minutes show that decision was deferred pending further factual information from the party auto conference, which was scheduled to meet in Detroit a day or two after the Plenum. The minutes of this Plenum of August 17-23, 1947 show that only one motion on the auto question was presented and carried, and I quote that motion from the minutes:

"Motion by Cannon:

"1. The discussion of policy on the auto union is to be continued in the NC on the basis of more complete factual information to be supplied by the auto comrades in all localities as to the composition of the two main caucuses and the strength of the Stalinists numerically and strategically. Decision on our tactics at the (auto union) convention is deferred pending this further discussion." (Emphasis added.)

Point 3. After the reports and discussion subsequent to the auto conference, the evolution of the question left more evidence in the minutes of the Political Committee of September 13, nearly a month later. In the meantime, Reuther had stepped up his red-baiting campaign, and negotiations had been conducted with the Thomas-Addes

leaders over questions of program and our participation in their caucus. This meeting of the Political Committee of September 13 adopted a resolution with 10 votes for, plus the consultative vote of one alternate, and none opposed.

This resolution decided that our fraction should orient toward support of the Thomas-Addes group at the coming UAW convention, and gave as its reasons -- what do you think? The importance and necessity of snuggling up to the Stalinists, to which the Stalinophobes had been so violently opposed? Not on your tintage. That is not what the resolution says, as recorded in the minutes of the Political Committee for September 13, 1947. Just the contrary.

The adopted resolution listed four reasons for the orientation toward the Thomas-Addes bloc. The first reason was Reuther's combination with the reactionary Catholic outfit, the ACTU, and "their increasing hostility towards us, as well as all radicals in the union." The second reason was the danger of the Reuther-Catholic bloc getting a monopoly in the leadership and stifling democracy in the union -- a very important point, and for me the decisive one. The third reason, I quote: "The overall more progressive character and militant composition of the Thomas-Addes group and their demonstrated desire to cooperate and work with us." That was the settlement of the factual question which had been under discussion and left undecided at the August Plenum, a month before.

The fourth, and final, reason the PC resolution gave for supporting the Thomas-Addes bloc -- what do you think that was? The strength and influence of the Stalinists and the importance of an alliance or an approach to them which had been inhibited by previous Stalinophobia? Not at all. Just the contrary. The fourth and final reason of the PC resolution, calling for an orientation to the Thomas-Addes bloc, reads literally as follows in the minutes of the Political Committee of September 13, 1947:

"The decline of Stalinist strength and influence; and their virtual absence from the top Councils of the Thomas-Addes group."

That's the way, and those were the four reasons why, the phony "auto crisis" of 1947 was resolved by unanimous vote of the Political Committee, and the frightful monster of Stalinophobia was laid to rest, and never mentioned in three subsequent party conventions until it recently came to life again, like Rip Van Winkle, after a 7-year sleep.

That's not all yet.

#### What Happened to the Bloc

Point 4. There were still further developments in our alliance with the Thomas-Addes-Leonard-Stalinist bloc, which is represented now as an historical turning point in the life and death struggle of the embattled proletarian wing of the party against the Old Guard "transmission belt for alien class influences into the party."

What happened to that history-making bloc after the 1947 convention? There are traces of its further evolution in the minutes of the PC, which the framers of the indictment against us neglected to check.

In the minutes of November 18, 1947 there is a report on the UAW Convention by Cochran, which is summarized in a stenogram of about 1,000 words. It devotes one sentence -- the last sentence in his report -- to the Stalinists, as follows: "The Stalinists are a waning force and have little influence in the councils of Thomas-Addes caucus." That's all Cochran had to say about the Stalinists in a report of 1,000 words.

Point 5. Perhaps you might think, that since an orientation to the Stalinists in the UAW could not be motivated by their strength, as indicated in the quoted sentence from Cochran's report on the auto convention, that we might have begun to feel sorry for them and oriented toward them because of their weakness. That's not what the minutes show. On December 16, 1947 the PC minutes record another report from Cochran on post-convention activities in the auto union, and the attempts to organize the general opposition into caucuses in Flint and Detroit.

Did we hunt up the Stalinists first to make sure they would all be present at the caucus meetings? That is not what Cochran's report says. I quote from the report, as follows: "The CP people were deliberately kept out of preliminary caucus meetings." Consider that. The Stalinists were deliberately kept out of caucus meetings of the opposition which we were helping to organize. What was that -- Stalinophobia? Not at all. Just plain horse sense and realistic tactics in our struggle for influence in the opposition circles against the Stalinists.

Point 6. The Thomas-Addes-Leonard-Stalinist bloc -- the bloc that shook the world in 1947, and is now shaking the SWP -- this bloc didn't last long as an opposition movement in the auto union. But that was neither the fault of the Old Guard Stalinophobes, nor of Cochran and the other St. Georges who have recently -- so very, very recently -- discovered the Stalinophobe dragon and raised their lances against it. Right after the convention, Addes left the union and opened a saloon, and he had nothing more to offer us but refreshments. That was one man down and two to go.

A couple of weeks later Thomas, who was supposed to become the leader of the opposition to the Reuther regime, was put on Murray's payroll in the CIO, and taken out of the auto situation altogether. That made two down and one to go.

Then Leonard was designated as the formal leader of the opposition. But a few weeks later he also was put on Murray's payroll, and taken out of the auto union. That was three down and none to go.

Leonard was sent out to the West Coast as CIO representative. In that capacity he organized and supervised the purge of the Stalinists from the Industrial Union Councils in San Francisco, Los Angeles, the California State CIO and any other locality in the West where he could find them. The world will little note nor long remember these red-baiting excursions of the noble Leonard. They are worth mentioning only to add the final ironic touch to the fearsome accusation that the hesitation of such revolutionists as Vincent Dunne and Arne Swaback to line up with the bloc of Leonard, Thomas and Addes is proof that they had become -- to quote again from page 10 of the

minority indictment -- Stalinophobes, and "a transmission belt for alien class influence in the party."

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### Policy on the Korean War

The third count in the indictment of the party leadership for the high crime of Stalinophobia relates to our policy on the Korean war. "The first reaction of the weekly paper," says the indictment, "was a Third Camp position." That is not true.

The "Third Camp" position is only a hypocritical formula -- invented and copy-righted by the Shachtmanites -- for support of the imperialist camp, as anyone can see for himself by reading the Shachtmanites' press. The Shachtmanite "Third Campers" are social patriots. It is a slander of our editors and of our Political Committee to say that they were "Third Campers" at any time, even for a couple of weeks, or a couple of days, or a single minute.

I was in Los Angeles at the time, and had nothing to do with the first issues of the paper after the outbreak of the Korean war. But I am dragged into responsibility, nevertheless, by the sly remark that the first errors disproved "Cannon's basic contention that the main danger came from tendencies toward 'conciliationism with Stalinism.'" Incidentally, I never made this contention -- although I do freely admit that I will never make peace, nor compromise, with Stalinist conciliationism.

The indictment then goes on to say -- three years after the event -- "it is true that the PC corrected its position in a relatively brief time under pressure of protests from leading comrades." "Leading comrades," did you say? What leading comrades? Who were they? Why this sudden lapse into anonymity? The "leading comrades" who rendered such a great service on a momentous occasion must either have had no names; or their names were unknown; or -- I cite this as a bare possibility -- the comrades who helped to correct the line did have names, and their names were known to the authors of the indictment, but it was not convenient to name them.

The framers of this indictment may possibly have faulty memories. They have given some evidence of this in other matters, notably in their recollection of the so-called auto crisis. But they are also skilled writers and they know, as every journalist knows, that an article can be loaded and slanted as effectively by what is left out as by what is put in. Comrades Preis and Breitman, who were in New York when the Korean war broke out, have filled in some of the omitted details, which give a somewhat different picture of the PC discussions than the one drawn by the minority research staff.

I was not there. But it happened that I did have a remote hand in the discussion and settlement of the question of policy on the Korean War. I mention this only because I am smeared in the indictment by indirection, innuendo and omission, and I want to wipe off the smear. It has already been proven against me -- if you take accusation for proof in the fashion of McCarthy's Senate Committee -- that I have been a Stalinophobe at least since June 1940. I revealed this malignant disease again in the discussion over auto policy in 1947.

And in June 1950 when the Korean War broke out, we were still discussing the question of the buffer zone in Eastern Europe, and my reluctance to characterize these countries as workers states is cited as proof positive of double Stalinophobia on my part.

The indictment covering the Korean War question says one thing that is true. For that reason, it is worth quoting in full: "The Korean War was the first big postwar crisis, testing all prior conceptions." That's true. And it could be strengthened by adding that the test was 100 times more important for us because American imperialism was directly involved. It is in the attitude toward one's own government that the worth and seriousness of one's revolutionary positions is really tested. It is easy to be a friend of revolutions in other lands. It is harder, and far more serious and far more important, to be a revolutionist in one's own country in time of war, especially if it is an imperialist power.

The outbreak of the Korean War was an overwhelming new event -- and it should be a matter of pride to the members of our party that the very first reflexive action of our press was a front-page denunciation of American imperialism. That is the main point. But in the analytical articles inside the paper, there was some groping and fumbling. And, according to Preis and Breitman, some of the present sanctimonious saints and unsullied innocents were not entirely free from sin in this respect.

However that may be, when we received the first issue of the paper in Los Angeles after the outbreak of the Korean War, we called a meeting of the NC members there to discuss the policy. We were dissatisfied with some of the analytical articles and decided to make our opinions known right away. We phoned Comrade Warde, who was in charge of the National Office at that time, and told him our opinions. He said that he, personally, agreed with them; and that the weight of opinion in the PC was swinging in the same direction, and that he thought the line would quickly be straightened out.

The next issue of the paper contained much improvement, but we in Los Angeles were still dissatisfied. We held a meeting of the NC members there and drew up a memorandum of our position. We again got Comrade Warde on the phone and proposed an immediate Plenum to decide the policy. This was discussed by the comrades in New York. Warde called back to report their opinion that an immediate Plenum was not technically feasible; but that if I could come to New York to explain the position of the Los Angeles NC members, they would call an enlarged session of the PC, which would include a number of NC members in town or nearby. This was agreeable to us, and I took the first plane I could get and came to New York for that specific purpose, and that only.

The minutes of that special enlarged meeting of the Political Committee, held on July 22, 1950 show that 14 NC members were present. I submitted the memorandum of the Los Angeles NC group and took part in the extended discussion. With your permission, I will quote a few excerpts from the stenogram of my remarks, which indicate the general line of our memorandum:

## Genuine Revolutionary Movement

"The Korean affair is a part of the colonial struggle against American imperialism. We ought to have the same attitude as to China. Even more sharply in this case because the U.S. intervened directly.

"It seems to us this is one of the most important factors in the development of the world situation. Tremendous strength is demonstrated by this movement of the Asian people. They are by no means pulled on a string back and forth from Moscow. It is a real peoples' movement and, at present, the most revolutionary factor in the world. We have to have an unambiguous attitude toward it. As things are shaping up now, it will manifest itself more and more, as a movement of the Asians against American military force.

"The correct demands are all stated in the paper here and there. But it is diffused too much and buried beneath balancing of blame. These demands must stand out as the main center of our campaign: Get out of Korea; Get out of the Orient; Withdraw the troops; Let the Koreans settle their own affairs.

"One thing is becoming clearer by the facts and we are gradually learning and assimilating it -- after the Chinese experience. These are genuine revolutionary movements of great masses, of millions of people. The one misfortune is that they begin under Stalinist leadership everywhere. But if we make that a condition for withdrawing our support or blunting it with reservations, we will be doing in effect what the Shachtmanites do formally and in an extreme sense. They always find reasons to abstain from real struggles.

"Not only are these genuinely revolutionary movements, which offer the greatest revolutionary potentialities in the whole world; they are developing a tendency toward independence. We learned something from the Yugoslavia development. I doubt very much whether the Kremlin, by remote control, can manipulate these vast movements in Asia in a puppet sense.

"As American imperialism shapes up its blundering military program for the domination of the Orient, we will have to get away entirely from anything remotely suggesting the policy of 'a plague on both your houses.' There are tens and hundreds of millions of people involved in the colonial revolt. They may well be the decisive force which will upset the whole balance. We have to support all these movements regardless of the fact they are led by Stalinism at the present stage -- insurrectionary movements in the Philippines, Indo-China, China itself, Korea.

"We think it is necessary now, in the concrete case of Korea to adopt a policy, not merely as an incidental one for a day, but as a pattern of our reaction to any further American adventures. Just how we will do that, with what specific slogans in each case -- we can discuss separately. But we ought to be clear on the main point. That should be the axis of our line in the paper. A sharper anti-imperialist line. And sharper defense of the colonial movement."

At that PC meeting the minutes show that there was an extended discussion in which 12 of the 14 members present participated. The



stenogram of the discussion shows that there was no fight at that meeting of the Political Committee; no crisis; merely some shadings of emphasis on one side or another, some questions and explanations, and so forth, as in every serious discussion. The PC minutes show that the vote for the Los Angeles memorandum on the Korean War was 14 in favor, none against.

As a result of this unanimous decision of the enlarged meeting of the Political Committee, I was assigned to write the first Open Letter to Truman. That letter was written and published in the first period of patriotic frenzy over the war, at the risk of the most serious consequences. That letter showed the Socialist Workers Party in action against the war. If party historians want to tell the truth about our policy on the Korean War they ought to quote that Open Letter to the President of the United States, published in the paper of July 31, 1950.

That letter was reprinted with acclaim in the press of the Fourth International throughout the world, as evidence of the revolutionary struggle of the American Trotskyists in the stronghold of their own imperialism. That is nearly three years ago, and a full year before the Third World Congress. The consistent week-by-week campaign of our paper since that time has been an inspiration to all parties of the Fourth International throughout the world, and has been regarded by them as a model of courageous and effective agitation against an existing war, waged by the class enemy in our own country, and not mere chatter in a propaganda circle about war in general.

How could Stalinophobes, who are "a transmission belt for alien class influences," carry on such a campaign, so consistently and aggressively and for such a long time -- in time of war, in the citadel of the most powerful and most ferocious imperialism, at the risk of their own heads? Isn't war and the attitude toward war, in which one's own country is involved, the ultimate test of a revolutionist and his policy? And aren't leaders who stand up under that ultimate test -- as the leaders of the SWP have stood up -- worthy of support, rather than denigration?

Since that PC meeting of July 22, 1950, and the publication of my Open Letter to President Truman a few days later, we have not heard one word of criticism from anyone in this country, or any other country, of the policy and conduct of our press on the Korean War -- until this accusation was suddenly hurled at us in April, 1953 in Internal Bulletin No. 8.

The Korean War is still going on! We, the leaders of the party's great campaign against the Korean War, are ready to submit the record of our anti-war campaign to the judgement of the Plenum and the party.

And that goes for the record of the party in all other fields of its activity -- the whole record, from the beginning. The record has been clean and our principled position has been right -- all the way.

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## Cochran's Conception of "Power Politics"

Factional struggles in the Marxist party of the revolutionary vanguard and factional struggles in the trade unions are not the same thing; or, at least, they shouldn't be the same thing. Factional struggles in the party of the revolutionists are justified only by serious differences of opinion over principles and policy, and should be conducted with the most scrupulous honesty. For it is only by an honest presentation of one's own position, as well as the position of the opponent, that the issues can be clarified and the youth can learn. That was Lenin's method. That was Trotsky's method. And it has been our method, the method by which we have assembled and educated our cadres for 25 years.

Factional struggles in the trade unions in the United States, in the primitive, pre-political stage of their development, have been power-struggles, struggles for office and place, for the personal aggrandizement of one set of fakers and the denigration and discreditment of the other side. Misrepresentation, false accusations, frameups, and financial scandals are the methods employed in these power fights of the labor fakers.

Cochran's conception of "power politics" in the party; his methods of conducting a factional fight -- come from this school of the labor fakers, not from ours. He has seen these methods work there and thinks they can work here. That's why he dares to threaten the National Committee Plenum with a revolt of the Michigan trade unionists, as he did in his debate with Dobbs. That's where he learned to demand equal rights for a minority "power bloc." That's where he learned to befoul the atmosphere of the party with the unsubstantiated accusation of manipulation of party funds by the Secretariat of the PC. That's where he learned to concoct this monstrous falsification of party history around the so-called "auto crisis" of 1947, and the "Korean War crisis" of 1950.

The Cochranite account of the "auto crisis" and the "Korean War crisis" are real frameups -- from the labor fakers' school, right out of the labor fakers' book. The same thing holds true for the other counts in this false indictment of our factionalism and Stalinophobia, several of which have already been exposed by Comrades Preis and Breitman in the Internal Bulletin.

What's the reason for this wholesale falsification of party history? The Stalinists' falsification of history had a reason. The Stalinists represented these elements of the Bolshevik Party, who had lost faith in the perspective of the international revolution, and who sought to rationalize their conservatism with a new revisionist program. But this unpublished program of Stalinism in the Soviet Union contradicted the program of Bolshevism, and its history and tradition. Before they could impose their revisionist line on the party of Lenin, they had first to discredit the leaders who represented and personified this Bolshevik program, this history and tradition.

That's why the Stalinists began their undermining work away back in 1922, before the death of Lenin. They organized a faction before they had announced their program, as opportunists and revisionists always do, and embarked on a vicious factional struggle against Trotsky on personal grounds. They fought with the dirty weapons of

gossip and slander and organizational manipulation -- the traditional method of all unprincipled opportunists and revisionists. They had to falsify the history of the party in order to discredit the men who had made it.

It was only after they had succeeded by these methods in conquering power in the party apparatus, and in swamping the leaders of the revolution under a tidal wave of slander, that they finally unfolded the program of "Socialism in One Country" -- the programmatic formula for all their crimes and betrayals.

The documents of both sides of the present factional struggle in our party trace its opening to a year and a half ago. But that is not the real date of its beginning. Cochran has been attempting to organize an underground faction on personal grounds for many years, before he even began to mutter about a program. We knew all about it because comrades, such as Geller, Selander and a dozen others, whom he tried to line up, reported it to us. That's how the Michigan comrades were poisoned and disoriented, and lined up long before the outbreak of this fight.

### Cochran and the Stalinist "Milieu"

Now we have it finally in the open. But not really in the open. We haven't got Cochran's real program in writing yet. You call this bulletin, "The Roots of the Party Crisis," the program of Cochranism? A better name would be a "pretended program," with all the corners rounded to catch signatures and votes, with the real program only slightly insinuated here and there. Some things are put in there as deliberate bait to catch suckers, who are eventually to be maneuvered in an opposite direction.

Take this orientation toward the Stalinist milieu, which has the New York romantics so excited. Cochran is even less interested in the Stalinist milieu than I am, and that is not very much. I think there is a field of work there and we ought to explore it, but it is a small milieu and by no means the main field of work for us in this country. But Cochran is not even looking in that direction. Cochran said in the Political Committee in plain words, "There is no such milieu." And that's what he really thinks. Anything to the contrary in this so-called programmatic document is simply eyewash, as far as Cochran is concerned. Cochran is using that issue to recruit a power caucus. The dupes will discover the real issue later.

If the real Cochranites are really interested in an approach to the Stalinist movement, and think it has a future in this country, as the predestined leader of the coming new radicalization -- which is the opinion of the conciliationists in Cochran's caucus -- why haven't they been working at it in Michigan, where Cochranism has its real center and social base? Why, just a few weeks ago, when "The Roots of the Party Crisis" came out, the Flint and Detroit branches suddenly decided to compile a list of Stalinists and fellow-travelers with the idea of looking them up. They had never thought of it before a couple of weeks ago. And after they had compiled the list and looked around, and found there wasn't much there, the latest report we have is that this little flurry has already died down.

If the Cochranites are really interested in the Stalinists, and consider them "in the same class camp with us," and think "they can no longer betray," as some of their New York acolytes go around saying -- if the Cochranites really believe all that, why didn't they make a united front with the Stalinists in Michigan in the fight against the Trucks Law?

With the help and leadership of Farrell Dobbs, they have helped to set up an imposing committee of trade unionists, liberals, church leaders, pacifists and others. And there is not a single Stalinist or fellow-traveler on this United Front Committee against the Trucks Law! Why is that? I'll tell you why. Out in Michigan they have to deal with the realities of the labor movement. They can't afford to indulge in flights of fancy, in Bartell's phantasmagoria of Compass Clubs and Huberman-Sweezy circles, and groups of reformed and repentant Stalinists, who are "rife with Trotskyist conciliationism."

They haven't got a single Stalinist or Stalinist fellow-traveler on the whole large committee against the Trucks Law -- I repeat: Not one! -- because it is their deliberate policy to keep them out. They know that the Stalinists are so isolated in the labor movement of Michigan -- the Stalinists are so much poison in the trade union movement out there -- that if they were to put a single Stalinist trade unionist or fellow-traveler on the Trucks Committee it would result in all the others pulling out and leaving us alone, isolated from the labor movement and the liberals, with a few Stalinist hacks.

I don't say their policy there in the Trucks Law Committee is wrong. I say it is absolutely right. That was the policy laid down by the Political Committee when the Trucks Law Committee was first projected. And the one who pointed out the necessity of this line, to which all other PC members agreed, was nobody but Cochran.

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### The Real Line of Cochranism

There is a certain sentiment of Stalinist conciliationism in our party, as we have to admit to our shame on the eve of our 25th Anniversary. It is a foul disease, and we are going to fight it uncompromisingly, and clean it out of the party. Fortunately, it is confined to a small section of the party, almost entirely concentrated in New York under the dominion of Bartell. That is Bartell's chief contribution to the New York Local, the first and founding local of the party. But the question of our attitude to perfidious Stalinism, important as it is, is not the main issue of the faction fight.

The real issue -- the fundamental and decisive issue -- is just hinted at in a few characteristic expressions in "The Roots of the Party Crisis." The denunciation of the 1946 Convention as "the ill-fated convention" -- that is the real line of Cochranism. This "ill-fated Convention," adopted our programmatic statement of the perspectives of this country, of the labor movement, and of our party in the "The Theses on the American Revolution." And that action of the 1946 Convention -- its adoption of these programmatic theses -- stamps it as the most important convention in our 25-year history,

with the possible exception of our Founding Conference. That is what Cochranism is against.

These cynical gibes at the "mystique of the party"; the vicious ridicule of party patriotism as "the mysticism of faith and hope"; the repudiation of the party's confidence in its historic mission, with the snide remark and characteristic sneer: "We had become the children of destiny -- at least in our own minds" -- that is the real line of Cochranism, so far as it has been stated yet.

It signifies, in its totality, a capitulatory renunciation of the revolutionary perspectives of this country, and of the labor movement, and of the destined role of our party in it. That can't yet be stated in plain words in a formulated program, because it contradicts the principled basis of our party, and its reason for being, since its origin 25 years ago. It contradicts the tradition of the party, and the great moral and political capital it has accumulated in the long and honorable fight. Such a counter-program cannot be stated openly and fully; it has to be sneaked in bit by bit.

The counter-program of Cochranism can't be stated openly because those party leaders, who are the chief representatives of our program and tradition, stand in the way. These leaders must first be disposed of. They must be misrepresented, slandered, discredited and disqualified before the party members can get a chance to see, in black and white, the real program of Cochranism.

But we know it already. We have seen it developing, step by cautious step, in sneak attacks, as Dobbs so aptly characterized them; in innuendos and insinuations in single sentences about the folly of "sowing seeds in the wind"; and in half-sentences cunningly woven into apparently innocuous paragraphs. In what is said and half-said in that sneaking manner, and especially in what is said and done by the Cochranites in Detroit -- who talk more frankly -- we see the real program.

This document says, hypocritically, that the Cochran faction is in favor of election campaigns "on a rational basis and where genuine gains can be expected." What's that put in for, except to catch the votes of comrades who still think election campaigns are good for the party? What's that statement worth in the face of the fact that they voted against the recent Municipal Election campaign of Los Angeles, where the conditions were the most favorable we could expect anywhere in the country, and has had the best results of any election campaign we have had to date on a local scale?

They say they are for election campaigns because they know that if they stated their real position, they would lose a large section of their supporters. But out in Detroit, Al Adler, who is a real Cochranite, and not a dupe like some of the New York lieutenants, says elections campaigns are a waste of time and money, and worse, because they expose our weakness and attract too much attention to us, and brought the Trucks Law down on our heads. That's what they say in Detroit. And that's what Cochran taught them.

We have a group of comrades in Detroit -- trade unionists who have given good service to the party in the past. They have seen the whole generation of militants, who built the auto union in its heroic

days, gradually change in character, until the change has become qualitative.

The old union militants who are still in the plants, after 13 years of war and post-war prosperity, are now 13 years older, and many of them are 13 times softer and more conservative. They have many years seniority, and that has become a sort of vested interest, a special privilege in steady employment, as against the younger, newly-recruited slaves of the assembly line who have no privileges whatever.

Most of them, who have been in the plants a long time, have been upgraded to better and easier jobs. Some of them have acquired skills which have raised them into a privileged category. They have had steady work at boom-period wages for a long time. All these material improvements in their conditions of life have conservatized these workers. These privileged and conservatized workers are the solid social base of the Reuther bureaucracy. They support the bureaucracy not because of the skill of Reuther's demagogy, but because his conservatism expresses their own.

### The Social Basis of Cochranism

All that was analyzed and explained in our convention resolution. But the convention analysis must now be carried a step farther. Some of our own trade union comrades in Detroit, and to a certain extent in other places, see this conservatism of the privileged stratum of the auto workers, whom they know personally and with whom they have long associated, and mistake it for the state of mind of the whole mass of the workers in the mass production industries. That is the source of their unmitigated pessimism about revolutionary perspectives in this country, and the perspectives of the revolutionary party. And some of them -- some of our own trade unionists -- have become infected with this conservatism themselves.

Their conservatism, which clashes head-on with the revolutionary line of the party, expresses itself in a revolt against the party. Under the inspiration of Cochran, this revolt sometimes even takes on the character of hatred of the party; denigration of the party; and denial of its historic mission. They exaggerate and whimper about petty "grievances" which are mostly imaginary, and not worth two cents anyway. They want to withdraw from the political struggle in the open arena. They want to retreat into a propaganda circle. They oppose any program of rounded activities proper for a revolutionary party, which is not the same thing as a mere group of progressive trade unionists.

We have that infection right in our own party! We have that reflection of the combined pressures of 13 years of prosperity, and six years of witch hunt, expressed in the conservatization of a section of our own trade unionists! That is the bitter truth. And these conservatized trade unionists are the real social basis of Cochranism in our party. They are the conservative right-wing of the party.

To be sure, every demoralized petty-bourgeois individual finds Cochranism expressing his own moping, pessimistic futility. But these demoralized petty-bourgeois individuals don't amount to much. They

are only individuals, not a solid social group as in 1940. We have nothing much to fear from them. But the conservatized trade unionists -- even though they are only a small minority of the trade unionists in the party -- amount to a great deal. That is why their mobilization in the Cochranite faction presents a mortal threat to the very existence of this party.

They have been whipped up into a frenzy of factional agitation, which everybody has noticed as similar to that frenzy we saw on the verge of the Burnham split in 1940. This factional frenzy of the Cochranites is a revolt against the party; against its program and against its tradition; and a denial of its right to exist and to lead the future revolution of the American proletariat. That is what Cochranism is.

That is the explanation for his abominable methods which are so utterly alien to our movement, and so repugnant to principled revolutionists. And that is the reason why the revolutionary elements in the party -- and those who want to be revolutionists -- have got to quit fooling around with the irresponsible game of "neutrality," and take sides in the fight to protect the party against this Cochranite attack on its right to live.

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### No Political Compromise

What are the perspectives of this fight? I will tell you what the aims and perspectives of the party leadership are, in plain words, so that there can be no misunderstanding between us. We are going to keep the party on the same revolutionary line it has followed since its foundation 25 years ago. We are going to fight Cochranism to a finish. We intend to win this fight, and we reject in advance any proposal, or even any suggestion, of political compromise.

Does this plain, unvarnished statement of aims and perspectives mean that we want a split; that we are planning a split; or that we are threatening a split? No, it doesn't mean that, and I'll tell you why -- also in plain words which cannot be misunderstood. We are "Old Trotskyists" who have seen and participated in many unifications and splits -- and we make no fetish of either. If we thought the party needed a split, we wouldn't hesitate to organize it and carry it through. We don't want a split this time for the simple reason that we don't need a split.

We are for party unity, not because we think a split would be a catastrophe for the party, as the Burnhamites said in 1940, and as the Cochranites say today. Splits in our party are a catastrophe only for those who make them -- only for the splitters, never for the party. We are for unity, not because we are afraid of a split, or because we doubt our ability to smash a split if it is attempted, as we have smashed every split in the past. We want to keep the party united because we want a discussion, a good, thorough, long discussion.

The reason we want this discussion is that we want to educate and re-educate the party in a struggle against Cochranite revisionism. We want a discussion to smoke out Cochran, and make him write his real program down on paper in theses form, as our program has already

been written down in the "Theses on the American Revolution" and in the 25-year record of the party.

The Plenum of the National Committee will undoubtedly endorse the program and the 25-year record of the party, and reject the program of Cochranism and its falsification of that record. Then will come the next stage of discussion in preparation for the decision of the party. We, for our part, have no doubt what that decision will be, and we hope it will be taken by a united party.

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APPENDIX:

(Reprinted from Socialist Appeal, Oct. 19, 1940)

THE STALINISTS AND THE UNITED FRONT

Speech of James P. Cannon at Chicago SWP Conference

(The following is the stenographic record of a speech by Comrade James P. Cannon, National Secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, delivered at the Plenum-Conference of the party at Chicago, Sept. 27-29. This speech was a supplement to his main report, "The Military Policy of the Proletariat," which we published last week.)

It seems, comrades, that the discussion on the military policy is pretty well exhausted. The small points of difference which have been brought out can be answered in the summary speech. We can now discuss the secondary question of the Stalinists and our trade union tactics.

For some time we have been compelled to realize that the Communist Party remains the greatest obstacle to the development of the revolutionary movement in the United States. The Stalinists retain a powerful position in many trade unions and by their new turn have still further confused things to our detriment. The calculations that the Hitler-Stalin pact would result in the annihilation of the Communist Party were not quite realized. This new line gave its bureaucratic leadership the opportunity to put on the mask of pseudo-radicalism once again. That appealed more to the worker militants in the ranks than the old policy. To be sure, the cynical deal with Hitler repelled quite a large number of Stalinist workers. But the great bulk of the losses, both members and sympathizers, came from the petty-bourgeois elements whom the Communist Party had catered to in recent years. When the show-down came they were more devoted to the bourgeois-democratic regime of Roosevelt than to the regime of Stalin. The Stalinist workers, on the other hand, by an large, stayed with the party and stood up under a great deal of repression and persecution. These established facts must be taken as the point of departure in determining our tactical approach to this question.



## Trotsky's Views on this Question

We were aware for many months that we had not made sufficient inroads among the Stalinist workers. The Communist Party is an obstacle which the revolutionary workers must remove from their path. This cannot be done by frontal attacks alone. It is necessary to devise methods of flank attack to supplement our uncompromising and unceasing direct offensive against perfidious Stalinism. These thoughts were in our minds when we placed the question of the Communist Party on the agenda for a discussion with Comrade Trotsky on our last visit. He was also of the opinion that our policy toward the Communist Party for a long time has been too negative, that we haven't devised sufficiently flexible tactics for flank movements in order to win over to our side a number of Stalinist workers.

Trotsky posed the question on the issue of the election campaign and put forward a shocking proposal. He said the CP leadership is talking very loudly in opposition to imperialist war, etc. We know they are liars and fakers simply carrying out current instructions in Stalin's diplomatic game. Tomorrow they will betray the fight against war. We know that, said Trotsky, but thousands of misguided workers are not yet convinced of it. "We must find a way to reach these workers as they are, with their present mentality. Let us take up the leaders at their word and state: If the Communist Party will maintain the position of real opposition to imperialist war we will propose to them a united front, and even give critical support to their candidates in the election."

Nobody in the delegation agreed with the Old Man on this drastic proposal. We had a long and at times heated discussion with him on it. We took the position that such a drastic change in the middle of the election campaign would require too much explanation, and would encounter the danger of great misunderstanding and confusion which we would not be able to dissipate. While we might conceivably win over a couple of hundred Stalinist workers in the course of a drawn-out tactic of this kind, we felt that we would run the danger of losing more than we gained.

## The United Front Tactic

We argued back and forth on this ground for several days. Then Trotsky made a compromise proposal. He said that, after all, the main thing is the new military policy -- the long-term strategical line -- and not the short-term minor problem of our tactics in relation to the CP in the current election campaign.

He said, if we would take his proposal as one possible maneuver, and would devise some method of united front approach which would really enable us to penetrate the Stalinist ranks, he would accept it as a compromise. We mulled over this a couple of days. I had a personal conversation with him before we left Coyoacan and restated my fears of misunderstanding and confusion from such a drastic policy as critical support to the CP in the coming election. He said he did not consider it of sufficient importance to make an issue; he did not want to provoke a party discussion which might divert attention from the paramount question of the new military policy. But we should think over the thing seriously and devise an effective united front attack against the Stalinist bureaucracy.

The united front tactics, as devised and perfected by Lenin, are in no sense the expression of a conciliatory attitude toward opponent organizations in the labor movement. The united front is designed to mobilize the masses -- as they are -- for common action against the class enemy on specific issues of the day. At the same time it is a method of struggle against alien currents and treacherous leaders. The tactic is not to be applied all the time, every day of the week, but only on suitable occasions. The main tactic of the Comintern under Lenin was the tactic of the united front. But Lenin knew when to employ it and when to put it aside. In the first years of the split of the Second International and the formation of the Comintern nothing was said about the united front. The Russians have a saying: "Every vegetable has its season." And the season of the war and the post-war period, following the Russian Revolution and the formation of the Comintern, was the season for head-on offensive against the international social democracy. The strategy was to complete the split in merciless warfare, and replace the reformist parties by revolutionary Communist Parties.

That direct frontal attack was carried on from 1917, after the founding of the Comintern in 1919 and up until the Fall of 1921. Then the leaders of the Comintern -- Lenin and Trotsky -- drew a balance. Lenin pointed out that we had succeeded in our strategy to this extent, that we had constructed independent Communist Parties in all countries of considerable strength. But the Social Democrats still had big organizations of workers under their control; these workers were not as yet convinced of Communism. For the next period we must confront the reformist leaders with united front proposals as an approach to the rank and file under their influence.

### We Must Repeat Lenin's Tactic

You can observe the same general pattern in the work of constructing the Fourth International in the fight against Stalinism. We have been conducting a long drawn-out frontal attack. In the course of that attack we have selected and drawn to our side hardened cadres of the Fourth International. But we must recognize that the CP still remains a powerful organization, many times more powerful than ourselves. It contains in its ranks a great many misguided but class conscious workers. We are now obliged to resort to united front tactics as a means of approach to them.

Nobody in our Political Committee wanted to sponsor the policy of critical support to the Stalinists in the election campaign. I think this is one time we disagreed with Trotsky correctly. Nevertheless we have all realized that we must devise a more flexible tactic towards the CP and look for suitable occasions, as long as they espouse this semi-radical line, to penetrate their ranks, by means of united front proposals. And here also we don't want to jump over to the other extreme, from leaving the CP alone to united front proposals every day in the week. We should carefully discriminate, select occasions and incidents for approaches to the CP rank and file, through their organizations, for a limited, specific, united front. That we have agreed upon, and I think the Conference should endorse it as a general policy.

It should be carried out, I repeat, in a most careful and discriminating manner. We already experimented, rather gingerly, with

this tactic in New York at the time we were carrying out our struggle against the Bundists and Coughlinites organizations. We addressed a letter to the district organization of the CP proposing to them a united front against the Coughlin-Bund bands. This was not followed up. We merely sent a letter and published it. But just the simple facts that we were out fighting the fascists in New York City, and that we appealed to the rank and file of the CP to join us, had good results. We were informed by our contacts in the PC that we created quite a ripple in their ranks. It caused the bureaucrats quite a little "trouble." A good many rank and file Stalinists wanted to accept our united front offer and join us in the fight against the fascists. Out of that single experience we won over quite a number of rank and file Stalinists to our party.

At the present time you have a situation out in California where, if I understand the facts, Governor Olson has proposed to the State Legislature the passage of a constitutional amendment to remove the CP from the ballot. Our Los Angeles local organization jumped on this right away. They proposed to send an appeal to the CP and other organizations for a united front action to fight this attempt to outlaw the CP. The Political Committee unanimously approved the initiative of the Los Angeles comrades. As I understand it, they will push this action in the next few weeks.

#### Problems of the United Front

It must be repeated all the time that the united front is a method of struggle. It does not mean friendship or conciliation. It simply means an approach to the rank and file of an opponent organization in the labor movement, through their official leadership, for a joint struggle for common immediate aims. Properly utilized, the united front creates the possibility to penetrate the ranks of organizations hitherto sealed against us. It is in this sense, and in this sense only, that we propose united fronts to the Stalinists, in the next period. We are, and we shall remain, the most consistent and most implacable enemies of Stalinism.

The Old Man was quite optimistic about the possibilities. He said, suppose you go into this and repeat these experiments time and time again on suitable occasions; in the end if you win over 200 Stalinist workers to our party you have gained a lot. We raised the question of the enormous hatred of many honest workers in the labor movement against the Stalinists. There is a great grain of justice and sincerity in this hatred, although it is often confused with reactionary prejudices. We have to be very careful that we don't offend the sensibilities of these anti-Stalinist workers who are militant and partly class conscious in their attitude, but we must not let their feelings determine our politics.

The moment we began to speak of a united front approach to the Stalinists, we heard from all of our fractions in the trade unions a cry to go slow! Those in the trade unions know how bitterly the Stalinists are hated. We must be very careful. If we allow ourselves to become confused and mixed up with the Stalinists, we will cut off our road of approach to the rank and file of the trade union movement, the anti-Stalinist rank and file, which, in my opinion, is a more important reservoir of the revolution than the Stalinist rank and file.

Here we had a little difference with Comrade Trotsky. He was inclined to dismiss the whole "progressive" movement as composed entirely of patriots and fakers. In fact he gave us quite an argument on Lewis and Browder. "What is the difference between Lewis and Browder? Is Browder a bigger scoundrel than Lewis? I don't think so. They are both scoundrels--of different types." One comrade there remarked, the Stalinists are very hostile to us. Trotsky said: "Yes, I know, sometimes they shoot us." (This was shortly after the May 24 machine gun attack.) He said, "Do you think Lewis or Green wouldn't shoot at you? It is only a difference of circumstances, that is all."

We must classify the Stalinists and the reactionary and "progressive" patriotic labor fakers as simply two different varieties of enemies of the working class employing different methods because they have different bases under their feet. It brings us into a complicated problem in the trade union movement. It has been our general practice to combine in day to day trade union work with the progressives and even the conservative labor fakers against the Stalinists. We have been correct from this point of view, that while the conservative and traditional labor skates are no better than the Stalinists, are no less betrayers in the long run, they have different bases of existence.

The Stalinist base is the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union. They are perfectly willing to disrupt a trade union in defense of the foreign policy of Stalin. The traditional labor fakers have no roots in Russia nor any support in its powerful bureaucracy. Their only base of existence is the trade union; if the union is not preserved they have no further existence as trade union leaders. That tends to make them, from self-interest, a little more loyal to the unions than the Stalinists. That is why we have been correct in most cases in combining with them as against the Stalinists in purely union affairs.

### The New Stage in the Unions

But our work in the trade unions up till now has been largely a day to day affair based upon the daily problems and has lacked a general political orientation and perspective. This has tended to blur the distinction between us and pure and simple trade unionists. In many cases, at times, they appeared to be one with us. It was fair weather and good fellows were together. The great issues raised by the war are rudely disrupting this idyl. Some of our comrades have already had revealing experiences of how a war situation puts an end to ambiguity and makes men show their real colors.

Some people went hand in hand with us on almost every proposition we made to improve the union, get better contracts from the bosses, etc. Then all of a sudden, this whole peaceful routine of the trade union movement is disrupted by overpowering issues of war, patriotism, the national elections, etc. And these trade unionists, who looked so good in ordinary times, are all turning up as patriots and Rooseveltians. We now have a much narrower basis of cooperation with them. This new situation induces some of our comrades to say we should break off all relations with these patriotic unionists and progressive fakers. That is a very extreme position which we cannot endorse.

What we have got to do with our united front policy, in the unions and in general, is to make it more precise. The united front does not signify political collaboration but joint action on specific issues despite political differences. The united front is based on day to day problems. It is nothing resembling permanent collaboration, but simply day to day agreements. Where we agree or half-agree with others we go along together; where we don't agree we go alone. Politically we have no ground for collaboration with the labor "progressives." We will have less and less as we go along, as the pressure of the war machine grows heavier.

A great number of our comrades in the unions have been working hand in hand with people who have been simply militant unionists and nothing else. In "normal" times they get along very well together. They will soon encounter the unpleasant experience of having many of these people these fellows who have been co-workers, drinking companions and pals turn up as direct enemies and informers against our movement. There is only one thing that binds men together in times of great stress. That is agreement on great principles. Good fellowship and chumminess is a very poor substitute. Those who don't know this will learn it in bitter experience.

All those comrades who think we have something, big or little, in the trade union movement should get out a magnifying glass in the next period and look at what we really have. You will find that what we have is our party fractions and the circle of sympathizers around them. That is what you can rely on. There may be cases where people who are united with us in principle will falter because of personal weakness. But those are the exceptions to the rule. There will be cases of men without broad political concepts, who, because of exceptional personal qualities will prove loyal to us in a pinch. They will also be the exceptions. The rule will be that the general run of pure and simple trade unionists, the non-political activists, the latent patriots -- they will betray us at the most decisive moment. What we will have in the unions in the hour of test will be what we build in the form of firm fractions of convinced Bolsheviks.

### We Will Stand on our own Feet

This military policy that we are outlining here will be the main line of our activity. We will have today a united front with Smith or Jones, together with Brown. We will agree with one or the other that such and such should be the demands upon the bosses, such and such proposals in the internal situation of the union. But we are bound to none of them and none of them are bound to us. We will fight against the Stalinist disrupters in the union every day in the week. At the same time we will approach the Stalinists on the broad political field for a united front action, as, for example, in California, to fight the removal of minority parties from the ballot.

Perhaps our progressive friends will say, "What are you doing? You are supposed to be working with us, and all of a sudden you come out against removing the CP from the ballot." We have a perfect right to reply: "You are supposed to be working with us 364 days of the year, but on one day you want to make an exception, to vote for Roosevelt, the agent of the bosses. And if you take that little privilege, you must give us one. We must have the same independence

that you have." Maybe this will be a lesson in democracy to the democrats.

One point more on this and I will be finished. Many of our comrades in the unions who have become deeply integrated with this business of the progressive Democrats, flinch away from the idea of offending them. Our party in this isn't as courageous as it should be. We are afraid of offending people, that is, their stupid petty-bourgeois prejudices. That is only another way of saying that we are not yet real Marxists. The great Marxists -- beginning with Marx and Engels -- and ending with the last great exponent of Marxism, Comrade Trotsky -- they all had a common characteristic: a complete indifference to public opinion. They did not care what the rest of the world thought about them. They figured out their line of policy in every case according to their scientific ideas. Then they courageously applied it and took the consequences. They made their own the motto of Dante: "Go your way and let the people talk."

Perhaps this problem of the CP is a test for us. To the extent that we can deal with the problem correctly and carefully, but also courageously -- disregarding Philistine opinion -- we will take a step forward becoming genuine Marxists, genuine Trotskyists, who follow their own line and let the world make the best of it.