

JUN 27 1940

US 1420.200 FND Documents
7-8/35

Rmc

WORKERS PARTY

INTERNAL BULLETIN

FOR MEMBERS ONLY

Issued by National Committee, Workers Party US

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

1	1087 Votes - What we gave, What we got - An evaluation -	by T. Stern
(p4) 1	The Question of "Organizational Methods" -	by M. Shachtman (second p1)
3	Another word on "Organizational Methods and Regino" -	by M. Shachtman
4	On the "Reform" of a Socialist Party -	by M. Shachtman
7	On the International Relations of the W.P. -	
	7 A letter to the N.C. -	by Will Soegers
	8 A Resolution -	by Will Soegers
10	The July 1935 New International -	by T. Stern
11	What is the future course of the Bolshevik-Leninist Faction in the SFIO? -	by T. Stern

NO. 1

PRICE 5¢

T. Stamm

On the 29th of June the New Militant reported that 1087 mandates at the national convention of the Socialist Party of France were cast for the resolution of the Bolshevik-Leninist faction in the S.F.I.C. (printed in the New Militant of June 1, 1935). This fact is presented as an unqualified victory for Bolshevism.

It is our opinion that the closer examination will reveal the "victory" in a somewhat different and correct light. That is the purpose of this article. We limit ourselves to the price paid for this victory.

The vote is a result of seven months of activity in the S.F.I.C. consequent upon the dissolution of the French section of the Communist League of France, into the French Socialist Party - commonly referred to as the "French turn". This "turn" has been the axis of a bitter dispute in the International Communist League and even beyond it in the general labor movement.

The implication inherent in the presentation in the New Militant is clearly that this fact is an evidence and a proof of the correctness of the turn. This is unfortunate inasmuch as it is not correct, nor the position of the Workers Party, which as yet has no position on the question.

Regarding the "French turn" there are essentially two positions; that it is a tactical question; that it is a principled question. The proponents of the turn defend it as a correct tactic made necessary by the situation in France, the isolation of the French Communist League, the Bolshevik-Leninists, and the possibility of functioning on a revolutionary basis in the S.F.I.C. A number of those who opposed it did so on the ground that it was an unwise tactic, that the same ends could be achieved by other means.

But there are those who opposed this turn on principle claiming that the French turn was the first step in a new international orientation of the I.C.L. toward the 2nd International namely that the French turn in its political and organizational aspects would be repeated in other countries and for the same reasons. They hold that what is involved is the question of the attitude, political and organizational, of revolutionists toward reformists and centrists--a principled question since the days of the Communist Manifesto. Our contention is that this orientation revolves around the political axis of reforming the 2nd International; transforming them from within into instruments for the decisive defeat of Fascism and for the proletarian revolution. We hold that it is a violation of fundamental Marxist principles to liquidate the world movement for the revolutionary vanguard international - the embryo of the 4th International - or those sections whose liquidation would politically and organizationally weaken the whole.

We proposed that the French Communist League maintain its independence and send a number of its people into the S.F.I.C. to work there as a faction for the same program and policies pursued by the League as an independent force with the perspective of split from the S.F.I.C. and fusion with the League to launch a revolutionary Marxist party.

Now it is the implication of the material published in the New Militant that it is evidence and proof of the correctness of the position of the proponents of the French turn. But this is false. Leaving aside for a little while all other considerations, all that this material can establish is that it was and is possible to work as a faction inside the S.F.I.C. So far as we are aware no one disputed this contention. For how long and with what perspective are other questions.

What this material does not prove and cannot prove is that these results justify the liquidation of the French Communist League, as an independent force in the French labor movement. For no gain can compensate for the loss of that force which alone, free and un fettered by the discipline of reformists and centrists can raise the banner of the proletarian revolution and summon the workers to build the 4th International in struggle against the bourgeoisie and against the Socialist and Communist Internationals and their parties.

Indeed it is our contention that the loss of the independent force weakens the fight of the Bolshevik-Leninists inside the S.F.I.C. Let us consider the resolution which received 1087 votes. It is composed of eight points. They are put in the form of policies for the Socialist Party to adopt. There is no word in them for any hint of the Socialist Party to adopt. There is no word in them for any hint of the Socialist Party to adopt. There is no word in them for any hint of the Socialist Party to adopt.

WY 21 PI.

"organizational methods", under cover of which they finally developed to full bloom their anti-Marxian views. In the early days of the Comintern, every real opponent of Communism who was under pressure of the masses and had to assume a left coloration to protect himself, vowed his loyalty to the ideas of the Third International, but fought violently against ... Zinoviev's organizational methods. Urbahn, Paz, Landau, Bauer -- all those who slid away to one degree or another from the line of Marxism, began their fight by fulminating against Trotsky's rudeness, bureaucratism, etc., - i.e. his "organizational methods". Oehler and Stamm, who now pervert every elementary idea of Marxism, do it under the banner of a venomous campaign against Trotsky's bureaucratism, his self-appointment as the Pope of the Fourth International (Stamm in the Polcom), against his "regime", against his "organizational methods". In a word, the song is an old one, and the lyrics haven't improved with the passage of time.

What are the organizational methods of the Oehler faction? They are notorious, and they flow from a notoriously wrong political line which drives them to unprincipled blocs and to intense factionalism. One minute: Weber is a notorious Right winger and a liquidator; next minute: Weber is nevertheless a good man to make a bloc with, in order to advance the great principle of adding Stamm to the National Committee, an item paid for by supporting the "unprincipled scoundrel Weber" for the same National Committee. One minute: Johnson is a notorious representative of the Right wing in the party; next minute: Johnson is a good Left winger because he's "against the S.P. orientation", and we'll make a little bloc with him. One minute: motion to keep the "Badenite" Breier off the party H.C. to which he was regularly elected; next minute: make a little bloc with good old Breier against the Cannon-Shechtman "organizational methods".

What are the organizational methods of the Kuste faction? They are weak and vacillating when they flow from a vacillating line, and firm when they flow from a firm political line. When the line of the party was clear, the united Polcom had no difficulty in dealing with the Weisbordian-Oehlerites, Zerk. At the Plenum, the Kuste group made a turn-about face and retreated several miles. Where before it had been in a fruitful bloc with us, which founded the party, kept it going and held it together, it now threw overboard everything it had previously stood for, repudiated the bloc, unloaded all responsibility ("we were misled") for its conduct in the first six months of the party, and capitulated to Oehler. It was going to put an end to the "Cannon-Shechtman regime and methods" which caused (!) the factionalism in the party and introduce in its place a new regime and new methods. It started the regime by whitewashing the Oehlerites, by "wiping the slate clean". A few weeks pass -- and what are the results of these "organizational methods"? The Polcom is compelled all over again to pass a motion of condemnation of Oehler's factional conduct, of his flagrant violations of discipline, and demand of him that he cease his undisciplined and factional conduct (P.C., July 29.). The example is an eloquent one.

What are the organizational methods of the Weber faction? Their unprincipled bloc with the Oehlerites at the CIA convention is quite well known in party circles. They agreed with us on every principled question; they disagreed with Oehler on every principled question. Conclusion? Make a bloc with Oehler against us and our ... "organizational methods" (which, it may be said at this point, has never yet been defined, because vagueness or obscurity or silence on this score is usually the safest course). Are the Oehlerites anti-Trotskyists? Do they center their fire on the main forces for the Fourth International? Are they factional and sectarian? Certainly, say the Weberites! Conclusion? Make a bloc with the Oehlerites! Follow Oehler and Kuste in concentrating all your fire in the internal discussion on Cannon and Shechtman and their ... "organizational methods". Was the party line correct in the first six months of its existence? Weber, sitting on the Political Committee, never said a single word against the party line, never made a single separate motion, a single independent proposal. Conclusion? Come to the Plenum and declare that for six months the party has been following an opportunist course! Is the West resolution on the SP correct, save for some slight, insignificant reformulation? Yes, says Weber! Would he vote for it? Yes, says Weber! Did he vote for it? No, because he learned that West, who goes by political line, merged his resolution with the Cannon-Shechtman resolution which

3.

which can speak with the full voice of Marxism, and play the role of attractive pole for the tendency crystallizing around the faction.

Conversely the absence of that force and pole not only weakens the work of the faction but arrests or distorts the development of leftward moving workers in these parties. The May articles in the New International, by its own terms, strives to inculcate the Socialist workers against Stalinism. More specifically the article is directed against the tendency led by Zyromski, which is moving in the direction of Stalinism. Here is news! Strange news! The Bolshevik-Leninists are steering a course deeper into the S.P. But here is a tendency which is moving in the direction of breaking with the S.P. It is a left tendency. Why does it move toward Stalinism? Where else can it move? Is there an independent Marxist force outside of the S.P. and C.P. which can attract it? No, that was liquidated. Would the French communist League have attracted it if it had itself remained independent? We cannot say. But it would have had an unparalleled opportunity to win all or part of this tendency for a new party and the 4th International. It might have demonstrated its ability to act as the center of revolutionary unity. This would have been a long step toward the new party in France.

What can the Bolshevik-Leninists say to this tendency now? What advice can they give it? Not to go over to Stalinism? Good, but that is negative; it is not enough. It does not answer the question: what should they do, where should they go?

They cannot advise forming an independent force as the center of revolutionary unity outside of the S.F.I.O. They have turned their back on this course. Besides they would be unable to explain why they do not follow their own preaching. Accordingly the article, La Verite, the Bolshevik-Leninists make no answer. But they can have only one: do not go to the C.P.; follow our course, deeper into the S.P. The line of the Bolshevik-Leninists contradicts the evolution of this tendency as it must any tendency moving toward a break with the S.F.I.O. The course of the Bolshevik-Leninists can serve only to disorient this tendency and leave it a prey to Stalinism and confusion.

So it is with the tendency of Doriot. What is responsible for the failure of this tendency, the first to break with the monolithism of Stalinism in years, to develop further to a Marxist revolutionary position? Several things. But prominently, the course of the Bolshevik-Leninists. Imagine the confusion in Doriot's ranks when the proponents of the 4th International entered the 2nd International! What can they say to this tendency? To follow suit? Therefore should it? As with Zyromski so with Doriot they are incapable of speaking of a new party outside of the SP and CP. Doriot and his proletarian communists they cannot influence on the basis of their present course, except confuse them and leave them helpless in their confusion to become demoralized.

The failure by the Bolshevik-Leninists to advance a clear perspective of a new Marxist party outside of the SFIO leads them to appear as the proponents of the idea that the S.F.I.O. can become the center of revolutionary unity. On the other side their silence on the split perspective, their ambiguity on the question of organic unity indicates that they have a series of possible alternative perspectives for the new party: organic unity, either through reform of the organic unity party, or a split off from it.

They cannot actively oppose organic unity in the S.F.I.O. for that would pose sharply the question of their perspective for the SFIO, split off from it or reform. And this question they are neither able nor ready to answer. Accordingly they strive to leave all doors and perspectives open. They are adrift on the sea of opportunist adventures and when they set sail they throw overboard the compass of Marxism.

These are the fruits in France of the "French turn". The international results have been if anything even more disastrous. In a number of countries it has had fatal results. We will deal with these aspects of the turn in another article.

But even before taking account of all the havoc wrought by this innovation the results in France alone justify the most rigorous condemnation of it and the sharpest warning to take energetic steps to avert the wreck which will be inevitable despite three times 100% votes if these steps are not taken. Essential by these steps are simple. Reconstitute the independent Marxist force outside of the SFIO. Subordinate the faction in the SFIO to the direction of the independent organization. Give the faction a split perspective. Open a merciless programmatic war on the S.P. and C.P. Oppose organic unity and its propaganda for it. Call for the new party and the 4th International. Build a faction in the C.P. Approach all leftward moving forces and tendencies for unity on a Marxist programmatic basis or on the basis of a revolutionary program of action for France.

THE QUESTION OF "ORGANIZATIONAL METHODS"

M. Shachtman

To one degree or another, all the factions in the party have been centering their attack upon us because of our "organizational methods". In the more recent phases of the internal discussion, especially in New York where the open confrontation of the various political lines has been possible, and where, as a consequence, our line has been made clear to scores of comrades and won their support, the hue and cry about "organizational methods" has only become louder. In some cases, a distinct effort is being made to drop the discussion of the political differences, or else to obscure such a discussion, by making our disputes revolve exclusively around ... "organizational methods". What is worse, these "methods" are discussed as though they constituted some distinct, separate entity, with a merit or demerit entirely their own and apart from political or principled considerations.

Can "organizational methods" exist by themselves, as a separate entity or problem? Do they in our party at the present time?

Organizational methods, as such, can exist and be disastrous, only under one condition. Namely, when they are not connected in any way with a political line. Such a condition has existed in movements here and abroad. But then the bearers of these methods were designated by their proper name: POLITICAL BANDITS. Political banditry is the pursuit of an organizational line or conduct by an individual or a group of individuals who have no political line that distinguishes them or that is discernible, and who seek to gain or retain power purely by organizational means (combinations, machinations, subterfuges and ruses of all kinds). But not even our most frenzied opponents assert that we have no political line. On the contrary: it exists, it is quite well known and we carry on an open agitation for and defense of it in the party.

But then, (it is now argued by some), didn't Lenin launch a struggle against Stalin purely because of the latter's organizational methods, his rudeness and disloyalty, and propose on those grounds to remove him from his post? To this reference is added the broad insinuation that we constitute a similar bureaucracy, with similar methods, who must be fought as mercilessly as Lenin and Trotsky fought Stalin.

The analogy does not even lie because it hasn't a leg to stand on. It is of the most superficial nature and betrays a failure to understand the problem of the Stalinist bureaucracy and Lenin's attitude towards its central figure. (1) It is not true that Lenin opposed Stalin solely on organizational grounds. The famous testament is prefaced by the significant observation that the rule of the proletariat is based upon a collaboration of two classes. This creates the whole environment for the growth of a Soviet bureaucracy. This bureaucracy, in the period of its degeneration, in the midst of a constantly self-reproducing capitalism, represents the pressure of alien classes. Because of this fact, the bureaucracy tends more and more to bear down upon the proletarian kernel of the country; it shows an increasing attempt for it and a growing inclination to lean upon enemy classes. Stalin was the personification of this bureaucratic tendency. If the Testament is read in connection with the noted articles and letters Lenin wrote shortly before his death, the political and class connection will become apparent. If nothing is learned from the Testament except that "Stalin is rude - remove him!"-- then, indeed, nothing has been learned.

(2) The bureaucracy in the Soviet Union is a social phenomenon. It has deep roots in Russia's past and present historical development. It has close class connections. It has tremendous material and intellectual power at its disposal - power to corrupt, to degenerate, to undermine the proletarian base of the Union. To speak of our pitiful little "bureaucracy" in the Workers Party - or any section of it - in the same breath with the Stalinist bureaucracy, can be excused only on the grounds of political infantilism.

Further: who fights as a rule against "organizational methods" as independent categories? Those who have a weak political line themselves, or who cannot put forward an independent political line. The opportunists in the German social democracy "did not" oppose Marxism. Oh no! they only opposed Lenin's "organizational methods", under cover of which they smuggled into the party their revisionist conceptions, for they dared not put them forward openly. The Mensheviks (in 1903) did not oppose Lenin's political line against Bureaucracy and Economism. Oh no! they merely opposed his "rude"

4th International, that is to say, by a new party independent of both the S.P. and C.P. No use to argue this is the perspective of the Bolshevik-Leninists - if that is the case (we are frank to say we don't know). These 1007 votes were not cast for that perspective. They were cast for the perspective of imposing these policies on the SFIO, that is to say, making it a revolutionary Marxist Party, or to put it another way, reforming it.

How could it be otherwise? Point One reads "Congress of the S.P. considers that the entire national and international situation imposes on the proletariat the task of immediately placing itself in the forefront of the struggle for power." For revolutionists, for all class conscious workers, this means above all else except program, the question of the revolutionary party; more concretely, which party? The resolution does not offer another party, either one which exists, or one which must be created. It does not state that those which exist are bankrupt, ridden through and through with social patriotism and reformism. It does not attack a position of the leadership for organic unity. On the contrary, point eight can be interpreted without difficulty to mean organic unity. (Is this ambiguous point put in to catch votes?) It does not call for the formation of a new party, independent of both the CP and the SP. The resolution consequently stands objectively on the perspective of reforming the SFIO into the party of the 4th International. At the very best it allows those who voted for it to do so on this basis. In a word, it strengthened the illusions of the left centrist workers. In this sense it hinders their further development to a full revolutionary position.

What is true of the resolution is true of the Platform of the Bolshevik-Leninist faction, printed in the New Militant on June 29th. This platform has 14 points. They contain the essentials of a revolutionary Marxist program. Point 14 speaks of the necessity of building the 4th International. But there is not a single word about the relation of the SFIO to the 4th, or how the 4th International is to be built in France, through reform of the SFIO, organic unity, or by splitting off the revolutionary elements from the SFIO and CP and building a new party.

The article in the New International "Within France", reprinted from L. Verite, organ of the Bolshevik-Leninist faction, discusses the question of power in France, converting the pre-revolutionary into a revolutionary situation, epitomizes Stalinism as the enemy and does not say a word about the question of the SFIO and the 4th International, except to take an ambiguous position on organic unity, which can mean either that the Bolshevik-Leninists are for it, or against it.

It is argued in justification of the Bolshevik-Leninist faction, and its resolutions, that a left wing, in a reformist or centrist party, must conduct itself according to the situation and relation of forces in the party. It is argued that a left wing can not "tell all", but must reveal its full line and perspectives step by step as the situation develops. Generally speaking, this is correct, but its application to the question we are considering will yield surprising results against this "French turn".

Let us note first that the argument implies a split-perspective

on the part of the Bolshevik-Leninists. We see no evidence anywhere that this is the case. They never proclaimed it either before or after the entry into the SFIO. The proponents of the turn are not clear themselves, like trustful children they await the unfolding of the developments. Whatever way it goes it will be agreeable to them. There is nothing in their course of the Bolshevik-Leninist faction in the SFIO which supports this assumption.

But let us assume that it is so, that is their perspective. They are prevented from revealing their full line and perspective. Good! But then, what voice is there in the French Labor movement which is teaching the Socialist workers to break with the 2nd International and the SFIO, to build a new party over which will float the banners of Marxism and the 4th International, which alone can lead to victory? There is none. And there is none, precisely because the French Communist League was liquidated in order to build a left-wing around the Bolshevik-Leninists and their program. What must be said can not be said. The Bolshevik-Leninists are "prevented" by their course from doing their elementary Marxist duty, to speak out what is. That is the wisdom of this argument.

The liquidation of the League weakens the right the Bolshevik-Leninists are making. Let us draw the valuable lesson that the indispensable condition for successful fraction work by revolutionists in reformist and centrist parties is an independent force outside of these parties

has an identical line. Conclusion? We won't vote for it and for its line because we oppose ... Cannon's "organizational methods". And to show the superiority of our own "organizational methods", we will spread the slanderous gossip in the party that Cannon and Sha Shachtman want to take the WP into the SP. In a word, Weber derives his "political" position from the momentary requirements of his "organizational" (fictional) position. If our conduct were to be condensed in one phrase, it would be that we act in exactly the opposite way, i.e., we derive our organizational procedure and conduct from our political analysis and our political line.

What are our organizational methods? They are inseparable from our general political conceptions and line. Concretely, they manifested themselves in the party for six months in the following way: Our political line was fusion with the main stream of the AWP and mutual assimilation of all assimilable elements. Thence our "organizational" line - close and comradely collaboration with the core of the Ruste group, symbolizing one section of the fusion, for the purpose of consolidating that fusion. Defense of this section of the fusion from the violent, unprincipled, party-wrecking campaign of the Ochlerite disrupters (our conduct at the Pittsburgh Plenum, before it and after it). Formalization of party life and concentration in the first period on the work of really establishing the party as a functioning organization (hence, our opposition to the sectarian phrase-mongering of the Ochlerites and demagogic demands for "discussion of fundamental problems" the day after the CLA, AWP and fusion conventions had adjourned, after a solid year of discussion!) Protection of the party from the ultra-factionalism of Ochler, who keeps a faction on principle and regardless of issues, who "discovered" a "bad party regime" to fight in order to justify the existence of a faction which was transferred intact, automatically and disloyally from the CLA to the WP, long before there was any such thing in our party as a "regime". For this line we need make no apologies. We were not misled. It remains our line: Collaboration (openly demanded at the Plenum) with the main stream of the Ruste group in the best interests of the Party. Intransigent opposition to the unprincipled bloc-mongers, the Ochlerites, who represent a politically reactionary and sterile tendency in the party which militates against its progress. "Peace in the party -- on the basis of a correct, unambiguous, concrete line on the decisive political questions confronting the party.

July 30, 1935.

Shachtman.

ANOTHER WORD ON "ORGANIZATION METHODS" AND "REGIMES"

What is the importance of the Weber group? Its importance lies in what it symbolizes: it stands for unprincipled clique combinations, for the perpetuation of a faction whatever the situation or the issues may be, for the preservation of the "independence" of their faction regardless of the extent to which they may agree with others on fundamental principled questions. In itself, it has no great importance, it is true. But for what it represents, it has the importance of a pernicious tendency which is reflected also in the other groups combatting us. It has the importance of a system of political and organizational conduct which, should it prevail in our party would simultaneously mean its degeneration into an unprincipled sect. For the methods employed by a faction to its own discredit, would work havoc in the party if they became the party's methods.

What is the "platform" of the Weber group? Politically, god alone knows. "Organizational", they have one permanent plank: "We are against the organizational methods and the regime of Cannon and Shachtman!" Do they agree with C. and S. on this or that principled question, on this or that political question, or even on all the important principled and political questions? Very often; indeed, more often than not. But that matters very little to them. They are against "organizational methods".

the greatest confusion, I should like to set down the following ideas which may facilitate a solution of the dispute and help to dispel some of the confusion. This "theoretical" question of "reforming" a non-Bolshevik organization has, for us, a tremendous practical significance at the present time if we are to carry out our work in the Socialist party correctly and, as a result, effectively. I should of course like to hear of your reaction to the ideas jotted down for your perusal. If you are somewhat surprised at why we are dealing "suddenly" with this "abstract" question, I can only reply that in the post-Tlenu discussion in New York on the various resolutions on this subject, all the other groups concentrated their fire against us, ostensibly on the "theoretical question of reforming a social democratic party", but in actuality because none of them fully understands or fully visualizes the great potentialities of an organized, clear-headed Left wing in the Socialist party as a factor in the unfoldment of a powerful independent movement for the Fourth International in the United States. It appears as if we have before us for solution once more all these fundamental questions which were involved in the pre-fusion discussion in the old C.L.A. over the perspectives and methods of merging with the old A.S.P. for the purpose of creating the new party in this country.

In what sense can we and do we speak of the theoretical possibility of "reforming" the social democracy? In the sense of capturing the Second International? No, that is purely a bureaucratic apparatus, a post-office. If we speak of it at all, it is in the sense of the revolutionary Marxists having the possibility under specific circumstances of gaining a majority among the members of this or that socialist party in this or that country, of electing a revolutionary Marxist leadership in the party, of adopting a revolutionary Marxist program for the party. It is ridiculous to argue that the mere fact of a majority vote does not make a reformist party a revolutionary party - for the simple reason that this is not involved. The "formal vote" comes as a culmination of the work of the Marxist kernel in that party which has been engaged in such an educational campaign in the ranks that the membership has been revolutionized, is ready for a Marxist party, leadership and program, and expresses this readiness, this revolutionary development, by its vote at - let us say - a national party convention. By this formal act, the reformist party is converted into a revolutionary party to exactly the same extent that, for example, the socialist parties in several countries became "communist parties" after the war.

Is it theoretically possible, therefore, to "reform" a socialist party? Not only in theory, but in historical fact, too. Examples: In 1920, the Socialist party of France was captured by the Left wing at the Congress of Tours, where the party was affiliated to the Third International after having endorsed the famous "21 points" of the Second Congress; the Right wing split off. In the same year, the largest political party of labor in the world, the Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany (some 900,000 members) convened in Halle, where the Left wing repeated the victory of the French communists - the party adopted a revolutionary program, elected a revolutionary leadership, endorsed the "21 points", affiliated with the Comintern, and decided to fuse into a single party with the already existing Communist Party of Germany (Spartakusbund). Here too, the Right wing split off. In Czecho-Slovakia, in 1921, the whole Czech social democracy was "reformed", i.e., it affiliated as a whole (some 300,000 members) with the Communist International, adopting the "21 points", etc., etc. No appreciable split took place. Also in 1920, a minority broke away from the Italian Socialist Party at the Livorno Congress and formed the Italian Communist Party. More than a year later, however, the Serratti Left wing which operated inside the Italian Socialist Party, gained a majority for affiliation with the Third International, the Right wing quit, and the majority fused with the Italian Communist Party. Thus, one year the Left wing failed to "reform" the Italian S.P., and the next year, it did "reform" it. In 1920, the Norwegian Labor Party, not even composed of individual members but of block trade union membership for the most part (roughly, like the British Labor Party) decided overwhelmingly to affiliate with the Third International. In September, 1919, even with thousands of members of the party expelled by the ruling Right wing, the Left wing of the American Socialist Party

nevertheless gained a majority of the membership, and had all their delegates attended the Chicago convention, they would have gained a majority. Similarly, in other countries.

--But this all happened under the influence of the Russian Revolution and the post-war period, didn't it? To be sure. The Russian revolution, and the first growth of the S.I., lent a tremendous impulsion to the "reform" movement, they facilitated it. This means only one thing: with the degeneration of the Russian revolution today, the winning of a majority in this or that S.P. is only made more difficult, but not necessarily impossible. In the first place, why is it ruled out of order for, let us say, the French workers to achieve their revolution instead of Fascism triumphing? In the second place, it was not the Russian revolution "as such" that made possible the winning of several Socialist parties to communism, but fundamental forces of the class struggle, which are operating today, with greater or lesser effect. Thus, even in the period of Stalinist degeneration, reformist and Centrist parties have been "reformed". Example: the SAP of Germany which, when it broke from the German Social Democracy several years ago, did not have a program or leadership differing in any essential principle from let us say, the S.P. of the United States at the Detroit convention. Yet a Left wing won a majority in the SAP and, formally speaking, triumphed in the party and had a communist program adopted. Similarly, the Dutch OSP, which was finally captured for the 4th International, after having started as a reformist-Centrist party. Similarly, the Chilean Communist Party, a Centrist organization, was won for the 4th International about two years ago. These indisputable facts prove that it is not theoretically nor practically impossible to capture (i.e., to "reform") a reformist or a Centrist party (a Centrist party is merely reformism at a certain stage in its development).

Why is the question of importance beyond the theoretical or academic realm? Because, in our present discussion, it has also a practical-political significance of the first importance. For example, our French comrades do not orient their fundamental perspective upon the prospect of capturing a majority in the S.F.I.O., not because it is "theoretically impossible", but because practically, with consideration given to the concrete relationship of forces, and the factors of time, place and circumstance, it is practically unlikely that the SFIO can be captured by the Fourth Internationalists. But for the Bolshevik-Leninists in the SFIO to proclaim in advance that they have no hope or aim of capturing ("reforming") the SFIO, would mean to defeat their aims in advance. It would mean, first, laying themselves open to the charge of driving immediately towards an artificial split and thus giving the bureaucracy unnecessary pretexts to expel them prematurely. It would mean, second, that they would get no hearing from the Leftward moving workers in the SFIO who labor under the illusion that all that is required to make their party all-sufficient is the gradual victory of a revolutionary group inside of the party and the consequent adopting of a revolutionary program and leadership. This illusion can be dispelled only in practice, by their own experience, and not by ultimate laid down by us in advance. "You want to reform your party, comrade?" our people will and do say. "Very well, then, join with us in an organized way in order to fight against Blum and Co. and for the revolutionization of our party. We shall soon see whether or not M. Blum and his cohorts will allow us to progress in our party along our line without resorting to bureaucratic expulsion measures." On such a basis, the Left wing workers will work with us, support us, and end in our ranks when the lessons hammered into their heads by their own experiences have shown that a revolutionary party can only be built up independently of the CP and the SP and under the banner of the Fourth International. There is no other way for the Left wing to come to consciousness and to independent organization in France under the given conditions.

Essentially the same problem confronts the Leftward moving workers in the SP in the United States. We have the perspective of a split of the Left wing from the SP and their fusion with us into an independent mass party, or one that will more closely resemble such a party than we do as yet today. That is our perspective. We know that, practically speaking, the prospect of reforming the American SP is so remote at the present time that it would be quite erroneous for

for us to base ourselves upon such a perspective. But the thousands of radical workers in the SP who want an end to reformist policies and leadership in the SP (by these radical workers, we do not, of course, mean Messrs. Thomas, Loan, Florman et tutti quanti) - they do not yet have our perspective. That is the problem we must solve. To lay down in advance as the basis for the Left wing's organization and growth the demand that they must have the split orientation openly, means to isolate it from these radical workers and reduce it to a sterile sect looked upon by the workers of the SP with suspicion. Contrariwise, if the Left wing says in its declarations that it means to "make the SP a revolutionary party", that it means to have the SP adopt a revolutionary program and leadership, and unite with all other genuinely revolutionary elements, this will make it possible for the Left wing to draw to its banner the workers discontented with reformism, but who are reluctant to leave their party because they still believe it can be made the kind of party they want it to be. The Left wing, therefore, if it is to win real support in the SP for the subsequent fusion with us, must operate formally, officially, ostensibly, on the basis of the "reform" (capture, revolutionization) of the Socialist Party.

Herein lies the alpha and omega of the whole question - theoretically and practically. Evade the correct answer or give the false one, and the possible Left wing in the SP is hamstringed in advance.

July 22, 1935.

Max Shachtman

1427 East Lycoming St.,
Philadelphia, Pa., July 31, 1935.

National Committee
Workers Party
National Committee
Workers Party U.S.
A.J. Muste, Secretary,
33 East 11th Street,
New York, N.Y.

Dear Comrades:

Enclosed please find resolution on international relations which I submit as presenting the only correct line in harmony with the Declaration of Principles and the Constitution of the Workers Party of the U.S. The decision of the National Committee to endorse the ICE upon letter without submitting the question to the membership is a flagrant violation of the Constitution and of any sort of democracy within the party.

We are always criticizing the Communist Party for bureaucratically making decisions and letting the membership discuss afterward. The Natl. Committee had no right to commit the party to a policy (that in its consequences means affiliation (and I believe is intended to mean) with the Trotskyite ICE (under whatever new name). The Constitution purposely and explicitly reserves decision on international affiliation to the convention of the party. The present decision is nothing but an attempt to reach the same goal by way of a back door before the convention, thus establishing a fait accompli which would make reversal more difficult, if not impossible.

I protest emphatically against this procedure (the membership of the Workers Party incidentally was not informed of this important step until receipt of resolutions between July 8 and 15) and ask the P.C. to send a copy of this protest as well as the enclosed resolution in full to every member of the National Committee and every branch of the party immediately.

Fraternally,

(signed) William Scagers.

RESOLUTION ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF THE WORKERS PARTY U.S.
(Submitted by Will A. Seegers, Philadelphia Branch)

The Declaration of Principles of the Workers Party contains the following statements as to the tasks of the Party on the national and international field: "The Workers Party of the U.S. is founded on the great principles of revolutionary theory and practice stated by Marx and Lenin and tested by the experience of the class struggle on an international scale, above all in the Russian Revolution of 1917 (the October Revolution). The Workers Party conceives as its duty the realistic application of these principles to the present historical situation. Since its primary task is the defeat of the enemy at home - the overthrow of the capitalist Government of the United States - the Workers Party will seek first and foremost to demonstrate to the working class of the U.S. and its allies that the application of the principles of revolutionary Marxism is the sole means for the fulfilment of their historical needs and interests."

"The workers revolution by its very nature is international in character. Beginning in one or more countries it must be extended progressively to others until it embraces the entire world and establishes socialism as a world system. We are therefore committed to the formation of new revolutionary parties throughout the world and their union in a new international. The needs of the working class movements in earlier periods of capitalist development led to the formation of the First and later the Second International, and demanded the establishment of the Third International when the Second betrayed the working class in their war and post-war crises. Today the existing Second and Third Internationals are bankrupt. The problem of international organization cannot be met by an amalgamation of the Second and Third Internationals or by an International based on a mixture of the bankrupt policies of the two. A new, i.e., a Fourth, International, based on the theoretic and strategic principles laid down by Marx and Lenin, representing the historic continuity of the international revolutionary movement, and applying these basic principles to the historical realities of the present stage of capitalist decline, must be built. The Workers Party is prepared to establish fraternal relations with all groups, organizations and parties in other countries which stand on the same fundamental program as our own and to co-operate with them in the elaboration of a complete world program and the speediest possible establishment of the New International." (emphasis mine)

The cardinal test of all revolutionary Marxists in the present epoch is the position they take toward the problem of a new revolutionary International and the work they carry on to advance the movement for its actual formation. The collapse of the Second and Third Internationals, the catastrophic advance of Fascism, the imminence of a new imperialist world war and the preparation of the old Internationals for a new social-patriotic betrayal and the need of a revolutionary defense of the Soviet Union left in the lurch by the international socialdemocracy and undermined by the policy of the Com. International - all these factors make the question of a new International one of profound importance for the world proletariat.

In order to determine correctly the next steps toward the establishment of an effective, independent revolutionary International, it is necessary to consider the international situation (with the various groupings) as it is today.

The defeat of the German Proletariat has not only decisively demonstrated the bankruptcy of the principles of Reformism and Stalinism, but has also robbed both Apparatus Internationals of their strongest and best-organized sections. The temporary influx of membership into the parties of the Second International in spite of the German debacle, is not due to a reversion of principle on the part of the masses from Revolutionism to reformism, but is the direct result of the failure of the Third Intl. With Fascism advancing everywhere, the masses no longer see the alternative as "proletarian dictatorship vs. Fascist dictatorship", but rather as "Bourgeois Democracy vs. Fascism"; they wish to maintain what they have rather than risk losing even that under Fascism. (The Third Intl. actively fosters this illusion; see speeches at Seventh Congress). But reality poses

-9-

the alternative differently, and the logic of events will drive home the lesson that even already achieved democratic rights and economic positions cannot be maintained by democratic means under a bourgeois rule that steadily moves from democracy to fascism. Thus the leftward movement in the reformist parties—with the practical aid of realistic revolutionists—will gain strength and the temporary influx will not halt the disintegration of reformism itself.

Outside the Second and Third Internationals there are various independent parties and groupings that are potential material for a new revolutionary international. All of these are minority parties or groups in their respective countries, and most of the parties are organized in the so-called London-Amsterdam Bureau (I.A.G.) The two most important parties in this set-up, the RSAP of Holland and the SAP of Germany, have openly acknowledged the necessities of building a new revolutionary international, although they differ as yet as to the best manner and immediate steps of bringing about its formation, the SAP concentrating at present on the task of furthering the leftward movement in the less advanced groups of parties in the I.A.G. and even those in the Second International toward a new revolutionary international. The "Directives for Revolutionary Socialist Policy", which were submitted in February to a conference of left groupings in the Second International parties is self-evident, and the correctness of the principles set forth promises success in the effort of moving greater masses toward the idea of the Fourth International. To proclaim a new international now, i.e. at once, or to attempt to set it up apart from and against the I.A.G., as comrade Trotsky advises in his article in the July New International, "Alchemy or Marxism", would be folly, dictated as such action apparently is by the desire to smash the I.A.G. (see page 133, New International, July), it could result only in the mere setting up of another, competitive international to the Second and Third, rather than being THE international or revolutionary unity growing out of the bankruptcy of the Second and Third Internationals and as such recognized by the world proletariat as an absolute necessity - not as the product of the brains of revolutionary intellectuals. Such a "competitive" set-up, without broad enough a basis, without sufficient authority, would be a caricature, a monstrosity without power to attract the millions of disappointed workers that must be rallied around it shall the new international be an effective instrument of the world revolution. And certainly the I.C.L. alone cannot provide a foundation sufficient solid to build on. It is made up mostly of minute sects in the various countries, some of them not even independent groups, but parts of reformist parties (France, Belgium for example), much less actually functioning parties. The only party of any consequence in the I.C.L. is the the P.S.A.P. of Holland, which wisely retains its membership in the I.A.G. This remains true no matter how correct the principles of the I.C.L. may be. It takes more than correct principles, and the success of the reformation of the international revolutionary movement cannot and will not be achieved through the proclamation of even the most correct principles or by the raising of however beautiful a banner. To believe that the masses would some day spontaneously recognize the correctness of these principles and rally to them, is folly. It is necessary to aid and further everywhere the development of the masses toward revolutionary action through active participation in their struggles, proceeding from the fight for more or less immediate demands, as for instance the fight in defense of their democratic rights and economic positions, and carrying the battle on toward the overthrow of capitalism. It would be a grave mistake to believe that this can be achieved by putting the RESULT of a process of development of consciousness at its very beginning, and it is equally dangerous to attempt to skip in this process actual stages of the development of proletarian consciousness.

The way of a quarrelsome sectarianism indulging mainly in factional polemics, fruitless hairsplitting and classification of the various species of "Centrism", etc., is not the way toward a new alignment of revolutionary forces in an effective international. The Workers Party cannot go this way. Nor must it adopt or tolerate the ultimatic methods of Comrade Trotsky and his followers regarding groups or parties not dominated by him or his organization. Sending these groups ultimatums, upon the acceptance of which in specified time it would depend whether we "bother" with them at all, as is proposed in the Plenum Resolutions (true, with variation), will not further the establishment of the new international. The cadres of the New International will be built through tedious work, hard experience and in connection with the practical work in the mass movement and in constant and positive collaboration and co-operation with those parties and groups outside of the apparatus international (many of them now in the I.A.G.) even if they have not yet developed to the same stage of theoretical clarity as for instance the Workers Party U.S.

On the basis of the Declaration of Principles (quoted in beginning) and considering the actual international situation, the party sees as the next steps to be taken toward the formation of a new revolutionary International the following:

1. Concentrate on building the Workers Party, first and foremost, and "demonstrate to the working class of the U.S. and its allies that the application of the principles of revolutionary Marxism is the sole means for the fulfillment of their historical needs and interests", proceeding from the present stage of development of the workers in this country and avoiding the error of starting off this process of development with the postulation of abstract principles that can only be the result of such a process of developing proletarian consciousness.
2. Establish immediately fraternal relations with the S.A.P. (which stands on the same fundamental program as our own) and the other groups in the IAG that accept the same fundamentals—until a convention can decide organizational affiliation—co-operate with them through the IAG in the "elaboration of a complete world program and the speediest establishment of the New International" (Declaration of Principles).
3. Propose immediately to the IAG as next practical step the calling of an international conference this fall of all revolutionary parties and groups outside the Second and Third Internationals to discuss thoroughly the international situation, any proposals submitted by the various groups and to decide on the next steps to be taken toward the establishment of a truly independent revolutionary New International on as broad a basis as will give reasonable assurance of effective functioning. Merely renaming the ICL as the Fourth International will not create an effectively functioning International.
4. Call the Party Convention as soon as possible to decide on affiliation with the IAG.

From this it follows that the proposal offered in the various Plenum Resolutions to endorse and ICL open letter (which incidentally has not been submitted to the party membership) must be emphatically rejected. Endorsement of this proposal would in fact invest the National Committee with powers that by our Constitution are expressly reserved to the Party Convention; for it would (and I suspect that to be the purpose) automatically preclude action by the convention on organizational affiliation to the IAG or any other organization, except the Trotskyite ICL.

THE JULY 1935 NEW INTERNATIONAL — T. STAM

August 5, 1935

The July 1935 issue of the New International (The June issue was skipped) again demonstrates the need for an editorial board or committee under the close supervision of the F.C. In addition to several book reviews and about a page of quotations from the press, the issue contains seven articles: on the Soviet Union, the ERA, railroads, Toledo Auto strike, SAP, the Civil War in Greece and the leader which is confused, laborer overwritten and carries a typically intellectualistic, New Republic or Nation title. This is an improvement over the May issue, announced as a special issue, which contained six articles. A year ago, the July issue carried 13 articles, the September-October issue 12.

As a result a number of issues important for the international and working class movements are omitted. And what issues? The war danger (the Ethiopian question, the new Japanese aggressions, the truce in the Sino-Chinese, the Anglo-German naval negotiations), the general European developments such as the ascension to power of the IAP, the situation in Belgium and the entry of the POR into the government, the new developments in the I.C.L.; the question of organic unity; in the Western Hemisphere, the developments in Mexico, the Wagner Labor bill (the article on the end of the ERA does not even mention it), the situation in the U. S. of L. (the possibility of a split, the fight against radicalism centering around 574, Local 5 of the American Federation of Teachers, and the threat to revoke the charter of the Toledo Central Trades and Labor Council and other locals if they did not suppress the boycott of breweries where there has been applied the U. S. of L. decision assigning the truck drivers in the Brewery Workers Union to the Teamsters International), the West Coast strikes, the developments in the unemployed movement, the Socialist Party the Communist Party, the unsolved theoretical problems of the American revolution, the negro and Latin-American questions, etc.

To be sure not all of those questions can be dealt with in one issue. But they are burning questions. The most important must find their way into an organ which purports to be Marxist. The theoretical production of the Workers Party in two months as represented in the July New International - and it is represented exclusively now by the New International - is very little and extraordinarily sectarian.

It is even worse when there is taken into account the fact that of the seven articles which really comprise the issue, three are translations from articles written abroad. And these three articles themselves comprise the bulk of the issue. The contributions from W.P. comrades are equal in space to half the translations and press quotations. Nine Pages! and in two months! What respect can serious revolutionary American workers have for a party which does not give a Marxist analysis of the burning problems of the day in its theoretical work?

Has the party people who can do it?

We think it has. But their efforts must be organized, and critically encouraged. No use to argue articles have not been submitted. They have. Those submitted by left wingers and others have been rejected. But even if they had not, we would still object to the unorganized volunteer system of putting out theoretical material which has been in vogue from the first issue of the New International. We are striving to become a Bolshevik Party. All our activity including our theoretical work must be planned. A staff must be organized, the issues planned, articles assigned and reviewed by the staff. The editors cannot do it themselves; they should be the leaders of the staff. It is high time to begin.

WHAT IS THE FUTURE COURSE OF THE BOLSHEVIK-
LENINIST FACTION IN THE SFIO?

Submitted 8/8/35

T. Stamm

July 28, 1935.

Reports from Europe say there are rumors in the French labor movement that the Bolshevik-Leninist faction in the SFIO is about to be expelled or withdraw in anticipation of the expulsion. Rumors are not trustworthy material for Marxist analysis. But these rumors, true or false, serve a useful purpose in raising the question of the future of this faction. If we assume that the rumors are without foundation the question of the future of the Bolshevik-Leninists would still require analysis and discussion. It is the duty of Marxists not only to speak out what is but to foresee what is coming and to predict it. In its ability to foretell lies the great advantage of Marxism as a guide to action.

Are the Bolshevik-Leninists coming out? Let us put the question another way: Do the Bolshevik-Leninists intend to remain in the SFIO to make it the center of revolutionary unity, the revolutionary vanguard party of the French proletariat? Their course - let us put it in the best light - has lent itself to this conclusion. We have remarked before, elsewhere, that the perspective of the entry into the SFIO was never clearly stated. The Bolshevik-Leninists have always answered this question in the most general terms. They were working in the SFIO, they said, for the Fourth International. During the first few months after the entry La Verite championed the cause of organic unity and soft-peddled the cause of the Fourth International. In recent months they have reversed the emphasis.

But at no time since their entry have they or the ICL, or any proponents of the new orientation of the ICL, discussed the question of the Fourth International in France in concrete terms of a new party in relation to their perspective in the SFIO and organic unity. On the contrary, they have carefully avoided discussion of their perspective either in the press or internally. They pursue an opportunist policy. They have committed themselves definitely to nothing. They have left all doors open; split from the SFIO, reform of the SFIO, organic unity.

Formally all doors are open. But in reality their course in the SFIO and the motivation for it have embodied a perspective - reform of the SFIO. They have functioned within the SFIO, couching their program and propaganda in terms of policies for the SFIO to adopt. A left wing, it is true, must pose questions in this form in order to live in the party. But, and this is the point, the Bolshevik-Leninists, the ICL, have not advanced anywhere any other idea in form or substance. Consequently, large numbers of workers have drawn the conclusion that the Bolshevik-Leninists are working to make the SFIO the center of revolutionary unity and the instrument for the seizure of power.

In this idea they have been encouraged by Trotsky. Writing from Paris at the end of August, 1934, under the pseudonym, V., Trotsky said about the entry: "The adherence of the League to the Socialist Party can play a great political role."

There are tens of thousands of revolutionary workers who belong to no party.... They sympathize wholly or in part with the ideas of the League, but they do not join it because they do not believe that a third party can develop under present conditions.... To this must be added the hundreds and the thousands of revolutionary teachers -- who could serve as a link between the proletariat and peasantry.... The League can and should show an example to these thousands of revolutionary workers, teachers, etc..... In entering the Socialist Party they will immensely reinforce the Left wing.... they will constitute a powerful center of attraction for the revolutionary elements in the Communist Party...." (New International, Sept.-Oct., 1934.) (Our emphasis.)

According to the delegate of the International Secretariat of the International Communist League to the national convention of the Belgian Communist League, held on March 10th, the Bolshevik-Leninists of the SFIO were working diligently to give life and blood to Trotsky's predictions. "In the leading sections of the Dept. of the Seine, Bolshevik-Leninists occupy responsible positions and are at the head of practical work. They are building and driving recruitment commissions. They are proposing and carrying out propaganda schemes to set up an influx of militants and young workers ----" These words speak for themselves. Their central idea is clear. Side by side with this work the Bolshevik-Leninists agitate for the workers' militia, the armed insurrection, workers' control of production and the Fourth International. But they say nothing about how the new party in France is to be treated. The result: militants and young workers draw the only conclusion possible - the SEPP is the party which can make the revolution. Here we have the basis for a capitulationist tendency.

Even so, despite all this or because of it, the bureaucracy may attempt to throw the Bolshevik-Leninists out. If the rumors are correct, that is in the air. The Stalinists demand it. The Bolshevik-Leninists, who oppose them as reformists, opportunists and social-patriots, and sow and strengthen illusions in the Socialist ranks about the SFIO, thereby make more difficult the final capitulation of the Stalinists to the social democracy. The shadow of the event preceding it already raises sharply the question of perspective. If the Bolshevik-Leninists draw the ultimate conclusion from Trotsky's theses they will capitulate to the bureaucracy. They have done it in Belgium and Spain!

But if the Bolshevik-Leninists in France don't? Then they will confront the question of their future course. In charting their line of march they will not be able to pass over in silence the question of their perspective with relation to the SFIO and organic unity. On the contrary, this question will be raised with increased sharpness. In fact, it will become the key question in the life and activity of the group. Their silence up to now will make it difficult for them to answer later. But life and the working class will demand an answer.

Let us recall. If the Bolshevik-Leninists themselves proclaimed no objective with respect to the SFIO the political and organizational aspects of their course in France and internationally move clearly enough in the channels of making the SFIO and the other parties of the Second International the centers of revolutionary unity, of transforming them into instruments for the seizure of power.

Their expulsion or withdrawal need not necessarily contradict this line. The organizational action here would not in itself be decisive for the political course. Only when the organizational step is related to the political line, that is to say, only when it is considered in terms of its political motivation and perspective can it be properly understood. We have gone through this question before. The Left Opposition always explained that its organizational separation from the Communist International did not involve a fundamental political separation. We insisted that the contradiction between our organization and political relations to the CI was an expression and result of the bureaucratic regime of Stalinism, and that our aim was to return to the CI to fight there for our ideas and program.

The key to the expulsion or withdrawal of the Bolshevik-Leninists, therefore, is their political line; concretely, their attitude toward the SFIO. If they fail to issue from the SFIO, whether it be by expulsion or withdrawal, on clear programmatic grounds, including denunciation of the SFIO as a party of social patriotism, the impossibility of transforming it into an instrument for the seizure of power, denunciation of organic unity and consequently the necessity of immediately creating a new revolutionary Marxist Fourth International Party, the Bolshevik-Leninists will not have corrected their past course nor laid the basis for correcting the new orientation on an international scale but will lay the basis for further opportunist blunders in the future.

Here, if their withdrawal or expulsion is to mark the end of the disastrous "experiment" of the new orientation both in France and abroad and constitute the first step on the Marxist road to the revolution and the Fourth International, then the Bolshevik-Leninists and the ICL must renounce not only the organizational aspects of their past course but its theoretical motivation as well; who

opportunist reevaluation of social democracy it has made under the sign of Trotsky's formula that "the destiny of the proletariat depends in large measure in our epoch upon the resolute manner with which the social democracy will succeed in the brief interval which is vouchsafed it by the march of developments in breaking with the bourgeois state, in transforming itself, and in preparing itself for the decisive struggle against Fascism." (New International, Sept.-Oct. 1934). No other course is open to Marxists.

The Stalinist turns are always accompanied sooner or later by "recognition" of some difference in the new course from the old, and the "admission" of secondary errors in the past, but never by analysis of the fundamental source of their errors, blunders, crimes and treacheries: the theoretical foundation of their opportunism - the theory of socialism in one country. That, of course, is impossible for bureaucratic centrism whose central article of faith is that the line is always correct. Thus there is always left open for fresh zig-zags, for further advances into the morass of opportunism, toward its ultimate and inevitable goal, social patriotism.

Withdrawal or expulsion from the SFIO will give the ICL an opportunity to demonstrate how Marxists correct mistakes: a statement to the international working class of the motivations and perspective of the new orientation; a sober analysis of the errors which lie at its base; a balance sheet of the results; and - very clearly - the road it marks out for the future, the road of the perspective of the Pact of Four, of the fusions in Holland and the U.S., of the independent parties of Cuba, Canada and Australia; the recreation of independent groups in these countries where its sections have been liquidated. Internally it will have to clarify the question of fraction-work in other working class parties, particularly the parties of the Second International, the perspective and relation of this work to the work of building the independent groups and parties of the Fourth International.

By this policy, the ICL can check its decline, attract new forces now inside the Second and Third Internationals, and centrist elements, groups and even parties outside of them. It can lift revolutionists to their feet again, inspire them with new hope and courage, blaze the way to the Fourth International, and give real meaning to the attempt to build a world center for it. In this glorious work, the French comrades can take the first step. But they must hurry. The advancing shadow of the war, the menace of Fascism, the aggravation of the crisis in France, are moving inexorably toward an acute social crisis. The active intervention of the revolutionists can lead the masses to victory. But for that, a Marxist party is necessary. By this policy, it can be built rapidly in the present situation. And by no other.

If the Blahovik-Leninists reject this course, if they stand on the new orientation, they will not succeed in building a Marxist party. It is doubtful whether they will build any party at all. But they can succeed for a time in maintaining an independent existence of a sort. In what would their independence consist? The new orientation would tie them politically to the SFIO. Organizationally, they would be independent. In short, they would stand in the same functional relation to the SFIO in which they formerly stood to the C.P. Essentially they would be a faction of the SFIO, organizationally separate from it.

Let us now try to trace the outcome of this "independence." Almost from the first day the group will be divided. Two main tendencies will make their appearance. One will strive for genuine political independence, to build a party in irreconcilable struggle against the SFIO and CP, and to coordinate fraction work in these parties with this task. Internally, it will have to combat the SF orientation of the tendency which will strive to fulfill the logical, political and organizational consequences of the political and theoretical consideration which originally led them to liquidate the League and enter the SFIO. The situation will roughly correspond to that in the Workers Party.

But in this struggle in the French group, the advantage will be with the liquidatory tendency. In the struggle in the Workers Party, the liquidationists have to combat the political line of the party embodied in its Declaration of Principles. But in the French group the struggle for genuine political independence will have to combat the liquidationist political and theoretical line of the ICL of reforming the Second International. This would be true even if the group succeeded in merging with other groups to form a party. We have seen this in the U.S. An independent group, the GLA, wracked by a struggle between proponents and opponents of entry in France, decided to embrace the entry. The GLA merged with another independent group, the W.P. to form an independent party on a Marxist programmatic basis. But the struggle between the liquidationist line in its international and national aspects and the Marxists continues and is threatening to split the party.

-14-

And a merger on the order of the A.W.P.-C.L.A. would be, so to speak, the best variant. In the discussion this spring for reconstitution of the Mexican Communist League, after the split which involved the application of the new orientation to Mexico, the group led by De Anda demanded that there be included in the basis for fusion recognition of the new orientation of the ICL as the international line of the I.C.L. To be sure, this demand can be made in this naked form only because it involves two groups which had previously constituted the Mexican Communist League, and their attempts to reconstitute it. But what will the independent group of Bolshevik-Leninists in France do if they confront the possibility of fusion with other groups to launch an independent party? If it fell out that endorsement were included in the basis of the fusion, the new party would begin with a cancer. They might try to leave the question open. But that would be no solution. For the question would arise in the new party the day after the fusion and it would have to be answered then.

If the expulsion or withdrawal is not accompanied by an analysis which lays bare the profound errors at the base of the political and theoretical motivations for the new orientation, the expulsion will not decisively affect the application of the line internationally, will not check its application in other countries. Ironically enough, the "independent" existence of the Bolshevik-Leninists will appear as a national, tactical, experimental, exceptional organizational circumstance. But the international line will revenge itself on the "independence" of the Bolshevik-Leninists. Its "pull" will tip the scales on the side of the capitulationist tendency. The weight of successes like the Mulhouse Congress in other countries will press the Bolshevik-Leninists to follow in their path as formerly the course of the Bolshevik-Leninists and their "successes" constituted the basis for the same experiments in other countries.

We cannot predict in advance the precise outcome of the "independent" course of the Bolshevik-Leninists. Upon which of the two tendencies gets the upper hand will depend the future of the group. In this connection, international events and developments in France will play the decisive role. It is not excluded with their help the rising tide of opposition to the new orientation will decisively defeat it and force Trotsky to acknowledge his error. That would be the best outcome. It is the one we are working for. If we succeed we can go forward again together with the ICL. If we fail, the new orientation will wreck the ICL and set the movement for the Fourth International. But if in the independent French group the liquidationist tendency will prevail, it will result not merely in reentry into the SFIO but in capitulation to it. Our task will be harder, our allies, at first, fewer; but the way will still be forward.

But you have discussed only two perspectives and you, yourself, acknowledge four, critics will say. Yes, we have discussed two, the basic perspectives. The others fall between these two and do not affect our analysis fundamentally. We can dispose of both in short order.

If the expulsion or withdrawal takes place on the basis of the political line which motivated the new orientation, the ICL will be unable to claim truthfully that the aim of the entry was a split from the SFIO in order to establish a party with the split-off workers. The political and theoretical motivations of their course and the logic which derives from these motivations contradict such an assertion. The assertion that this was their perspective would not change essentially the contradictions within ranks as an "independent" group and the outcome as we have sketched it. It might serve as a face-saving device to mask a forced retreat. The public admission coming at so late a date, after the event, would not be taken seriously. Moreover, if it were, those who were led to believe by the course of the Bolshevik-Leninists that they considered the SFIO the party of revolutionary unity, would conclude that they had been deliberately and systematically deceived. The "independent" group would have to contend with the hostility of the left workers in the SFIO and outside of it, their main source of recruiting for a new party or for their left wing should they capitulate later.

There is what appears to be an intermediate course between a genuinely independent group and a specious independence as the mask of a political faction of the SFIO organizationally separated from it by the bureaucracy; a group agitating and fighting for organic unity.

On the surface this looks like a third course. At bottom it is not. We cannot enter into a discussion of organic unity in these remarks. That is beyond their scope and is reserved for another article. But it should be obvious that the fusion of the parties of the Second and Third Internationals on an international or national scale would not constitute a revolutionary international, but an amalgam of social patriotic bureaucracies and the deluded workers whom they would drag in tow. The revolutionary Marxists would confront

the same fundamental problem: the creation of the Fourth International in struggle against the reformists and social patriots, programmatically and organizationally. Politically, organic unity would signify the final and complete capitulation of Stalinism to social democracy, Bureaucratic centrism outside of the USSR would have run its course and liquidated the Communist International. Within the framework of organic unity on an international scale the relation of forces would favor the social democracy. That would be the case in France too. Politically and organizationally, a new social democracy would arise out of the merger, refurbished, resplendent with a new and false cloak of revolutionary unity.

If they took the variant of organic unity the "independent" group of Bolshevik-Leninists would stand in substantially the same relation to the organic unity party in France as they would toward the SFIO. At bottom both parties would be alike: social democratic, that is to say, opportunist, reformist, social-patriotic. The same fundamental political and theoretical considerations which motivated the entry into the SFIO would operate to motivate entry into the organic unity party. But having championed organic unity in its realization would constitute a necessity to enter it on any condition. In the end the organic unity road would lead to the same result as the more direct capitulatory route of reentry into the SFIO.

It is not impossible that in anticipation of its consummation they would capitulate to the C.P. Trotsky, and after him others, have said in motivating and defending the entry in France that the aim was to reach the masses and influence them and the united front in a revolutionary direction; that to accomplish this purpose a road had to be found to the masses, a door into the united front had to be located; the SFIO and CP stood in the way of the League's penetration. But by penetrating one of them which was immaterial - that is the way they put it! - the Bolshevik-Leninists could penetrate the united front; the CP bureaucracy made life in it on a revolutionary basis impossible; the SFIO tolerated it; ergo, entry into the SFIO.

But with the expulsion or withdrawal from the SFIO, some comrades could reason, that door will be closed. But the necessity for reaching the masses will remain. The CP will stand on the verge of utter capitulation to the social democracy thru the channel of organic unity. In that case entry into the organic unity party following expulsion from the SFIO could depend on entrance via the C.A. Astute politicians will come forward to reason this course in terms of Marxism. But they will prostitute its living soul.

The struggle in the "independent" group will be complicated by the question of organic unity. What appears to be a third tendency may make its appearance. And it is not excluded that it may contain within itself seeds of a tendency to capitulate to Stalinism. That is speculation. Veering for a time between the two main tendencies the organic unity tendency would in the end find peace with its brother capitulatory trend at the expense of Marxism, the Fourth International and the revolution.

We are for a split from the SFIO but on a correct Marxist basis, as a step toward the creation of a Marxist independent party and international and the repudiation of the new orientation of the ICL theoretically, politically and organizationally. When that is done the base will be laid for fruitful fraction work in the SFIO and CP and the assimilation of leftward moving workers inside these parties and also those outside.

T. Stamm

Since writing this article, we have heard of and finally seen, a letter from CRUX (Trotsky) to the International secretariat, dated June 10, which states: "The prestige gained by the Bolshevik-Leninist group must transform itself by flooding light upon the workers (I). But the workers are primarily outside of the SP, in the CP, in the trade union organizations and among the unorganized. The Bolshevik-Leninist group must know how to effect a new turn which is the logical development of the previous stage." And: "The correctness of our entry into the SFIO is now proved by objective facts." In a later article, we will answer the letter in detail.