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AMENDMENTS TO NC RESOLUTION ON NATIONAL QUESTION
Submitted by R. Ferguson

1. Sentence beginning: "To believe that this slogan should occupy the same place in the Marxian program, and above all, in the Marxian platform, in the revolutionary transitional demands, now, when Europe" etc (NI Feb.'43, page 43)

Amend to read: "To believe that this slogan should occupy the same place in the Marxian platform, in the revolutionary transitional demands, now, when Europe.. ... etc."

Motivation: Deletion of the phrase "in the Marxian program and, above all," is necessary because 1) its inclusion flatly contradicts the first four paragraphs under the heading "On the Slogan of the United States of Europe" on page 42, and 2) its inclusion weakens the first of these four paragraphs and thereby contributes to confuse and blur the issue in the minds of some comrades.

2. Sentence beginning: "Before the masses see the "Socialist United States of Europe" as a realistic slogan, they undoubtedly want . ." etc. (Ibid, page 43)

Amend to read: "Before the masses, including the millions of socialist-educated workers, can see the "socialist United States of Europe" slogan as anything more than the positing of an indistinct and desirable New European Order culminating their revolutionary efforts, they undoubtedly want...."etc.

Motivation: This clarifies the bare former phrase, "realistic slogan," and so eliminates more confusion.

NOTE: The above amendments have been concurred in by the majority of the Political Committee, which recommends that they be incorporated into the resolution. -
EDITOR.

ADDENDUM TO MINORITY RESOLUTION

The minority resolution in July proposed that the vanguard in the occupied countries oppose the incessant agitation and preparation of the DeGaullists for the Fourth Republic with the slogan of a workers (and peasants) government of the working class based on workers committees, factory committees and peasant committees.

However, revolutionary groups in France and Poland are today agitating openly for the confiscation of the property of the capitalists and landlords and the formation of a socialist government. The DeGaullist leaders of the resistance movement in France base their agitation to the masses on 1) the necessity of a De Gaullist government and 2) the necessity of a Socialist Republic.

Under the circumstances, the vanguard agitates for the confiscation on the day of national liberation of the private property of the landlords and big capitalists and the constitution of a Socialist Republic based upon workers committees, factory committees and peasant committees, or workers councils which already exist in embryo and on the day of national liberation will almost automatically be formed over large areas of Europe. Today in Yugoslavia and other areas where the civil war is actually taking place, the vanguard agitates for the immediate confiscation of the private property of the big capitalists and landlords.

January 17th - THE MINORITY

ON CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS.

The dispute with Johnson on the national question has in reality become a dispute around the whole vast problem of the strategy and tactics of the revolutionary movement. Instead of a discussion on the concrete problems related to the struggle for national liberation which is now taking place in Europe, and their relation to the socialist revolution, the party is now actually engaged in a discussion of questions which had long ago been considered settled in our movement. For example, we now have to discuss the place of democratic demands in the socialist platform, the difference between ~~and~~ inter-relation of agitation and propaganda slogans, difference between ~~and~~ inter-relation between bourgeois democratic demands and slogans and socialist ones, the development and growth of class consciousness, the role of the party, etc., etc. In many instances, we are reduced to a point where we have to start all over again to define what is meant by these terms in our movement. Actually, what is involved is the whole theory of the permanent revolution upon which our movement is based.

One of the disputes occurs over the question of proletarian class consciousness, not only as it affects the European situation, but the question generally, and the role of the party. In this case, as in others, Johnson's viewpoints, even though frequently implied rather than directly expressly, are in conflict with all the teachings of our movement.

"I state unequivocally that exactly the opposite is the case, that inasmuch as the proletariat, particularly in France and Poland, now has to take upon itself the national defense in place of the bankrupt bourgeoisie, it is more class-conscious, it is more socialistic, and more determined than ever before in its history to achieve the socialist revolution," writes Johnson in the October, 1943, New International.

"The European proletariat in the oppressed countries is in proletarian revolt now."

"It would be a monumental error to believe that the proletariat is not increasingly conscious of its new position in the nation."

"Since that time (Stalingrad and Casablanca) the (French) proletariat with the dogged determination of the proletariat whenever it is undertaking independent action has never for one single moment subordinated its proletarian demands to the struggle for national emancipation."

"In Poland the proletariat is its own master already."

(All the above from Johnson resolution on the National Question. Many more could be cited.)

Thus, according to Johnson, the working class in Europe is today, without any organizations of its own, without a revolutionary party at its head, a class still struggling for the realization of a bourgeois democratic demand, i.e., national liberation, - this working class is more class conscious and socialistic than ever before in its history. (Lest Johnson raise a howl, I believe that this bourgeois democratic demand can be fully realized only as a result of a victorious proletarian revolution. But I believe even more that it is necessary not only to hold this viewpoint but to prove to the masses that the proletarian revolution is the prerequisite for the realization of their democratic desires and demands. To bring about this proof - for that a revolutionary mass party is needed. This is the nub of the whole question.)

According to Johnson, the very existence, the being of the proletariat determines its class consciousness. When Johnson is accused of this, and of not understanding the role of the party, he objects and points to a few token statements thrown into his resolution about the "need for a party." These are really abstract statements that have no reality to him. But his objections are in vain. For here comes a statement by one of his supporters who in very precise, unequivocal words says exactly what we accuse Johnson of and shows what lies at the base of all of Johnson's thinking on the subject of class consciousness and party.

"In capitalist society it is impossible to destroy the workers' sense of identity as a class. They are not lost with the rest. (emphasis mine-RC)

This is a rather categorical and inflexible statement to be made by a faction which prides itself for its mastery and expertness in, among other things, the dialectic method. Yet in this crude, unadorned statement, Comrade Stone has revealed just what is wrong with the Johnsonite point of view.

If what is meant is that under capitalism the working class cannot be destroyed - that is one thing, and entirely correct. In that lies our hope for the achievement of the socialist goal. But what is obviously in the mind of the writer is that under capitalism the working class can never lose its consciousness as a class, its class consciousness. Here we are dealing with an altogether different phenomenon, which is not as simple as the first, and which moreover, is the very problem which confronts the revolutionary vanguard party at every turn.

Before examining the mean and significance of class consciousness, let us look for a moment at the "proof" offered by the exponents of the theory that "being determines consciousness." They seek to prove that the working class in Europe today is more class conscious and socialistic than ever before by the fact that workers in the occupied countries are today participating in strikes. Here there is clearly a confusion between methods and aims of the struggle. The workers are struggling for national liberation. As workers, they utilize proletarian methods of struggle - the strike weapon. This, in itself, does not change the goal of the struggle from national liberation to socialism. To bring about this change is what the revolutionary vanguard has yet before it as its task.

Class consciousness is a very complicated thing. In the first place, as we have been taught from our earliest days in the movement, it does not arise simultaneously with the rise of the working class itself, but comes upon the scene at a much later date. Secondly, the capitalist process of production does not in itself create class consciousness, but only creates the conditions whereby class consciousness can be brought to the working class, "from the outside", in the words of Lenin. The very organization of capitalism does everything possible to keep the workers from becoming class conscious. It is usually more successful in imposing its bourgeois ideology upon the workers than are the socialists in bringing their ideology. The class struggle, and the existence of classes, the

~~the~~ proletarian included, were factors for a long time before Marx discovered them. It was this "outside" force, revolutionary Marxism, which first instilled class consciousness into the minds of the working class.

What constitutes class consciousness?

1) It is not individual consciousness that one is a worker, but consciousness that one is a member of a class.

2) More than this, it means a recognition by the class of different historical aims from those of other classes.

3) It means the understanding of the relationship between one's own class to the other classes in society. In this case, the working class understands its relationship to its own bourgeoisie, and its government.

4) It is not something which exists at all times and to the same degree. Nor does the class as a whole have the same degree of class consciousness, and not united at all times. As a matter of historical fact, the working class is disunited, split, torn by conflicts during most of its existence.

5) The role of the revolutionary party is to create and raise the class consciousness of the working class. Without the party, this task cannot be achieved.

6) Class consciousness is measured by the existence, strength and programs of working class organizations - and not by the advanced stage of capitalism or by the decline of that system.

In the above, I have only reiterated what has been given to us by the outstanding teachers of the Marxist movement - Lenin and Trotsky.

In "What is to be Done?" Lenin argues with the Economists on the role of the revolutionary party. Writing of the strikes of the 1890's in Russia, he explains that they were only embryonic class struggles, simple trade union struggles, but not yet social-democratic struggles. The workers, though participating in economic struggles (for immediate needs) were not yet class conscious. To reach this stage, something more than exploitation and suffering are needed. Lenin then goes on to generalize:

"We said there could not yet be Social-Democratic consciousness among the workers. This consciousness could only be brought to them from without. The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness, i.e., it may itself realize the necessity for combining in unions, to fight against the employers and to strive to compel the government to pass necessary labor legislation, etc."

Left to themselves, the masses can only come under the domination of the ideology of the bourgeoisie. There is no third ideology other than socialist or bourgeois.

"The workers can acquire class political consciousness only from with-

out that is, only outside the economic struggle, outside of the sphere of relations between workers and employers. The sphere from which alone it is possible to obtain this knowledge is the sphere of relationships between all classes and the state and the government - the sphere of the inter relations between all classes." (What is to be Done?)

But, it will be objected, Lenin was here talking of the "backward" Russian working class, existing in a backward country, where capitalist relationships had not fully matured, etc. etc.

Yet speaking of the German working class of 1932, a class with decades of organization and struggle behind it, a class which was on the verge of taking state power on several occasions, and could have taken power had there been a revolutionary leadership, a class operating in the most advanced capitalism of Europe, Trotsky wrote:

"The class, taken by itself, is only material for exploitation. The proletariat assumes an independent role only at that moment when from a social class in itself it becomes a political class for itself. This cannot take place otherwise than through the medium of a party. The party is that historical organ by means of which the class becomes class conscious. To say that the 'class stands higher than the party' is to assert that the class in the raw stands higher than the class which is on the road to class consciousness. Not only is this incorrect but it is reactionary. There isn't the slightest need for this smug and shallow theory in order to establish the necessity for a united front.

"The progress of a class toward class consciousness, that is, the building of a revolutionary party which leads the proletariat, is a complex and contradictory process. The class itself is not homogeneous. Its different sections arrive at class consciousness by different paths and at different times. The bourgeoisie participates actively in this process. Within the working class it creates its own institutions, or utilizes those already existing in order to oppose certain strata of workers to others. Within the proletariat several parties are active at the same time. Therefore, for the greater part of its historical journey, it remains split politically." (What Next?)

Note well these two sentences:

"The party is that historical organ by means of which the class becomes class conscious."

"The progress of a class toward class consciousness, that is, the building of a revolutionary party which leads the proletariat,....."

In "Strategy of the World Revolution" Trotsky explains that in the period of capitalist decline, the party is all the more necessary. During the period of organic growth of capitalism, the subjective factor (the party) can remain fully subordinated to the objective factors. "But as soon as the objective prerequisites have grown to maturity, the key to the whole historical process is handed to the subjective factor, that is, the party and its revolutionary leadership."

And indeed this is the lesson for revolutionists since 1917. The key to the resolution of the historical crisis of capitalism lies with

the revolutionary party. Without it, only one failure after another faces the working class.

"In the German revolution of 1918, in the Hungarian revolution of 1919, in the September action of the Italian proletariat in 1920, in the German events of 1923, in the English general strike of 1926, in the Vienna uprising of 1927 and in the Chinese revolution of 1925-27 (and we could add many more, Germany, France, Spain - and unless there is a revolutionary party and leadership in the coming struggles in Europe - RC) - everywhere, one and the same political contradiction of the past decade, even if different in form and degree, was manifested. In an objectively ripe revolutionary situation, ripe not only with regard to the social prerequisites but not infrequently also with regard to the mood for the struggle of the masses, the subjective factor, that is a revolutionary mass party, was lacking or else this party lacked a far-sighted and courageous leadership." (Strategy of the World Revolution)

Almost every article penned by Trotsky in which he deals with the burning, pressing problems of one pre-revolutionary situation after another, is replete with emphasis on the need for a party. This he has hammered into our heads, or should have, so that in every wakeful moment we are aware of the need of building the revolutionary party - not merely as an exercise, but because we know that without it we, and the working class, are doomed.

In "What Next" again we read: "The very need of the party originates in the very fact that the proletariat is not born with the innate understanding of its historical interests. The tasks of the party consists in learning, from experience derived in the struggle, how to demonstrate to the proletariat its right to leadership."

These are some of the principles we have learned. If Johnson thinks differently, he should say so. Then his dispute is not only with us, but with the fundamental principles of our movement.

Reva Craine

LENIN'S ATTITUDE TOWARD DEMOCRACY IN THE IMPERIALIST EPOCH

His Polemic Against Johnson's Theoretical Forbears

The ancient Hebrew prophet who said, "There is nothing new under the sun" was not quite correct. Even people who repeat old mistakes in new situations manage to add new mistakes to the old ones. Thus with Brother Johnson in the current dispute. But the rich tradition of a century of Marxism gives us not only the examples with which to confront these errors, but it also furnishes us with prototypes of these errors committed in the past.

The outbreak of the devastating world conflict in 1914 presented Marxism with a whole host of new problems. (1) It revealed capitalism in its ripened stage, imperialism, unable to solve problems except by the barbarism of war and thereby signified that Socialism had moved to the head of the agenda. (2) It also, simultaneously, revealed the bearer of Socialism, the proletariat, to be impotent, hurled back, divided into imperialist armies, and its organizations subverted to the use of the imperialist war camps.

The social patriots refused to recognize these as new problems in the epoch of imperialism. They mechanically quoted Marx on national wars and national defense from the epoch of the bourgeois revolution.

On the other extreme, a left sectarian tendency appeared among the internationalist Marxists which sought to cancel out everything that had been true before the war under the cry that imperialism had ushered in a new epoch, that Socialism was on the order of the day, that democratic demands were a hindrance, and that now everything had to be formulated anew to meet the new situation.

Lenin stood head and shoulders above all his Marxist contemporaries of 1914-17 precisely because he knew what was sound and true in the "old" Marxist program and how to use it in solving the problems that were truly new.

The left sectarian against whom Lenin polemicized were, in the first place, members of his own party like Bukharin and Piatakov. In addition there were groups like the Polish Social Democracy (left wing), among whom was Radek, and the Dutch Marxist group around Gorter. (Though he crossed swords with Luxemburg over the national question, she does not properly fit into the above category of left sectarian.)

Johnson follows today in the tradition of the left sectarian of the last war. His views are really an application of their concepts to the present war. There is no attempt here to insist that the positions are identical. For one thing, that would be quite impossible, since they both deal with different wars. Secondly, the stature as Marxists of Bukharin, et al, did not permit them to say so many contradictory things as are found in Johnson's documents. Their writings, more or less, have an internal consistency and cohesion. That is why they denied the importance of the national question and said so. Johnson, on the other hand, denies its importance and then makes it his main political slogan. One knew the contents of their bottle from its label. Johnson's stuff has many (and contradictory) labels. That is why it is necessary to taste it, boil it, freeze it, and submit it to even more involved analysis before ascertaining the contents.

In this process we will find a review of Lenin's dispute with the left sectarians of the last war very helpful. Let us begin by quoting in full the thesis of Bukharin since they typify the left sectarian approach:

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BUKHARIN'S THESIS ON THE TASKS AND TACTICS OF THE PROLETARIAT

(Presented to the Berne Conference of the Bolshevik Party in February 1915)

"1. The contemporaneous epoch of imperialist wars sets before the proletariat of the advanced countries the task of realizing its ultimate aim -- the transformation of the capitalist society into a socialist society through seizure of political power.

"2. Therefore the center of gravity of the proletarian struggle must shift from the sphere of struggle in favor of general democratic demands to the sphere of socialist demands of the proletariat -- socialist in the narrow sense of the word.

"3. In view of the fact that the maturing of a socialist overturn is a more or less lengthy historic process, the proletariat by no means repudiates the struggle for partial reform and their utilization. But these partial slogans must be considered at this historic moment as a tactical approach to the slogan of seizure of power and as a method of increasing the revolutionary energy of the proletariat up to a resolute clash between classes (civil war).

"4. It is the binding task of Social Democracy to oppose (resolutely) the slogan of civil peace with the slogan of civil war -- breaking up of blocs, withdrawal from cabinets, voting against budgets, the slogan 'war against war', etc.

"5. On the other hand, social democratic slogans which ensue from the concrete state of affairs must develop the material content of the socialist revolution and represent an expression of the growing attempts on the part of the proletariat to "encroach arbitrarily on private ownership" (for instance, the transfer of bourgeois military organizations, of economic life -- the bread monopoly, the distribution of labor, etc. -- into the hands of the workers; the transfer of closed enterprises into the hands of the unemployed; the organization of public works, the confiscation of food products and the organization of their distribution by labor organizations, the abolition of rent payments for workers, etc.)

"At the same time it is necessary to expand these slogans to their fullest extent, i.e., the slogan of seizure of power, as a means for their realization.

"6. In reply to the imperialist unification of the countries from above, the proletariat must advance the slogan of a socialist unification of countries from below -- republican socialist states of Europe -- as a political-juridical formulation of the socialist overturn.

"7. The methods of the proletarian class struggle (of the proletariat) which tends to develop into civil war against the bourgeoisie must change by all means in the direction of mass actions outside of the parliaments, actions which end in an open clash between the working masses and their class enemies."

(From "The Bolsheviks and the World War", Gankin and Fisher, p. 187)

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Not bad, eh Brother Johnson? Particularly the "Historical sweep" of Bukharin. Almost something to envy.

But the hard-hearted and cold-hearted delegates to the Bolshevik conference were neither stirred nor impressed.

"...Bukharin, Krylenko, and Rozmirovich formed really an 'opposition'; but there was no unity among the 'three'. En route and in the People's House it became clear that the three had no common point of view and Comrade Bukharin was very disappointed that nobody wished to support him." (From E. Bosh's Memoirs, one of the participants in the conference. *ibid* p.181)

Referring back to Bukharin's thesis over a year later, Lenin said:

"A little more than a year has passed since this arising tendency manifested itself before a few comrades, namely, at the Berne Conference in the spring of 1915. At the time, fortunately, only one comrade (N.I. Bukharin) -- who met with general disapproval -- insisted upon these ideas of 'imperialist economism' to the very end of the Conference and formulated them in written form as special 'theses'. Nobody subscribed to these theses." (All emphasis in original. *ibid* p.229)

Please, Brother Johnson and Brethren Johnsonites, proceed no further but go back and re-read "Bukharin's Thesis" and tell us, from your position and approach, what they contain that a Bolshevik would disapprove of.

But Bukharin was not one to easily give up the fight. He kept on working for his views following the conference until he won over two supporters among the leading people -- Piatakov and Eugenic Bosh. The three of them composed a new thesis, this time weaving Bukharin's old thesis around the national question. We give the following excerpts:

"The realm of foreign policy of contemporary capitalism is closely bound up with the dominance of finance capital, which cannot give up an imperialist policy without threatening its own existence. Therefore, it would be extremely utopian to advance anti-imperialist demands in the realm of foreign policy while preserving capitalist relations. The answer to the bourgeois im-

perialist policy must consist in a socialist revolution of the proletariat; Social Democracy must not advance 'minimum' demands in the realm of present-day foreign policy."

(The left sectarian never wearies of repeating "The answer...must consist in a socialist revolution..." - E.L.)

"It is therefore impossible to struggle against the enslavement of nations otherwise than by struggling against imperialism, ergo -- by struggling against finance capital, -- ergo -- against capitalism in general. Any deviation from that road, any advancement of 'partial' tasks, of the 'liberation of nations' within the realm of capitalist civilization, means the diverting of proletarian forces from the actual solution of the problem, and their fusion with the forces of the corresponding national bourgeois groups."

(A really classic and consistent statement of left sectarian analysis! In contrast, Johnson is neither classic nor consistent. His sectarianism is mixed with opportunism and internal contradictions. Johnson argues similarly that to liberate France one must struggle against German imperialism, ergo, against German capitalism, ergo, against the capitalist class which "speaks a foreign tongue", ergo, the proletariat struggles against "the crimes and catastrophes of thirty years of capitalist society", ergo, the "European proletariat in the oppressed countries is in proletarian revolt now", ergo, they seek an "ideal proletarian republic", and - here is where Johnson parts with consistent sectarians and reveals himself a muddle - ergo "the vanguard raises the slogan of national independence and makes this the main political slogan of the day." - E.L.)

"The slogan of 'self-determination of nations' is first of all utopian (it cannot be realized within the limits of capitalism) and harmful as a slogan which disseminates illusions."

(Here you have clarity that at least permits debate in contrast with Johnson's contradictions - E.L.)

"The deflection of the proletariat's attention toward the settling of 'national problems' becomes extremely harmful, especially now, when the question of mobilizing the proletarian forces on an international scale for their international activities, and for the overthrow of capitalism has been raised in a practical manner. The task of Social Democracy at the present time is a propaganda of indifference with respect to the 'fatherland', to the 'nation', etc. which pre-supposes the posing of the question not at all in a 'pro-state' manner (protests against a state 'disintegration') but on the contrary, posing it in a sharply expressed revolutionary manner with regard to the state power and to the entire capitalist system."

(By an ingenious "logic" known only to himself, Johnson has avoided coming to the same conclusion as his forbears. Johnson first wipes out the bourgeoisie in the occupied countries. They are 'non-existent'. The capitalist class is now composed of Germans. National hatred for the Germans is progressive according to Johnson. If the capitalist class is composed of Germans and one hates Germans, one is therefore, anti-capitalist. The more one hates, the more anti-capitalist one becomes. National hatred of the Germans cannot subordinate the French workers to the French bourgeoisie, because Johnson has already rendered the latter 'non-existent'. Says Johnson: The barbarous slogans of bourgeois nationalism become merely an outward shell for a new proletarian content. Every intensification of chauvinistic sentiment against Germany has resulted, as it must result, in the increased development of the proletariat as an independent force in society." -(p. 8, Johnson "amendment") By the same logic workers who hate Jews because "they own too much" are also anti-capitalist. And the more they hate Jews, the more is there an "increased development" of these workers, by Johnson's reasoning. Little wonder that a speaker for his position says, "Death to the Germans!" At this point we feel like apologizing to ghosts of Bukharin and Piatakov for our temerity in linking Johnson to their lineage.- E.L.)

"Hence it follows that in no case, and under no circumstances will we support the government of a Great Power which suppresses the uprising and revolt of the oppressed nation; neither will we mobilize the proletarian forces under the slogan, 'the right of nations for self-determination'. Our task in this case is to mobilize the forces of the proletariat of both nations (in common with others) under the slogan of a civil, class war for socialism and for a propaganda against a mobilization of forces under the slogan, 'the right of nations for self-determination'."

(Here we have again the readiness of the sectarian to give an easy solution: "...mobilize the forces of the proletariat of both nations". Sectar-ians somehow always think that outlining our "task" or our "needs" or our "aim" solves the problem. But it really only states the problem. The real question is: How? Johnson has many fine aims also. He doesn't want to raise democratic demands, he wants to simply take them. He doesn't want a democratic interval, he wants proletarian power immediately. He doesn't want trade unions, he wants Soviets. Fine, fine, Brother Johnson, But we want and what we can reasonably expect to achieve are two different things. We write a manifesto or proclamation to state to the workers "what we want". But we write a program and a resolution to state to the vanguard how to fight for it and how much to reasonably expect within what time. Johnson does well on manifestos. But they should not be directed at the Party members. - E.L.)

Lest some people think that they had differences only with the "right of national self-determination", Bukharin, Piatakov, and Bosch proceeded to expand their thesis into a "fifteen-Point Platform". They added nothing new. Again they begin with the imposing historical truth as point 1, that: "Imperialism is the bourgeois policy of the epoch of finance capital and is inevitable so long as the bourgeoisie is at the helm."

In point 2 they proclaim the need of "going beyond the limits of capitalism" to overcome imperialism.

In point 3 they point out that the war is a result of imperialism and that the struggle against the war must be expanded into "a struggle against imperialism, against capitalism, and for socialism".

Then follows points 4 and 5:

"4. Finance capital has fully prepared the basis for social revolution:

a) By creating such an economic structure as can be consciously organized by a proletariat which has seized the power and has expropriated the expropriators."

b) By continually tossing the proletariat into the arena of world struggle, by placing constantly before it questions of world policy in their entire scope, by abolishing thereby the national-state seclusion of the working class and revolutionizing the consciousness of the proletariat in an unprecedented manner.

"5. Socialism, thus, out of a theoretical prognosis becomes the task of the epoch; a social revolution is placed on the order of the day of the proletariat's concerted action."

(Or as Johnson re-echoes these views today: "For the last twenty years the proletariat has been compelled to participate even if at times passively, in the intense international activity of the age. The climax is the war...The increasing crisis and ultimate breakdown of the bourgeoisie result in the increasing political independence of the proletariat and the political independence of the proletariat sets it on the straight road to recognizing its objective unity in the existing social disorder." Page 8, Johnson "amendment".)

And again re-echoing his forbears: "This is the task of the hour, not the preaching of a somewhat abstract and necessarily theoretical socialism as in 1938, but not, when the bourgeois regime is bursting in every seam and every worker is either in revolutionary action or wishing to be, to show them the connection between concrete solutions and their own power." -- Johnson "amendment", page 21.

(How can it be, thinks the left sectarian, that workers have been hurled into the "world struggle", into the "intense international activity of the age", and not realize the need of international socialism? Certainly, we need but tell them this and they will understand and act. The old order is "bursting at every seam", the workers must certainly realize this. Therefore, we Brethren Sectarials, can safely assume and proclaim that "every worker is either in revolutionary action or wishing to be". "A social revolution is placed on the order of the day of the proletariat's concerted action". Why should we mess around with democratic slogans based on the "national-state seclusion" of the workingclass when it is being revolutionized "in an unprecedented manner"? When the proletariat is already beginning to recognize "its objective unity"? Why drag at the tail of the masses with democratic slogans when it is Socialism that the masses want?

(Yes, dear Brethren Sectarians, Socialism is very popular with European workers, even after the fascist hell and the destruction of workers organizations. That is why everyone from de Gaulle and Sforza, through the Catholic Social Parties, to Eitler himself speak about some kind of "socialism". But what will bring the masses to the public square to demonstrate? In Lyons it was "Against the deportations!" In Milan it was "Free the Prisoners!" and "Freedom of speech!" In Naples it was "Down with the King and the House of Savoy". These are all good slogans. We would have supported every one of them. To them we would have added slogans to further lift the stage of struggle and the consciousness of the masses. In Lyons it would probably have been "For the right of French labor to organize" In Milan we would have added, "Arrest the Fascists and the money-man behind them". In Naples it would have been "For the immediate right to vote" and "Against AMG interference in Italian affairs!"

(But is that all we would say? No. That would be where we would concentrate our agitation. In our leaflets and papers we would expand beyond the purely democratic demands and raise transitional and purely Socialist demands. But today, the latter would consciously affect only small groups. From these we would try to recruit and build the vanguard. - E.L.)

Piatakov further bolstered the thesis and the platform of the "Three" by writing an article to expound the various points. This proved this much for Lenin. He answered with a cutting reply to Piatakov specifically, and the Left Sectarians generally, and wrote what should be required reading today for every Johnsonite on the subject of democracy in the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolution. We present these excerpts.

Lenin's Reply to P. Kievsky (Piatakov)

"Some the war tramples upon and breaks and others it hardens and enlightens -- as does any crisis in human life or in the history of peoples.

"This is true of the social democratic reasoning about the war and in connection with the war. It is one thing to ponder over the reasons and the significance of the imperialist war -- on the basis of highly developed capitalism -- over the problems of the tactics of Social Democracy in connection with the war, over the causes of the crisis of the Social Democracy, and so forth; but it is an entirely different thing to permit the war to suppress one's thinking, or to stop reasoning and analyzing under the effect of the horrible impressions, the painful consequences, or the nature of the war.

"The scornful attitude of 'imperialist economism' toward democracy constitutes one of these forms of depression, or suppression, of human reasoning by the war. P. Kievsky does not notice that this depressed feeling, this intimidation, the abandonment of analysis because of the war, passes like a scarlet thread through his entire reasoning.....

"P. Kievsky becomes very angry when it is pointed out that he has permitted himself to be intimidated, to be made captive, so that he even repudiates democracy in general. He frets and retorts: I am not at all against democracy, but merely against one democratic demand, which I consider 'bad'. But, however P. Kievsky frets, however he 'tries to convince' us (and perhaps also himself) that he is not at all 'against' democracy, his reasoning or, more truly, his continuous errors in reasoning prove the contrary.....

"Imperialism is highly developed capitalism. Imperialism is progressive. Imperialism is a repudiation of democracy; 'hence', democracy is 'impracticable' under capitalism. The imperialist war is a clamorous violation of every democracy, alike in backward monarchies and in advanced republics, 'hence' there is no use talking about the 'rights' (i.e., about democracy!!). 'Only' socialism can be 'opposed' to the imperialist war; a way out can be found 'only' in socialism; 'hence', it is a deception, an illusion, an obscuring, a postponement, etc., of the slogan of the socialist overturn, if we advance democratic slogans in the minimum program, i.e., under capitalism.

"This is the real source of all P. Kievsky's misadventures, although he does not recognize it as such. Here lies his basic error in logic, which, because it is basic and is not perceived by the author, 'explodes' at every step like a rotten bicycle tire, 'springs up' either in the question of defense of the fatherland, the question of divorce, or in the phrase about 'rights': 'We shall NOT speak of rights, but of the destruction of secular slavery' -- a phrase so superb just because of its profound disdain for 'rights' and its profound lack of understanding of this matter."

(Lenin has in mind at this point one of the concluding paragraphs of Kievsky's article, which says: "It is not a matter of proclaiming freedom of the people, but a matter of establishing truly free relations, of abolishing all slavery, of abolishing social oppression in general and national oppression in particular.")

"To repeat this phrase reveals a lack of understanding of the relationship between capitalism and democracy, between socialism and democracy.

"Capitalism in general, imperialism in particular, transforms democracy into an illusion -- and at the same time capitalism generates democratic tendencies among the masses, creates democratic institutions, accentuates the antagonism between imperialism, which repudiates democracy, and the masses which strive toward democracy. Capitalism and imperialism cannot be over-

thrown through any reforms -- not even the most ideal reforms -- but only through an economic overturn. But the proletariat which has not been educated in a struggle for democracy is incapable of accomplishing an economic overturn. Capitalism cannot be defeated without a seizure of banks, without abolishing private ownership of the means of production. These revolutionary measures, however, cannot be realized without the organization by the entire people of a democratic administration of the means of production which have been confiscated from the bourgeoisie, without attracting the entire mass of the working people -- the proletarians, the semi-proletarians, and the petty peasants -- to a democratic organization of their ranks, their forces, their participation in the state government. The imperialist war is, we may say, a three-fold repudiation of democracy:

- (a) every war replaces 'rights' with violence;
- (b) imperialism as such is a repudiation of democracy;
- (c) the imperialist war completely eradicates differences between republics and republicans;

but the awakening and the growth of the socialist insurrection against imperialism are inseparably bound up with the growth of democratic opposition and revolt. Socialism leads toward the dying off of every state, consequently of every democracy; but socialism cannot be realized except through the dictatorship of the proletariat, which combines force against the bourgeoisie -- the minority of the population -- and a complete development of democracy -- a really general participation, with equal rights, of the entire mass of the population in all the state affairs and in all complicated problems of liquidating capitalism.

"P. Kievsky became entangled in these 'contradictions' by forgetting the Marxian doctrine concerning democracy. The war, speaking figuratively, has depressed his thinking to such an extent that he has replaced all reasoning with the agitational call: 'get out of imperialism' -- in the same manner as an economic and political analysis of the real meaning of 'withdrawal' of civilized peoples 'from the colonies' is being replaced with the call 'get out of the colonies'. (This refers to Kievsky's theory that "self-determination" is inapplicable to the colonies but that the "negative" demand of "Get out of the colonies!" is applicable. See Vol. XIX, Collected Works of Lenin, p. 253 - E.L.)

"The Marxian solution of the question of democracy consists in the utilization against the bourgeoisie of all democratic institutions and tendencies by the entire proletariat, a proletariat which leads its class struggle with a view to preparing for its victory over the bourgeoisie and the overthrow of the latter....."

"We must proceed toward a socialist and consistently democratic organization of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and against opportunism through the utilization of bourgeois democracy. There is no other path. A different 'way out' is not a way out. Marxism knows no other way out, just as real life knows none. We must include in this policy free secession and free union among nations, rather than brush them aside or fear that their inclusion might 'soil' the 'purely' economic tasks."

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How Lenin tail-ended the masses in 1916! Bourgeois democracy? Horrors! But even worse horrors for the Johnsonites, with their formal logic, must it be to remember that the October Revolution was fought on the slogan that "Only the Soviet Power will convene the Constituent Assembly!" Or to remember that the very first illegal act of the Petrograd Soviet on the right of the insurrection was to order the troops to remove the government seals from the closed premises of "Pravda" in the name of "Freedom of the Press!"

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In addition to the above quoted article in answer to Piatakov, Lenin wrote an article to specifically answer Bukharin. Among other things he said the following:

LENIN'S REPLY TO BUKHARIN

"It is absolutely necessary to warn these comrades again and again that they have slipped into a swamp; that their 'ideas' have nothing in common either with Marxism or revolutionary social democracy. This matter cannot be kept 'under cover' any longer, for that would mean contributing to the ideological confusion and guiding it in the worst possible direction, namely, toward ambiguities, 'private' conflicts, perpetual 'frictions', etc. On the contrary, it is our duty to insist absolutely and categorically, that this must be thought over and that the questions raised must be thoroughly analyzed."

"The author of the 1915 theses thinks that the editorial board of 'Social Democrat' lapsed into a contradiction when it advanced 'the expropriation of banks' even with the addition of the word 'immediately' (plus 'dictatorial measures') in Section 8 ('The Concrete Tasks'). 'But how I was scolded for this very same thing at Bern!' the author of the 1915 theses exclaims indignantly, recalling the Berne disputes in the spring of 1915.

"The author forgot and overlooked a 'trifle', namely, that the editorial board of 'Social Democrat' in Section 8 had analyzed clearly two alternatives: The first -- the social revolution has already begun, in which case an immediate expropriation of banks is necessary, and so forth. The second alternative -- the socialist revolution has not begun, in which case we should postpone speaking of these nice things.

"Since at present it is a fact that the socialist revolution in the designated sense has not yet begun, the program of the Dutch is absurd. The author of the theses, however, 'deepens' this matter by returning to his old error of 'turning the political demands (such as 'abolition of the first chamber'?) into a 'political formulation of a social revolution.'

"After marking time for a year the author returned to his old mistake. Here is a 'chief reason' of his misadventure: he cannot solve the problem how to connect imperialism with the struggle for reforms and with the struggle for democracy -- exactly as 'economism', of blessed memory, failed to connect capitalism with the struggle for democracy.

"Hence there is complete confusion in the question of the 'impracticability' of the democratic demands under imperialism.

"Hence there is an ignoring now, as usual, of the political struggle, an ignoring which is impermissible for a Marxist (and appropriate only in the mouth of an 'economist', a Rabochaja Mysl partisan.)

"Hence a persistent trait of 'wandering' from the recognition of imperialism to an apology for imperialism (as the 'economists,' blessed be their memory, 'wandered' from the recognition of capitalism to an apology for capitalism) etc. etc.

"It is impossible to analyze in every detail the mistakes of the author of the 1915 thesis in his remarks to the theses of the editorial board of Sotsial-Demokrat on self-determination, for every phrase is incorrect! After all, it is impossible to write whole books or pamphlets in reply to mere 'remarks' -- if the initiators of 'imperialist economism' have been marking time for a whole year stubbornly refusing to concern themselves with what constitutes their direct duty toward the party so long as they wish to take political questions seriously, namely, giving us a well-thought-out and complete exposition of what they call "our dissensions"....."

"There is the same 'economist' unwillingness to see and pose political questions. Since socialism will create an economic basis for the abolition of national oppression in politics, our author therefore, does not wish to formulate our political tasks in this realm! This is simply laughable!"....

"The author who has been thus cornered 'leaps' again; now he accepts the republic and the entire minimum program merely as the 'political formulation of a social revolution' '!!!'.....

"The error of Kautskyism is that it turns correct democratic demands back toward peaceful capitalism and not forward toward social revolution (whereas the author wanders over into the belief that such demands are incorrect.)"

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In conclusion, we wish to impress upon all the comrades, but particularly upon those who have been attracted by Johnson's (red) flag-waving and revolutionary phrase-mongering, that an attempt to understand and master the difficult questions raised by the European events without a study of the writings of the great Marxists of the past upon similar questions is as foolhardy as a navigator entering strange waters while ignoring the charts and maps of those who have sailed before him. Workers, who are active in party work, may find it difficult to do the serious studying required by these questions. If they lack the time to read everything pertaining to the problems at hand, they should at least read what is most pertinent. For their guidance, the following suggested material will prove of great value in the current dispute:

I. Marxism and the National Question:

1. Lenin -- "The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up" (Vol. XIX, page 267-310, Col. Works)
2. Lenin -- "The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination" (Theses) (ibid, p.47-60)
3. Lenin -- "The Pamphlet by Junius" (ibid. p. 199-213)
4. Lenin -- "On the Party Programme" (340-345 and 364-367, Vol. VII, Sel. Works)
5. Lenin -- "Theses on National and Colonial Question" adopted by Second Congress of the Communist International
6. Lenin -- (In German only) "Über das Selbstbestimmungsrecht der Nationen". (Band XVII, S. 539-602, Sämtliche Werke)
7. Radek, et al -- "The Polish Social Democrats and the Right of Self-Determination" Theses of Editorial Board of 'Gazeta Robotnicza'. ("Bolsheviks and the World War" by Fischer and Gankin, page 507-518) (This is position of revolutionary opponents of self-determination).

11. Leninism vs. Left Sectarianism:

1. Lenin -- "A Caricature of Marxism" (Vol. XIX, Page 214-263, Col. Works)
(This should be required reading for all young comrades impressed by Johnson's rhetoric).
2. Lenin -- "Reply to Kievsky" ("Bolsheviks and World War", Fischer and Gankin, pages 223-228)
3. Lenin -- "The Nascent Tendency of 'Imperialist Economism'" (ibid, pages 228-236)
4. Lenin -- "Left Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder" (pamphlet)

111. On Revolutionary Strategy in Fascist Countries:

1. Trotsky -- "Fascism and Democracy" (New International, July 1943)
2. Program of the 4th International -- pages 42-45 (Found. Conf.)

1V. On the Slogan of a Socialist U.S. of Europe:

1. Trotsky -- "3rd International After Lenin" (pages 10-17)

V. Marxist Tactics After the Revolution has Begun (Especially on the Formation of Soviets):

1. Resolution of C.I., 2nd Congress -- "When and Under What Conditions Soviets of Workers Deputies Should be Formed"
2. Lenin -- "Letters from Afar" - (Vol. XX, pages 19-88)
3. Trotsky -- "The 3rd International After Lenin" (pages 201-206)
4. Trotsky -- "Germany: What Next?" (pages 91-99)
5. Trotsky -- "Spanish Revolution in Danger" (pages 43-44, 48-56)
6. Trotsky -- "Whither France?" (pages 153-155)
7. Program of the 4th International - (pages 39-40, Founding Conf.)

E. Lund

"There is the same 'economist' unwillingness to see and pose political questions. Since socialism will create an economic basis for the abolition of national oppression in politics, our author, therefore, does not wish to formulate our political tasks in this realm!"

"The author who has been thus cornered 'leaps' again; now he accepts the republic and the entire minimum program merely as the 'political formulation of a social revolution' !!!!!"

"The error of Austro-Slavism is that it turns correct democratic demands back toward peaceful capitalism and not forward toward social revolution (whereas the author wanders over into the belief that such demands are incorrect.)"

In conclusion, we wish to impress upon all the comrades, but particularly upon those who have been attracted by Johnson's (red) flag-waving and revolutionary phrase-mongering, that an attempt to understand and master the difficult questions raised by the European events without a study of the writings of the great Marxists of the past upon similar questions is as fool-hardy as a navigator entering strange waters while ignoring the charts and maps of those who have sailed before him. Workers, who are active in party work, may find it difficult to do the serious studying required by these questions. If they lack the time to read everything pertaining to the problems at hand, they should at least read what is most pertinent. For their guidance, the following suggested material will prove of great value in the current dispute:

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4. Lenin -- "On the Party Programme" (

"WORKERS POWER"

How Super-radicalism Whitewashes De Gaulle

by Ben Hall

Will some supporter of the Johnson resolution please explain, more or less in detail, where he differs with the Cannonites on the National Question. In particular, what is your criticism of any of the article by Felix Morrow in the December 1942 issue of the Fourth International.

In his article in the October 1943 issue of the NI, Johnson takes a backhanded slap at the Cannonites. You see, they refuse to raise the slogan of "National Liberation". This is "crazy and fittingly doomed" says he and goes on to exclaim:

"In the whole wide world only the Cannonites think otherwise and but for their confusion on the subject I would not have thought it possible that such people could exist. There is no contradiction between the struggle for the power of the workers and the slogan of national liberation as the main agitational slogan."

Johnson can't get away with this. The error of the Cannonites consists NOT in seeing a CONTRADICTION between "workers power" and national liberation but in IDENTIFYING the struggle for national liberation with the struggle for workers power. National oppression they maintain has had no effect on the class struggle except to intensify it and precisely because of this they see no need for any new slogan. The Cannonites are only more consistent Johnsonites.

Johnson holds a position identical to that of the Cannonites in every major respect. Like them, he identifies the national liberation and the socialist struggles. True, as a concession to reality he favors the slogan-"For National Liberation". But his whole analysis of the role of the national freedom movement and of democratic slogans in general is in flat contradiction to his slogan. Why he chooses "National Liberation" as his slogan and not "Socialist Liberation" or at least "Proletarian Liberation" from the foreign oppressor is something which he will have to explain to Morrow.

Nationalism: the form of socialism

Johnson says:

"...the slogan of national independence one hundred years ago was raised by the bourgeoisie on the basis of the struggle for the bourgeois democratic regime, today the banner of national independence is raised by the proletariat on the basis of the advancing proletarian revolution." (resol: p.7)

And elsewhere: (Oct. 1943 NI)

"In 1942...the fully matured French proletariat takes upon itself the liberation of France leading the nation. But this is all on the basis of the advancing proletarian revolution and the struggle for workers power. There is nothing bourgeois about it at all, nothing."

"A movement of the "fully mature proletariat", with "nothing bourgeois about it", which is for the proletarian revolution and workers power....what is that but the most simple and concise definition of the revolutionary, socialist movement.

This same idea is expressed in a more forthright manner by G. Tobin in the bulletin (9-43, p4);

"In short the national struggle today is a new struggle compared with that of a century ago; it has a new class content; it resembles the old national struggles only in form, in appearance. The struggle for national freedom today is nothing else but the form at present assumed by the struggle for workers power in the oppressed countries. The national struggle has this objective character regardless of the ideas in the minds of the masses."

Yes, objectively a struggle for genuine national freedom leads to socialism, IF carried out consistently, uncompromisingly, and clearly. That is the kind of struggle we WANT and seek to obtain. In this same sense ALL the struggles of ALL oppressed peoples lead to socialism from the most elementary strike for 5¢ per hour to the struggle of Negroes for equality.

Unfortunately, for sectarian dreamers, however, in addition to the consistent, etc.etc, struggle, the inconsistent, unclear, vacillation, compromising struggle is also possible. That is what we are faced with NOW. The "objective" character of the struggle is not yet "in the minds of the masses".

And if this objective (i.e. socialist) character of the national movement is not yet "in the minds of the masses" then what is the nature of the movement that exists in their "minds". Isn't it these masses, with these "minds" (i.e. ideology, principles, programs, etc. etc.) who actually fight TODAY for national freedom. The socialist character of the struggle is derived from the "minds of the Johnsonites". Its real character is derived more directly from those who carry on the actual struggle.

The Johnsonites have simply attached a new label to the socialist movement. Their resolution should be entitled; "Why the revolutionary socialist movement must change its name to the national liberation movement."

The NC has presented a resolution on the relationship BETWEEN the national liberation movement and the revolutionary socialist movement. Johnson has written one to show that this is unnecessary because the national liberation movement IS the revolutionary socialist movement.

What is in Dispute

According to Johnson, the national liberation movement, the present FORM of the revolutionary socialist movement, will conduct a direct, irreconcilably struggle against capitalism and for workers power. Victory is not guaranteed but defeat or victory hinges first of all on the MILITARY factor of American Imperialism.

According to the NC resolution, there are not one but two possible roads of development. The national liberation movement may continue in alliance with bourgeois democrats, reformists, Stalinists, and "democratic imperialists" in which case it runs the risk of degenerating into a disciplined tool of imperialism OR, it may go forward to a split with the bourgeoisie, native and foreign and take the road to socialism and workers power.

According to the NC, the success of our efforts to turn the liberation movement into the struggle for workers power is primarily a POLITICAL question involving all the relations between the proletariat, the bourgeoisie and their agents.

The NC resolution devotes itself to the questions of HOW to place the proletariat in a position of real class independence and therefore at the head of the national movement.

Johnson, however, has no need for such a resolution. According to him, this task is already accomplished. His resolution is an attempt to prove that fact.

All the apparent absurdities in Johnson's resolution are not merely absurdities. What is so utterly condemning about them is the fact that they are absolutely necessary to his whole thesis. His whole position can be defended and supported only by the development of a series of distortions of fact and of history. That in itself annihilates it.

I wish to devote myself to only one of the many absurdities in the Johnson resolution. I take that which appears most "reasonable" and therefore most deceptive, his utilization of the slogan "Workers Power".

The Main Enemy

"It (the European proletariat - B.H.) is unified by the centralization of European capital which makes the MAIN ENEMY IN EVERY EUROPEAN COUNTRY THE FASCIST REGIME IN GERMANY" (my emphasis - BH p5, J. resolution)

And later: "And today in the occupied countries action means the struggle for the expulsion of the GERMAN OPPRESSOR, i.e., the existing capitalist class." (my emphasis; p16)

Is that clear enough? The MAIN enemy of the European masses is the FOREIGN oppressor. That is what makes a resolution on the national question necessary. But Johnson's resolution is an attempt to prove that his important fact not only does not enter as a new difficulty or entail any new methods in our approach to the masses but that on the contrary it facilitates the class struggle and makes even clearer than ever before to the masses the need for an immediate struggle for workers power and socialism.

Johnson tries to identify the foreign oppressor with the bourgeoisie in general ("i.e. the existing capitalist class") in order to cover up the fact that sections of the native bourgeoisie at home

and in exile are also against the foreign oppressor, for their own reasons and consequently are able to masquerade as allies of the people in their fight against national oppression. That is why the national question blurs over the class struggle.

The "democratic" imperialist camp is also against the German "oppressor". And precisely because the MAIN enemy IS the foreign oppressor the native bourgeois democrats and the Allied imperialists are able to put over their swindle that they are allies in the fight for freedom and democracy.

That is why De Gaulle and others of the same stripe can exercise great influence over the underground movement. That is why the Italian people hail the approach of Allied soldiers. That is why the underground press can talk of the liberating allied armies. Or is all this merely bourgeois propaganda?

Democratic Assets

Allen, a Johnson supporter, says: (Bulletin 12-43, p2)

"It is or ought to be self evident that the possession by the workers of democratic rights and of national freedom can be great assets in the struggle for workingclass power. That should not be of dispute among us."

How begrudging an admission. Notice: these rights "can be" assets. Not ARE but "can be". And further: These "can be" assets for the struggle for power. But are they not and "can" they not be assets in the struggle of the masses for their immediate needs even though their struggle still falls short of the struggle for power?

Allen here is concerned with IDENTIFYING the struggle for democratic rights with the struggle for power.

At any rate Allen grants, though in a miserly fashion, that democratic rights are "assets". And this is not "of dispute".

And what is so clear to Allen most certainly is even now "self-evident" to those revolutionary fighters now trying to overthrow a dictatorial regime of national oppression. The most advanced sections seek these "assets" because they are necessary to the struggle for workers power.

But NOW, the Roosevelts, Churchills, and De Gaulles and others of the same stripe spread the LIE that they too are fighting to gain these same "assets" for the masses of Europe.

These bourgeois imperialists seek to and do APPEAR as allies of the masses in the struggle for democratic rights. It is this alliance that gives the movement for national liberation the stamp of peoples frontism, not of the revolutionary struggle for power.

The democratic pretensions of the imperialists and the native bourgeois democrats are a fraud. They hold out illusory promises of democracy and freedom in order to gain the support of the masses for their imperialist war, to restrain the peoples from going too far and to keep them obedient until the imperialist war is over. They are the enemy of the masses and the enemy of the revolutionary struggle for power.

far, and to keep them quiescent until the base for a firm, orderly bourgeois regime is established in the now occupied territories.

A genuine struggle for democratic rights will bring the masses into conflict with their "allies". The prime task of the revolutionary vanguard within the national movement is to expose the hypocritical character of the democratic slogans of the bourgeoisie, to lead the proletariat to a complete break with its pseudo-allies, and to establish in fact the independence of the working class. No such task exists for Johnson however, for the proletariat is already independent and is at the head of the nation. How the proletariat can be at the head of the nation and still under the influence of De Gaulle is for him to explain.

Socialism

Johnson and his supporters refer constantly to the universal prevalence of "socialist" ideas and programs. According to Allen:

"The stamp of working class or Socialist pressure is now being placed on the programs of nearly all movements, bourgeois or working class. Petain, Laval--all of them must speak of 'Socialism'."

But why do they all speak of socialism? Recognizing the socialistic tendencies of the working class they say: we are all for socialism now. That is: if the workers want socialism they can get it in alliance with this or that BOURGEOIS camp. They aim at destroying the class independence of the proletariat. They are for "socialism" a thousand times a day, only the proletariat must string along with its class enemy.

There are as many species of socialism extant as there are of sectarianism in Johnson's resolution; But one thin above all identifies our brand of socialism from all others. For us socialism can be obtained only by an independent proletariat. Socialism is impossible so long as the proletariat supports bourgeois democrats or other agents of the capitalist class. The first step toward socialism is for the proletariat to break its ties with De Gaulles and Roosevelts. All other tendencies for 'socialism' cover up this fact.

National oppression permits bourgeois elements to come out as exponents of "socialism", and the rights of the people. That is why it blurs over the class struggle.

Soviets and Workers Power.

Soviets will come into existence, factory committees will be organized etc. etc. etc. Johnson tries to use these undeniable facts to bolster his slogan of Workers Power as against the democratic slogans.

What is the Johnson concept of the organization of Soviets?

On page 25 of his resolution we read:

"...so sudden and violent may be the collapse of German capitalism that the proletariat will in all probability find itself

almost overnight organizing Soviets for the seizure of power, even before a single democratic demand has been fulfilled."

Soviets are organized, mind you, by the proletariat "for the seizure of power." That is why Johnson sees a contradiction between slogans for democracy and the organization of Soviets.

But can Johnson refer to a single case where Soviets were organized "for the seizure of power"? When, where.

Soviets do not come from the skies. Only the ideal type dreamed up by Johnson. The same groups and tendencies that function today in the underground with all their misconceptions and backwardness will be the ones to take the initiative in organizing factory committees and Soviets. If not, then who? The same political tendencies that exist today will be taken into the Soviets. Openly bourgeois parties will have little or no representation but socialistic, reformist tendencies which follow a bourgeois ideology will have great influence.

Soviets come into existence as the broadest, most authoritative instrument of the masses for UNITED FRONT struggle. They are not created as organs of power but can be led to the seizure of power by a revolutionary, socialist, proletarian party.

With the weakness of the revolutionary vanguard, more aptly, in the absence of a revolutionary party it is a foregone conclusion that Soviets will come into existence AND give support to a "democratic" (i.e. bourgeois) regime. To expect more is to hope for a spontaneous socialist revolution.

Within the Soviets and factory committees the revolutionary elements have the task of winning the masses away from support of bourgeois elements. These elements may be represented by a De Gaulle, a left-DeGaulle, a left-left-DeGaulle, or a socialistic De Gaulle. All kinds of "democrats" will be available.

Workers Power

So long as the masses retain confidence in bourgeois democrats and their reformist agents and the revolutionary party is non-existent or weak all talk of Workers Power as an immediate possibility is idiocy. Workers Power is impossible without a complete break between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

The present alliance between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie remains possible because the De Gaulles etc appear to be fighting for democracy. That alliance must be destroyed for Workers Power to become a possibility.

The speediest divorce between De Gaulle and the masses can be affected by the revolutionary socialist elements within the national movement if it succeeds in exposing the fraudulent character of his 'democracy' and for that it must utilize a series of extreme and decisive DEMOCRATIC slogans.

The slogan of "workers power" expresses our strategic object-

ive, the dictatorship of the proletariat. This distinguishes the revolutionary vanguard from all other tendencies and is crucial as a propaganda slogan for the building of a revolutionary party.

But in addition to distinguishing the vanguard from the De Gaulles, there is the more difficult task of divorcing, differentiating the MASSES from them and for that purpose democratic agitational slogans are decisive.

Moreover, the building of the revolutionary party will be enormously accelerated if the revolutionary elements are able to demonstrate to the best, most advanced sections of the movement for liberation that they know best of all how to raise day to day slogans that can lead the masses away from De. Gaulles.

How Johnson Raises the Slogan: "Workers Power"

On page 17 of his resolution Johnson tries to indicate HOW he will use his slogan of "Workers Power"

"Against the Social-Democracy and the De Gaullists who indissolubly tie up the slogans of the immediate demands, national liberation, and the democratic republic, the vanguard resolutely poses the slogans of the immediate demands, the national liberation and the power of the workers." Johnson here is distinguishing himself from the De Gaullists in his AGITATION among the masses for what immediately follows is; "This being a question of action and not of education...."

What is significant here is this; ONLY ONE OF JOHNSON'S MAIN AGITATIONAL SLOGANS IS DIFFERENT FROM THE DE GAULLISTS'. De Gaulle, says Johnson, is for a Democratic Republic. As against this, Johnson is for Workers Power. That is; the masses are asked to choose between a Democratic Republic represented by De Gaulle and Workers Power represented by Johnson.

JOHNSON DOES DE GAULLE THE GREAT SERVICE OF GRANTING IN ADVANCE THAT HE STANDS FOR A DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC. And this is the whole basis on which the deception of the masses by the bourgeois democrats and social-democrats rests. By the very manner in which Johnson seeks to identify himself with his slogan of Workers Power he disarms himself and covers up for the De Gaulles.

De Gaulle, et al, do NOT fight for a Democratic Republic. True they say that they do. But Roosevelt also says that he is fighting a great war for democracy. Were we to say;

"Yes, FDR IS fighting for democracy but WE are for socialism" we would be doing the same service for Roosevelt and American imperialism that Johnson does for De Gaulle.

De Gaulle, the socialists, communists, and liberals are first of all, in favor of the war by the Allied camp against Germany. Everything else is subordinate and that is what makes all their slogans of democracy fraudulent.

Yes, yes, we are for democracy, socialism, republics of all

kinds, they say. Somewhere, somehow, sometime. But not now. Now we must have unity in the fight against Hitler. And if the Allied General staff vetoes democracy we must make a refined, loyal protest and bow to their decision. We must not endanger the front against Hitler.

That is how De Gaulle is really for a Democratic Republic. And that is what must be made clear before Workers Power becomes a real possibility.

We say: De Gaulle says he is for democracy. That is a lie. We must fight for democratic rights against him.

Johnson says: De Gaulle IS for a Democratic Republic. That's not enough. I am for Workers Power.

"Equally Ruthless"

Let us return to Johnson's resolution. The above quotation on page 17 continues:

"This being a question of action and not of education, the vanguard is ruthless against those who enter the national groups of resistance, raise the slogan of workers power and hesitate or dissemble about the slogan of national independence. It is equally ruthless against those who raise the slogan of national independence and hesitate or dissemble about the slogan of workers power."

Who is for workers power and at the same time refuses to raise the slogan of national liberation? Sectarians. Revolutionary socialist sectarians. We must combat this trend within the revolutionary movement to prevent our own isolation, to keep ourselves from committing suicide. That fight is one of internal clarification for the purpose of arming the vanguard.

But those who refuse to raise the slogan of national liberation represent no danger among the masses. They represent the danger that we will NOT be able to get to the masses. They cannot and will not become a SERIOUS force. Is that not so?

But what happens to your "equally ruthless" idea among the masses, in the factory committees, and in the Soviets. That is the only place it has any meaning for Workers Power, you say is a matter of "action".

In the field of action you will confront the agents of the bourgeoisie who TALK about democracy in order to prevent the workers from going forward to the seizure of power and those who seek to unmask them in "action" by raising extreme and decisive democratic slogans. But Johnson says that De Gaulle IS for a Democratic Republic. In the field of action his "equally ruthless" means that he will be equally opposed to the De Gaullists and to those who seek to expose the De Gaullists.

From two aspects, Johnson serves De Gaulle with his slogan of Workers Power. In the first place he covers up for De Gaulle by

granting that he is for democracy and in the second place he fights against those who seek to expose the anti-democratic role of De Gaulle.

A Dialogue

The fate of Johnson among the masses who still retain confidence in bourgeois democrats, reformists, etc is easy to predict.

"We must establish Workers Power, now" says Johnson

"Fine idea. But isn't it necessary to fight against Roosevelt, De Gaulle, Stalin etc, etc, if we fight for that."

"Yes", says Johnson

"But aren't they fighting for a Democratic Republic"

"Yes", he replies "De Gaulle is for a Democratic Republic."

"Well then, let us support him for a while. Didn't Allen just say 'that the possession by the workers of democratic rights and national freedom can be great assets in the struggle for working class power.' If we can fight for these assets with our allies it will be easier to get them and we will be in a better position later to fight for workers power."

"No, No, True De Gaulle is for a Democratic Republic. But that is not good enough. I am for Workers Power instead."

"Oh, then you mean that we must choose now either to fight for a Democratic Republic OR for Workers Power. Then let us string along with De Gaulle and get the Democratic Republic. Because as Allen says....."

"De Gaulle?" sneers Johnson, "You can take any democratic rights you want without him."

"What about that Trotskyist who said that if we want democratic rights we should fight for free elections, genuine freedom of speech and assembly, right to organize."

"Him? I am 'equally ruthless' against those who 'hesitate or dissemble about the slogan of workers power'."

Johnson's use of the slogan of workers power as against the 'reactionary' democratic slogans serves to create a false opposition in the minds of the masses between the struggle for democratic rights and the struggle for workers power and socialism and this in turn strengthens the hold of bourgeois democrats and reformists over the workers. So 'ruthlessly' does Johnson call for Workers Power that he makes it impossible to achieve.

Extreme and Decisive Democratic Slogans

In its agitation among the masses in the course of the struggle

for national liberation, the revolutionary vanguard raises extreme and decisive democratic slogans which are designed to lead the masses to its strategic objective, workers power, the dictatorship of the proletariat. All the main agitational slogans, including those which are aimed at the independent organization of the proletariat and the consolidation of its embryonic organs of power must be connected with the burning problems of democracy.

FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF FACTORY COMMITTEES AND THEIR CENTRALIZATION ON A DISTRICT WIDE AND NATION WIDE SCALE IN THE FORM OF WORKERS COUNCILS..SOVIETS.

The working masses of the nation desire an uncompromising struggle against the foreign oppressor and for democratic rights. To thwart compromises with the old regime a la Darlan, Badoglio, Royalist policy of the Allies and to prevent the consolidation of reaction the masses themselves must organize their own independent organs of struggle. To those who ask "Are you not interested in unity in the fight for democratic rights?" we reply: "Yes. And the form of unity for a genuine fight for democratic rights is the Soviets."

FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF ARMED WORKERS GUARDS

Every attempt by the reactionaries to reorganize and to interfere with the free organization of the people, to terrorize liberal and democratic elements must be answered by the armed organization of the people under the control of the factory committees and the Soviets.

FOR THE CONVOCAION OF A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY ON THE BASIS OF DIRECT, DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS. FOR THE DISENFRANCHISEMENT OF THOSE WHO COLLABORATED WITH THE HITLER-MUSSOLINI REGIMES.

With the casting of the foreign rulers from the occupied territories the Allied Powers in collaboration with native reactionaries, bourgeois democrats, socialists, Stalinists or a combination of any or all of these elements attempt to impose governments upon the people from above. Who has the right to say that these governments represent the people? No government has the right to speak in the name of the people if it is not freely chosen by them. The Soviets, the factory committees, the armed workers guards are essential to ensure genuinely democratic elections. This slogan is directed against all attempts to establish farcical caricatures of a representative assembly such as that established by De Gaulle in North Africa and proposed by him for France.

Temple's behavior on the National Question is fortunately unique in the history of the Party. The Party members should see that it remains so. The way to accomplish this is to understand clearly what he has been doing.

The National Committee Resolution on the National Question appeared in The New Internationalist (Jan. and Feb. 1943). In the April and May numbers Johnson attacked the resolution for its "deep...profound miscomprehension of the European crisis." This miscomprehension was expressed in two ways: (1) The resolution entirely misunderstood the result of the past decades and the course of the war upon the revolutionary development of the European masses. (2) The crucial relation of Germany to the national question.

In the N.I. of June and July appeared an article by Temple. We must summarize his argument carefully. It is worthwhile for its own sake, and, secondly, it shows to what depths he has since fallen. His argument was as follows:

The war of 1914 had been preceded by decades of social peace.

"Decades of social peace and calm, practically unmarked by any upheavals -- so lulling to a whole generation of workers that 'the revolution' was nearly forgotten. It became a sentimental phrase; a monstrous step into the unknown, even for those who called themselves socialists."

This was the worst possible preparation for revolution. Yet, says Temple: "For four years running, the overwhelming majority of the workers and peasants of war-ravaged Europe had as their popular cry: Socialism! The dictatorship of the proletariat! Soviet power!"

Temple's point is: If after no revolutionary experience, they did so much, imagine what they will do after the last 20 years. He then gives a short sketch of 1917-1936, and concludes: "Packed into these twenty years has been more revolutionary activity of the masses than in the whole history of the world since the fall of the Roman Empire." The emphasis is his own.

Now such comparisons are easy to ridicule. Yet it is easy enough to see what Temple means, and in essence he is perfectly correct. But that is the very basis of the Minority position. It is the main theme of Part I of Johnson's N.I. article. It occurs early in the Minority Resolution:

"The older generation of European workers has seen the First World War and the almost continuous crises and revolutions which followed it. Its reaction to them is written in history.

"In country after country the workers girded themselves to overthrow capitalism. They formed revolutionary or pseudo-revolutionary parties by the hundreds of thousands at a time and followed them by millions."

The reader should now compare these analyses with the picture of the European proletariat drawn by Gates in his articles in the N.I. On the one hand, the analysis of the Minority and the early Temple emphasizes the powerful revolutionary indoctrination of the European masses. Gates can see little else besides the successive stages of demoralization due to the victories of Fascism.

The Influence of the War

What political influence will the war have on the masses already charged with revolutionary spirit?

Temple quotes Trotsky on war and its influence on the masses.

"Change, change and change -- that is the main lesson of the school of war. This world is not fixed and stable; boundaries, laws, lifetime habits, opinions, rights, governments, methods -- everything tends to approach the fluid state of a newspaper headline. The tempo of thought and action becomes immeasurably accelerated. No class and no people can pass through the school of total war without a profound change in mental attitudes and psychologies -- that is, a profound shake-up of human nature. This is what happened from 1914 to 1923. It is happening now."

Thus, the whole of Temple's article, Part I, is in complete opposition to the "strangled stupor" thesis of the Majority.

In July the article continues. Temple lists four main points which "were the mainsprings of the greatest revolutionary movement the world has yet seen." (The emphasis is his.) He now lists "the new revolutionary elements."

The first of these is:

"The ideological propaganda by the imperialists in terms of revolution."

He then elaborates on the point:

"The war propaganda of 1914 was in terms of the status quo; the war propaganda of today is heavily tinged with revolutionary demagoguery. This is both a symptom of the mass state of mind and a cause of it."

Now this, again, is for the Minority a cardinal factor. Johnson expressed it in the April N.I. thus: "All Europe has socialism in the background of its mind." Europe today is so conditioned by the last 30 years that even the fascists must dress up their counter-revolutionary doctrine as some form of "socialism".

Of these conceptions there is no sign whatever in the documents or speeches of the Majority leaders. Gates, their chief spokesman, spends pages in the N.I. proving exactly the opposite.

The question now is: Has all this been altered, and, if so, in what way and to what degree, by the experiences of Europe since 1940?

"The National Liberation"

There is no need to go over familiar ground. The Minority has written:

"Every intensification of chauvinistic sentiment against Germany has resulted, as it must result, in the increased development of the proletariat as an independent force in society. In irreconcilable conflict with the German bourgeoisie and the collaborators, and distrusting or ignoring the serio-comic governments in exile the proletariat is compelled to struggle for the national, i.e., its own emancipation by its own means and in its own way. In this is shown the truly proletarian character of the national revolutions in Europe and their complete difference from the national revolution, in Spain a hundred and thirty years ago, in China yesterday, or in India today."

This, especially underlined in the resolution, is its main thesis on the specifically national question.

Now listen to Temple:

"The occupied countries of Europe, ground under the Nazi heel, where national-revolutionary aspirations are added to the workers class struggle to feed the flames of revolt."

So that in occupied Europe the class struggle is sharpened, not repressed, by the German occupation.

Our analyst says so himself. He goes straight on:

"There is an essential difference between the Nazi occupation in Europe today and the overrunning of France and Belgium by Germany in 1914."

Now this is very interesting and very important. Obviously, if there is an essential difference, we are coming to the heart of the matter. What, according to Temple, is this essential difference?

"Then, the official state still existed and fought on; the only foe appeared as Germany, and the concept of national defense rallied the French people only more vigorously around the bourgeois state, in greater national unity. The hypnosis of national unity wore off far more slowly in France and Belgium than in any other country precisely for this reason. The masses of people not in uniform stood by and cheered the French army on to victory; the workers in uniform fought under the military discipline of the capitalist state and its officers' corps."

So that, according to Temple, the essential difference between 1914 and today is that in occupied countries the workers see less of the "hypnosis of national unity". Now, to see less of the "hypnosis of national unity" means to become more conscious of the class struggle. But that is precisely the thesis of the Minority.

Then comes a passage which in the light of the future events betrays the shameful cynicism and disregard of the opinion of the Party members which characterize this politician:

"Today, the struggle against the German occupation is primarily a people's movement, a movement surging up from below, an underground movement, with the relative independence that this implies; it is furthermore necessarily directed not only against Germany, the foreign foe, but also against the official leaders of France, the Vichy government and the native capitalist class which has allied itself with the Nazis."

All the emphases are Temple's. Isn't this shocking, coming from one now a leader of the Majority? Those in the ranks in New York who have heard Shachtman and Gates, according to their lights, ridicule the Minority's analysis on this point will doubtless have a few questions to ask of Temple, and Shachtman and Gates.

This is the decisive question. And we introduce here for a moment a paragraph from a publication of the de Gaulle committee issued in March 1943:

"The great industrialists, tradesmen and financiers, the businessmen in general -- with some conspicuous exceptions -- play almost no part in the underground. The leaders of industry and finance who were the chief artisans of the Munich surrender and of the Bordeaux capitulation have logically become the chief supporters of the Vichy regime and of the policy of collaboration."

"On the whole, French resistance is of a popular character. The 'people' are those who resist while a large proportion of the so-called elite, of the ruling classes, shedding their national patriotism, have sold out to the enemy to preserve their vested interests."

Now the Minority believes that, if de Gaulle says this the French working class is quite able to see it and to become more firecely class-conscious than ever before. It believes also that this is what is decisive in the occupied countries of Europe. Temple also believes the same. Immediately after telling us that the French workers fight against the Germans, the Vichy government and the native capitalist classes, he continues:

"These facts, are more important than the temporary distortions in the movement arising from hopes in the Allied second front or de Gaulle."

Every paragraph is a slap in the face, now on one cheek, now on the other, for the whole Majority position.

Temple then proceeds to draw the correct political conclusion:

"For it means that the masses are driven into motion outside the straightjacket of the bourgeois state apparatus. It is true that De Gaulle would like to apply his own straightjacket, but he is not in the position of Poincare and Clemenceau.

"Victories scored against Germany by the regular army of the state lead the masses to repose greater confidence in that army and to themselves sink back into approving passivity. Victories scored against Germany and blows struck in the name of a self-mobilized mass upsurge lead to the attainment of greater confidence by the masses in THEMSELVES."

All emphases are Temple's. The word, themselves, is in the largest type I have ever seen in the body of an N.I. article.

What political conclusions can one draw from this? The Minority, for this and other reasons, drew its conclusions unhesitatingly. Now, more than ever, it is necessary to bring before the workers the slogan of power.

The Question of Germany

Once you have this appreciation of the situation, the next stage follows automatically. You move from this powerful revolutionary situation in the occupied countries, to the situation in Germany. You cannot help seeing the intimate connection between the revolution in the occupied countries, and the revolution in Germany, that is to say, the unity of the European masses for the socialist revolution, of which the national liberation slogan in the occupied countries is merely a subordinate part.

Temple devotes almost a solid page to the German question. We can only give extracts:

"More important, the German occupation has in several ways broken down a tremendous barrier to a successful Europe-wide revolution. It is teaching the masses of the European countries that their fates are interlinked."

So the barriers are down! (How Gates has distorted and then abused Johnson's statement on this!) So the masses can see all this more clearly than before! The minority draws the conclusion that now more than ever it is necessary to bring forward the slogan of the Socialist United States of Europe. The conclusion that Temple draws today is that the Majority Resolution is a fine Marxist analysis and that Johnson is a muddler.

Now for a rapid glance at Temple's points 8 and 9 on the German revolution.

"Two recent books (Will Germany Crack by Paul Hagen and The Silent War) have offered us the meager facts available about the development of the internal struggle against the fascist regime; it is not my purpose to trespass on this territory, but to point to the new revolutionary elements in this war; as compared to 1914."

That is good enough. But there is better to come.

"For the Kaiser, civil peace was a precondition for war. For Hitler, civil peace was a hoped-for-consequence of war. In this contrast appears the different levels from which the German workers started in 1914 and in 1939."

So Temple thinks that despite Hitler (see any article by Gates) the German workers are at a higher revolutionary potential in 1939 than in 1914.

And to conclude: "In time of war the power of the state appears greater than ever, frightfully swollen and overaweing. In point of fact, the capitalist statesmen realize only too sharply that the more the balloon swells, the more the fibres weaken."

Now comes the conclusion which Temple should spare a moment some time to discuss, if not with the party, then with Gates and Shachtman.

"This is many times more true of Nazi Germany."

This is no chance remark for Temple repeats the idea:

"The stretching of Nazism over Europe has tended to 'uncoordinate' the totalitarian controls of Fascism, not only in the occupied countries but within Germany itself. The stretched fibers are weakened. The forces of the revolution will burst through them and explode with a repercussion that will rock the world."

The Minority does not go so far with Germany. From the first Johnson article in the April NI to the last article in November, all it says is that the German revolution is the key to the situation and that the workers of occupied Europe must appeal to Germany, which can be done only on the basis of the Socialist United States of Europe.

Today Temple tells us ("Art of Muddling," P.9) that it is perfectly obvious that the coming German revolution requires the closest attention and thought.

Obvious to whom? And since when? Having joined the majority, Temple, in line with the "Supplementary Resolution," has to prove that in reality, when he writes ^{now} about Germany, he is making no kind of concession to the Minority. This is hard for Gates and Shachtman who merely forgot Germany. You would think it impossible for Temple to achieve this volte-face. But no, With the greatest of ease, he tells us:

"It is also obvious that the fate of the revolution in Europe as well as in America depends on Germany."

You see, the fate of a worker in Kansas City depends on the defeat of Hitler. The fate of a worker in Paris or Prague or Northern Italy similarly depends on the defeat of Hitler. "That, however, is in itself no particularly good reason to insist on transforming a resolution on the American scene into 'beginning and ending with Germany.'" So writes Temple.

This, friends, is the very Temple who told us so vigorously that the war was teaching the European masses that their fates were intertwined and told us too that the more Nazi Germany spread itself over Europe the weaker became the fibres, etc.etc.etc. But doesn't that make Germany the key? No, says Shachtman, and Temple echoes; No. There are some forms of nakedness that the biggest majority in the world cannot cover. This is one.

The Temple Zigzag

Everyone is entitled to his own position; he is entitled to change it, he is entitled to change it twice. But it is obvious that Temple, when he wrote that article, had separated himself from the Majority Resolution. Some time in July, before the second half of the article appeared, Shachtman, in the presence of members of the P.C., informed Johnson that Temple had joined the position of Johnson.

Temple, it is clear, was not arguing against the slogan for national liberation. He did exactly what Johnson did. He wrote to point out that the NC resolution had lost sight of the deep revolutionary temper of the European masses, based on the 20 years experience between 1918 and 1938; that the national struggle had sharpened and not weakened the class struggle; that Germany by oppressing the whole of Europe had given the masses in the occupied countries a common enemy, etc.etc.

Suddenly, in November 1943, Temple appears in the internal bulletin with an article, "A Mirror for Johnson." He offers no word of explanation of his previous articles, but actually becomes the spearhead on the attacks of Johnson. In a succeeding article, "The Art of Muddling," he denounced Johnson for saying the things he himself had said in his June and July articles, and some of them in a much more extreme form than Johnson ever ventured.

What are the party members to think? If Temple had the slightest sense of political responsibility, he would at least have had the decency to explain his change of view, to explain his positions of June and July, to show why the national question played so slight a part in these articles, why the German question played so large a part, etc., to show exactly what he was writing about and why. Instead he comes out as the advance-guard of the very position whose weaknesses he had so vigorously exposed. He leaves it to the Party to fish in the dustbin for these discarded rags and try to piece them together. In his new anti-Johnson garments he hopes to bluff his way through and appear as a charter member of the Majority position. This contortionist has one position for the workers outside the Party and another position for the Party members.

Political Conclusions

We approach now a period of extraordinary difficulty and trial for any Party, particularly, a young, untried Party. In the problems we face, each of us is going to be wrong often. Most of us are going to have to change opinions which we have expressed with conviction. There is no crime in that. The Bolshevik Party leadership continually had to do this, particularly between 1917 and 1923. And we are far from their standards.

But whatever mistakes we make, or whatever change takes place in our ideas, it is our business to take political responsibility for them. The Party must be able to judge between different opinions, decide in favor of one, if necessary change its views, accept or reject in toto or in part, hold certain ideas on ice as it were, and then finally accept or reject as events develop. That way is education, mutual confidence, and respect, and a flexible solidarity. Temple's conduct, bad at any time, is the worst possible preparation for a period of stress and storm. And the worst, the most disgraceful feature of the whole business, is that there is no political reason for it. Does he still believe all that he published in June and July? If so, what is he doing in the camp of the Majority?

The writer of this article believes that the decisive factor in politics, particularly revolutionary politics, is a policy, not a majority. That is a hard lesson to learn. It will be learnt, however, it will most certainly be learnt. Johnson made no haste to contact Temple. Events have proved him correct. Johnson, however, would not find himself in a faction with anyone who had written 6000 words, 5000 of which supported the political analysis of his opponents.

After such an evolution, it was Temple's business to clarify himself before the membership. A faction is a political means of delimiting positions, not for confusing them. When Allen had doubts of his position, he expressed them openly, then changed his position and said so. Temple's procedure is the kind which has to be held up before the Party - as an example, first, of that cynicism which short-sighted, shallow and empirical politicians believe is "Bolshevism." Secondly, when a resolution, originally written with one purpose and intention, has to be re-interpreted and supplemented to try to make it mean something exactly opposite, it brings a heavy series of consequences in its train. The case of Temple is but one of them.

January 10th, 1944
J. R. Johnson

Friday, January 21, 1944

Dear Comrade Johnson:

I have just seen, on arriving in New York, the manuscript of a 12-page document by you entitled "The Unprincipled Politics of Temple."

You seem to be of the opinion that my June N.I. article on "The Prospects for Socialism" is in contradiction with the N.C. position on the National Question. Unfortunately, your document gives no evidence to show this --- in fact, hardly makes the attempt to do anything but quote; but, fantastic as your idea strikes me, this is not the point of your document.

If it were true, you could be within your rights in calling me "confused", provided you spent a few sentences proving the contradiction.

But your epithets, which you furthermore intend to publish to the party membership, are: "unprincipled --- shameful cynicism --- politician --- shocking --- no slightest sense of political responsibility --- lack of decency --- bluff --- contortionist --- disgraceful --- cynicism."

Why? --- You claim that at the time of the N.C. article, I was in fact a supporter of your position, and then made a cynical switch. This is the basis for your outburst. It is either a fact or not a fact; it is not a subject for political disputation.

If you had not actually gone to the length of writing a 12-page convention document on this tremendous issue, one page (not to speak of 12 pages) would be too much to waste on it.

Here is the fact:

From the first moment when your position became known to us in California, I took the lead there in political argumentation against it, both in branch discussion and personal conversation. Likewise, from the publication of the N.C. resolution on, I supported its political line.

You do not wish to take my word for this fact? I don't mind. There are six comrades from California here, and all of them are in a position to know personally whether your claim is poppycock or not.

You conclude then that I am merely "confused"? Good; write an article, a different article, proving that there is a contradiction.

I think you have gone some leagues too far, even for an internal party polemic. I do not wish to match epithets with you, but rather urge you to reconsider and withdraw your irresponsible document before it is distributed. I myself make this suggestion to you mainly in the interest of the party discussion. For yourself, you should accept it also out of consideration of your own reputation.

Paul Temple.

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