

Bulletin

OF THE WORKERS PARTY

CONTENTS

COMMENTS ON A SECTION OF FREDDIE
FOREST'S CAPITAL OUTLINE by Albert Gates..... 1

ANSWER TO ROBERT STILER'S ARTICLE
IN AUGUST N.I. By Irving Berg 7

THE SOCIAL CRISIS IN THE U.S. AND
THE GENERAL STRIKE By J. Johnson..... 9

THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL AND THE
EUROPEAN SOCIAL DEMOCRACY Adopted by P.C. ... 24
January 17, 1947

SAILING WITH JIM CROW By C. Marco 28

IN REPLY TO COMRADE MARCO By J. Roan..... 33

ALSO IN REPLY TO COMRADE MARCO
By E.R. McKinney..... 34

VOL. 2 NO 1

February - 1947

10¢

1462

Comments on a Section of
Freddie Forest's Capital
Outline

By Albert Gates

Not having had the opportunity to examine the whole outline carefully, I want to limit my comments to the final section entitled "The Law of Motion of Capitalist Society," which drew my attention. This section contains two objectionable references. The first of these deals with a tendency in capitalist society which is treated in a distinctly one-sided, unobjective, and therefore, unscientific manner, leading to a false interpretation of the meaning of this tendency. The second is a foolish error which is exactly contrary to Marxian dialectical thought and method. The purpose of this article is to call attention to these references in an effort not only to correct them, but also to correct any false impressions which may manifest themselves as a result of a reading of them.

THE TENDENCY TO CENTRALIZATION AND
THE QUESTION OF STATIFICATION

Comrade Forest writes, on page 53 of her outline:

"The law of value, dominating over this mode of production, leads, on the one hand, to the centralisation of the means of production and, on the other hand, to the socialisation of labor."

So far, so good. This is indisputable. But Forest continues:

"The centralisation of the means of production ends, first, in trustification, and, ultimately, in statification... This dialectical development is accompanied by centralisation reaching a point where the entire social capital is 'united either in the hands of one single capitalist, or in those of a single corporation.'" (Capital, Vol 1, pa. 688)

In this single quotation, Forest combines a visible fact about capitalist development (centralization of the means of production and trustification) with a possible development, a prognosis made by Marx in recognition of a tendency. But it is not presented in the way Marx originally postulated it. A glance at the entire quotation below will demonstrate, Forest has amputated Marx's thought to serve her own ends. Forest grafts her indicative, statement-of-fact verb is onto the crippled quotation from Marx, making it appear that Marx unconditionally predicted the realization of the tendency. What Marx actually wrote was:

"Centralisation may take place by a mere change in the distribution of already existing capitals, a simple change in the quantitative arrangements of the components of social capital. Capital may

in that case accumulate in one hand in large masses by withdrawing it from many individual hands. Centralisation in a certain line of industry would have reached its extreme limit, if all the individual capitals invested in it would have been amalgamated into one single capital.

"This limit would not be reached in any particular society until the entire social capital would be united, either in the hands of one single capitalist, or in those of one single corporation." (Capital. p. 687-688. Emphasis mine)

Thus we see that Marx was extremely cautious about prognosticating the development of this tendency inherent in the capitalist mode of production. It was manifestly impossible for him, to do anything but describe it in a wholly qualified way: Centralization and concentration, trusts, syndicates, combines, and to some degree state enterprises, gives strength to the theory of the inherent tendency toward the "single capitalist" or the "single corporation" encompassing the whole productive apparatus.

But the early Marxist literature hardly dealt with this question. Only Engels, in an isolated paragraph, touched on it. But this paragraph has been mutilated, misrepresented and misinterpreted for the sole purpose of proving that capitalism exists in Russia today. Little or no attempt was ever made to understand what Engels meant. Engels wrote:

"At a certain stage of development...the official representatives of capitalist society, the state, is constrained to take over their management (large enterprise).* This necessity of conversion into state property makes itself evident first in the vast institutions for communication: the postal services, telegraphs and railways.

"But the conversion into either joint-stock companies or state property does not deprive the productive forces of their character as capital." (Emphasis mine)

"* I say is constrained to. For it is only when the means of production or communication have actually outgrown management by share companies, and therefore their transfer to the state has become inevitable from an economic standpoint - it is only then that this transfer to the state, even when carried out by the state of today, represents an economic advance, the attainment of another preliminary step towards the taking over of all productive forces by society itself." (Emphasis in original. Anti-Duhring, pages 311-12.)

The proof that Engels' writing is unclear is presented on page 314 of Anti-Duhring. Remember that he spoke of the state taking over the productive forces. He even added that "the conversion into either joint-stock companies or state property

does not deprive the productive forces of their character as capital." But after describing the new state property he writes:

"By more and more driving towards the conversion of the vast socialised means of production into state property, it itself (the bourgeoisie) points the way for the carrying through of this revolution. The proletariat seizes state power, and transforms the means of production in the first instance into state property." (Emphasis mine.)

First, the bourgeoisie turns the means of production into state property, then the proletariat turns it into state property. What could Engels have meant? Since he does not develop the point, he could only have meant that bourgeois state property remains capitalist property while proletarian state property lays the foundation for socialism, the absence of property. However, one wishes to interpret both Marx and Engels. It is impossible not to recognize that they were dealing with a tendency. The task of Marxists today is to determine how tendencies develop, whether or not they have been realized in modern society, or whether society has taken other turns, in opposition to the tendency.

Forest presents the tendency as a finished, completed process, in a sentence whose grammatical structure suggests something which Marx did not say, explicitly or implicitly. If this development had already occurred, we would have to write differently upon present-day capitalism, for the economic problems would take on a new form, as would the practical character of the class struggle.

As a matter of fact, two parallel developments occur in modern bourgeois society springing from a common cause. First, the tendency toward centralization (which has long ago reached the stage of monopoly capitalism) within the borders of a given bourgeois state. Second, the tendency toward world monopoly, toward the single world capitalist trust. Coupled with the first is the tendency toward statification which is demonstrated primarily at this time in the bourgeois world in measures of "nationalization," state intervention in the economy, or state-directed economics as existed during the exceptional war years.

But in addition to recording prevalent tendencies in bourgeois society, it is necessary, in order to be scientific, to record conflicting forces, i.e., opposing tendencies. The big bourgeoisie, the dominant monopolists are compelled to oppose statification. Lenin, for example, when dealing with the possibility of a "single trust", the "single world corporation" in his articles on super-imperialism, and his introduction to Bucharin's "Imperialism and World Economy," denied the possibility of such a development on the grounds that the class struggle and the inter-imperialist struggle (that is economic factors) precluded its realization. The literature on statification begins to grow during and after the First World War, and especially after the Russian Revolution, particularly in the disputes over the character of the Russian state prior

to and after the triumph of Stalinism. Lenin once characterized the pre-Revolution writings on state capitalism as nonsense, asserting that the real development in Russia did not correspond to previous theoretical prognoses (Selected Works, Vol 9, The Food Tax). One reason for this, he said, was that no one had ever seen a state capitalism. He described state capitalism in Russia as the concessions granted to foreign capitalist enterprises under conditions of proletarian state power. Others argued that the whole of Russian economy was state capitalist, though that was not the position of the Bolshevik theoreticians.

Socialist theoreticians have maintained that complete nationalization, i.e., the statification of economy, of "the entire social capital" under a workers' state is a pre-socialist form of economy, i.e., a transitional order of the dictatorship of the proletariat, distinctly different from capitalism and not yet socialism, and that it is a progressive stage of development. Also, that modern capitalism, while it has prepared the stage for a socialist development of production stands in the way of the "ultimate" development. But we have also learned today that mere nationalization, even where it is complete, is not necessarily progressive, for reasons which I will cite in a moment. A concrete examination of bourgeois society reveals that "the centralisation of the means of production" has not anywhere ended "ultimately, in statification." Does that mean that the tendency does not exist? Not at all. Empirical observation alone makes it clear that trustification and monopolization, as the precursors of statification have developed to an infinitely greater degree than has the statification of the economy. Up to now there has not even been an amalgamation "into one single capitalist," or the development of "one single corporation" in any single capitalist country yet alone bourgeois society as a whole. Not in Great Britain, the United States, France, Italy, Canada, Sweden, Japan or Latin America. Yet the urge to nationalization is strong in some of these countries. The whole problem remains extremely involved when one observes the variety of forms under which nationalization develops. We have had, for example, the nationalization of poverty-stricken enterprise in pre-Hitler Germany which was followed by reprivatization after the fascist victory. This is cited as an instance of one of the many aspects of the question. Another explanation suggests itself here. It is this:

In the real historical process, statification appears to be determined, by politics, i.e., by the general class struggle. Statification of economy is to be found in only one country in the world: Stalinist Russia. Statification exists to one degree or another, in some of the countries of Europe which are dominated by Stalinist Russia, and significantly enough it exists in industrially backward countries in apparent violation of the scheme of development formulated by Marx and Engels. But where the bourgeoisie is still powerful, or, more powerful than the proletariat, where the capitalist economy is still strong, or relatively strong, the resistance to the tendency remains vigorous, for statification reveals itself now as an anti-capitalist tendency. Thus, in the United States, and the nations under its influence, there is no strong force pulling in the

direction of "stratification." We come back then to the question of Russia. It should be remembered, above all, that the stratification of the economy there is the product of a proletarian revolution in an economically backward country whose industrial development was low, i.e., it is the result of the political class struggle. But today under Stalinism it has become the means for the enslavement of tens of millions of people, and a source of counter-revolutionary power under a reactionary regime.

These observations do not in anyway exhaust a subject which is of immense importance for us today, one which necessarily touches on all vital questions of revolutionary strategy and tactics. For that reason I am concerned that our presentation of theory be as crystal clear as we are capable of making it. I am opposed to presenting theory in such a way that the reader is forced to accept implications which are contrary to the spirit of Marxist inquiry and to party policy as well. A proper pedagogical method, especially in a final chapter indicating the significant facts of capitalist development, as well as its tendencies, would also establish the factors of their opposition. When this is not done, and when a bald statement is made about one of the most disputed problems of our day, the reader is led directly to the conclusion that the "ultimate" stratification of capitalist economy has already been realized in Russia and as a capitalist phenomena at that!

THE "INEVITABILITY OF SOCIALISM."

In the final paragraph of her outline, Comrade Forest has written:

"It is because Marx based himself on the inevitability of socialism that he could discern the law of motion of capitalist society, the inevitability of its collapse."

This is pure idealism. It is Hegelianism and not Marxism, and like other Hegelian ideas, stands the question squarely on its head. Examine the logic of the above thought and suppose for a moment that Marx had not based himself on the inevitability of socialism. He would have been unable, by Forest's reasoning to "discern the law of motion of capitalist society, the inevitability of its collapse!" Yet, actually, it was because Marx discerned "the law of motion of capitalist society, the inevitability of its collapse," that he was able to affirm the "inevitability of socialism."

Many silly things have been said about the "inevitability of socialism" inside and outside of the Marxist movement. There is no doubt that early socialist writers and theoreticians dealt with this question in a false way, more precisely, in an idealistic manner, treating socialism as though its realization was automatic. When Marx spoke of the inevitability of socialism he did not mean, as Trotsky phrased it, its inevitability in a cosmic sense, similar to the occurrence and recurrence of natural phenomena. Marx asserted repeatedly that socialism is "inevitable" only if it is fought for, if the

proletariat overthrows bourgeois society and replaces it with socialism. By inevitability, he meant the logical, necessary and desirable next state of social development, arising on the bases created by capitalist society. And this conclusion he reached by his observations of bourgeois society, its origin, growth and decline - by the unfolding of the class struggle caused by the class character of the social order.

It would be an exceedingly sad day for our movement, if its younger, inexperienced and not-yet-educated elements, were to be educated with this kind of "historical materialism," and in the spirit which gives rise to it.

ANSWER TO ROBERT STILER'S ARTICLE IN AUGUST NI
By Irving Berg

It is difficult to find in the pages of the New International since its inception, anything that even approximates Robert Stiler's article in superficiality, intellectual dishonesty and downright silliness.

Consider dear reader--What could be sillier than to counterpose preaching revolution to Freud's remarks on the role of suggestion in psychoanalytical therapy? Or of accusing Freud of being pro status quo because he aimed at adjusting his neurotic patients to their environment, instead of making revolutionists out of them?

What could be sillier than believing, as does Stiler, that it is possible to bring up a child without any restrictions on its actions; and thus castigates Freud for writing that "Education has therefore to steer its way between the Scylla of giving instincts free play and the Charybdis of frustating them."

Or, omitting, as does Stiler, the difference between Marxism as a class science, interested in the welfare of a particular class, and psychoanalysis, a classless science, like physics and chemistry, which is interested in curing anybody, regardless of economic status, which can be practised by anybody regardless of political beliefs.

Or, Stiler's nonsensical notion that it is possible to cure all neurotics by telling them to "live freely."

Or, stating, as does Stiler, without any corroborating proof, that Freud described the characteristics of the upper middle class and not those of the proletariat.

Or, criticizing Freud for believing in universal instincts--as if food, sex and sleep were not attributes of human nature under slavery as under capitalism or socialism.

What is sillier than counterposing that simple idea to Marxism (as if Marx never wrote: "To know what is useful for a dog, one must study dog nature. This nature itself is not to be deduced from the principle of utility. Applying this to man, he that would criticize all human acts, movements, relations, etc. by the principle of utility must first deal with human nature in general, and then with human nature as modified in each historical epoch.")

Or, what could be more dishonest than to quote some of Freud's statements on Marxism and Russia, completely out of context of his entire discussion on the subject. Thus, Freud also wrote that the strength of Marxism lies "in its clear insight into the determining influence which is exerted by the economic conditions of man upon his intellectual, ethical and artistic reactions,"

He also omits Freud's statement that "At a time when great nations are declaring that they expect to find their salvation solely from a steadfast adherence to Christian piety, the upheaval in Russia--in spite of all its distressing features--seems to bring a

promise of a better future. Unfortunately, neither our own misgivings nor the fanatical belief in the other side give us any hint of how the experiment will turn out. The future will teach us. Perhaps it will show that the attempt has been made prematurely and that a fundamental alteration of the social order will have little hope of success until new discoveries are made that will increase our control over the forces of nature and so make easier the satisfaction of our needs."*

Or as another indication of Stiler's intellectual dishonesty, he quotes Freud to prove his "Schopenhaurian pessimism" and omits to quote Freud's statement that "What we have said is not even true Schopenhauer. We do not assert that death is the only aim of life; we do not overlook the presence of life by the side of death."

Or of his omission of the fact that two of the greatest Marxist theoreticians, Bukharin and Trotsky, believed in the compatibility of Marxism and Freudianism.

Yes, dear readers, An intelligent article on the relationship between Marx and Freud is yet to be written.

* For Freud's complete statement on Marxism and Russia, read "The General Introduction to Psychoanalysis" pp. 243 to 248.

THE SOCIAL CRISIS IN THE U.S. AND THE
GENERAL STRIKE

A Criticism of Party Policy in the Coal
Crisis

The Political Committee has invited "Comrade Johnson to present his slogan of a general strike for the Party Bulletin so that it may be discussed in the branches." I do so at this time with reluctance and after much reflection I express my views only because not to do so would be worse. My reason is as follows:

I am more than ever opposed to the line of the Political Committee. Nor is this a theoretical question. In my view the lack not of abstract growth but of growth corresponding to our responsibilities and opportunities, our incapacity to hold the workers whom we win, are to be traced directly to the kind of paper Labor Action is and the political line of which it is a result. This has been made as clear as it is humanly possible in the discussion preceding the convention. However, these views were decisively defeated. I believe that it is my duty not only to accept this but to do everything possible to assist the leadership to carry out its line, to avoid obstructions or irritations of any kind, not only in the leadership but more important, in the ranks. The Minority faction has been dissolved not only in theory but in practice and all influence that I have been able to wield has been directed to trying to get the comrades to act in the spirit I have outlined. The SWP, I am informed, has made open declaration in their party that the Majority in the WP has forced the Minority to dissolve its faction. This is absolutely untrue. If the Minority has dissolved its faction and strives to act as is admitted on all sides not only as disciplined but as loyal party members, it is because the Minority of its own free will decided to do so.

It must not be thought, however, that this is a simple matter. The course that is followed at the Political Committee by Comrade Freddie Forest and myself is as follows: We discuss constructively and try to carry out and even vote for as many of the political proposals of the Majority as possible although it is understood that some of the proposals that we accept are to be regarded as not involving any conflict with the fundamental views which we have expressed and not repudiated. We freely bring in proposals we think can be worked out within the party line. We scrupulously avoid those which would "begin the convention discussion all over again." The picture would be incomplete if I did not state also that both on the Labor Action staff and at the Political Committee all this is borne in mind and acted upon by the Majority, and on the Labor Action staff in particular, there is an excellent collaboration. But there are times when developments in the class struggle pose serious questions before the party and it becomes a problem if and when and how to bring forward views which have been defeated. Such a situation, in the opinion of Comrade Forest and myself arose

after the failure of price control many many weeks ago, if I am not mistaken at the beginning of November. Obviously the struggle in the United States had entered a new stage. The discussion at the Political Committee revolved around the escalator clause as a propaganda means of meeting the new situation. With this I agreed, but I gave notice to the Committee that I proposed to bring before it in a memorandum (for the Committee only) some of the views which I held upon one way of meeting the new stage. When the Committee heard that it was concerned with "the general strike", it dismissed the matter, and said that it would await the memorandum. It is obvious that this is not a question of a mere "slogan." After much hesitation and long discussions with Comrade Forest, we finally decided that I present the memorandum at the November plenum.

The memorandum can be summarized as follows:

- 1) The party propaganda and agitation, in bringing before the masses the conception of workers, factory and consumers committees, represent progress since the convention, although lack of theoretical preparation in the party for this new departure has effected its effectiveness.
- 2) The clash between the government and the railroad workers was merely a preliminary to what is now being repeated on a higher plane between the government and the UMW. Such questions as escalator clauses are "for us" minor questions. The great question before the American working class inherent in the whole situation is the question of united mass action against the government acting as the executive committee of the bourgeoisie.

I then quoted two pages from the American resolution by Johnson presented to the Convention.

I ended by pointing out that had the course that I outlined in the resolution been followed, the party would today be mobilized for the present crisis. In the last two lines of the memorandum I reminded the Committee, and this is very important, that I had given notice of this before the present coal crisis appeared. I shall have to refer to this last section again because in it I raised the question of recruitment. I may mention and I want to emphasize this, that in the memorandum as presented to the Plenum, I stated clearly that I brought this question once more not before the membership but before the National Committee only.

At the Plenum during the discussion on PAC I spoke briefly but fully enough on the ideas contained in the memorandum, I was ignored. Completely. To use one of Comrade Shachtman's most telling expressions, "not one leading comrade" thought it necessary to say a word about this memorandum and the ideas contained in it. That, of course, is the privilege not only of leaders but of every party member.

I now quote the sections in the memorandum from the convention resolution.

(From American Resolution by Johnson, pp. 29-30)

Owing to the world-wide phenomenon of statification of production, all economic struggle today tends to become involved immediately with the state, i.e., to become political in the deepest sense of the term. In the face of the pressure of the masses the bourgeoisie makes innumerable legislative proposals (Smith-Connally, fact-finding, etc.) which for the most part end in impotence. The responsibility and power of the bourgeoisie in dealing with labor is thrust into the hands of the chief executive thus constituting in essence the elements of the Bonapartist regime.

But the process is not one-sided,

Every important strike by the workers against an individual capitalist or corporation has hanging over it the intervention of the government on the side of the capitalist class. Unification of bourgeois power draws in its wake unification of proletarian struggle. The immediate period now opening therefore has as its ultimate stage the recognition by the workers of the necessity for organized action as a class against the bourgeois state for the achievement of economic ends. The whole course of development indicates that the political break with the Democratic Party will either directly or indirectly be closely associated with the government's incapacity to satisfy or sponsor labor's economic demands. In the United States precisely because of the absence of a political party of labor, the general strategic orientation of the Workers Party as a political organization must be based on the economic struggles of the American workers which, owing to the statification of production continually tend to telescope the corresponding political and social development.

The Party therefore must henceforth make its main propagandistic orientation the propaganda for unified action by the working classes as a whole, directed against the government for the achievement of its economic as well as its social and political demands.

The Party does not anarchistically, recklessly, and adventuristically raise slogans for a general strike. It points out to the workers, however, the inevitability of the widening of the present scissors between wages and prices and the incapacity of the dishonest, bungling government to solve the problem. It points out that whereas in 1936 and again in 1945-6, the government was compelled to pretend to maintain a balance between capital and workers, it is absolutely impossible for it to continue to maintain that position in the future. The Party points out that only the unified actions of the decisive sections of the workers on a national scale can mobilize the full power of the proletariat and all its allies against the bourgeoisie and the deceptive role that has hitherto been played by the state

its executive committee. The Party points out to the working class that such unified action can range from a nation-wide stoppage of a few hours to a sit-down on a national scale. It warns the workers that a general strike which is anything more than a token demonstration against the government can pose immediately the problem of power in the nation, forcing upon the workers either preparation for the social revolution or a demoralizing and disastrous retreat. Without hysteria, by basing this propaganda upon its analysis of the next stage which faces the American working class, the Party not only attracts to itself those far seeing workers who instinctively draw this conclusion. It lays a basis for its future development in the minds of those workers who are taught to associate this ultimate stage of the development of the workers struggle with the Party of the Fourth International.

With that conviction which can come only from thoroughly understood theory and confidence in the inevitability of socialism the Party does not wait until the workers have acted and then proceed belatedly to explain the event. It boldly takes the lead, and proclaims the next stage. When this unified action will take place, how and under what circumstances it is impossible to foretell and ridiculous to ask. To wait to see before propagandizing is to fulfill the role not of a vanguard, but of a rear guard.

The Struggle Against the Labor Bureaucracy

such an orientation, however, demands a clear recognition of the role of the labor bureaucrats as agents of capital in the stratified production. The Party must therefore propagandize in close coordination with the idea of unified action on a national scale the idea of factory committees. These, as the 1935 CIO strikes showed, are likely to spring out of the situation with startling suddenness and power. The workers must be warned that any serious action on a national scale which is not jealously overlooked and safeguarded by factory committees or other rank and file organizations is doomed to disastrous failure. It is by means of the factory committees that the workers can be prepared to take the concrete steps vigilantly to supervise the sabotaging bureaucracy and in time to overthrow it.

* * * *

I have now to analyze this section in the light of what has taken place. Involved here is one important aspect (there are many others, equally important) in the fundamental question of our day - stratification of production. Merely to say that the government intervenes in all strikes is to say nothing. What is decisive today is that the strike of every group of workers can end in a direct clash with the government. With mass strikes over a period, it is inevitably borne home to increasing strata of the workers that their main enemy is not any individual capitalist or corporation but the government as representative of the capitalist class. This is a tremendous stage in objective

development. It means that the question of the united action of all the workers against the state is inherent in the whole situation. This is where I begin and the point from which I draw tactics. The party leadership speculate perpetually on the "consciousness" of the workers. But it is the "objective situation" which in a period like ours and in such a social milieu which rapidly develops the consciousness of the workers. And that is precisely what has emerged in the present crisis. For the first time since the formation of the CIO we have had the movement forward to united action of the CIO, the AFL and the Railway Brotherhoods. As was pointed out in the quoted section, in 1936 and again in the winter of 1945-6, by apparently taking the side of the workers or mediating between them and the capitalists, the government did not unite them against it. But as I insisted so many months ago, it was perfectly obvious that the time would come (and soon) when the government would have to strike savagely against one group of workers and by so doing, unloose the movement toward united action by all of them.

From such an analysis, however, follows certain political conclusions for the party. If in the objective situation, there is inherent united action by the workers as a whole, then it is the business of the party to anticipate in propaganda this objective movement. The resolution therefore stated very carefully that the party "must make its main propagandistic orientation the propaganda for united action by the workers as a whole..."

Note that it does not say that the main propagandistic orientation must be so sharp an orientation as the general strike. It carefully avoids saying that. This is not a slogan but an orientation, an idea which should permeate every word written or spoken until the situation changes. The statement says "unified action." The resolution then goes on to pillory any anarchistic or adventuristic raisings of a slogan for a general strike. But after pointing out the antagonistic features which would lead the workers inevitably in the next period to work together "under the whip of the counter-revolutionary" government, it then goes on to warn of the dangers and the difficulties of the united action which the objective situation would inevitably lead them to. It says that unified action can range from a nationwide stoppage of a "few hours" to a sitdown on a national scale. It warns, warns, mind you, that any general strike which is anything more than a "token" demonstration against the government, can pose before the workers either preparation for social revolution or a "demoralizing and disastrous retreat." In other words, the resolution considered it the function of the party to educate the workers well in advance and to show them the difficulties, the dangers and the possibilities attendant upon the situation. Not only was this written nearly a year ago. It was the specific passages which I selected to bring before the Committee. In the last section of my memorandum I regretted that this procedure has not been "judiciously followed." It is perfectly obvious therefore that what was proposed (and what is still proposed) is no mere "slogan" but a long hard serious preparation and an all-sided consistent education of the advanced workers who read our press, in the necessities of the objective situation. At a certain stage this can pass into open agitation.

Now, if when this question was originally posed, many people could not see it, that is to be understood. When I presented it again there was less excuse. But still, such things can be. But weeks afterward when millions of workers would have come out at the slightest encouragement from their leaders, my ideas met with the same reception as a year ago. It is possible that a sober discussion in the branches might help to clarify why. We are dealing with the greatest political event in the post-war United States, and the problems posed are still before us. This is not a post-mortem. The coal crisis was not the decisive clash. That is still before us. Everything depends on on what the "Big Three" of the CIO will do. That is why we must clear up the past.

THE UMW STRIKE

The projected attack upon the railroad workers by Truman was sufficient notice of what was on the way. Truman made an attempt to use the maritime strike for an offensive against the workers. He failed. The tremendous offensive mobilized against the UMW could therefore have come as no surprise. Truman, unlike us, carefully planned every step. Lewis declared the contract broken, and the whole press announced to the workers and to the nation as a whole that this was the showdown.

From the very beginning it was perfectly clear that the only thing that would stop Truman was the organized opposition of the working class. The particular forms that the organized opposition would take was something that could not in general be predicted. A Labor Action that had followed the course that I had outlined in February, and which I once again brought before the Committee in November, would have been in a position to pose immediately to its readers the question of unified action, to discuss the possibilities of a general strike, without necessarily raising the concrete actual slogan. In other words, under any circumstances, it would have been*patiently and judiciously following preferably but not by any means entirely in the inner pages of Labor Action as at present constituted. It is even conceivable that although unified action of this kind was abstractly necessary, yet the situation at a particular time, e.g. demoralization, defeat, consciousness of weakness, might place the revolutionary party in the situation where it could only bring the question of a general strike forward negatively. That is to say, by pointing out that though this was what would save the situation, unfortunately the working class was in no condition to even think of such a thing. That, as I say, I will admit for the sake of argument, was remotely possible.

The fact however, is that the truth of the concrete case was the exact opposite.

From the very beginning, every organ of the bourgeois press made it clear that the only reason why the government did not

*in a position, without seeming in any way adventuristic, to draw to a head the general line of analysis and propaganda which it would have been...

push Lewis into jail was the fear of a spontaneous-general strike on the part of the working class. We did not even have to pose the question. It was posed for us. The bourgeoisie recognized the objective situation. Nor did any journalist say that this belief on the part of the government was fantastic. Every one took it for granted that the government's fears were perfectly justified. Some even feared that the general strike might take place without Lewis being put into jail. Interviews with workers were printed about the general strike. Workers, including party members, reported that in the factories, there was talk of a general strike. One labor journalist spent a column after column discussing the general strike, and so far did the talk about general strike go that after Lewis sent the miners back to work, the New York Times printed a full length article entitled "The Anatomy of the General Strike," an obvious response to the fears of the bourgeoisie over the fact that in this serious clash with the workers, the question of the general strike was in the air. Everybody knew this, that is everybody except the Fourth International in the United States

THE CALCULATED TREACHERY OF THE LABOR LEADERSHIP

Every labor leader of any status in the country knew the tension. This explains their conduct. It was only after Lewis had been fined, and when the matter was definitively legalized in the appeal to the Supreme Court, it was only then that Philip Murray issued his public letter calling for unified action. The timing of this letter was no accident at all. The whole temper of the CIO resolution at the Convention and the whole convention showed the timidity of the CIO leadership. In addition to the numerous intrigues which these leaders and Lewis were undoubtedly carrying on behind the scene, Murray's call was such as to enable him to concentrate the main fight on the legal issues. In this letter there was not a single word about the Truman administration Here as elsewhere the labor bureaucracy remained true to the general pattern it has repeatedly shown us in Europe whenever the working class is in really serious danger. It is dyed in treachery and it is dyed in treachery because it fears the revolutionary mobilization of the masses particularly on a national scale.

To understand Murray and Green, we cannot do better than observe that great leader of the workers, President Walter P. Reuther. The United Automobile Worker of December 1946 tells us that on December 7, President Reuther spoke at a UAW-CIO (Founders and Smelters Conference in Milwaukee). This is at the very height of the struggle. The UAW has been fined a monstrous sum, the amount being named by the government. Murray had issued his letter on December 6, a letter in which he had claimed that the "whole labor movement" stood in imminent danger from "the forces of reaction. With a fine of 3 1/2 million dollars hanging over the UAW, Reuther proposed 1) a labor conference such as Murray had outlined the day before, 2) that labor and management call a national conference to work out a joint program to overcome the economic and production difficulties confronting the nation. 3) that after this conference a series of joint labor-management conferences by industry be called to carry out the program worked out at the national conference. Not a word against the Truman government. This is the Reuther who had called for a 24-hour general strike to

protest against the scrapping of price control by Congress, and had actually led the Detroit workers on such a demonstration. The same Reuther had called for a consumers' general strike. We do not need ~~any~~ ~~more~~ ~~to~~ know that such a speech at such a time aimed at nothing else but keeping the workers quiet and deflecting them from the sentiments of a general strike which were constantly being referred to in the bourgeois press, in the factories and in the lower ranks of the leadership. At this very time, in Detroit, Reuther's own stronghold, the AFL and the CIO were working out a joint agreement for a 24 hour general strike to let the government know the sentiments of labor against the crucifixion of the UMW today as a preparation for an attack on the whole labor movement tomorrow. At the same time on the other side of the country, the Oakland workers broke out in an almost spontaneous general strike against their leaders because the police, that is to say, the state, had lined up with capital in an apparently not very important dispute.

THE CALCULATED TREACHERY OF THE STALINISTS

Exactly the same treacherous policy characterized the course of the Communist Party. The Stalinists however, are quick and slick. They knew what was happening, and what should be done, but apart from their organic rottenness they were at this particular time in mortal fear of antagonizing Murray. Mark well their procedure. On November 19, the Daily Worker in an editorial, stated that "a number of labor leaders have suggested the advisability of an immediate joint conference of AFL, CIO and Railroad Unions to protect the miners' interests."* the Daily Worker welcomed the CIO convention resolution condemning the government injunction. (It is to be remembered, however, that van Bittner stated to the press that the CIO, while condemning the injunction, was not expressing any attitude to the question in dispute. Under other circumstances, the Communist Party would have torn the hide off him for this but they let it pass.) On November 26, the Daily Worker said: "The entire labor movement should rise to the occasion. Far too much is at stake to leave the decision in the hands of one man." etc. etc. They "hope" (note that word, please), they "hope" that progressives everywhere will initiate community-wide action through conferences or other forms." (Note, "other forms") "to bring forward the real issues and defeat the objectives of reaction." In other words, the same deliberate avoidance of any clear directives to the workers characterizes the gaudy phraseology of the Daily Worker as has already distinguished van Bittner and the CIO resolution. By December 9, the Daily Worker is able to point out that it "called for" united action to meet the emergency as far back as November 19. Everything is fixed for the record. On December 10 they are praising that traitor, Murray, for the letter that he issued after Lewis had been fined. They say: "Had Murray's proposal been accepted in time, the miners would not be going back to the pits empty-handed." The whole procedure is fakery from first to last. If they had wanted to propose any kind of action, they had at least two weeks before the court fined Lewis. Two whole weeks at a time when every hour counted.

* The Daily Worker welcomed the idea. On November 21....

THE UNCALCULATING BLINDNESS OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Thus for a line, a lead, even a little education, everything depended on the Fourth International. It will need only a few paragraphs to show how magnificently the WP and the SWP fell from the occasion.

What was the response of our own party, the Workers Party, to this crisis? On November 25, Garrett writes an article in Labor Action. He says that if Truman gets away with this strike-breaking union-breaking action, every union in the country will be menaced. Then comes this revealing passage: "The miners are therefore carrying the ball as they have many times in the past, for the entire labor movement. It is to be expected that a considerable section of the labor movement will rally to the miners defense. Unofficial reports from the CIO convention now in session say that the CIO will back the miners." Isn't this wonderful? The Stalinists "hope." Garrett goes one better. "It is to be expected." (The editorials in that issue deal with Budenz and Chiang-kai-shek) This much is clear. Garrett (and I speak of him not personally but as a characteristic representative of the party line) has no conception of the issues at stake, and what has been building up during the past months. He has no lead to give. (All this is Johnson's stratospheric nonsense.) He has no conception of the fundamental duty of the revolutionary party to call the workers immediately to note that the labor bureaucracy is ready, as always, to betray the struggle.

On December 2, Labor Action announces (on page 1). "Leaders of the CIO and AFL have announced that they are backing the mine workers to the hilt against the government's injunction procedure. Whatever the disputes between the union leaders and inside the unions the whole labor movement stands united with the mine workers in a solid front against the government's attack on the right of unions to strike. Union leaders, known for their strong opposition to Lewis, have been compelled by the necessity of defending unionism to announce their support of Lewis..." etc., etc. These terrible illusions need no comment. They speak for themselves. On page 2, Labor Action comes to the following conclusion. "Increasingly every wage struggle, every strike battle involves the government.. Good. And therefore what? "It is the elementary duty of every working man and woman to take his side with the miners" So that is what statification of production means to Garrett. The workers were with the miners. They didn't need us to tell them that. The question was what to do. But having given to the bureaucrats the prestige of "supporting" Lewis; obviously there is nothing Garrett can tell the workers to do. We have seen already how Walter Reuther that left-wing labor leader, is supporting the miners. The conclusion is as follows: "Regardless of what happens in the court, the issue will be joined in the coal fields and there, backed by the labor movement, the miners are certain to emerge victoriously." Wrong from top to bottom. If anything was certain, it was that the issue would not be settled in the mines.

On December 6, the PC discusses the question. Johnson, still

apologetic, raises the question again, beginning his speech thus: "I have reserved what I have to say (i.e. waiting until the others had spoken) because I believe that here it is necessary to do what I hate to do - bring up a point of view that is definitively rejected by a convention. In my opinion, this situation is not being approached correctly by the Committee at all."

I painfully go all over/^{it}again. I read from the memorandum, I read from the resolution. I show the line - organic to Bolshevism - which must be taken with the bureaucracy and without which, as I have categorically stated, it is impossible to educate the workers as to the need for a revolutionary party and all that this implies. At the Plenum I was ignored. This time while all the proprieties were observed, I was ignored positively. I obviously bored the Committee. On December 9, Labor Action came out with a headline of which we refuse to say one single word. We will not even mention it. This headline, to be buried, henceforth, we hope in oblivion, introduced the article which stated that on December 4, the UMW had been fined 31/2 million dollars - the greatest labor fine in history.

Who chooses to think that such things as that headline are merely "little mistakes" can continue to bury his head in the sand. They occur too often and too flagrantly to be other than the consequences of a whole political method. In that same issue, an article by Mike Stevens established the criminality of the government without a shadow of a doubt. It also established that the demands of the miners were perfectly justified. It was a poor thing but unfortunately not his own. It was the party approach. The lead article gave the facts of the case, referred to Samuel Gompers, Debs, and then informed our readers that "one thing, however, is certain; not an ounce of coal will be mined if Lewis or other UMW officials are jailed, nor will an ounce of coal be mined while the injunction order stands."

Thoughtful readers of the discussions during the last convention will now perhaps realize what the minority meant when it stated that the call for nationalization with workers control tacked on to it is not of necessity revolutionary. They will remember also the attack of the Minority upon the party's general political line as being always ready to show the crimes of capitalism but being unable to understand, far less to call upon the workers in great crises to play the role by which the proletariat, stage by stage, in bitter struggle, fights for its place at the head of the nation. Here is everything we said perfectly exemplified.

Now comes the preordained climax. The issue of December 16 has an article entitled "A Balance Sheet of the Coal Strike," written by the National Chairman of the party. Suddenly a paragraph leaps to the eye. "Could Lewis or the miners have acted differently? Yes, most certainly. Could they have appealed to the rest of the working class to walk out in solidarity with them against the infamy of government by injunction which threatens the interests and very life of the labor movement? Certainly. There is no question but that hundreds of thousands and millions of workers in this country stood poised in readiness to respond in such a cause,"

We rub our eyes. Millions of workers, then, according to this

were not only ready but stood "poised in readiness." This, then, is the question of a walk-out of millions, a general strike. But not one single word about this had appeared in the paper for the previous three weeks. If the workers were ready and the bourgeois press was talking about it, then perhaps we should have warned the workers "poised in readiness" against this provocation! Not only not a word but buckets of cold water had been poured on the very idea. This "in the Balance Sheet" is the first mention of a general strike in the paper. An accountant checking such a balance sheet would ask some very inconvenient questions about this entry. But more surprises would await him.

"If, instead of mere rhetorical talk, the leaders of the other labor organizations in this country, had immediately called a representative general conference of all the organized workers and proclaimed their readiness to stand by the miners in this strike, regardless of what action was necessary to gain a victory, the whole capitalist class, its government and the courts included, would have been compelled to retreat from their autocratic arrogance."

So only a proclamation of readiness was needed! This seems like rhetorical talk if ever there was. (and how did Labor Action distinguish itself from the others during the crisis when all "the rhetorical talk" was going on?)

It is a commonplace in our movement that an opportunist line ultimately seeks compensation in adventurism. We are leading up to something.

"Even now it is not too late to organize a powerful national network of united councils of action representing every branch of the trade union movement to stamp out the viper of government by injunction before it poisons the labor movement."

"Even now it is not too late." So "it is not too late to organize a powerful, national network...to stamp out...before it poisons the labor movement." So that the labor movement will be poisoned. On December 16th it is not too late, not for a mere declaration but for a network of councils. Do we advocate this? Is this our line to stop the poisoning? If it is, why don't we plaster, why didn't we plaster Labor Action with it? If so, why is it buried away in this article? Why isn't the whole paper, or half of it devoted to this? Compare this paragraph to the sober, careful phrasing of the Johnson resolution.

But the question remains. Are we for this action or are we not? Remember the millions of workers who are "poised in readiness." And it is not "too late" We read on;

"It is worthwhile pointing out that even if, let us say, a general strike had been called in support of the miners under the direction of the present labor leadership that would only have raised more acutely - far more acutely - the decisive question raised by the strike of the miners themselves, namely, who is master in this house... Are the American workers ready to answer this question?"

More acutely - far more acutely - the profound political confusion of the article is here exhibited. Note the phrasing. "It is worthwhile," "even if," "let us say."

2) If the strike had been called under the direction of the present labor leadership, they then would have been incapable of answering the question, who is master.

3) Then, as the present labor leadership is no good, what would have been any good?

"What is required is a working class political party which aims at establishing a workers government and will represent and defend the best interests of all the people against the monopoly capitalist class."

So that millions of poised workers must resign themselves to the poisoning of the labor movement because there is no party which represents the best interests of all the people. But this leadership to come will not consist of the present labor leadership. For the labor bureaucracy, unionist or politicians are organically the same. We know what they did in the General strike in Britain in 1926. We know that they will never in such circumstances claim to be masters. So that what the article is saying is that what we need is a revolutionary party. There is none in sight. So do nothing. "What hit the miners yesterday will hit every other worker tomorrow." So the article tells us. "Trade Unionism is not sufficient." This in large print. So the proposal for a general strategy committee which will consist of the present bureaucrats, all this in reality means nothing. They may meet. They will utter "mere rhetorical words."

It can now be seen that as far as this Labor Action article is concerned, the mere "proclamation of readiness to resist" is not rhetoric at all. It is the limit of what can be proposed from such a political basis. For if by any chance, the bourgeoisie should fail to be intimidated by the mere proclamation of the labor leaders, then, even without a general strike, the question of who is master would be posed. But these leaders, being what they are, and there being no revolutionary party, the American working class is not ready to answer this question. And since the American workers are not ready to answer this question, then the whole declaration of readiness would be seen for what it is, a mere empty threat, a mere rhetoric. We attempt to frighten the bourgeois and if it is not frightened, then we go back home again until a party is formed which etc., etc.

That is the party line. The above is the party policy. (It was the policy and still is the policy in Europe.) Some of the party leaders say pointblank that the workers are backward. Shachtman says that too but is always ready to say that millions are ready but there is no party. Between these two positions the party vacillates.

THE GENERAL STRIKE IN THEORY

I omit here two things.

1) The theoretical question of the "general strike" and the statification of production should fill our theoretical journal and should be constantly brought before our readers. Here I can barely indicate the treatment. The general political strike and the Soviets appeared in 1905 owing to the stage of development of production. In 1936 in France and in the U.S. appeared a new stage, the general strike for economic demands (increase in wages, holidays with pay, etc). Today as I have explained in outline, particularly in the US, the whole economic development and the

social forms it engenders, poses before the workers the general strike and the formation of committees for their economic demands. This is the social structure, the mould which gives form to the exploding wrath of the workers. The workers in the Commune behaved as they did because of the social structure determined by the stage of development of production. The same applies to 1905. The same applies to the U.S. in 1946. It is within this framework that a party functions. That is why the US bourgeoisie and the workers are concerned empirically with the general strike. That is why the minority makes this its basic strategic orientation. The party of the Fourth International does as we have seen.

2) Upon stratification also is based, today, the question of the social program for the miners and all other workers. Neither the WP nor the SWP has the faintest conception of what is propaganda for a social program today in the US. All I can do is to mention some of the more important questions posed by this serious crisis. The WP and the SWP will come to them in time. They will have to. But I have written as I have done because the miners strike was not the decisive action in the present stage. That was only a preliminary. The party now has to decide what it will advocate in the new round of demands that is coming up. It must devise some policy, above all, it must cease talking rhetorically about general council for strike strategy and united action. What united action does it mean? What does it propose that the millions of poised workers do in order to defeat Murray and Reuther's organic treachery? I state categorically that propaganda for a labor party and nationalization now take a secondary place. What is required is propaganda and agitation for concrete action. What does the party propose? I can only say finally that, particularly with the necessary preparation, issue after issue of Labor Action during the crisis should have been: a UMW issue; General Strike issue; the paper filled with interviews from workers in the plant on the general strike (for and against); every statement on the general strike by the bourgeois press reproduced; the article by the Times reproduced in full and elaborately analysed. We would have struck home. That was, is and will have to be our function in crises such as these.

COAL CRISIS, THE PARTY AND RECRUITMENT

I leave for the last the question of the party and the party membership. On December 1st, J.T. Farrell spoke at the NY headquarters on literature. Over 200 people came and some were turned away. On December 8th Greenberg spoke on the decline of art. There were nearly 200 people. At both these meetings, it was announced that Coolidge had visited the mine areas and would speak on December 15th on the strike. There were not fifty people present for Coolidge's meeting. The complete responsibility for this rests on Labor Action and its policy. If, during the weeks before we had oriented ourselves as I have indicated, the climax of months of preparation with the pamphlets, reprints from Labor Action and the New International, etc., and the party mobilized, we would have had a real mass meeting. This UMW question is the biggest single political event since the end of the war. The whole world looked on not only interested but vitally affected. It was

the climax so far to the first strike wave and the bourgeois preparation to break the second. Yet the party did not want to hear a first hand report. If the party reacted in this way, how will contacts react? On this deadly serious issue, the party remains dead or confused. It is the inescapable result of the false line. And that is why the WP and the SWP remain unable to rise to their responsibilities and really grow. *I stated that recruitment was to be undertaken in harmony with the rhythm of the advancing class struggle. I pointed out that by preparing for the events and then going all out when they came, we can compel people to think, to go beyond the day to day struggle, to join or remember us.

I again reminded the National Committee of this in my memorandum at the Plenum. We have done nothing to help build the party by means of this crisis. That is the miserable fact. In a few months the situation may change. It may remain stagnant. No one knows or can know these things. But I submit that the party has no line to meet the present situation at a time when the whole country is shaken by the potentialities of the struggle and now to deal with these "paralyzing strikes is first on the order of the day.

PS. This article was finished when I read the following in Labor Action of December 23rd (in an editorial, in large print) "It is, for example, an incontestable certainty that the government will think twice about trying to slap an injunction on the auto or steel workers if it knows in advance that such a move will provoke a national protest embracing all forms of actions, including stop-work action. The same goes for anti-labor legislation and so on down the line."

Surely someone besides the Minority will raise a voice in protest. What is stop-work action? I ask again: "What is "stop-work action"? Does the party advocate "stop work action" for "anti-labor legislation and so on down the line." If we are to have "stop-work action" down the line then where is the party to lead this? Will such action not be under the direction of the present labor leaders? And what does "down the line" mean? That, I beg to state, is an extremely loose statement. The more the leadership tries to extricate itself, the deeper it sinks. This paragraph alone justifies my whole article which I have written, I may add with considerable restraint.

J.R. Johnson
January 11, 1947

*In the convention resolution on Building the Bolshevik Party.

THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL AND THE
EUROPEAN SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

The first post-war revolutionary wave in Europe has subsided. It is not possible to say with accuracy when it will rise again. Nor is it necessary to do so for the purposes of this statement. What is necessary is to note several interrelated phenomena in connection with the first revolutionary wave:

1. It was not as powerful, it did not have the scope or depth of the revolutionary wave that rose immediately after the first world war. Except for a few isolated instances the proletariat nowhere succeeded in taking power, even for a short time. There was nothing equivalent to the German revolution of 1918-19, the Austrian revolution of the same period, the Bavarian Soviet Republic, the Hungarian Commune, the general strikes, factory occupations, let alone the Bolshevik revolution in Russia.

2. The utterly discreditable traditional parties in the working class, the Social Democracy and Stalinism, emerged at the end of the war in all the European countries, especially in the Western European countries, more or less intact, and between them immediately assumed undisputed leadership of the working class. In some countries, notably Britain, the Social Democracy even reached hitherto unattained heights of strength. In other countries, notably in France, the same holds true of the Stalinist parties. In the Stalinist parties no serious political differentiation is visible in the ranks; in any case, there is no important movement inside the Stalinist parties toward revolutionary Marxism. In the Social Democratic parties, whatever serious political differentiation is taking place in their ranks falls almost exclusively to the benefit, not of revolutionary Marxism and the Fourth International, but of the Stalinists.

3. Unlike the period immediately following the first world war, the period following the second world war has not seen the development of any serious centrist trend, that is, a more or less conscious organized political shift from the right to the left, a shift even remotely comparable to that which after 1918 made possible the building of mass Communist parties in principal European countries.

4. After the first world war, the tiny revolutionary Marxist groups under the impulsion of the general crisis of capitalism which at one and the same time made possible the Bolshevik revolution in Russia and the disintegration of the Social Democracy, were able to transform themselves almost overnight into mass revolutionary parties with tremendous influence upon the working class and with the immediate prospect of seizing power in a whole series of countries. At the end of the second world war, the revolutionary Marxist movement, the Fourth International, is in a number of vitally important European countries totally non-existent; in a number of other countries, exists only on paper; and in the western European countries continues to exist as tiny sects, without serious influence in the traditional parties of Social Democracy and Stalinism, without serious influence upon the masses in general, without serious influence in the organized labor movement, primarily in the trade unions.

In the countries where the Fourth International exists

to any degree as an organization, it lives almost entirely at the margin of events. In Italy, it remains a tiny group, confined mainly to the south with no important connections in the industrial north, and with no influence in the country. In Germany, the first painful and difficult steps are only now being taken to bring together into groups the militants who remain true to revolutionary principles. In Holland, the section of the Fourth International remains insignificant and, in any case, without significant influence or even roots in the working class. In Belgium, the section of the Fourth International there stagnates or what localized influence it has is in decline. In France, which is the largest and one of the most vigorous sections of the Fourth International, its influence upon the turbulent and decisive events of the past period, as well as today, is only little less insignificant than in the neighboring countries. In England, which has a really large section and which has even grown in numbers in the past period, the influence of the section does not even remotely compare with both the necessities and possibilities of the highly favorable political situation. In Spain, which is on the eve of decisive political events, the Spanish section exists only on paper. It does not even have a public voice (an organ of its own) and in its present state gives every indication that it will play an even less significant role in the impending crisis than was played by the Trotskyist movement during the Spanish Civil war. In the Scandinavian countries, the Fourth International does not exist as a movement but only as isolated individuals. The same is true in all the Baltic and Balkan countries. Greece seems to present an exceptional picture in that a vigorous section with continuous traditions exists in that country, but it too does not appear to have anything like the influence that the objective political situation of the past period made possible. Another exception seems to exist in Austria where, although details are lacking, a tiny organization exists but gives no sign of significant strength.

In a word, the state of the revolutionary Marxist movement in Europe after the second world war is in most unfavorable contrast to the state of the movement after the first world war.

The political reasons for this situation have been set forth by the Workers Party in other documents. It is not necessary to dwell upon them here, nor is that the purpose of the present statement. That purpose is narrowly conceived. It aims to indicate the field in which the Fourth International in Europe, given not only its present forces but its present political line, shall orient its efforts in the coming period.

It is necessary for the Fourth International to orient all its sections, groups and individual supporters, with perhaps one or two isolated exceptions, toward immediate entry into the Social Democratic parties. The idea that the present sections of the Fourth International in Europe can grow into mass organizations with decisive influence upon the proletariat by means of direct individual recruitment to the existing sections, and without going again through the experience of concentrated work in the Social Democratic parties, is definitely refuted. The idea that by continuing their present course the sections or groups of the Fourth International will maintain their "independence," is only an idealized formula for the perpetuation of the paralyzing isolation and uninfluence of the Fourth International.

The European sections cannot break out of the isolation which is misnamed independence by joining the Stalinist parties, even though they are mass organizations. Organized and systematic work inside the Stalinist parties is possible and fruitful only in the most unusual circumstances. While it is necessary to undertake this work whenever it is possible and indicated, the Stalinist parties are not and cannot be, by their very nature, a fruitful field for anything but political capitulation.

The Social Democratic parties present a different field entirely. Given the necessary political skill and understanding, it is not only possible to enter the ranks of these parties but to exert a decisive influence inside of them and to employ this influence at a subsequent stage for the further development of the independent revolutionary proletarian party and consequently a powerful and effective Fourth International.

The objection that the Social Democratic parties in many European countries do not have in their ranks or under their influence the majority of the proletariat, is trivial. In many countries, particularly in France, the Stalinists do have a greater influence over the proletariat than the Social Democracy. But there is practically no country in Europe where the Social Democracy does not have a hundred, a thousand and even ten thousand times as much strength in the working class, and general political strength, as the sections of the Fourth International. It is this relationship which is decisive for us at the present time. To expect that the workers and, in general, the masses who become disillusioned with Stalinism will quit its ranks in order to join those of the tiny Trotskyist organizations and thereby convert them quickly into mass parties is gross self-deception. The masses do not leave an "effective" mass party in order to join a small sect and convert it into an "effective" mass party, except under the most unusual combination of circumstances. There is no reason to believe that they will do so in the coming period.

Inside the Social Democracy the Fourth Internationalists can immediately operate in an organized political milieu, and have direct daily contact with politically organized masses. The belief that the Social Democratic parties are inconsequential, and that they no longer represent an important political force, is a ridiculous illusion which is not shared, however, by the politically astute Stalinists. The Stalinists, in every European country, continue to make tremendous efforts to penetrate the Social Democracy and to absorb it either directly into the Communist Party or such of its synonymous organizations as the Socialist Unity Party of Germany. The success of the Stalinists in this field would be a terrible blow to the working class in general and to the prospects for the development of the Fourth International in particular. Only the Fourth Internationalists, by concentrating their efforts in the Social Democratic parties can effectively resist the reactionary and disintegrating advances of Stalinism into these parties, on the one hand, and at the same time constitute a center of revolutionary attraction, a center of revolutionary alternative, to that section of the Stalinist party following which can be influenced by our political program.

The breaking of the isolation in which we now find ourselves in Europe by means of the course toward entry into Social Democratic parties is absolutely and immediately indicated for such countries as England, Holland, Belgium, the Scandinavian countries, Germany, Italy

and Spain. For the basic reasons given above, it is also indicated in that country where the relationship of forces is somewhat more in our favor than in others, namely, France.

It is now clear that this course should have been adopted by the International in Europe some time ago. Even if late, there is still time and still the urgent need to adopt this course now. Before the course toward entry can be adopted and precisely in order that the course may be carried through with the maximum positive results, it goes without saying that a thoroughgoing discussion must be started immediately in all the sections of the Fourth International so that entry, when it takes place will be carried through with understanding and conviction.

Adopted by Political Committee
of the Workers Party
January 17, 1947

SAILING WITH JIM CROW

On September 5 the Sailors' Union of the Pacific and the Seafarers' International Union "hit the bricks" in one of the most dramatic strikes in waterfront history. For a period of nine days two unions fought against a government agency to enforce a wage agreement already accepted by the employers. They achieved a signal victory. In winning the battle, these unions established a degree of unity amongst all maritime workers that had never before been accomplished. Most significant for the Seafarers' International (S.I.U.) was the manifestation of "unity in action" on the Negro question.

The S.I.U., which may one day engulf its parent, the S.U.P., has moved throughout its history toward complete segregation of its Negro members on board its ships. In the early days of organization this was favored by the Negroes in the mistaken conception that their jobs would thereby be safeguarded against white encroachment. In practice it has worked out to an increasing limitation upon the jobs open to Negro seamen. Of the three departments aboard ships--engine, deck and steward--the S.I.U. dispatches Negroes to work only in the latter.

In the heat of the general strike, discrimination against Negroes tended to disappear. White and black alike fought the government--on the picket lines, on union committees. They worked together, and shared the same sleeping quarters. A movement developed amongst the Negroes in the Port of New York to carry this real fraternization into the normal life of the union. That this movement did not fritter away immediately, as so often before, in senseless negotiations and maneuvers with the bureaucrat leadership or in hopeless motions at union meetings, was due primarily to the activity of the militants in the unions who understood the political nature of such questions.

Both the WP and the SWP have members in these unions. But those of the SWP far outnumbered those of the WP. For years the SWP has concentrated its attention on the seamen's unions. Their policy, especially during the war, was to "lay low" and gather the support of individuals for the occasion of open warfare against the union leaders. Pursuing this policy, they arrived at quite friendly relations with the bureaucracy of the SIU. This is only apparently paradoxical. "Laying low" meant not antagonizing, even cultivating the leaders.

The WP had made no such concentration in maritime and had far fewer effectives. During the strike and after, there was drafted and circulated a strongly worded resolution which secured the signatures of many full-book* members of the union, both black and white. The Cannonite fraction (SwP) actively discouraged this. They refused to sign the resolution and attempted to dissuade others. This was not the issue that would carry them to prominence and power in the union.

Against the opposition of the Cannonites, a select committee of

* The SIU, like many AFL unions, requires a long period of probation before full membership is attained.

signers was convened, discussed the situation and constituted itself a standing Committee Against Discrimination. It outlined a long-term policy of persistent education for the union and prepared to "hit the deck" at the next regular membership meeting, the first after the strike. A steering committee was elected and given broad powers. This steering committee, proceeding as loyal members of the union, but not as leaders of a committee, approached Paul Hall with their resolution and the determination to bring it in some form to the membership.

Paul Hall, the most astute leader in the union, officially agent for the Port of New York, is virtual leader of the SIU. For the union bureaucracy as a whole, but especially for Paul Hall, the victory of the general strike had flowered into visions of dominating the waterfront. Through the newly-created Maritime Trades Department including longshoremen, teamsters and others, appeared the goal of a new power in the AFL; and through this new power the dream of eliminating the National Maritime Union. The NMU, a CIO outfit, did not practise Jim Crow in any department aboard ship. Any attempt by the SIU to combat the Communist-dominated NMU must reckon with Jim Crow.

Paul Hall, clearest-minded of the union leaders, had these considerations as a background when faced with the resolution of the Anti-discrimination Committee. Hall attempted to compromise with and conciliate the proponents of the resolution. He would put through certain concessions at the price of silence. These would be (a) the elimination of the separate dispatching hall, and (b) the institution of "unit shipping". "Unit shipping" meant the partial break-down of Jim Crow in the steward department--white cooks and Negro messmen or vice versa were to be allowed. Hall was granted his silence, but it proved even more temporary than the steering committee expected.

At the regular meeting of the union which ensued, the concessions were introduced as part of the regular report of the leadership by the assistant secretary treasurer. Hall had succeeded in keeping the secretary-treasurer John Hawks, nominal leader of the union and stark reactionary, from attending the meeting. But even so, it took the combined pressure of the Negroes, the militants and the bureaucrats to persuade the membership to accept the report. The membership is largely southern and provincial, recruited on a basis of reaction against the more politically and socially advanced CIO. Speaking on the most elementary trade-union level, Hall served only to neutralize this overwhelming element of the union. They did not vote, for or against, but felt uneasily that this was the first blow against Jim Crow.

But the leadership was not yet done. Smarting under the whip applied by the Anti-Discrimination Committee, frightened by the danger of combating the sentiment of a large section of its membership, it struck back. At the end of the meeting, the assistant secretary-treasurer introduced an anti-political motion. It must be understood that the SIU is in many respects a direct descendant from the "Wobblies". The traditions of the Industrial Workers of the World and even its members have carried down to the Seafarers through the SUP. The distinguishing cry of the Wobbly was "no politics." And against the Communist-dominated NMU the SIU has cried "no politics," lest they go the same road.

This specific motion, however, was a threat and a warning against Trotskyists. It was believed, from the discussion, that somewhere behind the scene, on the Negro question, the Trotskyists had figured. Hence those who had fought against Jim Crow found themselves necessarily aligned against this anti-political motion. So staunch was the opposition that Hall twice rephrased almost to meaninglessness, and passed it in an uproar as the meeting adjourned.

The Cannonites played a singular role at this meeting. Lest they lose all standing in the union, they were forced to speak out before the membership and support the leadership's concessions. They were the most forceful and effective anti-Jim Crow speakers from the ranks. When the anti-political motion was made, the Cannonites took it upon their shoulders, and made the most violent attack against it. But their efforts availed them nothing. They had lost the leadership of the Negroes in the union. All those close to the events know that the Cannonites' previous behavior had weakened the fight. It was nothing less than betrayal.

But more battles are fought off the union floor than on. The passage of the report introducing these slight changes on the shipping of mixed crews fired a reactionary wave in the top layers of the SIU-SUP. From Lundberg, SUP agent, and John Hawks on the East coast, the bureaucratic machine recoiled against Paul Hall. A scurrilous campaign was launched to retail the SIU for Jim Crow. Slander was the first weapon employed. Paul Hall, in alarm, quickly made peace with his turbulent machine and turned with redoubled venom on the "politicals" whom he now, in common with his "southern cracker" cohorts, held responsible for "disturbing the peace."

Without further ado the motion on Jim Crow was reversed--by bureaucratic ukase. A rump meeting, carefully arranged, later ratified the reversal. A lynch spirit was whipped up against politicals. The SIU, like most waterfront unions, falls into that category best described as gangster-ridden. The "goon squad" operates not only on picket lines but also on "commies" and other "troublesome" elements. The threat of the "goon squad" was now directed, only a few days after an apparent victory, toward the WP and SWP alike.

At this point, the WP fraction was thrown into a quandary. Inadvertently, the leadership of the union had trapped it beyond its strength. To engage in a direct struggle with the united bureaucrats meant going down to overwhelming defeat together with the Negroes and perhaps even the SWP. A political defeat that might entail physical defeat, violence and expulsion. The other horn of the dilemma which impaled the fraction was the alternative of silence. This would leave the bureaucrats in complete command of the field, another form of the same defeat.

Searching for a possible way out of the trap, the fraction attempted to secure the cooperation of the Cannonites who were equally threatened. Only one of their fraction would even discuss. Their attitude was clear and unmistakable. The entire action was wrong from the beginning; sheer adventurism. They had predicted it would end in precisely such a blind alley as it now faced. The WP had provoked the bureaucrats and drawn down on everyone's head their awful wrath. Further, Paul Hall, operating in other waterfront

30-----

unions, teamsters, longshoremen, marine officers, had learned sooner than otherwise that his machine would not permit him the progressive road to conquering the NMU. No more would he consider working with Curran who had given indications of breaking with the Stalinist leadership in the NMU. The Cannonites would have nothing to do with the Committee Against Discrimination. They were hastening to take cover. Many of them shipped out. Boldly and aggressively they chose --silence.

The Party was determined not to follow the craven Cannonites into hiding. But turn and twist and examine the question as it might the best that could be produced seemed to be a legal struggle; demanding that the leadership cease being undemocratic. This was not only tantamount to shirking the real issue but bore the danger that the leadership would secure a democratic endorsement of its actions. Uncertain of its course in so critical a situation, the fraction called upon the Party secretariat for aid and advice.

A joint meeting of the fraction, the secretariat and one or two others was held. Here it was pointed out, as it had been in the fraction, that there was a way out. If it was calmly recognized that all the forces of the WP could summon in the union were outnumbered and outgeneraled there was only one place to turn for reserves. Outside the union.

The Jim Crow policy of the SIU was being challenged in New York, the most advanced center of the country. In this city exists the heart of liberal opinion. Here are found larger numbers of Negroes, progressive unionists, radicals and simple democrats. These were the reserves that could be called upon to slow down and perhaps halt the offensive of the reactionary machine. An organized counter-offensive would seek to involve veterans, civil liberties groups and other political parties to defend the rights of white and black. It was suggested that the NAACP be involved, perhaps through court action. This proposal meant turning the guns of publicity, public meetings, and the concerted efforts of the party upon a vulnerable union leadership. If adopted, the party would not only defeat its comrades and followers in the union but open the door for itself to a vast arena in the political heart of America. The WP was at that very moment engaged in an election campaign in Harlem. To stand forth in the election as the leaders of a struggle for Negro equality in the unions would surely redound to advantage.

Be it said to his credit, the labor secretary of the WP insisted that the problem of Negro segregation transcended the limits of trade-unionism. But the other leaders of the party made it a matter of principle to confine the struggle to the boundaries set by the union bureaucrats. They were as appalled as the bureaucrats themselves at the prospect of shifting the battleground to an area where the bureaucrats could not operate. The WP therefore advised its fraction against traitorous conduct such as the Cannonites' and to speak softly even when questioning the legality of the bureaucrats' actions. Bound by a rigid dogmatism, a worship of futile shiboleths, the party's advice was--silence.

By this decision, bowing before the altar inscribed "No Greener Fields Outside The Unions,"* The WP demonstrated its kinship

*WP resolution on the trade unions.

with the SWP. It also established the Cannonites as more consistent and far-sighted politicians. The WP ended a struggle with opportunism; the SWP began with opportunism.

Epilogue

When Trotskyism does not provide leadership, the masses turn elsewhere. The Negroes in the SIU are no exception. They, alone, forced the burial of the minutes of the rump meeting which reversed the concessions on Jim Crow. So the concessions still stand as passed though not put into effect. Searching desperately for means to accomplish this, they have considered going in for gangster tactics themselves. Beating up the leading reactionaries seemed a good idea. A proposal calling for a convention of the union so that a Negro could be elected to the leadership was also considered. In their blind groping they were falling foul of new errors and opportunists.

Learning of this and feeling criticism from within, the fraction decided to lead the Negroes once again in banging their heads against bureaucratic walls. The union leaders can all the more easily rebuff the second attempt, having seen how easily frightened were the Trotskyists at the first attempt. This is the greatest likelihood. The leadership may, however, act on other considerations. The Negroes, if not the Trotskyists, have amply demonstrated their determination. The bureaucracy may fear that the Negroes will take action outside the union. Information that has seeped into the press notably PM, has shown this to be a real possibility. Though highly unlikely, the union leaders might educate their machine to the necessity of fighting the NMU along different lines. These considerations might begin the removal of Jim Crow from the SIU halls.

But one thing is excluded. Neither Party can exercise any influence on the course of events in the SIU. They may have fractions and committees, they may introduce motions and speak to the membership. But it will all be wind over water. Both parties continue to sail with Jim Crow.

November 27, 1946

C. Marco

The policies followed by the fraction and those supported by Marco differ far more basically than Marco's article reveals. We, who accept the general line of the party, proceed from the viewpoint that it is necessary to maintain and extend our trade union fractions as the most important base for the future growth of the party. We realize that there are times when trade union work is more difficult than at others. A crisis in the industry, such as the recent one in maritime, makes possible great leaps ahead. The subsequent temporary stabilization may mean a more or less protracted period of plodding Jimmy Higgins toil in preparation for the next opportunity that history provides. But above all, without ever compromising our principles, we seek to maintain our base in the trade unions, for this is the best guarantee of the development of our party as a proletarian party.

Marco, on the other hand, proceeding in accord with the precepts of the I.K.D., considers the maintenance of our forces in the union as a secondary matter. To him it was most important to extend the struggle outside the union itself even at the price of the isolation and destruction of the fraction as a force in the union. And, I stress, there was not the shadow of a doubt among any of the comrades involved in the work* at hand that this was the price to be paid for following the ill timed tactics supported by Marco.

In contrast to the "rigid dogmatism" ascribed to the party and fraction by Marco, the policy actually followed demonstrated almost classis flexibility, the ability of the group to fit its tasks to the problem involved. When the situation called for our organizational abilities and experience, we were in the forefront of the struggle. Marco's own description of the operation belies the imputation of cowardice and neglect of duty that he lays to the fraction. When, contrary to the opinion of Marco, the larger body of Negro and white militants had sailed, the Negro pie-cards with whom we had previously cooperated refused to press the struggle any further without the pressure of these militants. Under these circumstances we had no choice but to await a further development of the union situation that would again allow us to mobilize sufficient forces for a greater struggle. But we are utilizing this interim period to gather recruits to the party from the maritime trades in order that we may widen our extremely narrow, and therefore, precarious base. With a wider base we need have no fear that in the next upsurge we shall be forced to depend on the caprice of the pie-cards.

It would be pointless to attempt to reply to the frivolous accusations, the half-truths and untruths with which Marco clutters his piece. What shall we reply to such patently disloyal statements as "the WP....continues to sail with Jim Crow". Our record is clear, we have fought, and shall continue to fight with all our resources against Jim Crow. But Marco differs from us. He will no longer "sail with Jim Crow." He has sailed completely out of the union and therefore won't have to deal with the problem any longer.

December 22, 1946

J. Roan

* As a footnote I should add that these do not include Marco, who, although he held as valid a book as any of us in the union, never saw fit to integrate himself in the vitally important work of the fraction.

ALSO IN REPLY TO COMRADE MARCO

It is not clear from Comrade Marco's piece what the real issue is between Comrade Marco and the Party. It is necessary to make this clear.

The fraction faced the serious, complex and very difficult problem of what to do about a most flagrant case of Jim-Crow in a union. Not just Jim-Crow in general but Jim-Crow of a rather virulent type practiced by some politically backward but militant white workers. This Jim-Crow took the form of confining Negroes to the stewards' department on the ships and of having a separate hiring hall for Negro and white seamen, even in New York City.

It was the opinion of the party and of the fraction that following the militant strike of the union in which white and Negro seamen worked, slept and ate together, it would be excellent to capitalize on this example of fraternization, union solidarity and non-Jim-Crow by beginning propaganda for doing away with Jim-Crow on the ships and in the matter of hiring halls.

It was known in advance that such a move would meet with opposition from backward elements in the ranks and from the union leadership. All of the militants, including the Negro militants, were aware that this struggle would be no holiday affair. We also knew that we could not avoid engaging in such a struggle. Every phase of the campaign was thoroughly discussed and worked over. The question of how to proceed was carefully considered. The fraction was not "thrown into a quandary," nor was it "trapped" "beyond its strength" as is claimed in the Marco piece. The fact that the militants were forced to retreat does not mean that it was in a quandary or that it had been trapped. Sometimes it is necessary to retreat in order not to be trapped. That is precisely what the fraction did. The possibility of having to retreat was known in advance and prepared for in advance. The fraction knew its strength or better its lack of strength. The fraction knew that not having the support of the other organization whose forces were far greater than our's, meant that the struggle would be weakened. We knew also that even if we had the full support of the other organization the fight would still be extremely difficult.

The fraction was not "impaled" anywhere. The "alternative of silence" was rejected categorically. The fraction in approaching the other organization was not "searching for a possible way out of the trap." It wasn't in any trap. If Comrade Marco does not understand why the fraction sought a united front with the other organization, then I believe that it is too late now for him to understand this simple tactic.

If the Party and the fraction were to be true to the principles of revolutionary socialism, we had to enter this fight. Here was a most disgraceful situation existing in a trade union: Jim-Crow and segregation. And right in New York City where even such Jim-Crow and segregation are not practiced either by the City Government or the bourgeoisie in general. Also it must be emphasized that the practice of the unions is exactly the opposite to that of the union under consideration. The opportune time to strike a blow against the practices of this union was right on the heels of the strike where Negro and white workers had functioned together without Jim-Crow. The aid of the SWP was sought not for the purpose of getting out of any "trap" but in order to augment the small forces of our Party and to bring, at least, all of the advanced militants into the struggle. This should be considered elementary.

The Party did not have in mind any "legal struggle", as Marco suggests. That was in mind was a struggle in the union to bring the union around to a correct position. The struggle was organized in such a way as to involve the Negroes and white militants. It was to be carried on in the union and from the union floor. This also is elementary.

Marco says that in the meeting of the fraction with members of the PC "it was pointed out, as it had been in the fraction, that there was a way out... An organized counter-offensive would seek to involve veterans, civil liberties groups and other political parties to defend the rights of white and black... It was suggested that the NAACP be involved, perhaps through court action... If adopted, the Party would not only defend its comrades and followers in the union but open the door for itself to a vast arena in the political heart of America."

I do not care now to take up the particular political notion contained in the quotations in the above paragraph. It was Comrade Marco who suggested the advisability of the NAACP and of court action. When Marco writes that it is to the credit of the "labor secretary" of the party that he "insisted that the problem of Negro segregation transcended the limits of trade unionism," he only makes the water muddier. This statement was not made in support of the Marco position that we appeal to the NAACP now nor in support of his position that the Party advocate court action. The statement about the NAACP was made in the course of the discussion and based on the future necessity for resorting to outside aid in case it was demonstrated that nothing could be done by a struggle inside the union. The "labor secretary" holds to the position that there are occasions where the question of the struggle against Jim-Crow inside a union, cannot be confined to the union itself. There are many questions of this kind and it is particularly true in the case of the Negro, fighting for his democratic rights. So far as I know, no one present at the meeting, took the position that appeal to such an organization as the NAACP would under any and all conditions be excluded. No one took the position that under any and all conditions, in such a matter as this, resort to the courts would be excluded. That the PC members did say was that there is no reason whatsoever for entertaining such notions at present in this case. Such procedure was excluded categorically for that time and for the present. That was where the break came with Marco. He wanted to appeal to the NAACP then and there. He was in favor of taking the matter to the courts and to the NAACP before the struggle in the union was conducted and right at the time when the fraction was making some progress in lining up the Negroes and other militants for conducting the fight in the union.

The brute fact is that Marco did not want to conduct the struggle in the union. He had no confidence that anything could be accomplished by appealing to the union membership, because the unions, as it has been stated by the political friends of Marco, are "the most barren field..." Furthermore Marco, also in line with his political views, looked upon this intra-union Jim-Crow and the appeal to the NAACP for aid, as a "door" "to a vast arena in the political heart of America." This of course is nonsense but a convenient peg for one's particular political point of view.

Marco writes that the "other leaders of the party made it a matter of principle to confine the struggle to the boundaries set by the union bureaucrats." Aside from the plain absurdity of such a statement; Marco should explain to the Party why the bureaucrats called a rump meeting to rescind the action taken by a regular meeting of the local, where it had been decided to eliminate some of the Jim-Crow practices. This favorable vote at the regular meeting was taken after the organization of the campaign by the fraction got under way. Which boundary were "the other leaders" prepared to accept in "principle"; the action of the regular meeting or the action of the rump meeting? And is Marco trying

to make the Party believe that the union bureaucrats were favorable to the elimination of Jim-Crow and that it was they who set such a boundary for the Party, but repented themselves a few days later; called the rump meeting and rescinded the legal action of the regular meeting? Or is Marco saying that when the bureaucrats called the rump meeting to revoke the action of the legal regular meeting, the "other leaders" were satisfied to "confine the struggle" to such boundaries; that is to the continuation of Jim-Crow? Is that the significance of his title: "Sailing with Jim-Crow?"

Marco gets down to brass tacks when he says that we bowed to the slogan: 'NO GREENER FIELDS OUTSIDE THE UNIONS.' Marco insists on dragging in his ILL political line by the tail, no ever, bruised, battered and gasping for breath. In this simple but practically difficult situation, where one union is practicing Jim-Crow and where our fraction is in action around this concrete situation in their union, Marco wants "all-sided activity," and sees the door swinging open and displaying "a vast arena in the political heart of America."

What did Marco want to substitute for the unions? The party's GREENER FIELDS. The NAACP and the courts! We were also having an election campaign. If the Party followed Marco into "all-sided activity," we could "stand forth in the election as the leaders of a struggle for Negro equality in the unions ...". The way to carry on the struggle for Negro equality in the unions is in the courts and through the NAACP. It has been said many times of course that the working class must have allies.

Comrade Marco adds an "Epilogue", According to him the fraction and the Party have failed. But they never learn. The negroes had banged their heads against the "bureaucratic walls" once but this was not enough for the fraction. They decided to lead the Negroes up the hill again and let them bang "their heads against the bureaucratic walls."

The whole of Marco's piece is that in fact it has no real connection with the situation with which the fraction was confronted. It has no real connection with the struggle of the Negroes in the union, for their democratic rights. It just as easily could have been written by a recently arrived visitor from Pluto; provided he had observed the "boundaries set by the union bureaucrats" on that distant planet.

This is bad enough but there is something worse in the Marco piece. It is anti-CP. I do not mean in the sense of political disagreement. If this were all there could be no complaint or objection. The Marco piece is anti-party in the sense of attempting to hold the Party up to ignominy and contempt. The piece is dishonest and bombastic. "The Negroes, if not the Trotskyists, have amply demonstrated their determination... When Trotskyism does not provide leadership, the masses turn elsewhere." This is bombast of the most puerile sort. The Negroes did nothing in this situation until the party fractions swung into action and provided, a very welcome leadership for them. One of the difficulties encountered by the fraction was the weakness and vacillation of one of the chief Negro leaders in the union. "The Party... advised its fraction... to speak softly even when questioning the legality of the bureaucrats' action." It is very difficult to discuss this statement with any real feeling whatsoever of talking to a comrade. It is difficult to refrain from saying a few things about the record of Marco in the Party and in this particular union situation. Marco knows this campaign begun by the fraction was fraught with the possibility of both physical harm and expulsion from the union. And Marco knows also that if anything in the nature of a physical encounter had taken place, he would not have been in the forefront of the struggle. Marco knows too that the fraction was given no such advice. Caution was discussed and properly so. Marco knows why.

In this whole situation the fraction conducted itself properly and with credit. It displayed courage in a tough and disgraceable situation where courage was necessary even to be in the struggle. Marco knows all of this. His piece is therefore nothing more than a scurrilous attack on the Party and the fraction by a member of the Party and a member of the fraction.

E.R. McKinney
February 17, 1947