

# Bulletin

## OF THE WORKERS PARTY

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SOCIALIST OR "SOCIALIST" POLICY ON THE MARSHALL PLAN  
or How to Help Stalinism.

By Ben Hall

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Viewed superficially, the "reply" of the editors to letters from Albert Goldman and James T. Farrell in the May issue of LABOR ACTION could be taken to mean: "Against the Marshall Plan; for Economic Aid to Europe." What mysteries are wrapped up in this illusive formula! Just what do they mean by "aid to Europe?"

In the prevailing misery following the catastrophe of World War II, who can deny that the suffering need assistance? If only this were at stake and nothing else, we could not deny to the social-welfare workers, public and private, the pleasure that comes from helping the poor and alleviating their hardships. We could only point out how pitifully meager are the results of such charity in the midst of the accumulating effects of capitalist decay; and request those philanthropists, who cannot let go a dollar without a consoling social philosophy to give them courage, not to annoy us and deceive themselves and others with happy theories about remaking the world through their noble efforts.

Complaints that horsemeat instead of beef or tobacco instead of food were being sent to Europe would then be in order, proving that even these pretensions of charity are overladen by the narrow and selfish motives of calculating profiteers whose first concern is with their percent. But as any realistic philanthropist could point out, while horsemeat may not be so tasty as beef, it can be eaten; while tobacco cannot be eaten, it can be smoked.

The Marshall Plan and the ERP are submitted with a fanfare of "humanitarianism." But even while clashing the cymbals, the sober statesmen hum a different note to themselves.

"Aid in any form, public or private", says the Harriman report, "always involves many practical considerations and limitations which temper its kind and quality." By "practical" considerations, of course are meant the political, economic and military aims of the United States. Nobody can take these pretensions of humanitarianism seriously, least of all serious socialists. Questions of charity and humaneness, which will inevitably flit in and out, are not at all involved in this discussion.

#### Workers' Aid

Elementary class solidarity impels the workers to send material assistance to their embattled brothers in a nearby shop, in an allied industry, or in another country. The socialists and trade unionists in Europe are poor. The American working class, enjoying a far higher standard of living, must support with every practical and material measure the struggles of their brothers in other lands. But no one can even dream that the American working class, itself not the ruling class but an exploited class, can provide the European workers with vast numbers of machines, raise their standard of living, send them security and well-being.

The workers in the United States can help the revival of the European socialist and labor movement but the chief instrument of such help is political and not material assistance. If the working class

challenges the imperialist plans of the American bourgeoisie, an impetus is given to the socialist movement everywhere. If it remains an appendage of American foreign policy, a weight will press on Europe which no material aid can lift. A correct policy on the Marshall Plan and "aid" to Europe cannot be crated and shipped but it is worth more than carloads of genuine beef (or horsemeat).

This discussion does not relate to material aid by the American working class to their European comrades. It does raise for discussion the relationship of American imperialism to European recovery; the connection between the recovery of Europe and the fight against Stalinism; and the attitude of socialists toward American imperialist strateg:

### European Reconstruction

The keystone of the question under discussion is the restoration of European industry; the re-establishment of its ties with the world market; the feeding and housing of millions of people; the elimination of inflation and unemployment; the abolition of economic crisis and the establishment of relative stability....the social recovery of a whole continent, the second greatest industrial workshop of the world.

This is the task, modestly termed "aid to Europe," which is so vast in its demands and implications that the American bourgeoisie, despite its control over the biggest pool of wealth, machinery, food money, in the world, is self-admittedly incapable of accomplishing it on its own. The ERP with all its billions upon billions is conceived by its proponents as only a gigantic pump-priming operation.

### U.S. World Master Plan

The basic strategic aim of the United States is to "stabilize" Europe as a subordinate and subjugated economic appendage of American imperialism, directed by an American dictator-coordinator. Europe (naturally in its own interests!) must not be permitted to interfere with the needs of American economy.

As the Harriman report puts it: "...the agencies which execute the program must adapt their operations from time to time to the condition of our markets and always have regard to the essential need for economic stability in the United States as the keystone to world recovery." Europe will be permitted to fill in the interstices of world trade, to be squeezed out in case of world depression. The subordinated condition of Europe provides a cushion for American capitalism.

Europe must remain on its knees. No other power must be permitted to dispose of its great industrial resources. Two world wars were fought to deny this privilege to Germany and if necessary a third will be fought to prevent Russia from replacing Germany. "If the countries of middle-Western and Mediterranean Europe sink under the burden of despair and become Communist...this transfer of Western Europe the second greatest industrial area in the world and of the essential regions which must inevitably follow such a lead would radically change the American position." So reads Harriman's report to Truman.

American imperialism--dictating to Europe what it must produce, how much and where it shall invest, how high a standard of living it shall allow its population, where it shall sell its products--is driven toward a world master plan by the very nature of modern class

society. So gigantic are the proportions of modern industry and so delicate are the threads which bind its various branches and centers together that no ruling class can feel secure without the total domination in one form or another of the economy of the whole world. This demands the elimination of all potential rivals by complete destruction or relegation to the status of subordinate satellite powers living off the bounty of the imperialist emperor. Imperialism drives toward totalitarianism...the "benevolent" imperialism of the United States as well as the "malicious" imperialism of Russia.

Ironically it is the conservative Stalinist bureaucracy reared on the utopian theory of socialism in one country and the narrow-minded American bourgeoisie which lived off the never realized fable of isolationism...these are the two antagonists driven almost contrary to their own desires and instincts by the inexorable force of modern economy, to a life and death struggle of world succession.

South America mirrors the fate of Europe under long-term American domination. The hegemony of the United States has left the former a continent of small backward countries divided among themselves, governed by semi-fascist dictators and generals without popular support, peopled by disease, and poverty-ridden servants of American monopolists and subject to devastating depressions. In South America we have restrained a backward continent from rising out of its backwardness. In Europe we aim to thrust an advanced industrial continent down into its backwardness.

#### The Compulsion Toward "Aid"

America is not compelled to grant "aid" to Europe (translation: to domina to Europe) merely by its antagonism with Stalinist Russia. "This problem (of Europe)", says Secretary of State Marshall, "would exist even though it were not complicated by the ideological struggles in Europe." An antagonism exists between the United States and Europe itself.

Nor is America compelled toward ERP by the pressure of the European proletariat except in a limited sense. The United States modifies its plans to gain popular support among the workers in certain countries by encouraging and relying upon the Social-Democracy. But, to sink into the phraseology of LABOR ACTION, this reliance upon reformist parties among the workers is truly one of the political "connotations" of the plan. It is a fleeting, subordinate, limited, adventitious aspect of American policy which can and will be discarded. The denotation of the plan, i.e., its essential nature, is imperialist and therefore reactionary through and through. Greece, Turkey, China; Darlan, Giraud, De Gaulle...these are the authentic and durable embodiment of American policy.

The closer to war and the greater the needs of war preparations, the less it will be possible for the United States to rely upon reformism and Social-Democracy. The United States is rich but not rich enough to buy off the working class of the whole world. The new Truman plan to "permit" (read: direct) the European nations in the American orbit to employ ERP funds for munitions must, if carried out, have political consequences. The only formula ever invented for war preparations is "Cannon, not butter." And this means Bonapartist dictatorship not social-democracy.

America is compelled to grant "aid" in the same way that capitalism is "compelled" toward imperialism. To inquire if Europe should reject or accept this aid is to ask an absurdity. The ERP and imperialist

dictation which it represents it not like a gift of bonbons, which one may accept or reject depending on how the ribbon-wrapping strikes one's fancy. Europe will either "reject" imperialist "aid" (reader will please translate for himself) by the socialist revolution or it will be "aided" by the United States or Russia, that is, dominated by and subordinated to imperialism, reduced to a near-colonial status.

For a different plan of aid, a plan purged of its imperialist "connotations", a different class would have to rule in the United States namely, the working class, a non-propertied, poor class which can aid the reconstruction of Europe only if it controls state power.

Goldman, Farrell and the LABOR ACTION editorial board have a plan of aid all their own.

### Aid à la Labor Action, etc.

When Goldman, Farrell, and the editorial board refer to "aid" they mean: a program for the stabilization and reconstruction of European industry. We are faced not with a tactical position on the Marshall Plan but a whole new program for defeating Stalinism by the capitalist reconstruction of industry. This program, despite the minor differences between them is the fundamental conception held in common by all three.

They repeat over and over again what they have in mind: "put the continent back on its feet"; economic revival"; "reconstruct ruined economies"; "economic recovery"; "rebuilding of ruined industries". The little terminological shift to the word "aid" only helps obscure what they really intend to "exact" from the existing government. Their policy would best be summarized as follows: "Against the imperialist connotations of the Marshall Plan. For the reconstruction of Europe by American capitalism."

But let us look at their program in full outline.

### Program of All Three

(of their program)

Point one: Depression and crisis strengthen Stalinism in Europe.

Labor Action: "on the other side of the Marshall Plan boundary looms the ever-menacing figure of Stalinist Russia, feeding on economic stagnation and hunger, ready to advance over prostrate nations."

Goldman: "It must be remembered that were we in a position to defeat the Marshall Plan and proceeded to do so, the real beneficiaries would be the Stalinists."

Farrell: "...if conditions further degenerate in Western Europe, only Stalinism will gain."

There is, let us grant an important element of truth in this promise but only an element. Just as in the absence of proletarian leadership capitalist crisis leads the petty bourgeois masses to fascism, so in the absence of revolutionary socialist leadership, capitalist decay leads large sections (not all) of the proletariat and other classes to Stalinism. But this correct idea is transformed into a totally different conception: that only Stalinism can grow in periods of economic crisis.

The growth of fascist influence could have been counteracted by a correct policy by the proletariat. The growth of Stalinism can be counteracted by a correct policy on the part of the anti-Stalinist sections of the working class. But what stands in the way of influencing Stalinist workers? Precisely the fact that the anti-Stalinists appear as the spokesmen and apologists for American imperialism which is justifiably distrusted and hated by millions who express their opposition to it by supporting Stalinism. The new program however teaches that we can combat Stalinism only with American "aid". In this way, the anti-Stalinists are further disoriented and the strengthened hold of Stalinism over masses of workers, far from being undermined is guaranteed.

Point two: From the fact that economic stagnation promotes the growth of Stalinism is deduced the urgency of "aid" to Europe (translate, please!)

Labor Action: "Economic revival is essential for the revival of Europe's socialist movement." and further, "Economic recovery is of the essence if Stalinism is to be defeated by the workingclass of Europe." (emphasis in original).

The error here is the converse of the one above. It implies that only the revolutionary socialist movement will be strengthened by the restoration of capitalist stability. But obviously the immediate gainer will be the bourgeoisie and American imperialism. Which gains most in the long run, the bourgeoisie or the socialist movement will depend upon the policies of the socialist movement. If the latter supports a "religion of Americanism" then the bourgeoisie will gain in the short run and with the inevitable explosion of the illusions of American-supported prosperity, Stalinism will be a thousand times strengthened in the long run. (Most important: a search for capitalist stability is offered here as a substitute for a program to defeat Stalinism.)

Point three: Economic recovery must come quickly; the socialist revolution is far off; we must have aid from capitalist America.

Labor Action: "...the urgency of aid exists now, while there is a capitalist and not a socialist government in Washington. We consequently favor exacting aid from this government for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Europe." (Emphasis in original)

Goldman: "We are not confronted by a situation where the alternative to the Marshall Plan is one for the reconstruction of Europe on a socialist basis. The alternative to the attempt to reconstruct Europe on a capitalist basis is to permit the industries of Europe to remain in ruins, to permit the people of Europe to remain hungry and thus to aid the Stalinists."

Farrell: "The capitalist reconstruction of Western Europe is far, far better than no reconstruction...The simple fact is that today only American wealth and power stands in the road of Stalinist expansion."

This, in sum, is a program for the struggle against Stalinism whose foundation is the capitalist recovery of Europe financed by American imperialism. Socialistic and laboristic twigs grafted on the capitalist stem identify the socialist outlook of the authors. Goldman and Farrell, carrying out the implications of their program almost to the end, conclude that we must not oppose the Marshall Plan. Farrell states bluntly that we must support it. Goldman "abstains" but would vote "Yes" if his

vote were decisive. This is only a slight difference in technique. There is a grim logic to this position...if the aid of the United States is decisive in warding off Stalinism then from this point of view it would truly be a catastrophe if the Marshall Plan failed to carry.

LABOR ACTION gags at putting the conclusion so brutally; but in shying away from the inescapable logic of its own position it falls into ludicrous contradictions. The board would oppose the Plan "on principle" to demonstrate a lack of confidence in the imperialist bourgeoisie. At the same time it voices confidence that a non-imperialist policy can be "extracted" from the bourgeoisie in whom it has no confidence. It votes "No" on the Plan but evades the very question which Goldman puts: how would you vote if your action were decisive? It opposes measures which are "solely" in the interests of imperialism. But the Marshall Plan by its reasoning cannot be "solely" in the interests of imperialism else how could it state that "the Marshall Plan embraces a measure of such aid" (that is, such aid as LABOR ACTION seeks)?

These contradictions do not result from a simple error in logic. They demonstrate that the editors do not have confidence in their own program. They cannot convince anyone of anything but can only give encouragement to the point of view expressed by Goldman and Farrell, whom, believe it or not, their statement is supposed to "answer."

#### Two Alternatives-Both False

The future of the working class in this new program is linked to the fate of capitalist prosperity at a moment when the whole capitalist world is in a state of chronic crisis and instability. To have confidence in their own outlook, the editors would have to invent what they cannot discover...the possibility of a viable capitalist recovery for Europe. But no one has enough faith to inspire such an invention. The board tells us: "Nor do we have the slightest confidence in the ability of this act to accomplish even what it claims it will accomplish. Thus we would wish to signify by our vote (No, on the Marshall Plan) no confidence in the government of the American capitalist class, no trust in its proposals, no faith in its ability to maintain peace or resurrect the Europe it helped destroy." (emphasis mine)

This is no longer a policy but a fit of political convulsions. Europe must be rebuilt otherwise Stalinism will conquer. And yet...capitalism cannot rebuild Europe. What follows? Only this! European recovery is impossible and the Stalinist victory inevitable. In a world of capitalist decay their hopes die as the prospects for capitalist recovery vanish.

The difference between Goldman and Farrell on the one side and LABOR ACTION on the other begins here. The former offer us one policy; LABOR ACTION offers at one and the same time, two mutually contradictory policies, both false.

The first policy goes as follows:

1) Economic recovery is of the essence if Stalinism is to be defeated.

2) Realistically, we cannot expect this recovery to be financed by a working class government in the United States.

3) Therefore we favor a recovery financed by the existing capitalist government.

The second policy goes like this:

- 1) Economic recovery is of the essence, etc.
- 2) We cannot expect a working class government, etc.
- 3) We have no confidence that the capitalist government can restore Europe.
- 4) Therefore, the economic recovery of Europe is impossible and the defeat of the proletariat by Stalinism is guaranteed.

The first policy leads toward critical support of the Marshall Plan and US imperialism. The second policy writes off the European working class in a fit of despair and defeatism.

#### The Common Theme

Both policies have this in common: they do not take the world as it is and seek to find those levers which can raise the level of working class consciousness. On the contrary, unable to find in life, as it really is, the possibilities for socialist revolution they depend upon the action of the ruling class to remake the world as they would prefer.

Capitalism is crisis, depression, recovery; war, preparations for war, and peace; unemployment and high employment....these are the objective facts of capitalist economy over which we do not have control. If prosperity strengthens reformist trends it does not mean that we base our policy on a "preference" for depression. If depression strengthens fascist or Stalinist trends it does not mean that we base our policy upon a "preference" for prosperity.

The task of revolutionaries in each period, on the basis of the given objective conditions, is to follow that policy which furthers the independent class ideology of the proletariat. The fundamental line of the "recoveryists" does not seek these slogans or policies which are especially adapted to a given period of crisis (or prosperity). They propose the period of recovery in and of itself as the policy.

#### Developments during Capitalist Crisis

The possible developments in store for Europe are not at all exhausted by the simple alternatives: capitalist recovery or Stalinist victory.

Stalinist seizure of power in Europe, ushering in World War III, would make the present discussion obsolete, or more precisely, raise it to the level of a discussion on our attitude toward such a war. These considerations aside, world economic crisis and depression, concurrent with extended European crisis and depression, would lead the American bourgeoisie to seek a solution for itself at the expense of Europe, which means the European bourgeoisie as well as the masses. As America squeezes its own allies and satellites (in their own interests, of course) the basis for an alliance between Stalinism and the Russian bureaucracy on the one hand and other groups, parties, classes, and governments would be established. Stalin would try to invent new devices and maneuvers to subordinate the proletariat to itself at a time when the workers are forced to fight in their own interests. The Renault strike which was an episode during the changing Stalinist line could under such conditions become part of a whole trend.....always dependent of



course upon the policy followed by the anti-Stalinist sections of the working class. Recovery or depression, the conflict between Stalinism and the working class exists as an objective fact and must be evidenced in differing forms under differing circumstances.

It may be argued that this or that suggested variant is not likely. But the living class struggle will certainly prove to be far more complex and rich in possibilities than the simplistic formula of the editorial board. If it is argued that in the event of depression it will prove impossible to win over the masses from Stalinism, then it can be argued with at least equal validity that in periods of prosperity and stability it is impossible to win the masses away from bourgeois democracy. If depression and discontent lead to Stalinism, recovery leads to the perpetuation of capitalism. All these arguments boil down to this: under no foreseeable circumstances is the socialist revolution a practical possibility. The advocates of capitalist recovery have an Aladdin's lamp whose power can summon the proletariat, but only in periods of prosperity. Thus far, however, the secret of its magic has not been revealed.

The formation of a Labor Party in the United States, most probable in the event of depression, challenging the American capitalist class, "the bourgeoisie of bourgeoisies", in its own stronghold could be a potent factor in encouraging anti-Stalinist revolutionary tendencies in Europe. But only to the extent that it does not defend but indicts the foreign policy of Wall Street. Apologetics for the Marshall Plan hinder just that development among the American workers which could have the most progressive effects in Europe.

### "Preference" for Recovery

Let us assume that the economic recovery of Europe, meager and transient as it must prove to be, would offer a "preferable" set of circumstances for the development of revolutionary class political tendencies among the workers. This statement of objective fact, however, is transformed into a political program by Goldman, Farrell, and the editorial board. To take the possibility of recovery into account, to estimate its effects on the working class movement in formulating a program...that is one thing. To make the stabilization of capitalist economy your very program...that is quite another thing. It is to adopt a pro-capitalist, Social-Democratic policy.

### Recovery in Europe before World War II

When Europe was plunged into economic crisis after the first World War, the United States in its plans to stimulate European recovery and stability followed the same strategic objectives as today. Trotsky said in 1924, "...Europe will be permitted to rise again but within limits set in advance, with certain restricted sections of the world market allotted to it. American capitalism...is preparing and is ready to issue instructions to European banks and trusts, to the European bourgeoisie as a whole....This is its aim. It will slice up the markets it will regulate the activity of the European financiers and industrialists. If we wish to give a clear and precise answer to the question of what American imperialism wants, we must say, it wants to put capitalist Europe on nations." (FI, July 1945)

The European Social-Democracy, dependent upon capitalist prosperity, saw in the financial aid of the United States a means of combatting the two "extremes": Bolshevism and rightist reaction. (Bol-

shevism, of course, meant genuine communism). The Social Democrats, said Trotsky, "...instill in the working masses the religion of Americanism....they are making a new political religion out of Americanism and out of the role of American capitalism in Europe. They are teaching or trying to teach the toiling masses that Europe cannot maintain herself without the pacifying role of American capitalism and its loans."

Up to the very end, in the period before the victory of Hitler, the German social-Democrats sought salvation from the same Messiah. The capitalist crisis was driving the masses toward fascism or communism. Only economic recovery, in the opinion of the Social-Democrats, could permit the resolidification of bourgeois democracy by minimizing the social conflicts. Their program was the restoration of capitalist stability with the aid of the United States. To this day they lament that if only the concessions granted to Hitler by the Allies had been given to them, democracy would have been saved, world war averted, etc. (See appendix)

From hopes in capitalist prosperity to the rising mass influence of fascism- from hopes in capitalist prosperity via the Marshall Plan to the rising mass influence of Stalinism: we are being asked to resurrect a very old program.

### Recovery Can Help....If...

An economic boom in Germany may have slowed down the rise of Nazism and provided revolutionaries with additional time for the propagation of their program and for the development of a genuine class leadership for the workers. To make "preference" for a boom the policy of the working class, however, was to ensure not the development of that leadership but its disintegration; it was to commit Social-Democratic suicide.

We prefer peace to the immediate outbreak of war. A period of peace would provide a pause during which the proletariat might be supplied with a revolutionary leadership or one which tends in that direction.

To make this "preference" the basis of our policy, a la Marshall Plan, we would have to argue somewhat as follows: The proletariat is not ready to prevent war by the socialist revolution; therefore we favor "exacting" a peace policy from the existing government; but the peace policy of the capitalist government has imperialist "connotations" therefore we fight for a peace policy from the existing government devoid of its imperialism.

From here to disarmament; the United Nations; proposed agreements with Russia to ensure justice and peace for all....the whole baggage of all the do-gooders of the world. Such a policy would utilize the period of peace not to dissipate the pro-bourgeois illusions of the people but to strengthen them and consequently to ensure the maximum support to the bourgeoisie in the event of war.

A period of bourgeois democracy gives time to prepare the struggle to defeat fascism only if the workers are taught to rely upon their own class strength and to stand in opposition to the bourgeois state. If not, as the history of the Social-Democracy shows, it becomes a period for the preparation of a catastrophic defeat. A period of peace provides time for the struggle against war only if the workers are taught that war can be prevented only by the establishment of a workers' government. If not it becomes a period for mobilizing the workers behind

the coming war by slogans of democratizing imperialism.

A period of economic recovery in Europe (and in fact just such a period exists in actuality) will give time for the preparation of the struggle against Stalinism and reaction only if the European workers are taught the need for independence from all imperialism; only if they are taught to see through the fraudulent claims of American "aid." If not the period of recovery becomes a period in which the rival imperialist mobilize the working class for imperialism and its war.

### Social-Democracy and Stalinism

The chief task of revolutionists in Western Europe is to expose the imperialist nature of the Marshall Plan precisely because we address ourselves first and foremost to the Social-Democratic workers and not to the Stalinists. (The "recoveryists" are welcome to seize upon this statement in any manner). But this alone naturally is not sufficient. Without a correct orientation toward Social-Democracy, they (the revolutionists) will, like the parties of the 4th, only succeed in helping Stalinism. The key to influence over the Stalinist-led masses is influence over the Social Democratic workers, not vice-versa. The question can be posed as follows:

Shall the workers now drawn to Social-Democracy become the victims of Stalinist ideology through the inevitable disillusionment with "American" prosperity...or shall they, by a correct political attitude toward the American imperialism and its Plans, serve as a battering ram for shattering Stalinist influence over the masses? From illusions about the Marshall Plan to Stalinist influence over the Social-Democratic masses...or, from a correct political line on the Marshall Plan to influence over the Stalinist masses via the Social-Democratic workers? The policy of the "recoveryists" leads to the first of these two alternatives.

Under certain circumstances, capitalist recovery, making possible the granting of concessions by the bourgeoisie to the workers, can stimulate the growth of Social-Democracy. The latter arises today not primarily as against the revolutionary socialist, Leninist movement which is pitifully impotent but as against Stalinist reaction. From the point of view of American imperialism this difference is not too important but from the standpoint of revolutionary socialism there is an enormous importance.

Stalinism appears to the best elements among the Social-Democratic workers as the subjection of the working class to the Russian bureaucracy and the extinction not only of bourgeois democracy but of all elements of proletarian democracy. As against subjugation to Russian imperialism they choose an alliance with the United States. The Marshall Plan keeps anti-Stalinism within the orbit of American Imperialism. This choice, however, is made from the standpoint of the most elementary interests of the working class: the maintenance of its standard of living, the defense of its organizations. What would simply be "opportunistic" and reactionary as opposed to the socialist revolution results from fundamentally progressive aims which contain in embryo the best existing possibilities for the evolution of a genuine class program.

But for this possibility to be realized the Social-Democratic workers must be separated from American imperialism and the "religion of Americanism" abandoned. Without this it is impossible to dent the

the Stalinist wall. With it, the Social-Democratic masses can become a pole of attraction for Stalinist workers. The very fact that economic recovery cannot be sustained in Europe means that a conflict between the Social-Democratic-minded workers and American imperialism is inevitable. But will this conflict strengthen Stalinism or weaken it? The first must happen if the revolutionary socialists themselves sink into Social-Democratic ideology and become the victims of the pro-American orientation. And this is precisely what the "recoveryists" do.

To make the salvation of the European revolution depend upon American dollars is to conceive of the American bourgeoisie as the decisive social force in combating Stalinism. It is a new "religion of Americanism", the Siamese twin of the religion of Stalinism, for neither can live separately...both must die together. It leads the proletariat to become the critical, democratic, oppositionist, even if unwilling, adjunct of the capitalist class and as such cannot influence the followers of Stalinism. Quite the contrary. Stalinism truly appears, as a consequence, as the only alternative to "Americanism"; the proletariat remains within the closed circle of imperialist ideology; the perpetuation of Stalinist mass influence is guaranteed.

#### "Utilizing" Aid

As though what is at stake is some simple tactical turn and not a whole program for the struggle against Stalinism, the editorial board argues; the European labor movement must "make use of the contradiction between American imperialism and Russian imperialism which compels the former to ship aid to Europe." And it states, "we advocate the full utilization by the European people of whatever economic aid is given to them regardless of the purposes behind that aid."

This evades the whole point. Is there a political tendency that maintains that the European workers should "refuse to accept" what comes from America? (Whatever that means! How do the workers "accept" and how do they "reject"? Aid goes not to the European people but to the bourgeois governments under fixed conditions.) Maybe the Cannenites or the Stalinists; but if so, LABOR ACTION has at no time given us the details. Yes, it would be idiotic for the people to turn up their nose at a earload of potatoes because it bears an imperialist label. But the real question is: Shall the workers of Europe favor or oppose the participation of their country in the Marshall Plan? Shall they support the fixing of their respective nations in the American orbit. No answer in the LABOR ACTION statement.

It is not a question of whether to utilize the contradictions between the imperialists but of (1) How to utilize them, and (2) How to prevent the indignation of the masses against each of the imperialist from leading to support of the other.

#### Three Possibilities

The contradictions among the classes and governments can take the following forms:

(1) If the workers of Europe are rallied for the support of the Marshall Plan and similar ventures of American imperialism, then the American bourgeoisie has succeeded in utilizing the antagonism between the proletariat and the peoples of Europe on the one side and Russian imperialism on the other to advance the interests of Wall Street

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The contradictions among the classes and governments can take the following forms:

(1) If the workers of Europe are rallied for the support of the Marshall Plan and similar ventures of American imperialism, then the American bourgeoisie has succeeded in utilizing the antagonism between the proletariat and the peoples of Europe on the one side and Russian imperialism on the other to advance the interests of Wall Street

(2) If the workers of Europe are led by the Communist Parties to oppose the Marshall Plan by simply sabotaging its operation. If that becomes the guiding line for the masses, then Stalinism has succeeded in utilizing the antagonisms between the peoples and US imperialism.

(3) If the workers of Europe, in particular the Social-Democratic workers, remain in political opposition to the Marshall Plan and hence oppose the participation of their nation in the American orbit and at the same time carry on their struggle under the economic and social conditions established by the Plan to do everything possible and necessary to achieve an improvement in their living standards and political rights and to fight against preparations for war, then and only then do the workers utilize the contradictions between the rival imperialists.

If the European workers do not follow this third road and if they are not encouraged to do so by the most powerful working class in the world, the American working class, then they and not only they are doomed to sacrifice themselves once again as tools of imperialism in a Third World War. Support of the Marshall Plan in any of its varieties does not check this terrible eventuality but accelerates it.

#### Appendix

Extracts from speech by Rudolph Breitscheid, leader of the German Social Democracy and delegate at the 1931 Congress of the (Second) Labor and Socialist International:

"...the other classes (in addition to the workers) also are beginning to perceive and realize the impossibility, the futility of the capitalist order of industry. This very fact to some extent explains the issue of the elections to the Reichstag in September of last year and the rise of a fantastic, utopian party devoid of any program and relying on violence and dictatorship (the Nazis)....And we see further how this dire economic stress is strengthening extremism on the Left, we see how the Communist slogans are exercising their magnetism among those who perhaps for years past have gone without work and food.... The working class stands at the sack bed of capitalism not only as the heir but also as the doctor in the conviction that a collapse of capitalist social economy in the form one now imagines from time to time would in the first place be the collapse of the German workingclass and of the working class generally. We turn to the financiers of the world not in order to uphold capitalism, we turn to them at this moment for the sake of the German workers....In order to maintain these Socialist facts and these seeds of communal economy within capitalism, our interest does not lie in the break-up of German social economy, and therefore we have the right to call upon those who have the possibility of upholding the workingclass in Germany together with the economic system. Unfortunately, these are the capitalists. Unfortunately, with the best will possible, the International with all the moral support which it can grant us is not rich enough to grant us the necessary material support. Accordingly, we are appealing to the financial powers of the world."

NOTE FOR THE BULLETIN

By Ben Hall

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The April 24 issue of the Bulletin contains an article by me on "UAW Policy". I did not submit this article for the discussion Bulletin but as a letter to the Political Committee. I have no objections at all to its publications but because the same issue of the Bulletin contains an article on the same subject from San Francisco it appears as though mine may have been written as a reply to theirs. This is not the case at all. I criticized what was supposed to be a turn in our future UAW work aimed at the building of independent caucuses of militants. They criticized the reputed inconsistencies of our past work and our line on the Taft-Hartby law, incorrectly in my opinion.

TOWARD A CLEAN BANNER

By Ben Lawton

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The enormous growth of the Stalinist parties in all key sections of Europe and in colonial countries where revolutionary developments are maturing poses the problem of combatting and defeating the Stalinist force within the labor movement. Here in the United States where the overwhelming bulk of the workers remain subjectively pro-capitalist, the Stalinists operate as a potent threat in the trade unions and in all other movements of the American workers. It is noteworthy that the virility of the Stalinist force stands in sharp contrast to what has been taught us over the years by our leaders. For example, in 1935, Shachtman wrote:

"Meanwhile, in its work of self-liquidation, we cannot but wish the Stalinists god-speed." (The NI, March 1935 p. 37)

Time and again, we were told that the demise of the Stalinist enemy was but around the corner. Ah, how simple life would be if the Stalinist movements would simply disappear and leave the path clear for a revolutionary development. Unfortunately, life shows the Stalinist "corpse" always very much alive and diverting the revolutionary developments among the workers into reactionary channels. Further, Stalinism reveals itself to be a dynamic, expanding force; and left free to peacefully advance its views, and those workers who organize to combat Stalinism are not ignored by the latter. Where possible they are shot, imprisoned, tortured, framed up and isolated by the international Stalinist gangster machine.

Isn't it significant that the Trotsky movement has been in existence on the international scene for 20 years now and yet nowhere has it been able to crack the power of Stalinism? This should be cause for serious thinking. The problem demands a solution and if we fail to find it and act upon it, we will probably pay with our lives. As a necessary first step we must learn to identify Stalinist ideology and expose it wherever it appears. We ourselves must be free from any attachments to Stalinism in any form; obviously, if we are tarred with the Stalinist brush then we cannot conduct any real battle against the Stalinist gangs.

Do we stand on any position which ties up in any way to counter-revolutionary Stalinism? As a contribution to an answer of this question I wish to present some facts for consideration.

Our leaders avow that the revolutionary program as against the Stalinist line was represented and elaborated by Trotsky:

"In the struggle that Trotsky waged against the gravedigger of the revolution, Stalin, until a Stalinist assassin struck him down at his work table, the revolutionary program was pitted against a counter-revolutionary distortion of that program." (LA. August 19, 1946)

This is not merely a historical evaluation restricted to academic significance. Lest anyone believe that the role of Trotsky in the Stalin development is one question and the everyday work of our party another, we are told:



"The essence of Trotskyism, its real heritage, is to be found only in our party." (The NI, Sept. 1946 p.204)

What is this heritage of Trotsky which is being given as our banner and which we are supposed to be applying?

As we all know, when Stalin was appointed to the post of General Secretary, he managed to manipulate that position to build up a bureaucratic machine tied to him through the use of his appointive power. We also know that in the latter stages of his life, while sick, Lenin began a fight against Stalin and sought to remove him from power. Along these lines, Lenin wrote an unusual letter on Dec. 25, 1922 evaluating the main figures in the party leadership and on Jan 4 1923 added a postscript advocating the removal of Stalin from his post. Because of the content of this letter and due to the fact that this was Lenin's last advice to the Party, it came to be designated as his Will or Testament.

This document as Trotsky says was kept under lock and key and hidden from the workers by the Stalin leadership. The insistence of Krupskaya, Lenin's widow, that the document be published as Lenin intended it for the party members, proved of no avail. Obviously, had Lenin's testament been published in those years when Trotsky was still the most eminent figure in the party and when Stalin was but a relative unknown figure, Stalin would have been shaken from power. Those workers struggling against the bureaucratic development would have a powerful weapon to destroy the prestige and authority of the Stalin leadership.

While in Russia, Max Eastman mixed with the party leaders and learned of the existence of the Testament which he published when the writer got out of Russia in 1925. He wrote a book called "Since Lenin Died" and acquainted the workers with the frameup campaign of the Stalin clique for consolidating their stolen power. By publicizing these facts Eastman performed a distinct service to the international proletariat at that time. Eastman's disclosures raised a storm of questions and naturally the prestige and authority of the Stalin clique was endangered. We know that the frame-up of the troika, composed of Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev was directed at Trotsky. Had Eastman's story been authenticated at that time, the Stalin leadership would have come into sharp conflict with the Communist minded workers who would have been aroused into struggle to remove the Stalin apparatus.

Instead of the necessary substantiation, Trotsky wrote a vicious attack against Eastman and stated among other things:

"All talk with regard to a concealed or mutilated 'will' is nothing but a despicable lie, directed against the real will of Comrade Lenin, and against the interests of the Party created by him." (Imprecorr, Sept 3, 1925, p.1004)

Trotsky in this statement gave Stalin's Central Committee a clean bill of health and warned the workers against believing otherwise. Eastman was blacklisted by Communist workers and his work became known as "Since Eastman Lied."

A Stalin disavowal of the facts publicized by Eastman could not have had a fraction of the importance of a disavowal by Trotsky nor could it have borne the weight of authority as the facts were unfavorable to Stalin personally, politically and organizationally.

Did Trotsky learn of the existence of Lenin's Testament only in later years? No, Trotsky himself testified that he learned of the Testament as early as May 1924:

"The first official reading of the testament...occurred not at a session of the Central Committee...but in the council of seniors of the thirteenth party congress on May 22, 1924...It was here that the oppositional members of the Central Committee first learned about the testament, I AMONG THEM." (J. Trotsky, the Suppressed Testament of Lenin, pp11-12 My capitals -BL)

If it was not ignorance of the facts that prompted Trotsky to make his statement on Eastman what did? Is it that Trotsky was bound by "discipline" and had to carry out a Stalin-made decision. Let every sincere comrade ask himself: "If the organization I am in prepares a crime against the working class, would party discipline excuse active assistance in perpetrating that crime against the masses?" As a matter of fact, Trotsky once noted the revolutionary attitude to party "discipline" as follows:

"...even in the Bolshevik Party, with its very severe discipline, Lenin first emphasized that the essence is more important than the form; that the ideas are more important than the discipline; that if it is a question of fundamental importance, we can break the vows of discipline without betraying our ideas." (The Case of Leon Trotsky, pp422-423)

The point is that Trotsky had formed a bloc with Lenin to fight Stalin ( See "My Life" 479-480..also read p485-486) and Trotsky agreed to carry out this line as Lenin's deputy in the party. In his statement on Eastman, Trotsky did not act on the basis of discipline to Lenin's line but on the basis of Stalin's line.

Perhaps one might argue that the question of the suppression of Lenin's Testament and of publicly denying the bureaucratic machinations of the Stalin clique, was an unimportant "incident" in the total development. But Trotsky himself has insisted that "it is a crime to keep it hidden from the party and from the working class." (LT-NI Nov. 1934 p 125 Letter to Muralov). Note carefully that Trotsky characterizes the act as a crime, that means the participants were criminals unless words have lost their meaning. It is a long ways from incident to crime. Incidentally from the same letter:

"In any case, my then statement on Eastman can be understood only as an integral part of our then line toward conciliation and peace-making." Note the contradiction!

We are told that the Trotsky heritage is to be found only in our party. The facts around the suppression of Lenin's Testament shows that Trotsky assisted Stalin in concealing these vital document from the worker. If the facts cited above are correct, then our heritage is collaboration with Stalinism. And if this heritage lives today in our party then we are obviously not on the road towards the building of a revolutionary party.

In this regard I wish to call attention to the following statement made by a leading member of our party:

"Historical Bolshevism has never been a closed book in our party." (Ernest Erber, N.I. Jan 1947 p. 20.

As the question is admittedly open, it is the elementary duty of the Party to examine the facts which I have shown above.

STATEMENT ON THE ITALIAN ELECTIONS

By the Political Committee

\* \* \*

In dealing with the elections in Italy LABOR ACTION analysed them from the point of view of the party's position on the reformist labor movement in conflict with Stalinism; specifically on the need of reformism for a bourgeois democratic arena and on the totalitarian nature of Stalinist power. Our analysis implied support for the Sarragat Socialist party, a typical Social Democratic organization, though we failed to state so specifically. This was an error and resulted from the failure of the PC to consider the matter in sufficient time to permit such a line to be taken.

The vote of two million obtained by the Sarragat Socialist ticket is the most favorable aspect of the elections. It further underscores the correctness of our position that the future of revolutionary Marxism lies in the Fourth Internationalist groups entering the reformist parties, which still contain large numbers of anti-Stalinist workers and, in the case of Sarragat, demonstrates its ability to attract such workers from the Stalinist orbit. The quarter million votes which Sarragat received in Milan, the old stronghold of Italian Communism and since the liberation the stronghold of Stalinism, is an indication that the mass of workers who veer away from Stalinism do not seek out tiny, unfamiliar propaganda groups but tend to oscillate between the mass parties. Our best opportunity of influencing such workers is from within the reformist organization.

The Sarragat party is pro-American in its foreign policy and favors support to the Marshall Plan, as do all European Social Democratic Parties outside the Russian sphere. However, it is incorrect to equate the pro-American role of a party like Sarragat to the pro-Russian role of Stalinism and state that we can vote for neither. In the absence of a revolutionary party, we generally support the reformists against the Stalinists. This was above all necessary under the specific circumstances of the Italian situation where the emergence of the Sarragat party signified the re-establishment of a labor movement free from Stalinist control for the first time since the liberation. In the absence of the Sarragat party, the Italian masses would have been confronted with a choice between the Christian Democrats, the outright spokesmen of the State Department and the political arm of the Vatican, on the one side, and Stalinism on the other. The pro-American policy of Sarragat is to be condemned and fought, but cannot be made the basis of ignoring the working class character of the Party, as is done by identifying it with the Christian Democrats.

The vote cast for Sarragat in the northern industrial cities indicates that millions of workers who voted for the CP-Nenni ticket in 1946 refused to follow the Stalinist line in 1948., not because they were pro-American imperialism-since in this case they would have voted for the Christian Democrats-but because they remain loyal to the Socialist goal and their own class organizations. This is one of the most encouraging evidences that the hold of Stalinism over the workers in Europe can be broken. However, since reformism cannot supply an answer to the problems of these workers, it cannot prove a lasting alternative. The desires of class conscious, anti-Stalinist workers cannot but clash with the policies of the Sarragat leadership and will produce left wing groupings which should prove the most fertile soil for our revolutionary Marxist program.

COMMENT ON CZECHOSLOVAKIA

By William Barton

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Recent LABOR ACTION discussions of the Stalinist coup in Czechoslovakia have been marked by a tone and an emphasis that can spread serious confusion among readers. The impression is given, though this will probably be denied by all writers of said articles, that last month's Czech events in some manner represented a coming to power of the Stalinists in opposition to their former duped capitalist allies, using the misled working class as their instrument. For some strange reasons, the Russian role is particularly deemphasized. Possibly if more attention had been given to Czechoslovakia earlier, the published accounts would not have been so completely inadequate and unclear in their implications.

Shortly after the war, the Workers Party postulated the possibility of the Stalinists taking power in a capitalist state without the direct intervention of the power of the Russian bureaucratic-collectivist machine. The decision was that as yet there was no conclusive evidence either way, so it must remain a theoretical question. Nothing definite in the way of evidence has yet been presented. Coming Italian events may give us a better idea. The Czech coup changes no major concept, and I had certainly hoped that this would be somewhere stated.

The Stalinists did not take power—they already had it since the summer of 1945. What they did was consolidate their rule against their existent rivals in the state apparatus and their possible popular opposition from other sources. The previous regime was that of a bureaucratic-collectivist state operating as a prize colony of Russia. Does anybody dispute that? (except the theoreticians of the SWP and their foreign colleagues, of course) Benes, Masaryk, the leaders of the Czech Socialist Party with whom they were ideologically associated, and just about every other official political leader of other parties opposed neither the existing social set-up nor the subservience to Moscow. They and those they represented were an integral part of the lenient bureaucracy that ran economic and political affairs. In what respect did they symbolize any bourgeois opposition? Only in the sense that being somewhat opposed to the Stalinists, who were the most solid part of the bureaucracy, they provided a haven for those with complete bourgeois notions and, in their slight disagreement with the Stalinists on questions like further nationalization and attitude toward the West, they furnished an outlet for bourgeois resentment. Benes and Masaryk can be compared to Bukharin and Rykov and the right wing opposition of the Bolshevik Party in the still extant Russian Workers State—as symbols of capitalist tendencies within the dominant group. In both cases, the masters of the apparatus booted out or subjugated their rival accomplices, with the added important feature that Gottwald had the advantage of holding the pipe line to the directors of the motherland in the Kremlin.

There is not enough comprehensive material on how the original Stalinist dominated bureaucratic-collectivist Czech regime was set-up, but enough is known to describe the pattern. The Stalinist importance in the resistance movement was significant, but should not be over-emphasized. For the actual governing regime was set-up in Eastern Slovakia with the early entrance of Russian troops, through the open

collaboration of Stalin and Benes and the acquiescence of Roosevelt and Churchill. The Alsops have given a slight account of the process in a recent syndicated column. The Stalinists and their avowed stooges like Social-Democrat Fierlinger immediately got the decisive posts. The American army in part of Western Bohemia and the Sudetenland helped this process by giving its prestige and backing to the government. The nationalization of industries, begun by the resistance movements determination to expropriate collaborators and the governments seizure of German holdings, became legitimatised and extended by the now well-organized and consolidated government's further decrees, sometimes with compensation for former owners, often with little or none. Remembering that under a dominantly nationalized economy the masters of the society are those in control of the state organization, the Stalinists became at the beginning the top group, the other party leaders subordinate members of the ruling apparatus.

Czechoslovakia was unlike the rest of Eastern Europe. It had a tradition of industrialization, parliamentarianism, bourgeois democracy, and some economic well-being. Many political leaders of the former liberal capitalist regime were neither compromised by collaboration with the Nazis nor associated with reactionary landholders. They also had a long record of pro-Russian foreign orientation. They and the Social Democrats were readily acceptable to the Stalinists, especially since denying them representation would produce a then unnecessary and dangerous internal strife. Benes, Masaryk, et al were on their part just as willing to serve the new state and economic order as the old. Their only request was a parliamentary regime, the right to a certain amount of independence, and a healthy amount of civil rights. Because of the history of the country, its lack of much appreciable lasting material damage during the war, the uncrushed independence of the resistance fighters, and the entire conjuncture of geographic and international political events, this could be permitted. In addition, labor unions, despite Stalinist domination were allowed some internal democracy and independence of the state, and factory organizations some voice in production affairs (probably about as extensive as the labor-management committees in the US during the war). These were essentially absent in the rest of Eastern Europe because few of the necessary conditions for their sufference were present. In addition, the Stalinist organization had little of a mass base in the others, with the possible exception of Yugoslavia. In the past two years, the Czech people have been no better off economically than most of Western Europe, but there has been little of the serious economic plight that compel more resistance and yet more oppression in its neighbors behind the iron curtain.

There had been little report of any groundswell of opposition to the prevailing system from the right (demanding some bourgeois restoration) or the genuine left (demanding greater democracy in economic life, increased output of consumers goods, end of colonial status, return of expelled minorities, etc.) Possible differences were first revealed when Masaryk went to Paris as "observer" at the Marshall Plan conference and was ordered home by the Kremlin. Little was said on the subject thereafter, but reporters believed that resentment against the exclusive Russian orientation grew. The economic situation showed signes of worsening. Apparently the harvest was below expectations. American help was desired. A possible slight turnaway from the Stalinists, who by their combination of apparatus manipulation and demagogic appeal had been given the largest single vote at the 1946 elections (though still a minority), was evident. They had lost ground in a

recent vote in Slovakia. The Social-Democratic Party Convention had ousted the leadership of Stalinist frontman, Fierlinger, and given the leadership to the group headed by Laushman, whose politics are not clearly evident but who was called by one reporter the "Czech Aneurin Bevin," or a right-center anti-Stalinist Social Democrat. It is likely that the emphasis on some rapprochement with America played an important part in the vote.

The entire past six months have seen an attempt by all the subject Stalinist parties to consolidate themselves in their controlled areas and upset those in which they are the outs--all with the purpose of knocking holes in the Marshall Plan. Czechoslovakia remained the one possible danger in their orbit (Finland has not been included in any of this discussion. It is an exceptional case of a country until now an affiliate, not a member of the Russian sphere). They therefore began to squeeze their stranglehold on the state apparatus. They feared a slight set-back in the coming national election--a setback that would not alter the existing internal set-up, but might imply a move toward friendship with America and some participation in the Marshall Plan.

The exact chronology of last month is still unclear. Russian Vice-Commissar of Foreign Affairs Zorin probably came to Prague with some definite orders for his underlings. Some observers believe the Czech Stalinists did not prepare their coup for the time it did occur. Some of their "opposition" may have precipitated it by their protest against the Stalinist's move to acquire greater control of the police. These may have believed that this feeble gesture would modify growing developments. Nevertheless, this furnished the cue--the result is known.

The one thing that upsets many people is the use of the working-class organizations, supposedly armed, as a means for assuring the success of the coup. Opposing the Stalinists therefore seems like a new type of policy in which revolutionaries are asked to support hostile class elements against the independently acting mobilized working class. First of all, there is nothing new in opposing even a majority of the working class when it is wrong, and sometimes being associated with unfortunate elements in that process. It is well to recall that the British working class was apparently strongly pro-war in the thirties against the ruling capitalist regime of Chamberlain. Our anti-war allies of those days were a varied group, including a motley crew of pacifists, religious oppositionists, and appeasers. We always sought our political independence from them, but there is no doubt that if a mass anti-war movement had existed in Britain in 1937, we would have found ourselves temporarily in the same camp, we would have found ourselves temporarily in the same camp. An unfortunate complication, but it did not change our line.

As for Czechoslovakia, we still have few details of the workers' actions. We don't know which workers were armed, how they were organized, what methods were used to acquire compliance, what the action committees were and are. Let's assume that large numbers of workers did join in voluntarily and enthusiastically. The fact remains that they were not participating in any revolution nor even in a serious change of social structure. We should leave overemphasis on the increased nationalization to the SWP. They were part of a movement organized by the masters of state power against a feeble opposition. That is essentially it. I am unconvinced that the majority of workers were overjoyful about participating in such a movement.

Why did so many workers then follow the Stalinist lead? Despite their two years of rule, they still had some prestige. Despite the difficulties growing more serious, the economic situation was not in a shattering crisis phase (as is probably true in Poland). They were still the heroes of the Munich days and the resistance. And, what is most important, they controlled all apparatus, including the trade union. Always watching the worker demonstrators was the controlled police, both open and secret. The men of the apparatus handed out the guns and ammunition and undoubtedly were in military command at all times (assuming that there was no careful selection of who got arms). The controlled jobs from both ends and would be able to arrest opponents tomorrow. If there had been a meaningful call to resist by other worker organizations, some might have responded. As it was, what was the point of not marching down the street with a rifle. With the armed strength of the state on one's side there is little chance of getting hurt. And who knows, there may always be tomorrow. This paralysis pervaded the top-working class non-Stalinists too, as revealed by Laushman's inclusion in the government as Vice-Premier after he had been booted out by Stalinist Pierlinger as Social-Democratic Party Secretary. The coup no more represented the armed self-mobilized working class than a conscript army of working class composition.

A blow has been struck at the one place where democracy and working class independence existed in Eastern Europe. That can not be denied. But, there must be plenty of life left in the historically virile Czech working class. Stalinist Russia may have bit off another hot potato. The economic situation will get no better. The totalitarian state will become completely unmasked to this freedom loving people. There is nothing to gain by being Polish about struggle against totalitarian rule, even in the still limited form of Czechoslovakia today, but there is equally no justification for panic. I have seen too many German soldiers who admit having been wounded by underground fighters to fear that terror will so completely stifle opposition. Much will be decided by world-wide events, but there is little doubt in this far-away observer that the Czech people, led by its proletariat, thoroughly trained in underground techniques, will take their place with their Polish brothers in providing another Achilles heel of Stalinist expansion. When that comes, they will not turn to the former-capitalist turned Stalinist-collaborators. They will seek new parties and new leadership, which can only be provided by the revolutionary socialists.

April 2, 1948  
Oakland, California

1833



IN REPLY TO GERMAIN

NOTE

The entire question of the attitude of the Workers Party to the EPC and all related political questions will be discussed at the forthcoming Plenum of the National Committee (July 4, 1948). All decisions of this Plenum will be communicated to the membership by the usual channels and if the committee thinks it necessary they will assign someone to write a more detailed reply to the Germain letter, the EPC, etc. than is contained in the short article by comrade Henry Judd that is printed below.

IN REPLY TO GERMAIN

by Henry Judd

It is to be regretted that so much time has elapsed before our reply to the "Open Letter to the NC and All the Members of the Workers Party", by E. Germain, published in full in Vol. III, No. 1, (March 5, 1948) of the Workers Party. We do not wish to minimize this lapse on our part, but it has not been entirely without some compensation inasmuch as a whole series of events (Czechoslovakia, Italian elections, foundation of the RDR in France, Wallace Party in American, EPC in Europe, etc.) have, meanwhile, permitted each comrade who read and studied Germain's letter to pass that final and decisive judgment of all upon its merits, namely, the test of time and events, as well as his own political knowledge and understanding. In a period of slightly over one half year since Germain wrote his extensive apologia pm behalf of the I.S. (Oct. 10, 1947), our charge that the leadership of the International is politically bankrupt and so completely disoriented that it cannot measure up to any event, small or large, let alone grasp its significance, has been tested again and again. Unfortunately, our judgment has been proven to a degree none of us could have foreseen or even desired.

These new failures are but continuations of the bankrupt past and only fundamentally underscore this past, which Germain hypocritically and so dishonestly defends in his letter. It is not necessary for us to take up and challenge each detail of the lengthy case he builds up. We reject the document as politically wrong on each important issue it deals with. Readily accessible publications of the Workers Party (LABOR ACTION, The New International and our bulletins) have already, in essence, replied to the various problems raised by Germain - Stalinism, the "National Question" in Poland, and the problem of WP-GWP unification. We shall not repeat any of this material here. Instead, we shall limit ourselves in the barest and tersest possible form, to testing Germain's documents against the actuality and reality of events - familiar to all of us - since the period when it was written. At this point, nothing more seems necessary to us.

I.

Germain on the "National Question" and the Occupied Countries:

"With a class logic that you do not seem to understand - comrades of the National Committee of the WP who, like the Stalinists spread the illusion of the 'destruction' of the bourgeoisie in the countries 'behind the Iron Curtain' - the retreat of the working class augmented the confidence, appetite and audacity of the bourgeoisie. The latter who, in 1944, had only hoped for a 'sincere' collaboration with the Soviet bureaucracy even if it were only to maintain partially its tottering class domination, is now patiently regrouping its forces to attack, at the opportune moment, the Stalinist regimes, and to become once more masters of their own fate. The bourgeoisie of these countries know very well that they cannot attain this goal without the direct military aid of American imperialism. That is why its politics consist of this: twist and turn, gain time, make every possible concession, resist bitterly any Stalinist interference with that holy of holies, private property and meanwhile prepare morally, politically and militarily for the return to the 'normal' conditions of the pre-war period." (W.P. Bulletin, Vol. III

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Precisely as has occurred in Czechoslovakia, Poland, Rumania, etc. Comrade Germain? In conformity with the completion of nationalization in Bulgaria, Jugoslavia, Czechoslovakia etc., Comrade Germain? In accord with the end of Mikolajczyk, Petkov, Benes et al?

"That is why the only political move that they (the working class) dare make is from Stalinism to the Social Democracy; no further than that!" (ibid, page 13)

This, with the liquidation - outright or in effect - of the Social Democratic parties in Poland, Rumania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia etc., etc.!

"With incomparable facility, Erber constructs his entire argument on the hypothesis that the Polish state has expropriated large sections of the Polish bourgeoisie. Where did he discover this? We defy him to cite a single serious economic source to prove this thesis, apart from the articles of bourgeois journalists ignorant on the subject of "nationalizations". (ibid, Page 23)

"In Poland (6 months ago), the state owns only 60% of industrial capital and employs only 30% of non-agricultural labor." (ibid, pg. 24)

\*

"Erber does not understand what the Polish bourgeoisie has gained in this counter-revolutionary action. But how then can the collaboration of Grabski, the most conscious politician of the bourgeoisie, and Mikolajczyk, the imperialist agent, be explained? By masochism? Isn't it clear that all of the bourgeoisies of Eastern Europe have gained important years (yes, reader\*\* - years) of respite from the Kremlin and their 'indigenous' Stalinists when they were threatened by complete annihilation?" (ibid, page 25)

\*

"It is time, comrades, that you abandon this irresponsibility in juggling facts, as it is time that you abandon your irresponsibility in judging the positions taken by the International. Our 'sectarianism on the national question' and our 'support to the GPU against the enslaved masses' are part of the same category of notions in which you find 'the Polish bourgeoisie expropriated by the Stalinists', notions which are real only in your imagination!" (ibid, pg. 25)

## II.

### Germain on Stalinism:

"You have 'educated' the members of the Workers Party in the spirit that 'the struggle of tendencies within the International centers around the question of whether the International will be turned into a left wing of Stalinism or whether it will become once a gain the left wing of the proletariat.' The Political Committee in the resolution which it submits to you now repeats this monstrosity and raises it to the level of the leading idea of your movement." (ibid, pgs. 25, 26)

We acknowledge the correctness of Germain's definition of our major accusation against the International - political capitulation to Stalinism.

Some proofs:

1. "At present, Greece is the only country in Europe in which a true mass resistance to imperialist oppression exists. The overwhelming majority of the population actively or passively supports the partisan movement which now enjoys a greater degree of independence from Stalinism than in 1944." (ibid, page 27)

2. In China, the International and the SWP gives support, on the same basis as in Greece, to the "progressive" agrarian, revolutionary movement of the Chinese Stalinists.

3. The English section of the International hailed the "victory" of the Czech workers and described the Stalinists seizure of power as a social revolution that destroyed capitalism. The International leadership and other sections ambiguously evaded all issues - not once denounced the Stalinists coup as reactionary

4. The Indian section of the International has a broad united front, politically and on economic issues, with the Indian Stalinist party and associated organizations.

5. The International leadership indicated its electoral support to the Stalinists people's Front electoral bloc in the recent Italian election.

6. The World Congress of the International adopted the resolution reiterating its position of "unconditional defense" of the "degenerated Workers' State".

### III.

#### Germain on "Canonism" and the Regime of the International:

"Its (the IS) conduct in all internal discussions which took place in the sections was inspired by these two fundamental preoccupations:

"a. To unify in every country all the tendencies of the Fourth. To safeguard the unity of our movement." (ibid, page 30)

The reality, since publication of this statement:

1. Split of the English section; Healy entry into Labor Party.

2. Split of the French section; Minority entry into RDR.

3. Further splitting of the already-split Greek section.

4. De facto expulsion of the entire Italian section.

5. De facto expulsion of the German-IKD section.

6. Blanket endorsement of the Cannonite point-of-view on the breakdown of "unity" efforts. Adoption by the EPC of a resolution claiming that "political differences" made unity impossible.

"Every member must, in good faith, recognize that whatever the errors we may have committed on this or that question, we were motivated in these efforts solely by the desire to strengthen the International politically and organizationally. And this balance sheet will remain more eloquent than all the mystifications and slanders when the Congress comes to judge it." (ibid, page 32)

The Congress indicated an actual world membership that was the smallest in the history of the Trotskyist movement - as well as the above mentioned splits, and others in the offing.

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"The discussion (for the World Congress) which has unfolded until now is, without any doubt, the most democratic and the freest which has ever been held, not only in the Fourth International but in the entire working class movement." (ibid, page 33)

The reality is that not a single resolution of the Workers Party - not to mention other minority tendencies such as that of Munis, the Irish section and the French minority - was ever published or circulated during the one year of discussion. Our participation was limited to two articles by individuals.

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The document of Germain has been revealed as worthless, unable to stand a single test of six month's time.