

# Bulletin

## OF THE WORKERS PARTY

### CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
AMENDMENTS TO THE RESOLUTION ON THE PARTY - By Ernest Erber .....	1
POLITICAL COMMITTEE ACTION ON AMENDMENTS TO THE RESOLUTION ON THE PARTY SUBMITTED BY E. ERBER.....	10-A
THE TASK OF BUILDING THE AMERICAN BOLSHEVIK PARTY - By J. R. Johnson .....	11
ON COMRADE JOHNSON'S AMERICAN RESOLUTION - OR SOVIETS IN THE SKY - By Irving Howe .....	25

VOL. I - NO. 9      MARCH 28, 1946  
 CONVENTION BULLETIN #3

10¢

574

March 1946

-11-

## THE TASK OF BUILDING THE AMERICAN BOLSHEVIK PARTY

At the Workers Conference a year ago it was brought to the attention of the party that there was in it unmistakable signs of disquiet and uncertainty about its course. It was pointed out that unless this was clarified, a serious internal crisis could easily result. (Building the Bolshevik Party) July 1945.

During the past five years the party has proved by its political activity and organizational achievements that its separation from the SWP was not motivated by petty-bourgeois pressure and fear of the sacrifices and demands which resistance to the war would entail. (Cannon). Though handicapped by the enforced withdrawal of a large percentage of its most active and experienced members, the party, by devoted labor and self-sacrifice, was able to establish itself politically and organizationally as a revolutionary propaganda group in the U.S. A large percentage of the membership industrialized itself and achieved valuable experience in the class struggle. Our influence in the union movement, when seen in relation to our size, has been effective. Yet all this hard work has not bred confidence. Uncertainty can be found in all layers of the party.

The New York organization is the heart of the party. At its convention, less than six months after the Workers Conference, the incipient crisis expressed itself with the utmost clarity and almost with violence. In the words of a member of the National Committee who took part in the discussion: "Every one agrees that the morale of the membership is very low, that the members do not have much confidence in the leading committees, that significant numbers are beginning to lose confidence in the future of our party, that recruiting has all but stopped..." (E. Erber, Internal Bulletin, December 31, 1945).

Different reasons were given, but there was substantial agreement among the rank and file that the above represented the actual condition of affairs. As the response to the organizational drive has shown and as its work during five years has amply attested, the party as a whole is ready and anxious to throw itself into the task of building the mass revolutionary party in the United States. The doubts which have overtaken it, as will be shown later, are fundamentally the result of a false political line. Readiness to struggle and sacrifice are not sufficient. If after great efforts the party gains only a small number of members a really serious crisis would inevitably result, with great damage to the Fourth International at home and abroad. The present resolution proposes:

- i. to recall the party to the Bolshevik method of building the party.
- ii. to point out the root of the false course so that it may be more easily corrected.

I.

With the adoption of the transitional program, the Fourth International in the U.S., made the turn from a propaganda circle existence to the organized workers in the U.S. Previously its propaganda was of a theoretical order, (theory of permanent revolution, socialism in a single country, crimes of the Comintern, etc.), directed toward the Third International, the left-wing of the Second International (SP) and other advanced political elements. Its main task now became propaganda for revolutionary action to the advanced elements in the working class. Such a propaganda is based upon the analysis of the situation in the U.S. as pre-revolutionary, for without this, the idea of a transitional program becomes ridiculous. The actual process of building the party is the result of a political analysis of our epoch in general. (See the International and American Resolutions.) Its aim can be summarized briefly.

The party speaks to the advanced workers and, on the basis of the closest struggle with them on the immediate demands, uses every opportunity to propagandize for the organizational forms and actions whereby the workers can oppose and in time overthrow the outlived labor leadership. The party as every party except a propaganda circle begins always with the immediate demands of the masses but at the present stage of its development it keeps a clear distinction between a mass party (able to agitate the masses and lead them in action) and a propaganda group which can only aim at educating advanced workers.

The party concretely aims at:

- i. winning over the developing revolutionary elements among the workers.
- ii. preparing the minds of the masses so that in time they will come to recognize the Workers Party as a necessary revolutionary party and convert it rapidly into a party capable of leading the workers in action.

Proletarianization

This type of propaganda demands the proletarianization of the previous propaganda circle.

The revolutionary propaganda group which has turned to the masses does not merely industrialize itself. Mere industrialization does not advance the purpose of building the revolutionary party, but merely drowns the revolutionaries in the mass. The party proletarianizes itself only to the degree that in the ranks of the working class it poses the proletarian solution of all questions, i.e. the propaganda and advocacy of revolutionary action leading to the social revolution. This must not be confused, as it so often is, with the tasks of the individual party member who in the factory or union responds always to an existing concrete situation. (See American Resolution)

Recruitment Campaigns

Not only its own morale but the rapid radicalization of the American masses makes recruitment the first objective of the party in the present stage.

Both the history of the Fourth International in the U.S. and the historical circumstances of the development of the American proletariat dictate special efforts to adapt the transitional program for the purpose of effective recruitment among the American workers.

The old propaganda circle was compelled to base its general line and its periods of recruiting activity chiefly upon the betrayals and failures of the Third International in Europe. The turn from the old propaganda circle towards the masses demands that that activity be now harmonized with the rhythm of the developing class struggle in the U.S. Thus our recruiting campaigns must be based upon such events as the strike wave and the lessons to be drawn from it.

During periods of quiescence, the party is not impatient at slow growth but mobilizes both its membership and its sympathizers in preparation for the coming events. When these approach and are actually in process, the party with its own revolutionary line carries on an intensive propaganda activity. Thus, as in a period of the strike wave, the party should be mobilized and ready to produce a pamphlet every 24 days or even every week, giving the Marxist analysis of all aspects of the strike. At the conclusion of the mass action, the party then proceeds to initiate a final recruitment drive and cannot fail to win adherents. It is not in the least impossible for the party to double, treble or even further multiply its membership within a comparatively short period of a few weeks or months. But in order to be able to do this, the party must carefully train and prepare not only its membership but its contacts and sympathizers for the inevitability of revolutionary developments and the distinctive role to be played by the party at all stages.

To reach the new type of worker aimed at by the turn from the old propaganda circle the party must reorient itself and base its activity upon the special national characteristics of the American working class.

The American working class lacks at the present time a spirit of generalization and of theory. It becomes therefore the special function of the party to frame its propaganda for revolutionary action and its general propaganda not in terms of articles about socialism but in terms of the development of American society and particularly the development of the American proletariat.

"The truths of communism and the methods of social revolution" must be drawn and expounded on the basis of the historical

development of classes in the U.S. and the concrete events today in the life of the American people. On this basis alone can the propaganda group as distinct from the old propaganda circle find a fertile reception in the minds of the ordinary rank and file American workers. Upon this basis the party can give to the advanced American workers the ideological conviction of the destiny of their class to lead society. It is this which brings workers to the revolutionary party and the full conclusions of Bolshevism. (See Education, Propaganda and Agitation.)

#### Integration

The party, having turned from the old propaganda circle, faces the task of integrating rank and file workers into the organization. This task is accomplished:

- i. by strict attention to the immediate problems of the individual worker in his factory and union.
- ii. the Americanization of Bolshevism as described above.
- iii. the presentation of the actions of the proletarian and peasant masses abroad, not in general, but in strict relation to the activity of the Fourth International as an active revolutionary organization.
- iiii. instruction in the historic tradition, achievements and methods of Bolshevism in opposition to all bourgeois learning, theories and ideas.

Negro workers present special problems to the party. The situation of Negroes in the United States gives the party many opportunities to participate and give direction to Negro struggles for democratic rights. This meets the justified demand, characteristic of Negroes, for immediate action on their special problems.

✓ The Negro worker, far more than the white worker, requires ideological understanding not only of the development of the American proletariat in American society but of the development of Negro struggles. An important part of his integration in the Workers Party is a Leninist education in the objective role which the Negro masses have played in the past and will play in the coming proletarian revolution. The education not only of Negroes but of the party as a whole in the significance of this objective role:

- i. binds the Negroes to the party
- ii. enables them to answer not only to themselves but to their contacts the justified doubts as to the fate of Negroes after they have participated in the overthrow of the bourgeoisie.
- iii. is the basis for harmonious relations between whites and Negroes under the pressure of bourgeois race prejudice which will increasingly be felt in the party as it draws into

its ranks not intellectuals, but rank and file workers, both white and Negro.

Experience has also indicated that Negroes, properly integrated into the party, cannot only bring substantial numbers of Negroes into the party, but are also a means of attracting white workers.

Recruitment, Integration and Education

The propaganda circle based its education upon the special differences between itself and other proletarian political organizations. On the contrary, the education of a propaganda group which has turned towards the masses must be founded on the general principles and traditions of Marxism as a new conception of society and a new way of life.

The foundation of the party's education therefore must be:

- i. the study of Capital and the related classics of Marxism so as to enable the party to analyze the different stages of the development of the American economy, American society and the developing role of the proletariat. The study of Capital has always been the basis (a) of all strategic analysis by which the Marxist parties developed their practical activity, (b) the means by which rank and file workers translated their practical experience at the point of production into conscious opposition to all aspects of bourgeois society.
- ii. study of the numerous writings, discussions, conversations of Trotsky on the American question, Negro question, etc. These documents form the indispensable manual for the development of the American revolutionary party.
- iii. the production and study of material, (pamphlets, outlines) of American history to familiarize the party members with all phases of past social revolutions in the U.S., leading to the inevitability of proletarian revolution.
- iiii. the study of the history and development of the Fourth International, particularly in the U.S.

In the special circumstances of American development, it is precisely the rank and file workers above all others to whom the party must give, both as contacts and far more as members, a comprehensive training in revolutionary thought and the revolutionary way of life as the concrete developing alternative to collapsing bourgeois society. Not only does the worker need this for himself, but it is only by this means that at the present state of the party's development, he can make the deepest and most effective appeal to his fellow workers to join our party. With rank and file workers interest in and defence of the party line is the result of a passionate devotion to the party, born of gratitude for the new world which it has opened to them. The most important part of this education is given

not in formal classes but in Labor Action, the party press and pamphlets, the public meetings of the party and the whole atmosphere which the leadership above all instills into the party.

A Bolshevick party at this stage, can be developed on no other foundation, least of all in the United States. The necessary education in the specific contributions of the party to Marxism in the past five years, concentration on "immediate demands", the conception of "plenty for all" - none of these can be the means of attracting or holding rank and file workers in any numbers in the party.

#### The Press

Labor Action - The new eight-page Labor Action must make no organized distinction between a section on day-to-day struggle and a "Magazine" section on theory. To maintain this separation would inculcate the old Menshevik conception of minimum demands and maximum program, a conception wholly foreign to the transitional program.

Labor Action must so teach the doctrines of Marxism that it will prepare its readers to become the cadres of the Fourth International and be itself a direct recruiting agent for the Workers Party. The technical means at the disposal of modern society and the radicalization of the masses demand that the paper perform this function. Labor Action must here profit by the experience of the French Party (1938) as to the aim of a mass newspaper:

"This aim is above all inter-related with the aim of the party itself; to forge cadres, provide the explanation of the situation and not to stop at merely agitational slogans, which, lacking explanations and political generalization are powerless to make the workers understand the Fourth International's reason for existence."  
(Founding Conference, p. 101)

To put "more socialism" into the paper is not a matter of adding theoretical articles, but making the paper openly recognizable by the workers as an organ of revolutionary socialism.

The New International - The New International as the theoretical organ of the party must perform its traditional function of making a Marxist analysis of current events, of vigorous propaganda for the party line and polemical attacks upon its opponents. But it cannot in this period address itself to opponents to the neglect of the theoretical preparation of its members for their main task: transforming the propaganda circle of the Fourth International to a mass revolutionary party in the U.S.

The New International, in its pages and other publications directed by it, must train the advanced cadres of the party in

(a) dialectical materialism (b) Marxian political economy, and (c) historical materialism. Thus trained party cadres will supply the party and the American proletariat with a constantly growing armory of weapons against American bourgeois society.

On the basis of this education the New International must make itself responsible for serious analysis of all aspects of American life and history, and particularly of the labor movement. The party must have patience and recognize that this serious theoretical work, long overdue, will in time permeate the party and be reflected in its every day life and immediate tasks.

In the present disintegration of American society and world capitalism as a whole the party must set itself as an immediate task:

- i making LA a direct recruiting agent
- ii making the New International, far more than in 1938, the intellectual center of that growing body of radical thought in the U.S. which is critical of American bourgeois society and hostile to Stalinism. The party must recognize that failure in this task cannot be laid to the objective situation which is overwhelmingly favorable.

The Fourth International

The party must educate the members in the spirit and principles and best traditions of the Fourth International. This requires (a) publication of the official documents and important articles of the Fourth International in the party press, public and internal, and (b) while criticizing the International wherever its line conflicts with the party line, not to tolerate under any circumstances or to allow to go unchallenged abusive and contemptuous statements about its internationalism, or its open characterization by responsible party members as "not worth a pinch of salt", and "a bunch of political bankrupts".

II

The future development of the party along the path outlined above can only be achieved if the party recognizes the causes for its previous stagnation and present uncertainty, and resolutely roots out all manifestations of them.

The greatest danger to the party's growth and development at the present time is represented by the "small mass party" conception of Comrade Erber. For over three years Comrade Lund has carried on a persistent and sharp struggle in the National Committee over the method of building the party. In a related series of documents he has accused the party leadership of "pessimism, dimmed vision...lack of sweeping imagination...satisfaction with crumbs when loaves are available, routinism...conservative traditionalism...we are lucky to exist at all spirit." He accuses the leadership of lagging behind the or-



ganization. "Nowhere does the lack of boldness and imagination strike one so sharply as in our topmost circles. Routinism and tradition seem to seek their final refuge there." He has for three years denounced the party for having no perspective. Comrade Erber's views are the fruit of a theory built upon his conception of the past of our movement. For Erber "Trotskyism has been synonymous with 'sectarianism'". For him the "conservatism of Cannon was the typical expression of Trotskyism on the organizational side." "The sterility of Cannon is the logical result of the 'sectarianism', 'doctrinarism', 'rigid, ideological shell' of Trotsky. Trotsky himself was saved from this logical conclusion of his doctrine only by his "idealism and common sense". According to Comrade Erber, the first Four Congresses of the Communist International and the history of Bolshevism have not been submitted to critical study but are viewed as "sacrosanct". "The WP is not and should not be a Trotskyist party in the sense that is usually meant." It is from this conception of the past of our movement, elaborated in lengthy and comprehensive documents, that Erber has consistently supported the present Labor Action. It is on this basis that he wishes the party to transform itself into a "small mass party".

The theories of Erber on party-building are dangerous because the majority of the leadership in actuality has no other perspective to offer to the party as a guide to party building. Defining propaganda as polemic against rival parties, Comrade Shachtman rejects the conception of the party as a revolutionary propaganda organization. This rejection is the essence of Comrade Erber's conception.

The party must realize the close connection between the theoretical heresies of Erber, the equivocal position of Shachtman and the confusion on party building which is now rife in the party. (See Building the Bolshevik Party). The party must unhesitatingly reject these ideas and their manifestations, open or concealed, in all aspects of party life.

#### The SWP and the "small mass party"

The "small mass party" conception is no personal aberration of Comrade Erber. The party must recognize it as in essence the result of the political inexperience of the American proletariat and long years of struggle against the usurpation of "revolutionary" leadership by Stalinism. The party must especially recognize that in rejecting Erber's ideas and particularly their manifestations in the building of the party, it will be doing far more than putting itself on the right road towards building the Bolshevik Party. It will also help to correct the false course of the SWP, and lay the basis for an effective unified organization.

The SWP practices the "small mass party" conception in a form concealed (and to some extent corrected) by its strenuous attempts to adhere to the strategic conceptions of Trotsky. Parallel to its genuine revolutionary temper in propaganda in

concrete trade union activity it builds illusions among its membership about its influence in the unions and leading the workers in mass struggles. Only a powerful mass party can attempt to exercise the organizational function of leading workers in day-to-day struggles without

- i succumbing to opportunism, and
- ii having the work of its members swept away by obvious inability to withstand the pressure of the trade union bureaucrats whenever these wish to destroy the influence of the propaganda group.

The past history of the party (Los Angeles and Philadelphia) show, and the inevitable puncturing of the illusions of the SWP will show, that only a correct conception of its function can save the Fourth International from diverting its precious energies into fruitless and demoralizing channels.

### III

The particular persistence of Erber's ideas in all layers of our party is not at all accidental. The WP was born out of a split of the SWP. In the course of the dispute Comrade Trotsky summed up his view of the historical significance of the dispute as follows: (In Defense of Marxism, p. 104)

"Scientific socialism is the conscious expression of the unconscious historic process; namely, the instinctive and elemental drive of the proletariat to reconstruct society on communist beginnings. These organic tendencies in the psychology of workers spring to life with utmost rapidity in the epoch of crises and wars. The discussion has revealed beyond all question a clash in the party between a petty-bourgeois tendency and a proletarian tendency. The petty-bourgeois tendency reveals its confusion in its attempt to reduce the program of the party to the small coin of 'concrete' questions. The proletarian tendency on the contrary strives to correlate all the partial questions into theoretical unity. At stake at the present time is not the extent to which individual members of the majority consciously apply the dialectic method. What is important is the fact that the majority as a whole pushes toward the proletarian posing of the questions and by very reason of this tends to assimilate the dialectic which is the 'algebra of the revolution.'"

This statement does not exhaust or even express either the complete circumstances of the split in 1940, or the course of the WP or the SWP since that time. Nevertheless, the main difficulties of the party at the present stage can be traced directly to its refusal to base itself upon this instinctive drive of the proletariat to reconstruct society on communist beginnings in the epoch of the death-agony of capitalism.

Because the party does not unequivocally base its policy on the instinctive revolutionary strivings of the proletariat,

1) it fails to make revolutionary propoganda and therefore does not recruit revolutionary workers.

2) it sends its members into industry overweighted with the impossible task of bringing not even socialist but more political consciousness to sixty million "backward" American workers.

3) it does not recognize that at present the party's only claim to leadership is ideological and therefore places the party in the hopeless situation of competing with the labor bureaucrats as a more sincere and more militant wing of the trade union movement.

4) it fails to teach the methods of social revolution and therefore is compelled to put "more Socialism" in the paper by increasing the number of abstract articles on the socialist idea.

5) it fails in its press to point out and interpret the steady move toward socialism and the leadership of the nation by the American working class. It is therefore compelled to fall back on frenzied denunciation of the evils of capitalism.

6) it has developed a purely arbitrary distinction between propoganda and agitation, based on the conception of propoganda not as revolutionary propoganda for the social revolution but as political polemic with the SWP.

7) it fails to carry on a serious political education of the proletarian vanguard and, as a result, the party inevitably experiences an internal depoliticalization, which is merely an internal reflection of the external concentration on "immediate demands."

8) it fails to teach Bolshevism to the American workers and therefore does not discuss its own development in Bolshevik terms but in terms of regime, conservatism of leadership (Erber), lack of forces, (Shachtman) etc.

IV

Rejecting all types of bourgeois solutions to the problems of society, but at the same time governed by retrogressive concepts of the proletariat, the party leadership undermines the revolutionary confidence of the party membership in itself by a perpetual vacillation between opposing political positions:

The party vacillates on the

1) Russian question (between the position of Carter and the official party position)

2) Character of our epoch (between the theory of retrogression and the theses of the Founding Conference of the Fourth International)

3) Negro question (between the old Social-Democratic conception of Debs and the Leninist-Trotskyist conception)

4) Stalinism (for and against the CP-SP-CGT slogan, support and non-support of the Chinese peasants, for and against the EAM & ELAS to power, etc.)

5) German revolution during the war (implying its impossibility and predicting its imminence)

6) Fourth International (between saying that the only hope of the revolution in Europe is the Fourth International and at the same time ignoring the publications and policy of the Fourth International and denouncing it as politically bankrupt)

7) Bureaucratic collectivism (rejecting it as a new social order except for Russia and at the same time experimenting both in theory and in practice with the idea of a new bureaucratic collectivist social order)

8) historical foundations of the Fourth International (between attacking all who preach that Stalinism is the inevitable fruit of Bolshevism and at the same time asserting that Lenin's and Trotsky's treatment of the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries, (ratified by many Congresses and by Lenin himself) contributed to the degeneration of the revolution and the victory of Stalinism. (The "Mistakes" of the Bolsheviks, NI, November, 1943)

The party at this stage, lacking effective forces, can sustain itself only by a clear consistent political line and the firmest conviction of its past and its future. If even the line is proven incorrect, a healthy party can change it and thereby even gain in confidence. The present vacillating course of the party leadership on fundamental questions is one of the chief causes of the uncertainty of the party.

The party must establish and resolutely maintain until it is changed a firm political line on all fundamental questions.

#### Democratic Centralism and the Cadre

Unable to mobilize the full force of the party for action behind a firm, clear, political line, the party leadership is driven to intensify education in the special discoveries of the party during the past five years. But inasmuch as this line cannot be related to the recent past of the Fourth International (e.g., CP-SP-CGT to Whither France; the Negro position to the writings of Trotsky, etc.) the party education cannot bring the desired results.

In full control of the party press and party education and with leading representatives of its line in nearly all the centers of the party, the leadership is forced to try to achieve by organization what it cannot do by political means. It is driven to attempt to establish cohesion in the organization by the imposition from above of a cadre, to be composed essentially of those who subscribe to the special theoretical contributions of the party.

Any attempt to carry out the cadre principle will result in the virtual creation of a thinly-disguised faction, the setting up of two types of membership, the relegation of experienced, politically developed, devoted party members to the status of second-class citizens, as well as give a false education to new members as to the relationship in the party between members of opposing political views. Thus, the word, cadre, which, in its Bolshevik sense, signifies the development of the whole membership in the basis principles and traditions of Marxism, rejection of all bourgeois concepts and ideas, devotion to the party and readiness to submit to its discipline, has now become degraded by the application of it to a factional maneuver.

The party must resolutely reject this concept and any attempt to put it into practice.

## V

Bolshevism and Unity

The WP must base its demand for unity on the theories and practices of Bolshevism and the objective situation in the United States.

The WP condemns the leadership of the Fourth International for not pronouncing itself clearly and unequivocally and demanding that the SWP accept the proposals of the WP for unity. It condemns the SWP majority for its unprincipled and dishonest factional maneuvers in regard to the proposals of unity made by the WP and the SWP minority.

The WP, while recognizing the objective results of a concrete situation, disapproves of the actions of the SWP minority:

- 1) in allowing its factional struggle to reach the perspective of a split on the question of Cannon's regime.
- 2) in conducting its factional struggle in a manner harmful to the education of the Fourth International and particularly the youth in the traditions of principled Bolsheviks.

By these actions it has done harm to the very cause of unity it initiated. It has lost the opportunity of effective resistance to the unprincipled Cannonite opposition to unity and has done harm to the Bolshevik morale of the whole movement in the United States.

The WP pronounces itself against splits in the Fourth International of any kind except on the political ground that the party from which the split is proposed is no longer an instrument of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie.

The WP denounces splits in organizations which have left the propaganda circle stage and address themselves seriously to workers. It does great harm to the conceptions of Bolshevism

when workers are asked to devote their lives to one party and then told that although the parties still stand on the revolutionary principles of the Fourth International, it should be abandoned in favor of another.

The WP does not unduly concern itself with problems such as Hansen's article on Cannon and controversy in the SWP about the rights of intellectuals to criticize the party and the publication or non-publication of letters, etc. It does not give the slightest credence to the conception that a party cannot be built with Cannon. It is confident that if Cannon or Cannonism or any other individual or tendency stands in the way of building the Fourth International in the U.S., then the revolutionary cadres in both the WP and the SWP will either defeat such individuals or tendencies or thereby prove their inability to defeat the bourgeoisie. The WP makes its main attack on Cannon's regime its refusal to enter honestly into fusion negotiations. This refusal betrays its stultifying monolithic conceptions. The WP recognizes that the mere acceptance of fusion between the two parties would strike a death blow at the monolithic conception. All other preoccupations are subordinate, disorient the membership of both parties and strengthen the Cannonite mis-education in the rank and file of the SWP on unity.

The WP stands for the unity of the Fourth International at home and abroad and recommends to the party to use all legitimate means to carry out its policy of unity, not being deterred by the dishonesty of the SWP leadership or the ignorance and fanaticism of its members. It is confident that its own devotion to the principles of the Fourth International, its proved capacity to struggle against the bourgeoisie and the developing objective situation will compel the formation of a united party in the United States.

Finally, the WP denounces the invitations in any form, in public or in private, to any minority to leave the party.

## VI

The party must constantly bear in mind the peculiar circumstances under which the Fourth International functions today, owing to the tension of the whole international situation and the smallness of the organized revolutionary forces. Its individual members will be called upon to carry out tasks of revolutionary leadership and responsibility which will tax their energies and resources to the utmost. It is therefore of extreme importance that workers who join the party find in the party itself a means of developing themselves as revolutionists of mastering to the fullest extent of their capabilities the theory and practice of Bolshevism. It should be impossible for any party member even after only a few months in the party to feel that he has not learned anything. In its present condition of dissatisfaction with bourgeois society but yet lacking revolutionary theory, layers of the American proletariat will be

found receptive to the ideas of Bolshevism, but only if the propagandist of Bolshevism is himself a trained, serious, educated Bolshevik, preferably a worker, able to give by his personal example and personal exposition some indication not only of the socialism which the party aims at but the socialism which it represents today. This can be learnt first of all in the party.

Such a condition does not exist in our party today. That it should be realized, demands from the membership first of all a clear conception of the dialectical connection between the international perspectives of the party, its national perspectives and the task of party-building. It demands from the membership a resolute determination to discuss its problems with serious recognition of the great issues involved and to be merciless against all who show by their arguments, demeanor and general procedure that they seek least of all a clarification of issues and the education of the membership.

Above all, the united membership must drive out of our ranks defeatism, pessimism and scepticism in any shape or form. It must base itself unequivocally upon confidence in the historic destiny of the proletariat and in the party as its expression. Without this basis, even the correct revolutionary line can only bring a few more members and continue the party on a more or less stagnant course. With this basis the party can by the proper education, training and patience so prepare itself that as the proletariat moves to its destiny, it will in increasing numbers recognize the propaganda group of the Fourth International and steadily transform it into the mass revolutionary party which will lead the social revolution.

March 18, 1946

J. R. Johnson