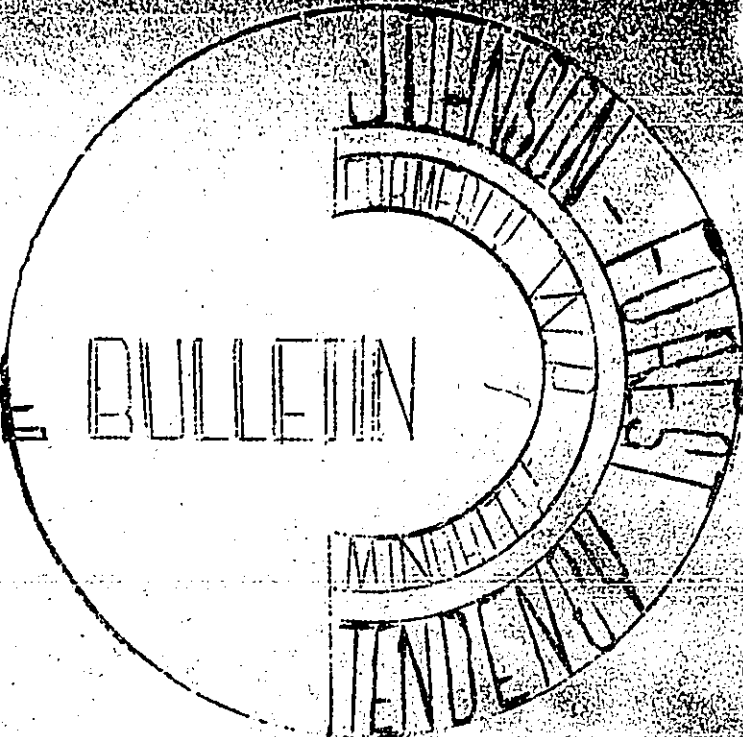


# INTERNAL BULLETIN



WHY WE APPEAR	P.1
TO THE PROLETARIAT	P.4
BOLSHEVISM AND UNITY	P.9
LENINISM AND OPPORTUNISM	P.12

July 17, 1947

Volume I Number 1

WHY WE APPEAR

The Johnson-Forest Tendency submitted its resolution passed at its National Conference of July 5-6, 1947, to the P.C. of the W.P. on Wednesday, July 9. On Thursday, July 10, at a meeting of the P.C. of the W.P., the P.C. passed the following resolution:

1. The P.C. rejects the Johnsonite request for a transfer from the W.P. to the S.W.P. as a cowardly evasion of a responsibility which is that of the Johnson faction alone and as an attempt to shift the task of making a decision from the shoulders of the Johnson faction, where it properly belongs, to the party leadership.

2. The Secretariat is authorized to draw up, in the name of the P.C. and for the submission to a referendum vote of the National Committee, a statement on the resolution of the Johnson faction.

On Friday, representatives of the Tendency saw representatives of the S.W.P. They had been supplied with copies of the July 5 Resolution after it had been submitted to the W.P. The representatives of the S.W.P. expressed themselves as willing to consider favorably the application of the Johnson-Forest Tendency for unification with their party. In so doing, they were merely reaffirming what had been for a long time their political evaluation of the Johnson-Forest Tendency. The S.W.P., while agreeing in principle to the unification, was governed by certain agreements into at its last plenum. It had also to consider the implications of the unification for the movement as a whole. This coincided with the desire of the Johnson-Forest Tendency for an interim period of about eight weeks during which it would prepare itself to carry out the decisions of its National Conference. The Johnson-Forest Tendency, July 14, sent the following letter to the P.C. of the W.P.:

"You have rejected our request for a transfer of membership from the W.P. to the S.W.P. as a cowardly evasion of a responsibility which is that of the Johnson faction alone."

"It seems impossible to make political ideas penetrate through the fog of 'cowardly,' 'dishonest,' 'bureaucratic' and other subjective motivations which more and more obscure the politics of the W.P."

"We hereby inform you that the Johnson-Forest Minority resigns its membership from the W.P. as from today."

This severs our connection with the W.P. During the period in which we shall bring to a disciplined close our seven years in the W.P., we propose to publish this weekly bulletin for our caucus membership and our close sympathisers at home and abroad.

First of all, this is an internal bulletin and not a public journal of any kind. We do not propose to give information or comment on any public affairs. That is the business of political parties and independent tendencies to neither of which category we belong. Neither is it our intention to carry on political controversy with the current public politics of either the W.P. or the S.W.P. or other Trotskyite groups. Our main purpose is to prepare our membership for the carrying out of the decisions of the National Conference, and secondarily, to keep them informed as to what is taking place among the international tendencies which subscribe to the general principles of Trotskyism, particularly insofar as they affect the future political course and organizational plans of the Johnson-Forest Tendency.

- 2 -

We can best sum up the decisions of the National Conference by means of extracts from the Resolution itself:

As always, we govern our strategic course by international considerations:

"The International is hereby warned that few tasks before it are more important than the political clarification and organizational solution of the miserable situation to which the American movement has been reduced. The W.P. which has played so mischievous a role in the United States has now unmistakably shown that it has already transferred its operations to the international field. By the same vague and adventurous politics combined with sharp organizational attacks, which have characterized it in 1940 and 1945-1947, it seeks now to build support for itself abroad. The International should not be deceived by the political bankruptcy of the W.P. into believing that it still does not have great capacity for disruption at home and abroad. The 'centrifugal tendencies' in the International have already received substantial support from the W.P. and the infinite adjustability of its opportunist politics is always at the beck and call of its organizational needs." (page 5)

The organizational conclusion from this is expressed as follows:

"The world situation and the political positions of the Minority have long demanded that the Minority align itself with those elements in the C.I.C. which are in opposition to the proponents of the theory that the proletariat is today permeated with democratic illusions. The 'bureaucratic collectivists' and the retrogressionists of all stripes are extreme forms of this type of subjective political thinking which constitutes the greatest danger to our movement today." (page 7)

On the national scene we have a clearly defined orientation:

"(The Minority) hereby declares that its main purpose now is to devote its energies towards the building of the revolutionary party by winning workers into its ranks. It believes it to be the duty of all revolutionaries in the United States to be hostile actively to the preoccupation with internal discussion and the winning over of groups of Trotskyites from one point of view to another within the party or rival parties. This type of politics, is, at this stage, the main enemy of the development of the of the revolutionary party in the United States and can be traced directly to the lack of revolutionary perspective. Contrary to the beliefs of petty-bourgeois arrogance and ignorance, penetration into the workers' movement and milieu demands not a lowering but a heightening of the theoretical level of the cadres, particularly in the United States. For the Johnson-Forest Minority this means that such theoretical activity must be aimed against the bourgeoisie and against the enemies of Bolshevism for the consolidation and the mutual education of the party and the workers. The Johnson-Forest Minority proposes for itself as its next step the task of integrating itself in the S.W.P. It will seek to learn from their experiences, to penetrate always more deeply into the mass proletarian movement and to test the ideas that it developed during the seven years, not as a faction in the discussion of theses, but in the closest comradely association for the common task of winning workers to the party." (page 9)

Subject to the above, the Tendency has also a special task to perform in regard to its own past and its future:

"As a result of the developments in the class struggle and as a result of six years of constant struggle in the W.P., the Johnson-Forest Minority, while acting always as loyal, devoted and disciplined members of the W.P., has developed consistent positions on all the questions of the revolution and the counter-revolution of our epoch, particularly in regard to the United States. The international comrades for the most part, have seen fit to ignore them and, even on an international scale, as late as January 1947, have been concerned with the Minority only in giving it advice to split. The Minority is not deterred by this, but as a completion of six years of work it is now engaged in publishing documents, new and old, embodying its political ideas and experiences, including a balance sheet of its seven years in the W.P. and a fundamental document on its revision of Trotsky's position on the Russian question in the context of the present perspective of proletarian revolution." (page 9)

The Internal Bulletin will do its best faithfully to assist the Tendency and its friends to carry out these tasks and others legitimately allied to them.

\*\*\*\*\*

TO THE PROLETARIAT

We shall publish in a few weeks as full an account of the National Conference as possible. For the time being, it is sufficient to say that the Conference held three sessions: 1) The Saturday, July 5, session at which the political line embodied in the Resolution was discussed; 2) the Sunday morning Executive session at which the immediate organizational implementation of the political line was worked out; and 3) the Sunday afternoon session at which there was discussion on what was entitled the Trade Union question. This was led by certain delegates who had specially prepared to do so, but all present, delegates, members and sympathizers were free to take part and many did so. Veterans of twenty years standing in the revolutionary or labor movement agreed that they have never yet taken part in so satisfactory a conference, and all were of the opinion that the Trade Union discussion was the climax of the Conference.

That this was so was not due to any naive enthusiasm but was a fitting end to one period of development of the Tendency and the beginning of what we all felt to be a new and decisive stage.

As had been fully discussed in the first session, the Tendency had for many months been aware that the first stage of its development had come to a close. It had been engaged for years in the elaboration of its theoretical positions. This had not been done mainly from books, resolutions, etc. Our analyses of contemporary society had led us to the conclusion that today politics has reached a stage where it must be rooted in production to a degree impossible before. Our theoretical analyses therefore were constantly checked, initiated, stimulated and developed by the careful observations by the proletarians in our Tendency of the workers among whom they worked. Without the recent upsurge of the American proletariat, in so many important respects the most advanced in the world, and the close observation and analysis of it by comrades trained in the fundamentals of Marxism, it would have been impossible for us to solve in outline, as it were, some of the problems we have solved. But once the basis of this work was done, the Tendency became increasingly impelled to devote its whole energies to the task of seeking to win workers to the movement on the basis of the preliminary education we had so painfully acquired. Our theories now had to prove themselves in life in concrete action and results. The proletarian elements among us, some of them among our most devoted cadres, were particularly emphatic that they were tired of discussing the backwardness of the American proletariat. The proletariat itself, by its demands for a general strike had not only confirmed our prognoses made many months ago and ignored or sneered at by the W.P. Majority. It had warned us that it wanted revolutionary leadership.

With our political decision behind us, the Trade Union discussion marked the beginning of a new stage for us. We shall print in the Bulletin some of the speeches and all the comments made. This Trade Union question is one of the two topics which we have recommended to the tendency for educational discussion during the coming eight weeks. In the course of the next few weeks we hope to have accumulated a mass of material as a good basis for the discussion. The speeches and our published documents will show that we are mainly concerned at this stage, not so much with minor policy, as with how to understand and elicit the instinctive revolutionism of the American workers and to translate it into concrete political policies. Inextricably intertwined with this for our worker cadres and intellectuals, is writing for the press or talking to workers in such a way that the workers will feel that the Tendency is not only a revolutionary tendency but also a revolutionary reaction.

952

- 5 -

will feel that the paper and the party are theirs and ultimately reach the stage where two thirds of the paper is filled with their revolutionary reactions to the daily concrete struggle.

The following speeches are reproduced much as they were made and do not represent any organized policy although they have a certain clear orientation.

Speech delivered to the Johnson-Forest Tendency's National Conference, July 5, 1947, by Manuel of Los Angeles:

"Two years ago I came into the socialist movement with one thought in mind and only one thought. I didn't have any ideas of becoming a professional revolutionist. I still don't have any such ideas.

My only purpose in entering into the movement was and is the liberation of the proletariat.

For two years I have seen factional fights after factional fights. Each side trying to convince the other while the workers keep moving forward. Many times, believe me, I felt like throwing in the towel; yes, many times. I have had the urge of stepping out and letting everything go to hell. Why didn't I? Because I have come to the conclusion that my first duty is that for which I joined the party in the first place.

Talking about politics, I know very little about politics, although I agree with the Minority's American position. Politics in the sense of trying to convince on faction or another are plain worthless.

Who is to be the judge of all these political ideas? The Shachtmanites or the S.W.P. or the Johnsonites? No.

The only judge will be the workers.

I know it is better to go to the proletariat with the right political ideas, but I believe if the line is not right, the workers will change it. As long as you have faith in the proletariat, you are on the right road. Revolution without the working class will never come.

Two years ago I took a blind jump into the radical movement. Blind because I didn't know what it was all about. I had never before heard of the W.P. or the S.W.P., but I saw in this group indications that they wanted to do something about the class struggle.

For two years I have seen the party which I joined, put into action none of the beliefs which in my mind they had promised to do.

I came to the Conference with my mind made up against the split, because I am for unity and I am for unity not because I love to see big crowds, I am for unity only because I see the necessity of the proletariat for a Bolshevik party.

Comrade Johnson says the faction is ready to go into the masses and try to do something about socialism, instead of carrying on factional fights. That's what I have been arguing should be done all along.

Like two years ago, I am ready to take another head first dive, and only because I am still in the movement for the one and only reason for

which I joined the movement two years ago.

I don't care whether it is the W.P., the S.W.P. or by ourselves, but let's go out and really try to guide the workers in the direction in which they are going."

Speech delivered to the National Conference of the Johnson-Forest Tendency at the Trade Union session, July 6, 1947, by Philip Romano:

"In the past fifty years only one effective Bolshevik Party has been built in any of the great countries of Europe and America or for that matter anywhere. The W.P. has failed to find the basis on which to build the Bolshevik Party in America.

We base our analyses of a given society on the production relations and not on property relations. That is where we differ from the W.P. and from the S.W.P. both. It is necessary to find the basis in the workers for the building of the Bolshevik Party. This basis lies in the social relations of production, i.e., the contradiction between worker and machine as it is today. For years, capitalist control of production has built up a tremendous hostility and explosive force in the worker. He is sick to death of his life as he lives it today. It is this tremendous force which is at the bottom of all dynamic movements made by the workers.

Trotsky wrote that in order to reach the American worker we must know how he drinks whiskey, eats, sleeps and lives.

Explosions in the shop by various individual workers at given moments are but an indication of the whole. This whole assumes its collective expression in the big strikes.

Workers have a habit of expressing in one way something which bothers them. Usually this manifestation is not the true expression of what really bothers them.

Workers put up a barrier in the shop against fellow workers. It is only through outside social intercourse that this barrier is broken down. The pressure in the factory under capitalism are enormous.

One fact we have all recognized is the continued small attendance at union meetings. This must be dealt with. The underlying reason for this condition must be brought into the open to serve as another base for the proper evaluation of our task. In my opinion, the workers whom we are trying to reach are not these few activists who attend union functions and make up the core. On the contrary it is in the vast arena of the rank and file where lies the future revolutionary worker cadre.

Under the pressure of events, we have time and again seen the activist group recoil from the mass movement of the workers. The pressure of the bourgeoisie reaches an explosion in them.

It is necessary to bring a concept of social theory to the workers based on their own experiences. It is necessary to concretize the theoretical to actual work in the trade unions and the building of the party.

The Negro question is a dynamic one. It is clear that any approach to the Negro worker must be of the most profoundly revolutionary nature. The Negro realizes he is at an impasse. The union does not solve his problems.

During the 1800's the Negro struggle in the South reached highly tense proportions. The whites were continually alerted to possible Negro uprisings. They lived in constant fear and treated any action of the Negro with violent brutality.

Today in the factory when a Negro and white worker engage in a fight, the situation immediately becomes tense. The company seizes the opportunity through its stooges to further divide Negro worker from white.

Someone in the cafeteria drops a bottle at lunch time. This following on the heels of the battle produces a sudden sharp tension and silence. It is clear that events for the moment have brought the multitudinous pressures and divisions to a sudden anti-climax. The thing passes over and chatter resumes.

It is clear that white workers know the hostility of the Negro. He is also aware of his oppression and knows that the Negro is capable of drastic actions at any time.

Our first task in the factory today is to recruit worker revolutionists. I do not believe that we should exhaust ourselves by millions of small details, which go with union office. The conception that we must first acquire union office does not necessarily hold. We dissipate valuable energy in fruitless union tasks.

The weekly party press is an instrument of inestimable importance. It must do a tremendous job for us. In fact, three quarters of the task of getting down recruits.

When our comrades go into a new plant, the paper should have an issue dedicated to that plant letting the workers know that this is their paper. They should be invited to write and contribute. Our comrades must be trained in what to look for and how to write on it. The paper will then give our comrades the revolutionary enhancement which they need and which is difficult to fully put across during the working day.

We know that capitalist production develops the conditions for socialism in the material means of production. We also know, however, that it conditions workers philosophically and develops definite socialistic tendencies. This should be presented systematically from a Marxist analysis of developing production relations.

In order to begin to understand further what our task is, we must analyze the various groups of workers in the shop, their relation to each other and to the company and union. This must be examined now by comrades in factories wherever they are.

Following is an analysis of one such section of the workers.

There is in the factory today, a stratum of workers who over a period of years have accumulated a high seniority. That is, these workers have spent several or more years in the same industrial plants. During this time, they have observed and experienced various union regimes. More so than other transitory workers, they have seen union leaderships develop into various patterns and effects. They are aware of the class collaborationist activities of the union. Gangsterism and bureaucratism have left a hostile mark on them. This group of workers which represent a large section of the American labor movement, are especially aware of the rottenness of



capitalist society. They harbor always a deep and abiding hatred of the industrial ruling class. They are wise to its maneuvers, tricks and abuses of the workers. At the same time, not having a fundamental grasp of the economic laws governing society, many believe that the capitalist class is all powerful. They lean more to this conclusion as they see the trade union bureaucracies continually capitulate.

Throughout the years the process of production has been steadily working on them. This factor has produced an explosive latent force in these workers. More than all the other sections of the workers, they have been subjected to a steady and uninterrupted education and development by capitalist production and bourgeois society. All the contradictions are there.

Their years of service in one factory have created in them a feeling or attitude of having a vested interest in the plant. This is expressed by other workers thus: "If I worked here as long as you have, I would want to own the factory."

The apparent inability of the union to solve their problems, the seeming tremendous power of the boss, have both contributed to making these workers cynical and conservative. Many sections of them become out-and-out company men.

Any comrades who have spent some time in the factories will immediately recognize this core of high seniority, long-time employed workers. The company is forced to be lenient in one respect or another towards these workers. However this does not prevent periodic explosions.

To restate once again, these workers are more aware of the affects of production and also the wretchedness of the bosses than all the continually job-changing workers.

The party and the revolutionary movement in this country are very small. We have little or no seniority in the factories and will be chopped off at the first huge lay-offs. In preparation for the coming American Revolution, we must reach cadres of workers who are, so to speak, rooted in various factories for years. These are the workers about whom I have been speaking. They will be susceptible to a dynamic revolutionary perspective only.

Workers who acquire many years of seniority in a factory almost always have acquired stock interests. The company deliberately promotes sales of company stock to these workers to put them under the illusion of part ownership or interest.

\*\*\*\*\*

### BOLSHEVISM AND UNITY

The attitude of the Johnson -Forest Tendency to the Unity Negotiations has been expressed in various documents, notably the "Letter to the Membership," April 28, 1947, and the Resolution of July 5. We reproduce below some extracts from an authoritative comrade abroad to the leaders of the W.P. He expresses the opinion of a large majority of the most outstanding representatives of our co-thinkers in Europe. We agree entirely with the ideas he puts forward which in our opinion represent principled Bolshevism. The extracts follow:

"Regarding the information which has been transmitted to you by the representative of the Spanish group in Mexico, we are curious to know from what source this comrade, always so well informed on the machinations of the IEC and of the IS, gets his information. You know that the resolution of the Plenum of October 1946 stated that a report on the activity of the International during the war will be presented and discussed before the (E.P.C.)', in which is included the point relating to the attitude of the sections towards the war and the resistance movements, and that since this resolution, no other text of the CIO has emerged to suppress or modify this point.

"It will be preferable, in the future, for you to be more prudent in regard to the reports launched by different tendencies and isolated comrades, who try to discredit in advance the E.P.C. in order to escape from its decisions and its discipline afterwards.

"It is necessary to remind you, Comrades, that the ideological and organizational preparation of the E.P.C. has been up to now discussed at three sessions of the IEC in plenum in which, on the average, the qualified representatives of ten sections of the C.I.C. participated, among the most important belonging to the different tendencies, and that the decisions concerning the E.P.C. were adopted unanimously after long discussion.

"None of these representatives has placed in doubt, for even an instant, the sincere desire of the IEC to arrive at as democratic a representation as possible of our movement and the efforts of the IS to facilitate to the maximum compatible with the limited material means at our disposal, the international discussion.

"We are therefore, very disagreeably surprised to note that your letter, the first which we have received since the resolution of the last meeting which decided on your participation in the international discussion and at the E.P.C. with full rights, is drawn up in such a tone, placing in doubt the democratic preparation of the E.P.C. and preparing, in our opinion, indirectly a position of retreat from your agreement to respect the decisions and the discipline of the E.P.C.

"In regard to your remarks on the question of the evolution of negotiations between your organization and the S.W.P., we note with regret that their actual present state does not promise a rapid and favorable consummation, as we had desired and hoped.

"The stiffening which is now revealed in the S.W.P. is in large part the result of repeated attacks, which your leadership has believed it necessary to level, immediately after the departure of Comrade Smith, against the S.W.P., its leadership and the Johnson tendency.

"These attacks do not indicate any spirit for unity, and do not in any way prepare an atmosphere of the best relations in the unified party.

"The letter of Comrade X which was written before the S.W.P. Plenum which decided in principle the question of unification and before the 'Joint Statement' has served you as a base for unloosing a campaign which has reawakened in the SWP and those of its members most opposed to unification, as also in the C.I.O., all the fears, distrust and doubts concerning the possibility and the usefulness of this unification.

"Nobody demands from your organization an ideological capitulation, that is, an abandonment of your political opinions which you will have the right to defend in the normal condition of the regime of democratic centralism which characterizes our movement.

"But we have all believed, and on this point, there is occasion to speak of a 'misunderstanding', that you have taken seriously the decision to return into the SWP and the Movement, as a disciplined tendency which accepts the fact of its position as a Minority in relation to the Majority of the SWP and the Movement, which demonstrates by its acts, that its main concern is not to discredit and combat this majority, but together with it and under its leadership, to build the revolutionary party in the United States and in the world. That is to say, either you are convinced that our Movement is a healthy revolutionary movement in whose ranks a tendency like yours ought to take its place in order to influence in the long run, according to its own ideas, or our movement seems to you of such secondary importance and so corrupt that you prefer to act independently and with full liberty. In that case, let us say frankly that the question of unification is not posed. Let us stop presenting the spectacle of people who maneuver without any real desire and without any faith in the possibility and the usefulness of this unification.

"In no case, have we considered your re-entry into our Movement as being part of an 'entrism' tactic such as that which we have practiced in reformist and centrist organizations and which aim to provoke a split after a certain time.

"We take note that both you and the S.W.P. declare yourself still party to the unification in the terms discussed when Comrade Smith visited you. In this case, we leave the Extra Party Conference to decide this question definitively, it being understood that in advance thereof, we now envisage with difficulty the possibility of a unification.

"The recommendation that we can make, both to your organization and to the S.W.P., is to pursue henceforth political discussions, to expand practical action jointly on all questions and matters where an accord is possible, to restrict to a minimum the discussion around personal incidents in assisting the regular functioning of the Committee of Coordination of the two organizations.

"We believe that the method which consists in magnifying disproportionately the propositions made or written in internal discussions and documents, by this or that comrade are not indicated to consummate the unity negotiations. What matters are the written agreements which define the official position of each organization on the question of unification and not the manner in which each, within its organization, tries to explain and to justify its attitude towards this question.

"You display, Comrades, tremendous energy in creating the impression that all this history of unification, machinations and shady calculations have as their end to lure you into one knows not what trap and to eliminate you as an ideological tendency,

"As far as we are concerned, Comrades, we believe that in accepting the unity on the terms proposed, you accepted the re-entry into our movement in full knowledge of the basis of our ideological positions and our organizational principles, of your rights but also of your duties as a Minority tendency in the S.W.P. and the Movement.

"If you have decided sincerely to build with us the revolutionary party in the United States, your rights are fully guaranteed, as we have already demonstrated by publishing your documents in our press and by making them available, by our own means, for the information of all the members of the Movement.

"But if you believe that your political conceptions are so different from ours, that the discipline of the present Majority of our movement is unacceptable to you, and the coexistence in our organization is impossible, it is necessary to say this frankly and to conclude that unity at the present stage is impossible not for organizational reasons of the 'bureaucratic regime' or 'clique', etc., but for political reasons.

"The choice is still in your hands."

LENINISM AND OPPORTUNISM

On November 8, 1946, a most unusual debate took place in Greece between the Stalinists and the Greek section of the Fourth International. It was the second of three which had been agreed upon by the two organizations. The subject of the debate was "Popular Republic or Socialist Soviet Republic in Greece?" The complete debate will no doubt be published in English. We here publish some extracts only for the education of our membership. We believe that they will learn some valuable lessons in distinguishing the tone and language of Leninism from the tone and language of opportunism. All opportunism, says Trotsky, springs from a lack of belief in the revolutionary capacity of the proletariat. Of this Stalinism is, in its own way, a significant example. Our young comrades in particular should study the two passages and learn to recognize the accents of Bolshevism and the accents of opportunism under whatever guise they may appear.

From the speech of Stinas, the speaker for the Fourth International:

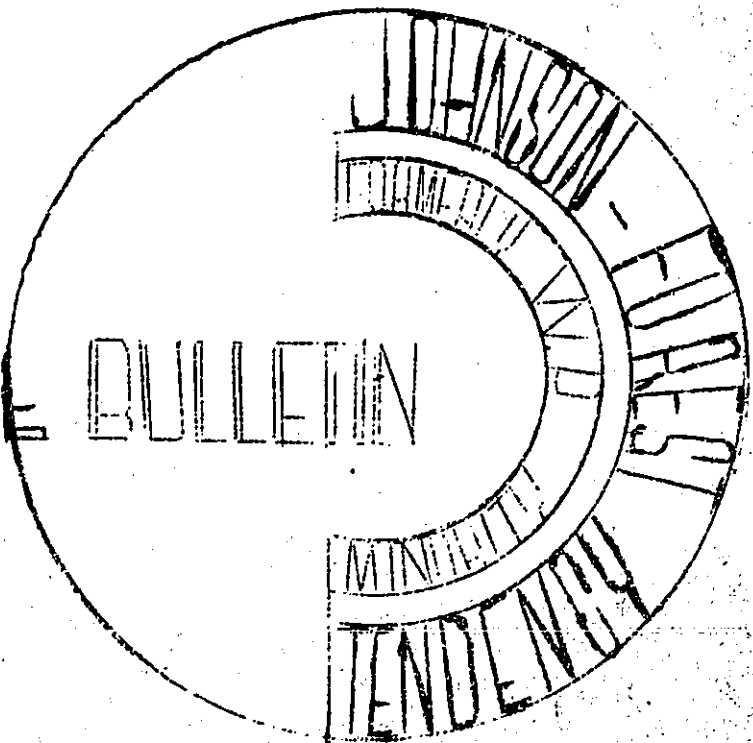
"I would like right at the beginning to draw your attention to the exceptional importance of the subject that we propose to treat. If the objective conditions for a popular republic really exist in Greece, if the development of the productive forces is possible without the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist regime, if it is possible to have a peaceful and gradual road to socialism, then without any shadow of doubt the party which sets for itself as the immediate strategic task the social revolution in Greece is condemned to fritter itself away and vegetate on the fringe of history. But, in such a case, it is absolutely clear that all the tactical and strategic principles which Marx and Lenin have taught us and which they themselves have applied during their whole career, all the analyses of Lenin and of Luxemburg on our epoch, everything on which Bolshevism has built its program, ought to be revised. The October Revolution itself would thus remain an inexplicable historical phenomenon without theoretical parallel. That which will then be judged during this discussion and on which you will decide by your vote, is not merely this or that difference with the Greek Communist Party but the scientific foundation of Marxism itself as a totality."

From the speech of Apostolu, for the Communist Party:

"First for us, Stalinists, one thing is clear: the soviet form of the power of the workers is the best form that the experience of the labor movement has yet given for the transition from capitalism to socialism... But, for us Stalinists the question does not reduce itself to seeing what is best in principle. For us, Stalinists, who attempt always to remain in the context of real life and not in fossilized phrases, the best each time and in each concrete case, is that which drives the class struggle forward, one by one; and from this point of view, if the soviet form of power is in principle the best, it is however, not yet accepted by large strata of workers who wish, however, to fight and who fight effectively for a democracy representing the power of the people. The soviet form which will set in motion the large popular democratic current created by the struggle against the fascist dictatorship, and the basic task of every true revolutionary is to find in each case the most appropriate manner of expanding the movement of the masses. Thus, if the parliamentary form of democracy today, as is the fact, drives forward the struggle of the workers for socialism, if this form of power binds us to the masses and permits us to go forward with the masses - for without the masses one remains a revolutionary phrase-maker, which is to say one ceases to be a revolutionary - then it would be a crime to reject it."

What a series of articles could be written on these two extracts and other sections of the speeches, as texts! But we refrain.

# INTERNAL BULLETIN



WHAT IS SECTARIANISM...p. 1

THE JOHNSON-FOREST TENDENCY  
AND THE ATTITUDE TO BIGGS  
WITH BUREAUCRATIC COLLECTIVISTS.....p. 3

A LETTER TO THE WEST COAST  
.....p. 5

A BEGINNING.....p. 8

Part II  
BUILDING THE MASS REVOLUTIONARY  
PARTY IN THE MINE AREA..p. 1

July 24, 1947      Vol. 1, No. 2

- 1 -

WHAT IS SECTARIANISM?

Marxists, in the throes of factional controversy are apt to throw around words like "ultra-left," "opportunism," "sectarianism," to the confusion of young or inexperienced comrades. One mark of a good, serious, responsible, Marxist, is that he always uses these terms in strict relation to a political analysis and not as an epithet.

For our epoch Trotsky defined sectarianism in a long passage in the Transitional Program. In the first edition it can be found on page 51. In the second edition of the Program (Pioneer Pocket Library), it appears on page 55.

Let us summarize the views put forward there.

At the basis of sectarianism is the refusal to struggle for partial and transitional demands, i.e., for the elementary interests and needs of the working masses as they are today.

How do they show this?

Trotsky shows the characteristic features of the Sectarrians.

- 1) They propose to turn their backs to the old trade unions.
- 2) They are indifferent to struggle within reformist organizations.
- 3) They refuse to draw a distinction between bourgeois democracy and fascism; e.g., in Spain in 1936 where they refused to draw a distinction between the two fighting camps. They are for the same reason "neutral" between Japan and China.
- 4) They deny the principled differences between the U.S.S.R. and the imperialist countries. Naturally we do not agree with Trotsky on this.
- 5) The sectarians deny the necessity of transitional demands. Political events are for them an occasion for comment not for action.

"Since sectarians as in general every kind of blunderer and miracle-man, are toppled by reality at each step, they live in a state of perpetual exasperation, complaining about the "regime" and "the methods" and ceaselessly wallowing in small intrigues. In their own circles they customarily carry on a regime of despotism. The political prostration of sectarianism serves to complement shadow-like the prostration of opportunism, revealing no revolutionary vistas. In practical politics sectarians unite with opportunists, particularly with centrists, every time in the struggle against Marxism."

The best examples of sectarianism in the United States are the Oehlerites with their perpetual harping on the string of opposition to the Labor Party slogan, and their refusal to admit the validity of critical support of the Labor Party to power, e.g., in Britain. For them there is no difference between Attlee and Sir Oswald Mosley.

The sectarian therefore has a clearly defined political physiognomy. He may not subscribe to all of the leading traits which Trotsky distinguishes. But he subscribes to sufficient of them to make his political orientation clear.

Now for an example of how to misuse the term. In April 1917 the whole of the Bolshevik Central Committee misjudged the revolutionary situation in Russia and for a variety of reasons kept the party's line within the framework of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. When Lenin arrived he made a fundamentally different analysis of the class forces in motion and from it drew perspectives of the proletarian revolution. He therefore on the basis of this analysis of the objective situation proposed different slogans on the basis of different perspectives. Even the slogans he was prepared to accept, like the slogan of the Constituent Assembly, he put forward in a manner corresponding to his analysis of the situation. He said: Constituent Assembly? Yes. But who will call it and organize it and carry out its decisions? The bourgeoisie? That is ridiculous. Let the workers and peasants and soldiers soviets call the Constituent Assembly together. He showed clearly enough that with a different estimate of the political situation he would be ready to modify his demands for a revolutionary Constituent Assembly. Needless to say his opponents called him "sectarian," "stratospheric" and the like.

It is obvious that behind the word "sectarian" can be hidden two qualitatively different concepts. First a certain false political method which Trotsky has described and the signs of which are easy to discern; and secondly different estimates of a certain concrete situation resulting in different policies. Your genuine political confusionist can never make these clear even to himself. He is too scared and nervous to say "My estimate of the objective situation is such and such. Yours is different and that is why we have different perspectives and different slogans and even where we have the same slogans we give them a different content." No, he prefers to say: "On the objective situation, i.e. on the relation of class forces, there is no serious disagreement. But," and here he is in his element, "you are a sectarian. You do not take into consideration the level of consciousness of the workers. There is no party. Now if there was a party you would not be sectarian. But as there is no party you are sectarian" and so on and so on.

Building a Bolshevik Party, becoming a good Bolshevik requires the capacity not to be befuddled by words. The reply to all this is simple. It should be as follows: "I think that this analysis is correct and therefore this policy follows. You have a different analysis and another policy follows. That is all. I think your analysis is wrong and I know why it is wrong. We have discussed that often. When something happens and you think it can change my mind from my view tell me about that. I may have time and inclination to listen to you then. Meanwhile go and clarify your mind as to what is a sectarian. You need such clarification badly."

In conclusion, we may add that political abuse of this name-calling type is on a par with the persecution of inexperienced workers and youth who are bewildered by learning that they have no right to take an opinion on the American question because they have not "studied enough" and cannot answer questions on Anti-Duhring or worse still that it is obvious that they agree with the Johnson-Forest Tendency because of emotional ties and not for "political reasons." This is also on a par with more ambitious but equally inane substitutions of pseudo-psychology for politics. It is necessary to say that people who allow themselves to be confused by such petty politics are only showing that they will not be able to stand up very well against the confusionism by which the far more powerful and subtle bourgeoisie attempt to confuse the proletariat and its vanguard.

\*\*\*\*\*



THE JOHNSON-FOREST TENDENCY AND THE ATTITUDE TO BLOCs WITH BUREAUCRATIC COLLECTIVISTS

In many documents, most recently in A Letter to the Membership, we have made clear our hostile attitude to a bloc with "bureaucratic collectivists." We want here to show how far back we took this position and how clear-cut and unequivocal was our rejection of such a bloc.

The first public article on the Russian question by the Tendency appeared in the New Internationalist in April 1941. It was a discussion article entitled "Russia - A Fascist State." In the issue of the previous December, Shachtman had written his article "Is Russia a Workers' State?" In it he characterized Russia as "bureaucratic state-socialism," which was later changed to "bureaucratic collectivism." Against this we polemicized as follows:

"In Russia the proletariat is a class of wage-laborers. The peasantry, despite all the fictions of the property forms, are wage-laborers, some of them receiving a strictly controlled bonus on the year's work. This predominance of wage-labor makes the means of production capital. The means of production, monopolized by a section of society, in their role of capital, have an independent life and movement of their own. The bureaucracy of capital, then becomes what Marx always insisted the capitalist class is, merely the representative, the agent, the personification, the incarnation of capital. The agents or representatives of the means of production as capital can call it state property or common property or private property or Peruvian property or bureaucratic state socialist property if they have good enough reason for doing so. They may have monopolized the means of production for five generations or for five years. They may organize and appropriate in open competition with each other or through their state. They may plan the economy and lead it to chaos or they may have simple old fashioned chaos without plan. But from the juridical and metaphysical fiction of the abstract property relations to Stalin's new 15 year plan, all are to be analyzed and appraised only in the light of the primary social relation, the class struggle. Here you have two alternatives. You can say with the Cannonites that the proletariat is still the ruling class and Russia transitional to socialism by way of chaotic economy, the G.P.U., prisons as factories, factories as prisons, corruption of the international proletariat...But you cannot like Shachtman call the bureaucracy a class whose state control 'guarantees economic and political supremacy' and at the same time call Russia 'a transitional and therefore unstable social order.' American capitalism is an unstable but not a transitional social order. You can have a social order transitional to socialism or back to capitalism, with the proletariat as ruling class or struggling to maintain its position as ruling class. Or you can have another type of society with defined social relations. But both together? No. If you say with Shachtman that the bureaucracy is a class and 'owns the state and therewith the state property' you are saying that the ruling class in Russia 'owns' the means of production. What you are saying in reality is that the ruling class is in such a productive relation to the working class that the means of production thereby become capital. That is what Marx meant by saying that capital was conditioned on wage-labor. If you don't want that, then back to the old degenerated workers' state conception." (pp.55-56)

From that day to this we have never wavered from this. You can say it is a workers state or a degenerated workers state. You can say it is a capitalist state. But the "neither-worker-nor-capitalist" state bears in it the complete break-up of the fundamentals of Marxism in theory, and in practice, all sorts of evasions and compromises as to the relation of the proletarian revolution to bourgeois democracy. We are ready to consider a bloc on the Russian question

with defeatists who have a revolutionary Marxist position. If in that bloc, "bureaucratic-collectivists can find a place, a clearly defined subordinate place in which their fundamental revisionism is clearly defined and differentiated, and in which their particular political ideas have no possibility of gaining ascendancy or of being confused with revolutionary Marxism, then that does not trouble us. But we took our original position in 1941, we have held it consistently and the intervening years have justified us ten thousand times over. They are very dull people who cannot understand this.

\*\*\*\*\*

-5-  
A LETTER TO THE WEST COAST

We reprint below a letter recently sent from this center to two comrades on the West Coast:

July 14, 1947

My dear Bessie and William,

I have just seen your telegram with the news about the hesitations of some of the comrades to carry out our decision. It is a political experience which had to be expected. For our own clarification, and I hope for theirs, I want to make a few comments.

I say that was to be expected. I saw Cannon on Saturday. In the course of the talk he asked me: "How many have you got?" I replied as follows: "We have 68 on the list. There are about half-a-dozen or more youths and some sympathetic people making about 80 in all. But as far as we are concerned some of them are sure to back out. As Lenin said, 'When the locomotive of history makes a sharp turn, many cannot hold on and are thrown off.'"

The first thing I would ask you to do is not to bring any undue pressure on these comrades. Talk to them, discuss the political issues with them if they so wish. But today we are acting on a conference decision. Before the conference was one period. This is another. We would be absolutely wrong to beg people to accept a conference decision. It would be bad for them and, much more important, it would be bad for the Tendency as an organization. To Los Angeles in particular, at enormous expense, well before the conference, we sent two of our most qualified comrades to speak and discuss. The Los Angeles comrades sat and listened and asked questions. They had every conceivable opportunity to judge, to weigh, to see where political truth and the political future lay. They had time, and some of them had any number of years to judge what the W.P. stood for. They decided that the political right was with us. We answered everything raised by the W.P. and by them. We raised and clarified policies that are still a sealed book to the W.P. They were more-or-less satisfied, some of them very satisfied, with our general political orientation.

We organized a conference. The comrades sacrificed heavily to do it. We did not act in secret. We informed the W.P. what we were doing. We told them they would be informed. We did not pack the conference. You knew Mannie was uncertain or in fact, opposed, and might vote against. Because of that and because he was a worker, you chose him as delegate. Mannie changed his mind and of his own free will voted for the decision, voted for the Resolution on the need for complete solidarity in all actions to carry out the decision. On his return to Los Angeles he starts to raise objections and raise barriers. That is wrong and a bad sign for Mannie.

Did we act hastily? No. It took us months to prepare. Have we acted unpolitically? No. We drafted a political resolution in which we explained everything. What does Mannie or any of the other comrades object to in it? But supposing that they have some doubts about this or that aspect? That does not justify their action. Our Tendency has now been developing for six years. We have fought honestly for our ideas. We have developed them over a wide field. It is to further these ideas that we are acting. The great body of the caucus that developed and fought for these ideas is solid for the step we are taking. For a few people who disagree with us to set up their own individual doubts and hesitations against the carefully worked out decisions of a large majority is

wrong. Yes, wrong. It means that though you agree with the political ideas, though you find yourself in close agreement and sympathy with a body of comrades who you think are serious, yet when they decide to do something, you push the politics into the background and elevate your own doubts and hesitations into the foreground and act on those. That is the absolute reverse of Bolshevik politics. How often we meet workers who agree with everything we say but for this or that reason will not join the party, will not act on their political beliefs. We have to be patient with them. But at least they do not set up as leaders, as a vanguard to guide others. No. These comrades must be made to understand the real political backwardness that their actions indicate.

And what is it that they object to? That we propose to go into the Movement. Yes, exactly that. Do we try to prevent the W.P. going in? No. We say to them: if you are as anxious to start work in a unified party as you say you are, come in. The C.I.C. has written a few days ago to tell them to stop fooling and make up their minds. We have made up ours. We wish to get out of this organization which cannot make up its mind about anything and start work at once with the Movement. These comrades prefer to vacillate with the W.P. instead of coming with us. That, too, is wrong and bad.

Did we intrigue and maneuver in a dishonest manner? No. We had absolutely no relations with Cannon until we handed the document to the W.P. Then we went to see Cannon and told him of our desire to be integrated into the S.W.P. We refused to go to him and bargain as to whether we would stay with the W.P. if we did not get "good conditions." We stated plainly our political opinions of the W.P. and the S.W.P., not slanders and low gossip, but political analyses. He told us that he respected our political positions and would communicate with the C.I.C. and his National Committee. It would take about eight weeks before the plenum of the C.I.C. and his own plenum. We also wanted eight weeks to publish our own documents and get our affairs in order. He had no objection to this. Meanwhile Shachtman had refused to grant our transfer. We had discussed all possible evaluations. Mannie was at the Executive Session where we went through all this openly before the delegates in advance. We decided to live by ourselves for eight weeks, and during that time to finish up the work of seven years. Mannie now raises objections. That is very, very wrong. There were some who disagreed with our views. But seeing that the majority, and the majority of the leading comrades, were solidly for this course, they took care to be the most active and energetic in carrying it out. That is the correct behavior. They felt that even if they would have preferred to wait for a while, yet what came first was the political ideas, and to protect those, to give them the most solid backing, their own idea as to whether an action should take place in six days, six weeks, or six months, was not important.

We have now attracted international attention. In Latin America and in Europe the ideas of our Tendency are being discussed and closely watched. We have sent a comrade abroad who will meet a large number of the international comrades, circulate our documents in person, spread our ideas, fight for them. Yet Mannie and these comrades at this time say "We think your ideas are fine. We believe that they correspond to our experiences with the workers. We think that yours is the road. You have acted with energy, honesty and discipline. But we think you should wait a bit and if you don't think so, go by yourself." It is indefensible. There is not an ounce of Bolshevism in it, not an ounce. It would be absolutely wrong not to let them know that this is our opinion - not necessarily with anger, or with reproach or with bitterness. Not at all. But as part of the political education which is the counterpart of our political ideas.

-7-

The caucus prefers to have fifty people who know the correspondence between ideas and action rather than one hundred and fifty who at a critical time when we need all the strength we can get, draw back and hesitate and make excuses. And what will they gain by it? Nothing. The W.P. Majority will fill them up with all sorts of unpolitical ideas like "loyalty" etc. But they are very naive if they believe that the serious ones in the W.P. will have any political respect for them. It will be obvious to any serious revolutionary that they had to make a choice between their political ideas and their organizational inclinations and they decided against their political ideas. They will now sit in W.P. meetings and do what - ? Try their best to reconcile what they really think with what they will hear and either begin to revise their political ideas or be in an insoluble contradiction. It is precisely this that is the result of the politics of the W.P. For if we were in the place of the W.P., we would tell these comrades: "If you do not agree with us politically, then go with the Minority." We would say this because ten or more comrades with us or not with us does not affect us. On the other hand we know how demoralizing it is for these comrades to be in the position they will be in and we prefer to teach these comrades how to behave themselves politically rather than see them drowning in the non-political atmosphere of the W.P. - and this whether they come with us or not. But as long as they fool around with the politics of Shachtman, Draper, Larry O'Connor and Stan, they will never, never understand what is Bolshevism, i.e., preparation for leadership of the revolutionary proletariat. It is at times like this that comrades begin to acquire bad habits of rationalization and compromise which sometimes end in their leaving the movement altogether. As for the S.W.P. whom we all meet in the unified organization, the political reputation of these comrades will not be higher but lower if they persist in their indicated course.

As for us, we now have before us what we hope will be eight wonderful weeks. We shall mobilize ourselves for political clarification and the publication of our ideas. We shall let everybody, far and wide, know what we are, what we stand for, what we intend to do. Then we shall be able to join the Movement as a solid, disciplined body of people who know what they want and how they intend to fight for it. We have done this without any one of our leading comrades spreading gossip or slander or making psychological characterizations of the leaders or the politics of the W.P. or the S.W.P. If after all this, the comrades still think that they prefer to stay with the others, then, my dear Bessie and William, hear what they have to say, tell them what we are doing and what we propose to do, try to persuade them to reconsider, but let them be under no misunderstanding as to what we think of their actions, not as individuals, but as political persons. If we did not do that and with the necessary firmness, we should be traitors to the political ideas we represent.

J.

\*\*\*\*\*  
THE JOHNSON-FOREST TENDENCY HAS NOW REPRINTED TWO OF ITS BASIC DOCUMENTS:  
THE POSITION OF THE JOHNSON-FOREST TENDENCY ON THE NEGRO QUESTION  
EDUCATION, AGITATION, AND PROPAGANDA by J.R. Johnson  
these are for sale at 10¢ per copy  
\*\*\*\*\*

A BEGINNING

At the Trade Union Session of our Conference we once again reaffirmed the ideas our documents are based upon in essence, and the American Resolution and "Education, Propaganda and Agitation" (The Americanization of Bolshevism). Our task of recruiting and integrating workers to the Bolshevik movement requires that we now seriously consider what previously we have only hinted at. That is, the life and milieu of the working class in the United States and the penetration of it by our Marxist ideas which they have already begun to grasp in instinctive action and thought.

Because the American proletariat is one of the most flexible in the world for historic and economic reasons, the revolutionary ideas permeating it are for the superficial observer clouded over by the bourgeois forms of expression. This in itself forces serious Marxists to raise their level of analysis and to remove themselves more and more from the abstract understanding of the proletariat in relationship to the bourgeoisie to understanding the proletariat as an oppressed class emerging with the patterns of the future which we must adopt. But to get at the roots of the working class, party members must submerge all petty-bourgeois ideals and rise to identity with the proletariat. We must learn and learn from the proletariat - in the factory, in social life, in recreations. We must accept the worker to a degree that we change all our petty-bourgeois superficial standards of culture. The positive conviction of the progress that the working class represents - its power to batter down all that has formerly degraded us - hypocritical double standards between men and women, between old and young, between the well and the handicapped, between ideals and actions, between necessities and opposing power. These things have split the modern personality, made us powerless. The proletariat can make us, and society, into a powerful united whole.

The proletariat has the new culture in it. We have no need for sanction from the bourgeois professors who quake at the moving mass ready to change what these learned men have for years mildly criticized like liberals.

We have no need for shame when meeting former friends now "successful" in various professional fields. There are comrades who enviously look back to see former friends and ex-comrades "passing them by" - now book writers preoccupied with Celine, psychoanalysis and such. Actually we are not passed by, but rather we ride on the crest of a new, a higher culture which far surpasses all clingers and compromisers to the old outworn bourgeois culture.

If we are sufficiently educated in Marxism, we are able to approach work in various factories and among the proletariat not only as economists but as people who are able to understand the real socialistic instincts and desires which the workers are expressing, often in bourgeois language and with bourgeois phrases. We can make of our Marxist education and the penetration into the factory the basis of a real revolutionary approach to society. We shall be getting the way of winning workers to the party and integrating them. I am repeatedly amazed at the way workers, once we learn to talk to them and really mean and understand what we are telling them, can take it and understand it and give it back to us in their own terms. Sitting on the line, talking to them, one can see the new culture in the proletariat. That is the real culture of the future and not chasing after the book-writing challenge and the need to compete with the bourgeois culture. The foundation of the new culture lies waiting for those perceptive enough and active enough to understand and disentangle its potentiality. That is what is meant by penetrating into the workers' milieu. Otherwise

the worker is someone you work next to and try to influence to vote your way in union elections or to join the party, but has no positive value inherent in himself. He represents only a quantitative increase to the movement and is unable to exercise a qualitative effect.

Trotsky fully understood our task here. In speaking of the party press, he said:

"I continue to be of the opinion that you have too many petty-bourgeois boys and girls who are very good and devoted to the party but who do not fully realize that their duty is not to discuss among themselves but to penetrate into the fresh milieu of workers." (In Defense of Marxism, p. 112)

To do this we have to make the complete break from bourgeois society and all its dying yet clinging emotion. Otherwise party members continue to wait hesitantly ("Is this the time to go into the factory? Must I place politics before everything? When shall I have a chance to settle down and write a novel? What will our friends think?) - before going the complete way with and of the working class. To be poised between two different ways of life means to be fearful and unsure - and this in the Marxist party means to be fearful and unsure of the potentialities of the working class. Comrades who fall at ease with college student contacts and not with workers must understand this dichotomy for what it is - an underestimation of the working class.

Many still do not grasp the great extent our ideas penetrate our attitude towards all things. When contacting workers we busy ourselves completely with "politics", while we ourselves fail to integrate the trade union sphere with the complete capitalistically-dominated life of the workers we contact. Trotsky says:

"As it is, the paper is divided among various writers, each of whom is very good, but collectively they do not permit the workers to penetrate to the pages of the (press). Each of them speaks for the workers (and speaks very well) but nobody will hear the workers. In spite of its literary brilliance, to a certain degree the paper becomes a victim of journalistic routine. You do not hear at all how the workers live, fight, clash with the police or drink whiskey. It is very dangerous for the paper as a revolutionary instrument of the party. The task is not to make a paper through the joint forces of a skilled editorial board but to encourage the workers to speak for themselves." (In Defense of Marxism, p. 112)

The workers have a great deal to say. For Marxists to recruit workers from all strata means that we must understand the extent of all they have to say. We must not, for example, expect contacts, Negro workers, young factory workers, young factory women and workers coming to us from factory schooling to fit right in with our ways. But what we should expect is that when they do come, they round out what we have failed in. The socialism in the proletariat today is very powerful, but it is not clearly expressed politically and we fail to understand in live terms the infiltration of bourgeois ideals into the proletariat which cover up and obscure the real socialism in the workers. That is why we have to, as Trotsky says, encourage the workers to speak for themselves.

We fail to bridge the gap between "politics" and social life, and in this lies the reason why neither one nor the other is successful. Comrades in anxiety toward recruiting become impatient and tend to blame the "backwardness of the working class", the inevitable end of sectarianism (and opportunism too).

Marxists who once grasp onto the dynamic reality with which the United States working class moves need not fear propaganda for revolutionary socialism among the workers, and with this grows the deep social respect among people who strive together that makes for national comradeship.

I feel that I have not fully and clearly expressed my ideas. It is only now we have left the WP that I can begin. The WP covered up its failures by blaming the workers, and tried to integrate workers by "cutting short business meetings" and "going down to their level" and pure trade unionism and all that we have been demoralizing ourselves with, with them, for the last two years. If the comrades who spent all those years in the factories had known what they were doing, they would have recruited. Of that I am sure. And although some can't get jobs now, they would know something and would be able to win over and hold workers. Studying Marxism and our caucus resolutions and documents and my experience with the workers, small as it is, make me feel that we have the correct approach, but we are only just beginning. Many of our own comrades in the caucus are still not able to make the big jump in their thinking.

- Nettie



BUILDING THE MASS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY IN THE MINE AREA

In this period, the miners both as a social group and as a section of the industrial proletariat, present tremendous opportunities and responsibilities in terms of building the mass revolutionary party in the United States. Certain important generalizations and perspectives can be drawn from the work already begun in the Monongahela Valley.

The Monongahela river rises in central West Virginia and flows northward to Pittsburgh, a distance of some 150 miles of navigable water. Along this entire length there are hundreds of slope mines employing thousands of miners. Tipples lead from the mine mouths to the river where coal is loaded on barges to be freighted by steamer to Pittsburgh. In 1946 almost 1/10 of the nation's coal was transported down this river by barges. Several railroads also serve the area; their tonnage is even greater.

The coal area follows the river but is relatively narrow. On either side a marginal agricultural region exists. To the north the mines blend imperceptibly into an industrial area the center of which is Pittsburgh, the center of the world's steel production. Within the coal strip there are hundreds of company towns, many of which are hardly a mile apart.

Pittsburgh is the only metropolitan center in the vicinity. Other towns have a maximum of about 25,000 people. Few miners ever see Pittsburgh, and trips to such centers as Fairmont and Morgantown, W.Va., are not frequent except for those who live within a few miles of the towns. The company town is the economic unit.

A conservative estimate places twenty percent of the UMWA's 400,000 men in the Monongahela area. The extractive nature of the industry demands decentralized pit mouths and the companies have seen fit to place the shacks they erect for the miners at the pit mouths in the majority of cases. This means that many of the commonplaces of urban civilization such as running water, bath rooms, and so on, are automatically excluded from the miner's life because of the economic impossibility of installing them on a small scale.

In general there are three reasons why there are few central locations from which the miners could travel to work. The first is historical. Many of the company camps partook more of the nature of company concentration camps than towns when they were erected. Immigrants were lured from Europe and placed in barbed wire stockades which included both homes and pit mouths. Union organizers and correspondents were excluded from the stockade. The miners could leave only by means of a pass which had to be secured from the boss.

The armed guards and the barbed wire exist only in memory but the company towns remain both as vestiges and as businesses. Once erected the shacks are inhabited until they literally rot away. One of our contacts helped build shacks in 1926 which cost only \$50.00 each. Today they rent for \$15.00 a month. Others are so old that no one in the community can remember when they were erected. From the standpoint of the miner: few miners can afford automobiles and unless there are shower houses at the mine, no one likes to drive a car to work and dirty the interior with the black dust which covers the miner.

0 9 7 3

One of the products of the transition from hand work to machine was the almost total displacement of older workers. During the depression it was customary to get rid of all men over 40 when possible and supplant them with younger elements who were better able to withstand the grueling pace set by the machines. Skill became of infinitely less importance than strength. During the war years almost all of the older men were recalled as marginal mines were reopened. Simultaneously, younger men left the pits in droves, some to the army, some to the defense plants. And they have not returned. One of the problems of today, not only in America but all over the world, is that young men refuse to work in the mines.

There are three primary classifications of miners today. These are Negroes, immigrants and their sons, and native whites who have frequently switched to mining from marginal farms. One of every four miners is a Negro; many of them come from the deep South and the general degree of concentration increases from north to south. During the 20's many Negroes were imported from the southern states to the northern areas as strike breakers. Most of the ill will of that period has been dissipated by time. However, a certain amount of distrust remains. In the Monongahela area union action must have the support of both races to be effective; whites dislike to support a local's program which is carried by almost exclusively Negro votes.

On the other hand, when the relations are judged relative to other areas it is readily seen that friction is at a very minimum. It is not at all infrequent that whites and blacks share the same house and mixed marriages are found now and again. Negroes hold offices in many of the locals, responsible positions, not merely honorary posts.

A surprising amount of discrimination is practised by the employers; many mines refuse to hire Negroes and many company towns exclude them. West Virginia is a Jim Crow state of the worst sort.

The foreign born and their children are concentrated in the northern sections of the Monongahela valley. Most of them came from southeastern Europe and are Slavs, Italians, and Poles. Many retain European political traditions and I have encountered old Mensheviks among the Russian detachments. The immigrants predominate north of the Mason and Dixon line; this because Pennsylvania preceded West Virginia in production and since 1913 immigration has been slight.

No effort was ever made to intergrate these immigrants into American culture. As a result they retain many European traditions and have their own societies, Polish lodges, Slavic unions, etc. Some of the national groupings even have their own colleges. It is quite difficult to communicate with many of these people even now, particularly for one not acquainted with the peculiar mixture of conventional gestures and international dialect which is sanctioned by social usage. This has acted to the detriment of literature sales and is doubly unfortunate as many of these people are potential revolutionaries of the first order. I am quite confident, for example, that an Italian speaking person could organize a branch in Morgantown in short order.

Whereas the Negroes offer the most fertile ground for revolutionary activity because of the dual discrimination which they suffer and the immigrants are receptive both by cultural heritage and American discrimination, the native whites represent a distinctively backward strata in comparison.

- 3 -

They are frequently the products of marginal or sub-marginal farming land and their density increases to the south. Yet certain factors must be noted. The hillsmen of southern West Virginia are the most militant miners in the state even though the least political. Similarly, it is in this area that the greatest opposition to Lewis is to be found. And it is in southern West Virginia where living and working conditions are the worst and where the greatest amount of personal violence takes place. During the November 1946 strike only one miner was killed, a phenomenally low figure, but this took place in the southern section of West Virginia, out of the Monongahela Valley, be it noted.

Between these classifications there is some ill feeling but on the whole remarkably little. Differences in race or origin seldom interfere with the business at hand, particularly in case of a strike where community interest take precedence over personal predilections.

The formal education of the average miner is negligible. But this is compensated by an industrial education both vigorous and profound. In the process of production a certain amount of skill, strength and self-reliance are requisite; in the environment of oppression a sense of hatred and a spirit of revolt are inevitable.

The strictures of modern capitalism have empirically drummed into the head of the miner a receptivity to revolutionary propaganda. Marxist theory, not as such but as translated into terminology and experiences comprehensible to the miner, is immediately grasped with an almost shocking profundity.

The miners are deeply dissatisfied with their working and living conditions. This finds expression in a relatively high amount of floating population; men who drift from camp to camp seeking something better. The old miners warn the young men to stay out of the pits; on the other hand few actual miners do leave the pits. This is partially accounted for by the fact that there is little else to do in the area but the broader reason lies, in my opinion, in the relationship between the miner and his work.

The miners take a certain pride in the fact that they are miners, in the working conditions as it were. But, on the other hand, they dislike the conditions of work. The contradiction between the innate desire to produce coal and the inability to derive any benefit from production manifest itself in friendly competition between shifts to see which group can win a carton of cigarettes or some such prize.

Another form: the miners appreciate safety inspectors but dislike to be forced to comply with any formal regulations. They consider the men at the face the only people qualified to decide on safety measures. The inspector's function, as far as the men are concerned, is to keep the company in line.

Dissatisfaction with mining has steadily increased since machinery was introduced. I think the relationship is to be found in the fact that there is now considerable less outlet for individual creative activity and much more mechanization of the personality. The whole outlook can be summed up in a paragraph spoken by a miner:

"It gets you. You don't often quit mining for good. It gets you where you live, the smell of coal, or something. It's the hardest work there is but it gets in your blood and you ain't satisfied with nothing else. You ain't satisfied with mining either, and there you are ..."

Transportation is very inadequate in the area. In some cases mining camps are isolated altogether and are therefore totally dependent on local facilities for every aspect of life. And even when transportation is available, the miners seldom leave the relatively narrow area in which coal is mined. Thus he is familiar with the river valley for 20 miles in either direction at times but perhaps has never been more than a few miles away from the river.

In almost every important respect the miner is part of a specific, homogeneous community differentiated from the broader community of American life. This may be seen in the segregated recreation of the miners. Even in the towns of 20,000, miners usually frequent one set of saloons, etc., and townsmen another. For recreation the miners are limited, by and large, to beer halls, dances, movies, and gambling.

The miners consider themselves, and are considered by others, as almost a race apart. A union card is a calling card. The problems of the miner are such as to permit conversations between any two miners no matter how unlike in other respects but make conversations with non-miners quite difficult. This may be illustrated by a conversation I had with one of Comrade Fenwick's best friends who is now a student but was, at one time, a miner. He told me, "You or I might go up to a miner and talk to him about Socialism right away but someone like Stow here (i.e. Fenwick) might stay around for two or three years and not win their confidence. They just don't trust him." While it is possible that the student exaggerated and probable that other factors are present in the situation, still this indicates the light in which outsiders are judged.

This same consciousness of cultural independence is manifested in many other ways. The ideological front which repels all of the assaults of so called "public opinion" has astounded and disgusted bourgeoisdom for many years. It is said that the miner's ignore public opinion; that is not true, it is impossible to ignore the concerted screams from the national caste of liars, but the miners discount it.

All of these facts, traits, and propensities (and many others could be drawn) add up to the conclusion that the mining culture represents a community within a community. The common cohesive factors are industrial in nature rather than racial or otherwise.

The basic distinction is, of course, the distance between the complete life of the miner and the complete life of the urban proletariat. Many of these differences have been alluded to. They go all of the way from recreation to procreation (the miners have the largest families in the country) with sanitation and education thrown in. But of no mean proportion is the type of work which the miner does.

Mining coal is hard and brutal work. Recent industrial history has been the history of mechanization: from predominantly hand work to predominantly machine work in a decade. This transition was not easily made. During the depression years the UMWA locals fought mechanization, particularly the introduction of joy loaders as it appeared that technological unemployment would ensue.

The miners still look upon the introduction of machines with mixed feelings. Many of them say that they would rather return to hand loading.

0 9 / 6

They make this distinction between the types of labor: hand loading was back-breaking but to work with machinery is "hard." That is, the actual labor of hand labor was greater but it afforded some individuality. Today miners have trod the familiar road. They are appendages of the machine and subject to incessant activity with only the novelty of danger to lighten the monotony.

Accident and health statistics further particularize the coal area. In 1942, 1480 miners were killed and 70,500 injured. Eight out of every hundred miners may expect to be killed or injured each year. Until May 1943 more miners had been killed or injured than had been reported killed, missing or captured in all branches of the armed services. Most of these accidents could be prevented; they are the result of wanton carelessness. The miners feel that the safety inspectors, both state and national, are on the side of the bosses.

The lack of sanitation in the camps, the lack of education, the low level of life all breed bad health for both men and families. Tuberculosis is the most dangerous disease and each year 120 out of every 100,000 miners die of it. This compared to 87 for industry as a whole.

Medical service is notoriously bad. In the majority of cases the men pay the "company doctor" through the "check off" but the company appoints the doctor and can remove him at will. Needless to say the doctors usually manifest a much greater attachment for the company than for their patients.

It is a chronic source of grievance that the doctors, the compensation boards and the companies unite to prevent injured miners from getting accident compensation. Although the doctor's salary seldom runs below \$5000 a year, his facilities are usually meager and his service lax.

The disasters of the coal fields receive tremendous publicity but they take only a small percentage of the dead and injured. Individual casualties predominate and a great many of these are caused by the speed up system which does not permit a man to keep up his posts, sound the roof, and take other elementary safety precautions.

#### Aspects of the Monongahela Valley and Present Branches

West Virginia ranks first in the production of bituminous coal in the USA. Pennsylvania is second. In West Virginia about 1/4 of the population is made up of miners. When this is taken in conjunction with the fact that labor holds the balance of power in West Virginia (and the balance of power in both parties as far as that goes) the tremendous weight of the miners in politics is apparent.

The coal area in W.Va. is roughly split into two main divisions; Northern and Southern. The titan of the northern section is the Consolidate Coal Company, now the largest company in the world of its type. Here, in the north, the mines and the union are older although West Virginia as a whole was organized relatively late. In the South coal is only now beginning to come into its own; this because the older deposits, in Pennsylvania especially, are being worked out and the industry is moving south and west. And with industry so go the miners and political power. But that, as yet, is largely academic: the northern field still produces at top capacity and it has been

estimated that the state as a whole retains enough coal to supply the nation for a thousand years, at present rates of consumption.

The other two large industries in the state are steel and chemical plants. Chemical plants are centered about Charlestown, the capital of the state, although one is located at Morgantown which employs about 600 workers. The chemical plants are owned to a large extent by the DuPonts. Steel, centered in Wheeling and the Ohio Valley, is controlled by E.T. Weir who has a nationwide reputation as a labor hater.

Any political bloc between the coal, steel, and chemical workers would sweep all before it in West Virginia: the votes of these three divisions form an absolute majority. And beyond this: I am told by the leader of the NAACP in Morgantown that the Negroes would follow an independent labor party almost 100%. He, himself a school teacher, is of the opinion that both parties have sold the worker down the river for 80 years and that an ILP would be the best thing that has ever happened to the Negro. If marginal and sub-marginal farmers, who compose the next strata of oppressed could be drawn into the orbit of an ILP together with coal, steel, chemical workers, and the Negroes, the number of votes which could be mustered against this group would be infinitesimally small.

Among the rank and file coal miners there are many signs to indicate that labor is about to coalesce. At a public meeting in early April a miner who had been totally unexposed to our propaganda arose to speak three times on the necessity for unity between the AFL and the CIO. Of no less significance was the reaction of the rank and file to the November strike when it was feared that Lewis would be jailed. Time and again I heard the opinion expressed that not one lump of coal would be mined until he would be released. Also: that it would be necessary to unite all labor behind the fight for the release of Lewis.

Compared to this fertile ground our propaganda has remained singularly sterile. To the miner the Labor Action campaign for an ILP is almost meaningless: members of the NC who have visited Morgantown have managed to present the concept of the ILP as a singularly abstract abstraction. It has been my experience that the slogan itself is meaningless unless organically connected with the immediate task of the struggle against capital.

The miner is a very pugnacious individual empirically concerned with the struggle for existence against his arch enemy -- the boss. With politics he is concerned not at all and, furthermore, in my opinion any idea of pedagogically teaching the miner consciously to generalize his experiences into the class struggle and thence to the ILP is a utopia. To do this is to attempt to compress American social forces into European forms, at best.

The content of the ILP must be derived from the inner necessities of the economic struggle: it must be based on the organic strivings of the workers for a better life. The entire history of the UMWA, and of contemporary American for that matter, have hammered the perspective of mass actions into the miners. These are the requisites: a bold, aggressive program coupled with the immediacy of action.

Confused discontent seems to be the predominant characteristic of the area. Old timers caution young men to stay out of the pits: "the mines aren't like they used to be". Diggers, women and children are all acutely aware of the price and housing situations and things more intangible -- the relation-

ship of boss to worker. For example: two bosses were caught in a check of checker slate and, although these were two very popular pit bosses, personal friends of many of the workers, men gloated about it for weeks over two townships.

This intangible discontent is not something which can be placated by a raise in pay or a vacation; the miners are tiring of Lewis's economic strikes and asking what they can expect to gain. But at the same time every misfortune, from the coal car shortage to dull tools, from a wreck which causes a five minute delay in leaving the pit to the congressional limitation of the checkoff, to the coming hard times, is being attributed to "what them fellers that own everything is trying to do".

The very successes of Lewis and the UMWA have taught the miner the necessity to transcend the limitations of the economic strike. The rank and file demand for the unification of the CIO-AFL is an indication of the degree to which the miners have recognized their problems, and the correctness of their instinctive solutions.

For 15 years the UMWA has been able to win almost every major battle in which it has engaged. Wage demands have been met with an astonishing regularity but the net result has been almost nothing. The miners' mode of life remains relatively unchanged.

Working conditions and wages, it is true, are much improved. But this has served only to pose the problem of life in terms of a broader social perspective. The focus has turned from the pit and the immediate owner to the relationship between the miner and society.

Indications of this are found in many places. It is no accident that the southern area in West Virginia is least impressed by the Lewis bureaucracy but, simultaneously, most militant. The southern miners are becoming aware of the necessity to grapple with new problems which Lewis ignores, with the mobilized strength of the union. The neutral apathy which characterized the miners in the Safety Strike of April 1947 was an indication of the fact that the men sensed the futility of such action.

In the face of present social conditions and the stratification of production both the rank and file and Lewis are searching for a way out of the dilemma. Lewis, caught in the contradiction of Comperism, sees no exit and writhes about with dangerous, brilliantly executed, but essentially small time tactics such as the safety strike which certainly contributed nothing to the morale of the miners.

The men react sluggishly; the old time fearlessness remains but the men question the program. "What happens if they put Lewis in jail?" "Not one lump of coal will leave the pits." In November it is rumored that FBI agents have been sent to a near by camp; someone curses, "They better never come around here or I'll run a pick through their heads". But when asked if they will stay out on safety strike they reply "What's the use?"

The history of Stalinism is instructive. Some years ago the Stalinists had a paid organizer in Scott's Run and a fairly large group of miners who tried to run candidates in the elections. During the war the Stalinists recognized the obvious contradiction between the party line and the UMWA strikes and removed their men while they were still alive. But today, in my opinion, the Stalinists might be welcomed in Scott's Run. Nothing has so helped their reputation as the Red Scare. Almost every miner I speak to has a word of

0 9 7 9

commendation for the Stalinists in relation to the government.

There are, of course, few Stalinists in this coal area. Only one union in West Virginia has any number of Stalinists to speak of. Dual unionism and the National Miners Union cooked the Stalinist goose for many years. And the CP's notorious strike breaking during the war years effectively destroyed whatever influence they ever had in this area.

There is a similar lack of all other-leftist groups. Not since the days of Debs have the Socialists been numerous.

The UMWA itself, and Lewis, still stand high in the affection of the miners. The union is the specific and only institution which the miners can regard as their own; It is considered the emancipator, but as a vehicle of progress it seems to be something of an outmoded form to many of the workers, especially to the Negroes who have derived no positive benefit in the form of inter-racial education or occupational equality. Union meetings are no longer the wide open free-for-all that they once were. Drowsy dozens now languish among the ghosts of cheering hundreds who packed union halls during the hectic days of the rising CIO.

The bureaucracy of Lewis which was once the progressive symbol and centralized manifestation of the strength of thousands of isolated coal camps has become a chain about the necks of the men in many cases. This is particularly true in the case of the lower ranks of the bureaucracy which are composed of parasites of the worst sort; legalized semi-gangsters who contribute nothing to the well-being of any one.

The UMWA has almost no secondary leadership; Lewis' lieutenants took their stand with the CIO. Lewis himself is approaching a crisis; he possesses no weapons of the calibre necessary to fight the government and it is only a question of time until the rank and file realize this fact. At present there is reason to believe that Lewis is considering the creation of some body such as his Non-Partisan League of 1936, in order to support the Republicans in 1948. It is rumored that he has already made a secret deal with Dewey.

As yet I have not met a single miner who has been receptive to this idea. They say that they had enough of the Republicans under Hoover. It is very unlikely that the men who refused to support Wilkie in 1940 in the face of Lewis' threats to resign from the leadership of the CIO, will now support a Republican candidate. They are similarly disgusted with Truman. One miner told me that he wanted to vote for the other party but he didn't know which party was the other as they were both in office. The fall election of 1946 was boycotted to a large extent by the miners.

#### THE MINER AND SOCIALISM; THE MINER AND THE DEVELOPING CLASS STRUGGLE

Some of the men and women who have become acquainted with Socialism only recently have, in a very short time, shown remarkable development in their abilities; others have been so impressed by the power of Marxian ideas that they attribute almost divine properties to the ideology and to those who have some knowledge of Socialism. One lady, for example, asked that I be brought to her in order to cure her cancer after the doctors had given up hope.



- 9 -

Another case, of more importance, concerns a very gifted leader who had read but little for many years. After first learning of Marxism she began to read almost incessantly until her husband complained that she kept him awake at night while she read in bed. She read certain sections of several pamphlets over and over again drawing forth the full meaning as best she could by translating their lessons into the experiences of her life. In three different cases I have heard the story of the SWP Treason Trials told in terms of police interference with strikes.

In Grays Landing, Pennsylvania, particularly, the idea of Socialism has meant a whole new approach to life to many miners and their wives. It is now the rule rather than the exception that problems of living concern a goodly portion of our meetings: a sort of communal clinic of daily activity has been established. In the past few weeks we have dealt with evictions, rent increases, alimony, co-operative purchases of food to avoid the company store, the cure of cancer, methods of fighting racial discrimination on the immediate level, et cetera.

Of perhaps even more importance is the observable effect which the recent strikes, rise in the cost of living, government intervention, and so on, have had on the rank and file miners. During the past year a tremendous rise in the conscious knowledge of the role of the government and the political methods of the bourgeoisie has taken place. One aspect of this manifests itself in the urgent regularity with which the miners demand unity of the AFL-CIO-RR Brotherhoods for a combined offensive against their common enemies.

The process reached a high point during the last week of June when 300,000 mine workers marched out of the pits in a spontaneous protest strike against the Taft-Hartley Slave Labor Bill in spite of the strikebreaking efforts of the Lewis bureaucracy. So insistent were the miners in their comprehension of the meaning of the Bill that one interviewed machine operator stated categorically that should Lewis attempt to send the men back to the mines under the Taft-Hartley threat, they would refuse his orders and remain on strike. The fear of this possibility undoubtedly was extremely influential in forcing the operators to bow to Lewis' demands that the new contract would exempt the UMWA from certain portions of the Bill.

The universal slogan of revolt which swept the coal fields - "Let the Senators dig the Coal" - expressed the fear that conditions would return to what they were in pre-union days and the determination to fight rather than to submit. For many months tension has been building up and the miners have nervously prepared as best they could for a long and violent strike action. Many of the wives have been working for several months in order to put aside a little money; the families which raise their own meat have eaten of it sparingly in many cases which I know of personally. As long ago as last November the wife of a miner in Scotts Run laid aside a large supply of dried beans which have not been touched. She remembered the bloody "March on Logan" of the early 1920s when her husband took his rifle and went to meet the National Guard on mountain tops where, it is said, bones yet bleach in the sun. To her, wise in the ways of the class struggle, the passing months have foreboded the necessity for courage, dried beans, and struggle.

The Negroes in Pennsylvania are more articulate and more militant, by and large, than those in West Virginia. In West Virginia there are segregated schools; in Pennsylvania there are none. Yet in Pennsylvania the problem of segregation in the southern schools occupies more attention than in West Virginia. This is only an illustration. The whole problem of race relations is

10  
viewed by the Pennsylvanians in a more general manner than by the West Virginians. Many times I have spoken to the Grays Landing fold about some particular manifestation of discrimination and how to combat it only to have them generalize it into its national effect: "every thing we do here helps those people in the South just as much as it does us and maybe more." They have, in fact, asked me to talk to several people about this aspect of the problem as they believe that in that manner I can win people who would fear to participate in our activity otherwise.

It has been our experience that it is much easier to recruit Negroes than whites. Luther, our Scotts Run organizer, told me a few weeks after he was recruited "This means more to my people than anybody else". That seems to be the consensus. Among the Negroes there is every desire to aid the party but considerable fear to undertake anything without supporting whites. They tend to depend completely on the white members of the Branch to recruit white miners and hesitate to recruit blacks themselves until we show some activity.

Yet the focus of the Negro's attention is overwhelmingly on the exploitation of the Negro as Negro. No meeting passes by without a discussion of race relationships. The Negroes instinctively refer to themselves as a nation, at least those I know do.

Our program and literature fail to take advantage of the high potential involved in this situation. We are unable to channelize the revolt of the Negro into the stream of trade union activity with any great success. The Negroes are interested in one thing: How they can struggle against discrimination as Negroes.

The SWP pamphlet "The Struggle for Negro Equality" is by far the most popular reading we have. We are unable to keep these pamphlets in stock. Men on relief who get \$12.00 a month and spend \$8.00 for rent buy it, ministers buy it, teachers talk about it in Sunday School. It is popular, I believe, because it treats the Negro problem as a specific problem.

Yet it fails in one vital respect. It fails to mobilize the Negroes, it fails to inform them that they, as a people, must act as a people, that they must form their own organizations, train their own leaders, fight their own battles and that only by so doing will they be able to enlist the support of the white workers.

#### LITERATURE

In a sense it is justifiable to say that our literature is no literature. It is only in the most abstract sense that our literature has any bearing at all to the coal miner. I have yet to see a miner who has heard of, or cares about, the Paris Commune; its relevancy to America, as far as the miner is concerned, is nil.

Marxism is never presented in the context of the miner's world. Our pamphlets are never guides to action which illuminate the problems of life; they are not even "theory", a word which does not exist in the miners vocabulary; they are drab histories, good enough for the daughter in high school but totally irrelevant to the man who digs coal.

Simon's "Class Struggles in the U.S.", Trotsky's "Marxism in the U.S.", and Goldman's "In Defence of Socialism" have been our most popular pamphlets if "The Struggle for Negro Equality" is excluded. One of my contacts told me that she had read the first 29 pages of Goldman's pamphlet over and over again and learned more each time. A treason trial in Minneapolis obviously

meant something to her. It convinced her, as a matter of fact, that it was necessary to fight the government, that it would be a dangerous fight, but one she would gladly undertake.

The only other pamphlet that we have been able to talk people into reading is "Plenty for All". So far as I know it has been value-less. The first section of the pamphlet carries the message that something is wrong and that the bosses are not lovable creatures. To the worker these things are painful truths which do not demand elaboration. The gospel of nationalization and planning is met with painful silence. The manipulation of control commissions and iron ore may be quite laudable in themselves but that is something which, as far as "Plenty for All" and the miners are concerned, is somewhat austere and, in its own manner, a mystery. The miner is intimately concerned with his place in production and the method by which he will live a meaningful life. To the coal miner the National Planning Board is just about as concrete as the Deus Ex Machina of a Greek drama.

The morality play ending which summarizes 72 pages by calling on the worker to join the Party is on a similar level. The worker, who is an intensely practical fellow, views this plea with some skepticism. There is no obvious connection between membership in the WP and a more fruitful life. As someone said, "I've joined the Garveyites, the Townsend Club, the Moose lodge and everything else that came along but none of them ever did me any good."

The same criticism must be made of Labor Action with only one minor change. Our pamphlets deal with episodes foreign to the worker. Labor Action deals with contemporary events but does so only in a negative fashion, there is criticism but little positive participation in them.

In method, Labor Action complements "Plenty for All" with its didacticism -- stories frequently end with the eager communication that this proves that socialism is a good thing. Socialism, instead of being the logical and conscious expression of the innate desires of the worker becomes a concept held by some supra-class writer.

The politics and programs of Labor Action and the pamphlets are complete abstractions in most cases. They offer no pattern of individual activity; they mobilize emotions at times but never people. The miners who read Labor Action think that its ideas are all right, but never understand that they become realities only by the activity of the worker. The concept of the worker as creative agent is absent from the pages of Labor Action or presented in such a manner as to be completely obscure.

Abstract ideas are hammered home only as ideas. There is no unity between ideology and activity. Thought is presumed to come first and action afterwards. Marxist guides to activity are so far from implicit in the material that many miners have read Labor Action for months and do not understand that it is published by a revolutionary party. I have talked to several who have not been able to differentiate it from the "Voice of Labor," a local paper owned by the most influential industrialist of the area.

#### THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY AND THE MONONGAHELA VALLEY

Of primary importance is the recognition of the character of the coal area. It is necessary to consider it as a community within a community; differentiated in many respects from the balance of the economy with its own peculiar problems and potentialities. Many of the factors which give rise to this characterization have been enumerated, e.g. isolated camps with little

transportation, poor living conditions, etc.

The similarity of living conditions, problems of life and working conditions give rise to a continuity of culture within the area, a mutuality of interests which are sharply differentiated from the urban proletariat. Many of the commonplaces of urban civilization cannot be hoped for by the miners while capitalism exists. It is this which makes the fight for many of the primary amenities of life objectively a fight for socialism in the coal community.

The general recognition of the disparity between the living conditions of the coal area and the remainder of the country, and the general recognition of the futility of the economic strike make it feasible to recruit many miners on a propagandistic basis when the propaganda is oriented around the needs of the area.

One merit of the propagandistic approach is that it draws into the orbit of the party the entire family: men, women and children. Any program restricted to union activity automatically excludes the wives except under exceptional circumstances such as picket lines (which do not exist anymore). Propaganda centered on a sewage disposal system, on the contrary, appeals to wives as much as miners.

The structure of the UMWA (the Lewis bureaucracy) generally excludes democratic participation by the rank and file in national policy to any real degree. But the local of the UMWA is frequently the predominant social form and can be utilized for all sorts of community activity. For example: a consumers' strike would be unthinkable without the support of the local. The local is the coordinating organ which unites the disparate elements, Negroes, whites and foreign born.

The program of the Revolutionary Party should be the program of community action centered around the basic problems of the community. These differ from camp to camp and a master program can be, at best, a guide to be applied according to particular needs. In general it may be said that it is necessary to (1) stabilize the coal industry by rationalizing production according to the needs of the economy and the elimination of the mines which have a low productivity and (2) integrate the coal community into the socialist culture of the nation as a whole. The second point is decisive.

The resolution of the miners' subjective desires will be, objectively, Socialism. The nexus between the integrated socialist society which is to come and the present situation is the mobilization of the masses around transitional demands.

In general we think that our activity should center around the poles of the safety committees in the mines, together with local safety councils composed of representatives from individual mines, and the health welfare fund. The safety committees have the ability to close a mine at will and interfere directly with production at the face of the mine; the health and welfare fund, on the other hand, is derived from an assessment per ton paid by the company and is used to provide certain things, largely undetermined as yet, for the miners.

The social importance of the fund will be determined by the use to which it is put. Its importance to us lies in the use to which we can put it as a central notion in our propaganda which strikes not only at the production relationships but at the Lewis bureaucracy as well. Democratic participation in the control of the fund strikes a dual blow. Furthermore, the women of

- 13 -

the mining camps can be rallied around slogans based on the health and welfare fund.

Some of the specific slogans which we would recommend are:

- (1) For democratic rank and file administration of the Health and Welfare fund through:
  - a) Demand for showers at all mines
  - b) Down with the company doctors - MD's to be responsible to unions
  - c) For clinics (UMWA) at central locations
  - d) For town improvements - depending on local needs
  - e) Down with company stores - for union administered co-ops
- (2) Safety Committee control:
  - a) For inter-mine safety councils
  - b) Right to purchase and install all safety equipment at company expense
- (3) General:
  - a) For compensated education and school lunches
  - b) Abolish company towns; For public housing
  - c) Workers sitting on all compensation boards
  - d) Educational campaign in UMWA itself concerning, among other things, race relations - (should be under (1) above)

An entire series of pamphlets should be drawn up dealing with perhaps three categories. The first should be concerned with demonstrating the general laws of Marxism in terms of American experience and would be educational in nature. In this series, three would be of primary importance: The Reconstruction Period; The Rise of the UMWA and its Accomplishments; and the Rise of the C.I.O.

The second series should be concerned with propaganda as applied to the contemporary scene in regard to problems of a fairly broad scope. For example the need for a labor party, the need to unite the AFL-CIO, race relations and the effect of discrimination on the working class, etc.

The third series would be concerned with the slogans listed above. These slogans have a propagandistic merit at all times and achieve the pressing nature of agitation frequently. For example, after a disaster the safety committee demands are received very well. In structure these should be quite simple and should utilize pictures, diagrams, charts, etc.

The central theme which should pervade every single pamphlet is the theme of individual and collective action with socialism posed as the inescapable conclusion of the workers own struggle for existence. Our experience has been that a great many workers are fully prepared to accept our demands and that they would be willing to devote a great deal of time and effort toward achieving them but are convinced that their neighbors do not understand as well as they do the necessity for action. Our problem is the problem of mobilization; all of our propaganda and agitation should be centered about the crystallization of the miners into mass organizations.

Organizational activity requires a paid organizer who possesses an auto. The distance involved, the numerous mining camps to be seen, and the absence of transportation demand a full time worker to coordinate activity. A miner will never be able to carry on successful organizational work because of the time and effort which his work demands. We have subscribers in over a

dozen towns whom we have never seen.

My weekly trip to Gray's Landing requires an entire day and the walking involved (as much as 9 miles) is not conducive to fruitful activity. While at Gray's Landing I seldom have the opportunity to contact other miners or give personal attention to individuals. With a car and the necessity to earn an existence out of the way, I believe that it would be possible to organize seven branches, holding a meeting every day of the week, within a short time.

We have dropped Labor Action distributions as it has been impossible to continue them as well as impossible to take advantage of the subscribers we now have. However, last week I sold five subscriptions to Labor Action in ninety minutes which is an indication of what could be done if time permitted.

There is every reason to believe that a large Negro organization could be formed if the proper guidance could be given. We now have Negro contacts in five camps who are anxious to organize something and they are acquainted with other Negroes throughout the valley. We have three Negro ministers who assure us that they have been socialists for a long time and that they will do whatever they can to help us. They talk about us in Sunday School and, being itinerants, are in a position to spread our word far and wide.

Nothing could be more beneficial to us than one or two cadre people to function in the locals where we have men and help build the organization. All of our contacts, with the exception of a few college students, are miners or manual workers of one sort or another. While it is true that this eliminates many troubles which beset other branches, it is also true that the task of integrating the miners into the Party requires a considerable amount of activity which is unnecessary for the brooding young intellectual. For example: I have heard from a dozen people about the Negro girl in New York who could not read and was about to leave the Party until someone took her in hand and taught her. That is obviously a novel experience for New York. With us, however, illiteracy is as common as coal dust.

We believe that the potentiality of this area is quite high. In order to take advantage of our opportunities we need a paid organizer who has a car, some sort of a cadre, even if it consists of nothing more than a college boy who will sell papers, a series of pamphlets related to the specifically American scene, a newspaper which is distinguishable from local labor papers by its Bolshevik analysis of current problems, a theoretical monthly which recognizes the existence of the proletariat, a political line which places the mobilization of the masses at its forefront, a program and method of work for this particular area, and cooperation from the national office. With these things we believe that we can begin to create a mass movement in the Monongahela Valley which would have the perspective of sending roots into every state and every camp where coal is dug.

-- Morgan West

Morgantown, West Virginia  
July 21, 1947

Workers Party  
4 Court Square  
Long Island City, 1, N.Y.

Dear Comrades of the Political Committee:

We joined the Workers Party because we saw in it for the first time an organization that would sincerely fight to help us against our main enemy, the capitalist class. Our experiences with the party taught us three things:

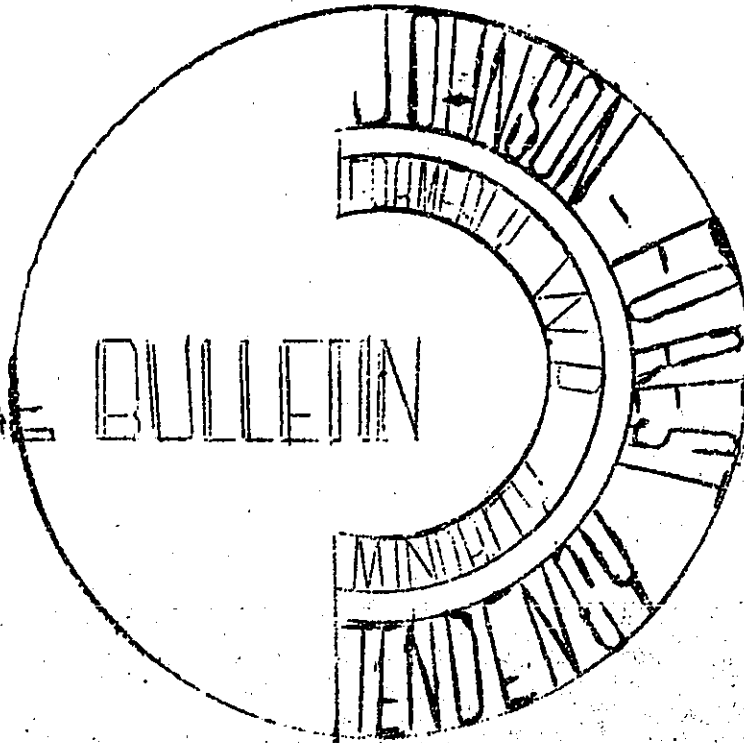
One, that while the party had the best interests of the workers at heart, it did not know how to struggle for these interests. In fact, most of our efforts here were constantly checked by the party.

Two, that the Workers Party held ideas that were part of a world working class Movement - the Fourth International. In this country, it was represented by the Socialist Workers Party. We read the literature of the SWP and felt it expressed our ideas in a revolutionary way that displayed more understanding of our problems.

Three, that a necessary condition for the coming American Revolution was the unity of the Workers Party and the Socialist Workers Party. Since the Workers Party has raised trivial issues to disrupt the Unity, since it does not best express our needs, since Unity is a prerequisite for the revolution, we hereby inform you of our resignation from the Workers Party.

William B.  
Henry D.  
Thomas B.  
Andrew S.

INTERNAL BULLETIN



The Johnson-Forest Tendency  
and the SWP.....1

Excerpts on the American  
Workers Party.....4

Experience of Splits and Uni-  
fications in the American  
Movement.....6

Part II.

The Worker in Modern Industry...1

July 31, 1947

Volume I

Number 3

10c

Address all communications to Martin Harvey, 101 W. 46 St., New York City, 19, USA

987



THE JOHNSON-FOREST TENDENCY AND THE S.W.P.

A serious, but as Lenin once said, a grateful task now faces the caucus: the task of getting itself ready for integration into the S.W.P. The task is in essence political. By that is meant that it could not be satisfactorily performed without a sound political basis and a clear political orientation. But that does not mean that such a political framework of itself solves the problem of leaving one party and going into another as a small minority. Far from it. It requires a certain mental attitude. And these precious few weeks should be used to the utmost for this purpose. We propose to be quite plain about this.

In the W.P. we have been driven by the objective developments to be critical, suspicious and hostile in regard to the political statements and attitudes of the leadership. We were psychologized to be on the alert against their perpetual deviations from Marxism, their ideas about the proletariat, their ideas about the revolution, their ideas about the party, their ideas about everything. Whether they were right or wrong in this or that instance, hard experience had taught us to be on guard. It could not have been otherwise. Year by year we felt the theoretical ground under the feet of the W.P. slipping away from it. Vigilance on one side creates a corresponding vigilance on the other, and behind the simplest of cooperative efforts was always the necessity, if not to attack, at least to have mental reservations. This sort of thing becomes a habit.

As a result, the comrades as they met together and talked would inevitably begin to compare notes as to the way in which contending political lines were manifesting themselves, the evasions, the compromises, the flat contradictions in which their political line repeatedly involved the Majority. Equally we were careful of what we said, conscious that we were being judged always as Johnsonites, if even nothing was said. That too was inevitable. Some of the younger comrades know of no other political life but this. On the whole, the way in which the majority of the comrades combined their political intransigence with submission to the discipline of the Majority and the performance of party tasks and party duties is remarkable. But a certain attitude to politics, to the party and to the leadership was inevitable. The spirit of caucus solidarity, stronger always in a minority could not be avoided. The negative side of this type of existence was accentuated by the special relationship between the W.P. and the S.W.P.

Beginning in 1945, the attack upon the organizational procedure of the S.W.P. and its "bureaucratic jungle" by the W.P. reached fantastic heights - the correct word is depths. In the public and the internal press this terribly demoralizing campaign went on - one of the most vicious crimes that has been committed against revolutionary Marxism and the Movement in this country. As was inevitable, this found its counterpart in the private discussions, reminiscences and doubts and queries by comrades who had not the experience and the political reserves to ignore it. The climax came with the campaign that was unleashed, of all times, after the unity agreement was signed. The net result is that the S.W.P. leadership and the S.W.P. membership must appear in the minds of quite a few inexperienced comrades as a combination of ruthless, conscienceless bureaucrats and dumb submissive sheep. We do not take this too seriously. Many of those older ones who are carrying on the campaign will be among the first to accommodate themselves to the regime of a unified organization. We have refused to take part in this - any part. We condemned the W.P. leaders for this political degeneration and political stupidity. But we refused to be drawn into the position of "defending" the S.W.P. The S.W.P. is perfectly able to defend itself, if and when it feels that it needs defense. But the political result has been a concentration of all concerned on the good-will, ill-will and generally, the machinations of leadership; the relations between leaders and followers; on internal matters; all the miserable consequences for the movement as a whole of this type of politics. Thus

the spirit of faction, <sup>align</sup> of looking always to your own factional center, was re-enforced.

The overhead expenses of factional struggles are always high. Good party members try to lessen them. But the type of accusation, revelations, exposures, behind-the-scenes negotiations, that have darkened the movement during the past two years, that was not necessary. It is an overhead with no profits but only losses.

Powerless to stop this political decline we had held ourselves away from it as best we could. As soon as the Unity Pact was signed, the leadership of the Tendency called the caucus together to prepare for the international discussion and to get ourselves ready, in our own way, for the unified party. We put before the comrades (perhaps not skillfully enough) the idea of orienting ourselves to a different type of procedure in the unified party. As was to be expected, some of the comrades reacted strongly. We had clearly differentiated ourselves as a third tendency in the international, carefully delineating our differences with all other tendencies. To preserve these distinctions had been, and rightly, the main axis of our existence. Were we going to give them up? Did the S.W.P. demand this of us?

It was a normal, and from one point of view, a very healthy reaction. That tendency which does not spring to arms if it thinks its political positions are in danger of being compromised by its leaders is not worth a penny. But the discussion proceeded and the Tendency would have arrived at a clear understanding of its new tasks without difficulty despite the poisonous atmosphere. Into this situation, however, came the W.P. Majority. "Capitulation to Cannon!" became their battle-cry. To prepare the comrades for our new political perspective, winning workers to a unified party, this was considered by the Majority as capitulation. The caucus has on the whole withstood this assault with firmness and the necessary contempt. Our solidity on the necessity of leaving the W.P. shows that. But we must do more and clarify our attitude positively.

Everything, in fact the major responsibility, is not on us. But we must get rid of any hangovers from the party we had to fight on so many principled issues. We must have an entirely different attitude to the leadership, and to the party and to politics in the S.W.P. Yes, comrades of the W.P. Majority, we propose to have a very different attitude to the leadership, the party and the politics of the S.W.P. than the attitude we had to you. The leading comrades must do their best to inculcate consciously that confidence in the leadership which we could never give to the W.P. leadership as a political body and without which a party member can never be a good party member, confident in himself. We shall not be on the alert for differences, wondering if this is not the result of the theory of retrogression and doubts of the proletariat being able to achieve socialism. There is need for it. The old habit may shoot up, but it will be easy to suppress.

If there are differences, we shall differ as party members seeking the correct road and not as a tendency seeking to put one more barrier in the road of political degeneration. The political positions which are ours are there. No one can take them from us. No one wants to. We shall have plenty besides those to occupy ourselves with. We have to lose the old habit of thinking of ourselves as a grouping. That is bad for us, bad for the party.

The S.W.P. program, the party line, are good enough for us to win workers to the party. That critical attitude which was forced upon us by the W.P. we must now begin to shed and aim at becoming normal party members. And for those who feel the necessity of discussing theoretical or disputed questions, it is wise to remember that the more you establish yourself as a good, solid party man above all things, the more easily other party member talk to you. We have seven years of

antagonistic separation to overcome and two years of a poisonous political atmosphere. We must get rid of this debris as fast as we can.

One chapter is closing- is closed. Another is opening. Let us begin it right. Bolshevik intransigence in defense and audacity in attack? Yes, against the bourgeoisie and the enemies of the party, not against "Cannonism." Persistence and ingenuity in winning people over to our view? Yes, in winning workers to the views of the S.W.P., to the views of the Movement. That will be decided at the Extraordinary Party Conference. We shall do all we can for our ideas there. But everything in its place.

"Shades of Leninism!" says a horrified Majorityite. "You are capitulating. What about the Russian question? The Russian question, My God! Are you ignoring the Russian question?"

This is farce on a high level. First of all we are perfectly able to take care of our views on the Russian question. We have done so up to now and we shall do so in the future. If we do not deceive ourselves, we have done, let us be modest, as much to clarify our views and propagate them as the W.P. has done to clarify its views. We lived for six years in the W.P. without a discussion on the Russian question. We didn't die, and our position has not withered away. In fact, just now it seems a pretty vigorous plant, assiduously fertilized and tended by historical development. The solicitude of the W.P. Majority for the views of the Johnson-Forest Tendency on the Russian question is touching - it wrings tears to our eyes, tears of laughter and wonder at the infinite adjustability of opportunist politics. Why, but yesterday the state-capitalism of the Johnsonites was beneath contempt; not worth taking seriously, not worth answering, an aberration of Johnson's, product of a hasty and half-baked reading of Marx's Capital, offspring of a few quotations from Anti-Duhring, etc., etc. (If we did not have to pay for and produce this bulletin ourselves we could fill a page of type with more of this obloquy that was poured upon state-capitalism by the W.P. Majority.) And now? (The tears begin to come again.) Our erstwhile deriders accuse the insignificant Johnson "and his friends" of being luke-warm in defense of state-capitalism. As Lenin once asked the Russian Mensheviks: "Have you no fear of God in your hearts, Menshevik comrades?" But any attack will do if it will only help to beat "Cannonism."

Excerpts From "A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE AMERICAN WORKERS PARTY" (Militant, 6/3/34)

"The Political Evolution of the C.P.L.A."

"The A.W.P. is proud of its 'origin in action' in the Conference for Progressive Labor Action. While there is much that is useful in the past, it is also a reformist past. The sharpest theoretical clarity is necessary to distinguish between the useful heritage and its reformist nature. A break with this reformist past is necessary. In view of the A.W.P.'s proud boasts about its origins and its insufficiently critical analysis of its past reformism (see Chapter IV of the Program) one is constrained to say that the A.W.P. stands more in danger of reformist hangovers than it is of losing any useful elements of its past. A glance at its history will make this clear enough.

"Beginning in 1929 as an organization of trade-union progressives, the Conference for Progressive Labor Action won a certain amount of success, due to the fact that the Communist Party had launched itself on its dual unionism, while the Socialist Party had long capitulated to the A.F. of L. leadership. Politically, the C.P.L.A. was reformist; in advocating independent political action for labor, it was little further advanced than the unions which in 1924 declared for La Follette. Even when it began evolving more militant trade union policies, building rank and file oppositions and branched out into the unemployed movement, the C.P.L.A. remained definitely reformist in politics. Nor was there further clarity in the declaration of the September, 1932 convention which made the C.P.L.A. into a political organization, for the criticism of the Socialist and Communist parties was limited to their mass work, and in no way was linked up with political fundamentals.

\*\*\*\*\*

"At no time - including the 1933 convention resolutions - had the C.P.L.A. made the decisive distinctions between reform and revolution. Throughout this period the case against the Socialist and Communist Parties had never been put in political terms; always the quarrel on the level of day-to-day work. Not until the Program of the A.W.P., published early in 1934 (written with the assistance of revolutionary intellectuals with no C.P.L.A. background) does there begin the first criticisms of the Socialist Party in terms of its reformism, and even here the talk is mainly of its mass work (see Chapters III and IV). It is true, as Sidney Hook says, that the theory of the state is the touchstone of a party's nature; it is true that the Program (plus further statements by A.W.P. leaders) approaches the Marxist theory of the State (though it contains ominous omissions and ambiguities - role of the Soviets before taking power, armed insurrection, the ambiguous formula of workers' democracy substituted for the Marxist formula, dictatorship of the proletariat.

"There must be a period of thorough theoretical discussion and analysis in order to see whether the rest of the Program, and particularly what the A.W.P. brings over from the C.P.L.A., is actually in consonance with Marxism. The mere presence of the class theory of the state does not guarantee the rest, certainly not when the introduction of the theory of the state is of sorecent origin. No revolutionary but is gratified that the A.W.P. leaders who were a year ago preparing to build a Farmer-Labor Federation are now speaking in revolutionary terms; but such a volte-face reveals a gross empiricism which must be overcome by theoretical discussion and training. Clear formulation of fundamental principles is a necessity at this point. By all means let us be 'flexible' in the application of our principles. But let us first have principles to be flexible about."

May 19, 1934

"The Political Meaning of Adaptation to the American Scene"

"Behind all this talk of 'sectarianism' and the exaggerated Americanism of the A.W.P., lies a healthy motive. They would like to cut through the 'factional period' and cut into the high road of American working class struggle. So would the Communist League, but it has the lessons of the 'factional period' while the A.W.P. group were not in the revolutionary movement during these last ten years and have yet to assimilate its lessons. Its search for a 'short-cut' is futile. It does seem simple to say of the C.P. that 'it has thought and felt in terms of Russian and European rather than American working class experience'. It does seem simple to declare for a new party on the ground that the Stalinists are in 'organizational subordination to the Communist International, which has tended in recent years to become a branch of the foreign office of the Soviet Union instead of the leader of the world revolution.' But this ever so 'simple' formulation ignores the whole question, why a 'branch of the foreign office' is no longer revolutionary.

"By all means, let us come before the masses with a clear and simple program, understandable to all workers. Let not the A.W.P. forget, however, the distinction between a clear and simple program, and the by no means clear and simple mass of events and theoretical knowledge on which such a program must be based. Marxism in all its ramifications is not simple, but without it as a foundation no program can lead anywhere. Leninism, with its analysis of imperialism and nationalism, its development of the Marxist theory of the state, its contribution to the strategy and tactics of revolution, its enunciation of the role of the party and the non-proletarian masses, its conception of the place of democratic centralism and the soviets - all this is not easily learned, but it must be learned by a revolutionary party. The ten year struggle of the Internationalist Communists, involving a further clarification and refinement of every fundamental question of revolutionary theory and strategy is certainly not a simple story to read, but without understanding and acceptance of its lessons, any new party gravitating toward a revolutionary outlook will find itself drifting between Stalinist centrism and reformist centrism.

"There are no easy short-cuts. And the reasons given by a new party for its existence logically determine its policy. If 'sectarianism', 'failure to adapt itself to the American scene', is taken as the cause of the degeneration of the C.P., then the S.W.P. policy will be a frenzied adaptation, an exaggerated Americanism which, if it does not degenerate into outright chauvinism, will certainly be a policy of gross empiricism, susceptible to all the errors of all previous working class activity, in America and elsewhere.

"What strange fruit may be born from the Americanist approach? Consider the implications of the following statement by Hardman at the conference:

"The revolution in America will be the American revolutionary movement, not the revolutionary movement in America. It was not by accident that we called the party the American Workers Party instead of the Workers Party of the U.S.A.!"

....Felix Morrow

May 26, 1934

MY EXPERIENCES OF SPLITS AND UNIFICATIONS IN THE AMERICAN MOVEMENT

I have been in the movement many years and have seen many splits, and unifications. I want to give my ideas of these as a rank and filer. I began in the American Workers Party. Those of us who came from the A.W.P. to the Trotskyites, came with a burning desire to build an American revolutionary party. We almost said - though we knew it wasn't political to talk like that - we were for the building of a "political" revolutionary party.

In 1934, the A.W.P. had workers and leaders of mass organizations who were actively engaged in and devoted to the class struggle on the American scene. They were in the lead in many of the mass struggles of the day. No sooner did they come to us, than the C.P. with a political line would come on the scene and take them away from us. Nor were most of these workers New Yorkers. They were recruited from all parts of the country. We in New York were feeling the pressure too - with political organizations all around us - the Communist League of America (Trotskyites) right next door - giving political answers to questions of the day. The younger elements in our ranks felt the pressure and were more than willing to learn. Some of us looked at these politicians with awe as some kind of gods who knew all the answers. We were activists and were out-talked all the time. We felt superior and inferior to these Trotskyite politicians at the same time. Superior, because we joined with them for the building of a political organization and we could and did go out to do the work. No task was too hard for us. Inferior, because whereas they didn't do as much Jimmy Higgins work - they had the ready political answer which we didn't have. What education we had we picked up on the way. But it was chiefly the events of Hitler's coming to power and the very good work the Trotskyites did that attracted us to them. They would be out on the streets with the Militant morning, noon and night, in face of Stalinist opposition that was at its worst. All eyes were on Germany. At union meetings, on street corners, everywhere, the German events were being discussed. The Socialist Party had to cover up its faults. The Communist Party was in still a worse mess. Here were the Trotskyites shouting at every street corner. Heretofore we, the Muste-ites, said that the only thing those Trotskyites could do was walk around with a book and talk - endless talk - and now they were out with a program, one we could understand. A program for action.

Time and again we went to their aid when the Stalinists attacked them. Even though it was international politics and not the American scene, still we went to them and looked to them for answers to political questions. Shortly after these events came the Minneapolis strike and that decided us. At least this small group of New York A.W.P.'ers. We were attracted too by their work on Russia. But our main interest was the movement of the American workers.

Then came the faction fight on whether we should go into the S.P. A few of us were disturbed and didn't know what to do. Ohler came forth with the slogan of building the revolutionary party independent of the corrupt S.P. We had fought the S.P. and the Second International. We had accepted the Trotskyite analysis of the Second International and the Trotskyite analysis of the German events - the whole period leading up to Hitler's taking power. The building of the revolutionary party, for us, didn't go with entering into the S.P. The political reasons given were that the French Turn was all wrong. We must maintain the independence of the revolutionary party. By going into the S.P. the Trotskyites, we said, were opportunists.

I went with Ohler. My reasons for going with the Ohlerites were these. A revolutionary party must be built in this country. How can it be built in the corrupt S.P.? We will have to sell the S.P. literature which we were against. We couldn't build the party that I wanted there. Therefore I would have no truck

machine operator runs the machine, the laborer sweeps and cleans, lifts, etc. This is usually the case. I have noticed, however, the distinct tendency on the part of workers to break these classifications by doing work not in their jurisdiction, so to speak. An operator does some laboring work, etc. This infraction of the rules is done on the worker's own initiative. That is, they take on the added tasks as long as they do it of their own accord. If the company orders them to do these things, immediately the men rebel and refuse. It is almost impossible to stop them when they decide themselves.

Complicated rules and regulations that are not sufficiently explained often lead a worker to think he is being treated unfairly. He views with distrust any new change which the company might propose. Often the worker feels that he is not getting what he is worth, or that he gets less than other people doing work requiring the same degree of skill.

The wage scales and classifications in the shop are extremely numerous. It is a continual battle to reach a higher classification and more money, especially with one worker competing against another. Much anger is generated between workers and against the company over upgrading and promotions to new jobs. Every time a new job is open, a bitter wrangle takes place. It is not predominantly a question of the nickel raise involved, as it may seem on the surface, but a desire for recognition and a chance for exploitation of one's own capabilities.

A good worker always likes to keep his place of work clean. The conflict of classifications often prevents him from doing so.

The average honest worker respects another good worker. It is his way of building up respect among his fellow workers in recognition of his capabilities. The community of labor brings this forth as part of an unstated code.

Workers often change jobs in the hope of finding conditions better in another situation. Often they will even take less pay if a certain job appears to offer some peace of mind. It is apparent, now though that conditions of work everywhere are the same. A change of jobs may bring a novelty but it wears off in a week or two.

When a worker moves from one factory to another, a temporary feeling of being lost seizes him, an unsureness of whether he will be able to make good on the next job. One day in the new plant among the workers again and his confidence in himself and his ability immediately returns.

#### "As Though They Were Somebody"

There are many workers in the shop who search for some expression of their self-importance. The company, knowing this, institutes a certain type of uniform: It is in the form of a shock or light work coat with the company insignia on it, usually worn by set-up men, inspectors, etc. I took care to notice the effects of this ruse on a few workers. At the first few days, they seemed to adopt a self-important air as though, now, they were somebody. After a few days, the coat was dirty, and added to this, from the very beginning, the workers ignored the new distinction which those who wore the coats seemed to think they had. The novelty soon wore off as no change was brought in their status and work continued in the same monotonous manner as before.

become identified by the distinct type and color of the clothing they wear.

All employees are numbered. Badge numbers are systematically replacing names of individual workers. Pay envelopes, work charts, etc, are all figured on the basis of number. Even workers begin to refer to each other as numbers: "Number 402 worked on my machine last night."

Yesterday, the worker on the next machine did some little trick of a skilled nature to better his machine performance. He insisted on showing it to me and explaining to me what he had done. He was pleased with his accomplishment, but was frustrated that there were no others he could about out to.

Many workers take satisfaction in coming to work on a very hazy day. The initiative is his and he does as this is one day he is not expected to come to work. Those workers who do come that day find a certain enjoyment out of having arrived, especially if there are workers absent. There is then a certain camaraderie or light-heartedness apparent.

#### "No Use Giving The Company Something For Nothing"

The worker does not give freely of his fullest abilities. When he deems it necessary, he will cut his production. If he can't make out on the job, he will make sure he goes well under for the week. "No use giving the company something for nothing, as that is what they are looking for," he says.

At the same time, I have seen workers almost wear themselves into the ground trying to put out an extra number of pieces purely from the desire to see how much they could do. In these instances there was no extra money involved. In contradiction to this, workers will deliberately but out tools in the machine at quitting time by turning off the lubricant. Sometimes this is done to chastise the incoming worker for something ill-natured he has done.

Again, when time-study men are about, workers will find a multitude of reasons for shutting the machine down. A resentment of large proportions grows as he sees the man from the office with the clock in his hand. It is then that he uses all the tricks he knows to slow down the machine and also his own action. The time study man is unwanted in the shop. Everywhere he goes, resentment-filled eyes follow him. He is aware of this, and many times is almost apologetic as well as at other times, surly.

There are days when a worker has become particularly irritated at the company. He vents his anger by putting out less work than usual. Other times when the company speeds up the machine and increases the norm, a section of workers will tacitly agree to a slow-down formula. Such a situation is occurring now in one department. In order to compel the company to reduce the rate, the workers are at present engaged in a daily reduction of their percentage. Since the company has refused by arbitration to reduce the rate, the men are relying on their own actions to compel a change.

A laborer one day told me the following: "You know, kid, being a laborer is really an art. The idea is not to be around when you are needed. There is a way to time all this and the clever laborer need not exhaust himself."

The plant took inventory this week. Many workers including laborers, machinists, heat-treat, grinders, etc. participated. For the past several months workers have been stealing pans of work to fill their bonus needs. Obviously, there will be a shortage of tens of thousands of pieces in inventory.



The workers found the situation quite humorous.

**"A Letter On The Productive Forces"**

My plant is part of a giant corporation. The network is country-wide. It is a high degree of capitalist organization in industry. However, the bureaucratic supervision of it brings with it inefficiency on a tremendous scale in view of the effort involved. It appears that the company is sacrificing all for production. It is not so. More production could be gotten in a different manner. The intent is more at the subjugation and control of the laborer. I had discussions with several workers on the lowered productivity of labor.

Worker B. agrees. Especially concerning the assembly lines. Says workers do not want to exist as slaves. Says production could be upped 20% or 30% if workers were given a free hand. Complains of the insuperable number of obstacles which a worker encounters during the day. Says if all red tape, annoying supervisory help were eliminated, and if workers' ingenuity were allowed full play, production could be considerably upped. He says it is very difficult to know what the individual worker thinks as he isolates himself mentally in many respects from his fellow worker. He does not often say what he thinks. He says workers hold back on their production and never give their fullest. I spoke with two other workers on the same subject.

**"Just Putting In Time"**

One says production could be doubled. The other is in doubt. Seems to think it means more work for the worker. I approached the subject on the basis of a four hour day, five day week and asked if that goal was possible. I tried to impress them with a plant-wide conception of cooperation. I explained what was in reality workers' control. One said that during the war in his sections of the plant, the fellows used to knock out work fast deliberately and then spend a few hours in horse-play. They enjoyed themselves and at the same time got the work out. He claims the mental attitude was entirely different then. Now the monotony is extremely evident. It is just a question of putting in time. He resents the pressure of the foremen when the production norm is completed and he is kidding around. The foreman, it seems, cannot stand workers being idle even though the norm has been filled. The other worker, in reference to this, noted that the miners had not been paid for a full day's work in their walk-out, although the production quota for the day had been filled.

The workers say! "Why such inefficiency?"

"The company lost a day's work because of a lack of a piece of chain costing about seventy-five cents."

"Why are there no washers? Can't the company afford it?"

"It is getting so that supervision doesn't give a damn about anything."

Machines are breaking down constantly, a situation which irritates many workers.

Many workers become angry because of the fact that suggestions which they put in are ignored. These suggestions would add to efficiency and also increase production as well as save money.

During the war there arose a type of worker creativity known as the "Government Job." I don't think there is a worker who at some time or another has not made a "Government Job." It was always natural to observe another worker making something for himself during working hours. Hundreds of thousands have made rings, lockets, tools and knick-knacks. If the foreman or boss would come over and ask: "What are you doing?" The reply was: "A government job." Many beautiful things were made and the workers used to show them to each other. This has carried over and it appears that it will remain. The term applies to anything the worker makes for himself on company time.

In order to make production, many workers devise ingenious little adaptations. Some change gears when the foreman is not about. At times, they help each other and conversely at other times they do not.

The company tries to increase production by every mechanical means. Never once does it stop to realize that the key lies in the collective capacities of the workers themselves.

\*\* Phil Romano

\*\*\*\*\*

- 1 -

THE WORKER IN MODERN INDUSTRY

(extracts from a forthcoming pamphlet)

Any worker who has had a few factory jobs throughout several years, learns most of what I have written through his own experiences. On entering a new plant he learns to keep his mouth shut for a safe period of time. Many months pass before the gap is bridged between the new worker and his fellow workmen. He takes no sides. In answer to involving questions, he will answer with a nod or knowing wink. What goes on about him does not escape him although to all appearances he has the aspect of lack of interest. First impressions are almost always voided. Any real trust is placed only in those individuals with whom he has become more basically acquainted through social intercourse outside of the pressures of the factory.

Joe Worker of today is an educated individual in that he has gone through at least twelve years of grammar and high schools. He has a wide sphere of knowledge and can talk about machinery, autos, politics, government, movies, etc. Enough so as to offer an opinion on any subject which may arise for discussion.

"There Must Be A Better Way Of Making A Living Than This"

There exists today in the factory an attitude which was not apparent before the war. As stated by the worker it goes "There must be a better way of making a living than this." It is a distinct and definite change.

I have noticed the trend amongst the workers to speak more and more in terms of security. How it can be gotten, etc. There is a strong attitude prevalent to the effect that the worker gets pushed around too much on the job. They think in terms of a year or two at the present job. "When production really gets under way, it will be a short time before the warehouses are flooded." In short, they expect boom and bust. Several business suggestions have been bandied back and forth. Opening a tavern, ice cream parlor, launderette, etc. No one of the workers could finance it alone, so for a while they spoke about partnerships, but then gave that up. They feel the closeness of their economic position.

The worker is compelled on the job to perform a task which can only make him rebel: the monotony; the getting up every morning; the day by day drudgery which takes its toll. He labors under forced conditions. Not only that, but there is the fact that he compels himself to accept these conditions. Home, family, economics make him a slave to this routine. Theoretically, he is a free wage laborer. Realistically, he cannot exist and maintain such a policy. In other words, he thinks he has the right not to accept his condition, but clearly realizes he must. These two pressures tend to foment a subterranean frustration within him.

The workers' attitude towards all this is: "All that the company is interested in is production and more production." This is his way of protesting against the complete disregard of the individual human element. This is also evidenced by such statements as: "What do they think we are, pieces of steel?"

A worker walks in and sits down in my aisle of lockers at the beginning of work. He is a veteran, was wounded overseas. He suddenly exclaims in a loud voice: "Let's go out on strike!" I look at him and ask: "What brings this on?" He answers: "I can't stand it. The goddam machine pounding my head all day long, back and forth, back and forth. It's driving me nuts."

The machine he operates is a cold header. It chops off 1/2 inch pieces of steel about one half inch in diameter from a large roll of steel. It takes great pressure and is done without heat so that the result is a steady pounding noise, with the feeding arm going back and forth. I myself have worked next to these machines for several weeks. When you leave work, there still remains the continued booming in your head.

Now and then the plant has a fire drill. The workers march out of the plant for five minutes. Everyone seizes the opportunity to smoke. Remarks of this kind can be heard: "I'd like to go right home," or "I wish we would stay out till quitting time."

Lunch time in the cafeteria veranda, an ex-G.I. says: "These damn factories are prisons. You are cooped up without a chance to get a decent breath of fresh air."

There is a worker who arrives every morning in the locker room with "Ours is not to reason why, ours is but to do and die."

There is the destructive urge manifested by the worker throwing a piece of work at the machine when it does not function properly. He curses the machine.

I once had trouble with a machine. I said to the worker next to me: "If I owned this stinking machine I'd break it up." He replied: "Don't break your own machine. Break this one. It belongs to the company."

#### "I Work All Week For Friday Night"

The life of a worker is transformed into working time. He does not know how to play. After working hours, in the company of other workers, the conversation invariably returns to the shop. It is like a drug that will not release his mind. The worker thinks of pay day and the end of the week. His off hours are always conditioned by "I can't stay up late as I have to go to work tomorrow." When Sunday night arrives he thinks dejectedly of returning to work on Monday morning. The incessant process continually repeats itself. He looks longingly for week-ends and they disappear before he has a real chance to absorb them. He says: "I work all week for Friday night."

Workers gamble perhaps to win some money and escape production, buy a new car, etc.

Others talk about their betting as if they know it all and are big shots. Some of the workers use any subject as a means of maintaining a bond of interest between them, e.g., baseball, betting, women, etc. Many workers talk everlastingly of the baseball teams, their standings and who is playing. Specific detail is given to individual players and many know very exact information on some of the players and their health.

There are times when the worker has several days off in a row. The knowledge of this almost immediately begins to loosen the psychological strain. After a few days, he begins to acquire rest and peace of mind. The world takes on a lighter aspect. He has the opportunity to look out of his limited sphere. The pressure of work temporarily leaves him. Oddly enough, however, during fleeting moments of this period, a sense of unexplainable guilt for not being at work suddenly will come over him. The return to work is difficult. The first few hours back in the shop still find the worker imbued with the spirit

of his sojourn. Then comes the end of the day. The appearance and feeling of the worker is exactly what it was before the break occurred.

"Transforms His Life-Time Into Working-Time"

There is at certain times in the worker a psychological drive to remain in the plant. As we know, a worker spends most of his waking hours in the plant or at his labor. His life therefore revolves around this activity. His subconscious becomes overwhelmed with facts and thoughts concerning machine, workers, bosses, regularity of work hours, and incessant repetition. When out of the shop, he breathes a little more like a man. His home is more like the expression of his life. When the break occurs in the work and he has his week-end, for a fleeting moment he has loosened himself from the effects of the shop. Then crash! He must re-orient himself back on Monday to the same old routine. The mental strain at many times is immense. This was much more so during the war when in most instances the work day was 12 hours, 6 and 7 days a week. As a result, having become acclimated once more to the shop, in many instances he would rather remain than leave. The longer hours a worker puts in, the easier it is to drag him still further in the work day. There is a converse to this. As the work day shortens and the work week correspondingly, the worker then begins to want a still shorter working period.

One of the inspectors told me he is going into business. He won't take this any longer. Day after day, he gets up at the same time, goes through the same routine, and comes home. He says he refuses to take it any longer. This monotonous procedure is getting him down. He does not want to spend his life this way. He had best make a break before he gets old. He does not care if he loses all his savings, at least he will be free for a while. He was in the Marines and did picket duty during the strike. I told him he was doomed to the factory and he became very upset. He took a month's leave of absence, failed and then he came back.

"Another Day, Another Dollar"

The worker cannot express even to himself the real meaning of his suffering. When he arrives home, he finds that his wife, after a hard day's work in the home, is incapable of understanding what he has been through. His understanding of this makes him at times resent the fact that he cannot even unburden himself to his wife. He often talks to his kids about his work though. Not so they will understand, but as a release for himself.

There is an old popular phrase used on pay day: "Another day, another dollar."

When pay day comes, the locker-room buzzes as though a faucet was turned on. This one day of the week, there is whistling, chattering, and lively activity. The thing for which the workers have struggled all week has arrived, so it is natural that they should justify their suffering by the "good old pay check."

Worker Z. told me this. The other night when he came home, he said to his two year old baby girl: "Baby, you would cry if you saw my percentage." The child answered: "Don't cry, Daddy."

"Relaxing With A Bottle Of Beer"

Here are some other aspects of home life. Many workers say: "I've already got my ice-box filled with beer, I generally drink a half dozen bottles

before going to bed." "Relaxing with a bottle of beer."

After supper sitting in the living room, it is a matter of minutes before falling off in an exhausted sleep on the parlor chair. Here is the way it is told: "I put the radio on. I heard the announcer state the 'Lux radio movie' for the evening and that is all. I woke up a few hours later. Stiff neck and back ache and flopped into bed."

"If I Was Single"

Often the wife must do the waking up at five or six in the morning. This adds to the trials of her day as she makes breakfast for him and then goes back to bed to wake up a short time later for the kids. Many times home life is disrupted by this series of events. It results in early morning quarrels and arguments with the husband leaving for work without his lunch pail. Also a cause of this disruption in family life is the shift work. The third shift, from 11:00 PM to 7:00 AM is the worst. Some call it the night-mare shift. The family can rarely get together and look longingly for week-ends. He gets home at the beginning of day and tries to sleep with the kids running around. He gets irritated at the kids and yells at his wife for not keeping them quiet. He works hard all night to come home to this.

Both second and third shifts prevent the husband and wife from sharing in a rational and human manner the normal intimacies of life. Sex life is often very disrupted.

The married worker with a family feels that the single worker who supports himself only, cannot be too responsible. He arrives at this conclusion this way. Factory life is drudgery. Anyone who is not forced by necessity to endure it, is one who will at any moment up and leave or be irresponsible on the job. It is not uncommon to hear one worker say to another: "Why do you stay in the factory? If I was single I would be out of here long ago."

Many times the workers awakens on a non-work day with the impression that it is a working day. Saturday or Sunday, for instance. He wakes up with a start, not having set the alarm and frantically realizes he is late. The shop is even in his subconscious.

Monday morning on a dreary cold winters day: Workers are dressing and changing clothes. A worker comes in and in one word expresses the philosophical outlook of each worker present. In a frustrated, definitive angry tone he says: "Aw S-----!" Everyone understands and says to himself, "You can say that again for me, brother."

Taking a ride on non-work days, a worker many times will deliberately avoid those streets which lead him to work. He comes to dislike all those buildings and landmarks which line the route. At the same time, he will many times deliberately ride this circuit up to the plant and past, precisely because he is free to do so on this one day.

On the other hand workers have often made it a point to bring their whole family to the plant area on a Sunday. There they explain to the family what section of the plant is their working area.

"I Dropped Dead"

Many machines have been speeded up. The worker used to be able to smoke more often. Now the worker has to spend all day watching, changing and

cleaning tools. The interludes are briefer. The end of the day produces a more exhausted worker, mentally and physically. The moments of relaxation are continually diminishing.

The machinery is speeded up to a high degree. As a result there are continuous breakdowns. The wanton use of the machinery is everywhere apparent. As a result, a large crew of maintenance men are needed.

A worker on a high speed automatic machine said: "I am geared up at a high speed pitch to run a fast machine. Kept busy piling up the work, loading and putting new tools in. If I was to be put on a slower machine, I couldn't stand the change of pace. At the same time it would be as a vacation compared to the fast one I run."

When the operators fail to make bonus by the end of the day, they climax it with the expression: "I dropped dead." The essence is that the worker exhausted himself to no avail.

"If I Had The Money Spent On This"

A huge conveyor belt has recently been installed throughout the plant. It goes from department to department. Hundreds of steel girders and steel baskets comprise its make-up. The cost ran into thousands of dollars. As far as the workers are concerned, it is at this date a failure. They are constantly hurting themselves on it. It is in the middle of the machinery and serves as a hazard. The workers are becoming increasingly angry about it. The men speak up but the company says they will put round edges on the corners and the men should be careful. However this does not solve the problem.

Whereas before, the machine operator stacked up his work in pans and placed them on the floor for a laborer to pick up later, now the men are ordered to place the work on the conveyor. The laborer is now eliminated in this respect. The company had tried to institute this once before, but failed. Having reached larger sections of the workers with increased benefits in the meantime, the company was able to install the system at this time. However, many of the workers rebelled at the new system, claiming it was out of their classification, etc. For some days there was a disturbance. Although the new system has proved in some ways more satisfactory, the fact that the men were not consulted and also the fact that the company arbitrarily instituted it, brought on the revolt.

There are some other aspects to this situation. Previously, the checker came to the worker's machine and in a relationship exchanged receipts for the work which the worker created. Now the worker places his work on a conveyor whence it travels to a central pay point. At various intervals during the week he receives his receipts. The old relationship no longer exists of contact between worker and checker. (This is very satisfactory to the checker.) The old system gave the worker a feeling of individual contact with the recipients of his work. The worker is angry at the new system and demands that the old relation be reestablished. He insists that he be paid for his work at his machine. His reason is that otherwise he is cheated of some of his day's work. But this is no more the case than usual and the company goes to extremes to see no one is cheated. The new system as stated proves in many respects more satisfactory than before. But the worker, not understanding himself or his reason, is angry because he is becoming further divorced from and automatized in his work. He attempts to protect his individuality and resents the regimentation of his labor into a sterile path. So he protests not the fact that he is required to lift the work onto the conveyor,

1002

but the further divorce of himself from the end results and the receivers of his efforts.

The workers are clearly aware that "economic strikes" do not get them anywhere. At this time, a lay-off numbering into the hundreds has been taking place. The workers contrast the cost of the conveyor and its waste of money and space to this lay-off and say that the expense involved could easily have kept all these workers on the job. Many say: "If I had the money spent on this, I could retire for life." The lay-offs have brought an increased labor on the part of those still remaining. The workers all understand and state openly and consistently that the company is trying to cut overhead and expense. These lay-offs have affected all but the production departments, i.e., laborers, inspectors, toolroom, maintenance and other non-production workers. Many know of the tax refunds to the company by the government. The conveyor has displaced laborers who used to cart away.

"Fit For A Variety Of Labors"

The basic machine in production is the lathe. It was from the first crude lathes, operated by foot power, that almost all other machines have since developed. Almost all machinery is either a modification of the lathe, e.g. the drill press, or a further addition, e.g. the huge automatics and boring mills. Most every worker who understands machinery knows this. The point I wish to make is this: The mastery of any of these machines automatically prepares the worker to gain mastery easily over the others. This I have seen hundreds of times in the last five years. I as well as other workers, have at some time or other, been put on machines which we had never run. Most often it took about a half hour to be able to run them satisfactorily. This is a constant occurrence in most factories. When work runs out on one machine the worker is put on another. I see it every day in the factory. In this plant during the first two months, I ran a drill press, air-chuck lathes, automatic screw machines, foot press, etc. Two of these machines I had never run before.

It is clear then, that the present day organization of production itself prepares certain strata of workers for a multiplicity of abilities. I recall that during the war this was much more so. Another fact shown by the war was the ease with which newcomers to machinery could learn in a comparatively short space of time. This was proved to me by the fact that in the first three years of the war, I alone trained some twenty-odd workers, ranging in age from 17 to 60, in the practice of running engine and turret lather.

When workers have the opportunity to sneak away, they investigate the other sections of the plant. Rarely does this happen. The longing to vision the whole of which he is a part is never satisfied. He does not get to know the routine and full mechanics of the next departments. He will pass through various departments, pick up a piece of work and comment on it. Then again he will stop at a machine which intrigues him. He will question the operator about it. An exceptional yearning can be seen in the watchful eyes of those whose job it is to perform some sort of laboring or unskilled manual task. It is not uncommon to hear one worker say to another: "Boy, that job is a good one to have."

"The Cooperative Form Of The Labor Process"

In factories where different classifications of work are set up, workers confine themselves to their own classification. For example, a



with it. Perhaps it was O.K. for the Trotskyites in France to enter the Second International, I knew very little about that, but here in the United States, I couldn't see it. That was the political reason. But something else came in. The rumor spread that Cannon and the majority leaders were carrying on negotiations with the S.P. behind the backs of the members. We said that men of their ilk couldn't build the pure revolutionary party. Our background was one of fighting the corrupt leadership of the A.F.L. Many of the A.F.L. leaders were S.P. ers. In the A.W.P., under the pressures of the corrupt A.F.L. bureaucrats, we had become obsessed with the building of the party, not of just any party though, but an honest revolutionary party. Thus we spent a good deal of time on the bureaucracy of the J.P.C. regime. The bureaucracy and dishonesty of the leaders got all mixed up with the question of political entry. We had little political education at the time. For me, the question of whether entry into the S.P. was correct, has still to be evaluated. I think, today, that if the Trotskyites had evaluated the American scene correctly and turned to the workers, they would have held on to most of the Muste-ites and most of the Ohlerites, if not all. In any case, even from the SWP point of view, many of those who came from the S.P. later split away to form the W.P., and the W.P. has given the S.W.P. as much or more trouble than the S.P. Trotsky intervened in the struggle over entry. But to me his intervention was remote. It didn't mean much. All our talk was of building and keeping an independent organization. Some of the old Muste group were C.P.ers - and at the last convention of the A.W.P. which decided on going into the S.P., they went to the C.P. Some, completely disoriented, dropped out of the movement. A good number, mostly under Muste's influence, went along to the S.P. and a small group went with Ohler. I was one. Yet I didn't really believe that the Ohlerites would build the mass party. It was rather that there was no other place to go.

What started the disintegration of the Ohlerites was the false position on the formation of the C.I.O. (It must, however, be pointed out that later the Ohlerites changed their appraisal of the C.I.O.) In the beginning they saw it not as a movement of the unorganized working class for struggle, but as a maneuver of John L. Lewis, the corrupt labor faker. Thus, Ohler who split to build the independent American party missed the C.I.O. He had no analysis of the American scene. I can see that now. Spain came up and we were busy raising money to send some one to Spain. Some of the ex-Muste-ites left Ohler after he took the position on the C.I.O. as did a few others. Again there was a general dropping from the movement. I and my friends were footloose and free, with nowhere to go. With the formation of the S.W.P. our spirits were high; we had a "home" at last. We hadn't liked our period of do-nothing. We had the Spanish revolution before us and the great lessons to be learnt from it. We saw the further disintegration of the Stalinist regime in the Moscow trials. And for us in the U.S., there was the importance and encouragement of the mobilization of the American working class - the great militancy it displayed in building the C.I.O. We wanted an organization to work with, to give the answers to all these problems.

Once again the workers gave the lead. The depression and organization of the unemployed had forced the Trotskyites to turn to the American scene - unity with the Muste group. The formation of the C.I.O. pointed the road to us again, to the task of building the revolutionary party in America.

With the formation of the SWP, spirits were high. We felt that now we would really build the party. We felt that now we will really give the C.P. a run. Yet at that famous convention in Chicago, there were grumblings against bureaucracy. Trade union reports were given with an eye toward what control we had in one or another union. Not with what I see today as absolutely imperative - what are the workers doing, what demands do the workers make. We were not looking at the workers to learn from them, but rather we were working out positions for the workers. However, we were off with a bang. And when later we adopted the Transitional Program, we were on top of the world.

-8-

And yet a sharp period later, we went through another split. Again it was a question of bureaucracy and the tricks and underhanded dealings of the leaders. I was still looking for the building of an American revolutionary party, disliking the use of the old Marxist jargon, feeling that the American worker doesn't understand it. We wanted to find new words.

To top it all, we the present W.P. were called petty-bourgeois when I know that I wanted to help build an American revolutionary party as much as the people who were called proletarians.

Did I feel good about the split? No. In the first split I did not understand Trotsky's intervention. I was going to help keep a Trotskyist organization alive, independent of the corrupt S.W.P. This time I felt Trotsky's intervention more, and yet I understood it less. We would have to show him. That was the general conclusion.

It's interesting to note that for one who started with the Muste-ites where the all-consuming idea was the building of an American revolutionary party based on American events, my first split was on the French turn, the second was on the Russian question. Yet I felt all the time that it was not international politics which would build the American party.

The grumblings of bureaucracy were not small scale this time, but a loud roar. This time, I felt, we were going to build a party without the bureaucrats. We were cold sober. Trotsky said we were petty-bourgeois. Well, we would show him too. We will get into industry, become proletarians, develop our ideas as we went along. No, we didn't say empirical, but "as we go along."

When the fight started, Cannon fought us on our level, incorrectly. When Trotsky intervened with his way of attacking us, factional lines had already been drawn tight. Looking back, it seems to me that Cannon and his supporters continued the attack in the old manner, only giving lip service to Trotsky's method. But most important, we were incapable of answering the old man. We said he had introduced the dialectic as a red herring. I knew nothing about dialectic. None of us rank and filers knew anything about it. We had no training to understand it. I was positive that the split was right but I could not understand why Trotsky was against us and I could not understand how he could not see our point of view. It disturbed me. With the Ohlerite split, I thought that Trotsky did not understand the American scene. I could see the Muste-ites, good American worker-types, around us and wondered why Trotsky wanted us to go into the corrupt S.P. I came to the conclusion that he didn't understand and left it there. But this time I could not dismiss his intervention so easily.

Now this split is of an entirely different nature. This has been the hardest fight and interestingly enough, the quietest. In the past, if even "my side" made a very good point, one felt embarrassed at the usual name-calling. No such thing now. The Shachtmanites might chafe at our political characterization of them. But they have to answer us one way, politically - for any other way they answer us sounds shallow and says nothing. They have tried to answer us in the old way to which Shachtman is accustomed, and which, bad as it sounds, is the traditional way that the Trotskyite parties conducted fights. They finally had to stop, for they were talking to themselves. They don't answer for they can't.

This split has many things to teach. And it is absolutely necessary to study it carefully if we are to stop drawing up programs for the worker. Instead if we want a program that will make an impact on the American scene, we must start with the worker. Analyze the American workers' struggles not with the Russian question in mind but with the Russian Revolution for background. We

must try to do here today what Lenin did in his day for the Russian masses. Analyze the actions, struggles, demands of the American worker today and from that analysis evolve a program. Only in that way will we be able to build an American Revolutionary Party.

We have stuck to politics. No bureaucracy, no accusations of dishonesty of leaders, no attempt to spread rumors about maneuvers. Politics from first to last. I have never been in a group or caucus that understood itself so well. Today also, I understand all I have been looking for since 1934. I can read and understand what Trotsky was saying in 1940.

It is in this way that the Johnsonites wrote our American resolution and all our other resolutions. There was a method evolved in the writing of the Johnsonite resolutions which is invaluable for the education of party members who are serious in their efforts to build an American Revolutionary Party.

Not everybody can write a resolution but each of us must be made to contribute something. We were made to look at the smallest signs, as well as at large actions, among the workers and were taught to interpret them in terms of Marxism. We were made to learn the importance of reading the fundamental writings of our movement and interpret them in our day to day activity. A leading member of the Shachtmanite caucus, when Labor Action was criticized by us for its lack of socialist content and method, answered: "You want Socialism in the paper - write an article on Socialism." We can laugh at this, but in one way or another it has been my experience that this has been the trouble with the press of the Movement in American articles on socialism.

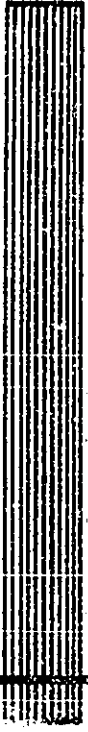
We must develop the method that we Johnsonites have used. We who have been around the movement for any length of time, whether we started as worker or student and whether we are working in factories or going to school today, can not see the actions of the workers in the same light that the "uneducated" or "raw" workers see them. Therefore it is absolutely necessary to go to the workers wherever we are, and listen to them, hear them and draw them out. Only in that way can we learn how best to teach them what we know, that is our method of explaining the actions of the class struggles, i.e., Marxism. Any other way is just "gun-beating." Was this understood by anyone who participated in the actions which led to the other two splits? By only one - Trotsky - and in his article to Shachtman, "From A Scratch To Gangrene," he pointed it out to us.

The importance of the Johnson-Forest Tendency is that a beginning was made here to get to the American workers in practice through theory. I have not seen in the past much serious theory about the American workers and at the same time such practical activity. We must follow it up. And to answer even my old moralist approach to building an "honest" revolutionary party, this is the only way. On all the old things that used to bother me, the "honest" party, no "bureaucracy," "getting to the American workers," how to combine international politics and theory with building the American party, I am quite clear. That's why this split is different. I can see it in the comrades too. No doubts, no hesitations and no regrets. We are glad to leave the past behind us. There never was such a split in my past.

- Freddy Dutton

1 0 0 7

# INTERNAL BULLETIN



## OF THE JOHNSON FOREST TENDENCY

Number 4

August 7, 1947

---

### CONTENTS:

#### PART I.

- A Conference Speech From the Trade Union Session. By Nettie. . . . . Page 1  
"Educating" the Youth. By Zeb. . . . . Page 5  
Who Will Lead Whom Where? By Martin Harvey. . . . . Page 8

#### PART II.

- Introduction To Three Essays of Karl Marx. By J. R. Johnson, F. Forest and R. Stone

10 CENTS

1007

A CONFERENCE SPEECH FROM THE "TRADE UNION SESSION"

Throughout today's conference there is one steady stream of discussion, and that is the question of where we must concentrate our efforts - in the union itself or the factory in daily contact. Of course, we understand that both are important; that neither one can exclude the other. It is not a choice of one or the other, but rather where the emphasis must lie. I believe we must concentrate on the workers next to us at the point of production where socialist lessons can be pointed out directly. I also believe our greatest task is in constantly explaining the need of a revolutionary party to the mass of workers who are seeking a decisive and complete change in their life.

It is for the Johnsonite tendency to realize that this need applies especially to the majority of working women, who are not directly "political" and never will be integrated entirely into the trade union movement; but who nevertheless are deeply concerned with the failings of modern marriages, juvenile delinquencies, crises of wars, depressions and especially inflation which affects their home-life directly - all things caused by capitalism.

Looking back to the Johnsonite Reconversion Program, I accepted theoretically a year and a half ago, I am amazed at the profundity and depth it represents. Just how marvelous our transitional program is, is brought out by the workers themselves who are questioning the waste of the capitalistic system, in relationship to the tremendous resources at its disposal, and this is especially true in America where the last depression is still a vivid memory to the working class. At the head of our transitional program is a slogan for the four hour working day which requires that we explain modern imperialism in a complete way to our worker contacts. In my own experience I've often found workers cynical and questioning socialism who quickly became anxious to discuss and hear more once this point was made clear.

Even among us Johnsonites it is difficult to realize just how near the workers are to our slogans and ideas, that they are already repeating our slogans in their own words. It was in talking to one of the women workers that I myself first realized just how much the achievement of the four-hour day would permit us to develop interests that we can barely, if at all, squeeze in on our weekends if only because we must work from sun-up to sun-down in factories and offices today and never see the daylight except on weekends. This same worker went on apologetically to tell me that she was not a communist, but that (and this very hesitantly) working on a belt makes a person radical. What a wonderful way of explaining our own belief that capitalism itself radicalizes the worker and prepares him to strive for socialist beginnings!

When we were recently given an increase of five cents an hour, workers while applauding when this was announced, simultaneously spoke to each other about the four increases in the price of refrigerators by the company. The attitude was: "They'll get that extra nickel out of us. They'll speed-up production. They don't give us anything without getting more back." Nor did they think that the union leadership had done anything for them, instead they mumbled about the officers getting the raise only to raise union dues the more easily.

In my personal experiments in contacting, I've found that talk of a labor party, opposition to no-strike pledges and insufficient wage increases come nowhere near the enthusiastic response of advanced workers to talk of changing the entire capitalistic system and internationalism and what it can mean. One woman who was placed next to me for a day and whom I hardly knew, discussed with me how difficult the work was. As an experiment I said to her

"The International" after just a few words of explanation. When I was half-way through, I began to wonder how I could retreat gracefully for there was no note - not even a smile - of encouragement. When I had finished the song, she turned to me and said simply: "If only that could be true." Then she proceeded to buy a dollar's subscription to "Labor Action." We spoke about internationalism, but I, a revolutionary socialist, was too stunned to say very much immediately.

Workers are constantly comparing themselves to cattle. As one man put it: "Here I go home again - eat, listen to the radio a little, fall asleep, and back to work again the next day. Just like a donkey." His friend with him says: "Don't you mean like an ass?"

When I speak of fatigue to one of the women, she answers: "Of course you're tired. What do you expect. They whip your ass." (One learns that "they" in these cases always means the capitalist class.)

Many women must get up at 5:00 AM in order to get their children to nurseries and school in time and actually do household chores before coming in to work. At the end of the day they hurry home to pick up their children - to have dinner cooked in time for the family. Some even speak of factory work as a relief and say they hate to think of going home because of all the work waiting for them there. They ask why I should be tired, a single girl without the responsibility of children.

From all this it is easy to understand that modern marriages - one third of them in the United States - end up in the divorce court, not from psychoanalytical reasons but from the draining of all energy by the belt system which clouds the whole life and personality of the workers, not only during working hours, but even on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. I am not against psychoanalysis in its limited place, but our concentration must be concerned with so-called "normal" people who, given a six months vacation from capitalistic work, would lose all trace of nervousness and anxiety so prevalent today. While accepting Freud, Reich and all other psychologists for what they are worth, we ourselves must not accept psychoanalysis for the working class when just plain fatigue and nervous tension is the answer for the vast majority of the capitalist-oppressed workers.

We must also remember that when one third of our marriages are failing, not to mention the matings that never reach legal status, the bourgeois status quo on which modern marriage and family life are based, is being threatened. It is here where we revolutionists must be able to teach contacts, especially women, that only socialism can completely and effectively renovate the marriage customs which today permit easy divorce for the wealthy and influential, difficulty and expense for the working class, and a hypocritical, double, sexual standard separating men from women artificially. As Lenin so beautifully explained it in his "Conversations on the Woman Question," we must be able to show women the political connection between our demands and their own needs and desires. Here we can also attract women to our movement who are actually not from the proletariat, women who are already aware of the double standard holding even in such "scientific" fields as medicine where nurses, held down financially, often do as responsible work as the male doctor, who nevertheless receives the greater return; this is not even to mention the even greater difficulties of the female doctor who must fight against all the prejudices instilled within both the medical profession and the layman. The socialist movement must tie up for these women the meaning of our fight for the socialist revolution in relationship to the special inequalities these women have been subjected to. For we realize,

Like so many bourgeois professors, sociologists and journalists do not, what only socialism can give equality for the sexes. We realize that the national state itself, encourages the dichotomy between men and women, just as it does the split between Catholic and Jew, Negro and white, veteran and civilian - all conducive to weakening the power of the working class in its opposition to capitalism. Otherwise, why would the national policy continue inadequate, inconsistent and outmoded divorce laws? Why the inequality extended even to property ownership and rights accorded to men and women under the guise of paternalistic protection for womanhood? We socialists realize that consent to marry and divorce on the part of two people hardly represents "equality of contract," we understand that the social-economic pressures (even if not conscious to the participants) may be completely unequal. Unlike the modern bourgeois sociologists, we know equality before the law (the fight for consistent divorce laws, higher professional status for women in different fields, etc.) can affect everyday life for the broad masses very little for all the superstructure is based on a corrupt economic system so that double morality standards are a result not a cause. Within the Bolshevik party, we live as closely to our future socialist standards perhaps as capitalist indoctrination permits, and it is in this party that many women will get their first taste of equality - something precious indeed.

One of our greatest problems lies in the competition with all the various bourgeois activities attracting workers in the few leisure hours there are. Because there are so many other adult educational and recreational opportunities in the average industrialized localities in which we concentrate, it is absolutely necessary for us to raise the political level of our meetings, forums and even our social affairs. Then the worker can see that we do not compete on an equal level with the institutions he has hitherto been accustomed to, but that we challenge all of the present bourgeois life and aim to make a radical change which concerns every aspect of his life. To do this successfully means we must emphasize politics, politics, politics - and there is nothing sectarian about this when we consider the penetration of politics, as we Marxists define it, into every phase of life. Rather it is sectarian and supercilious condescension to present ourselves only socially and ignore the fact that women contacts brought around are anxiously striving to understand the meaning of the party and of revolutionary socialism. Our type of comradeliness must be shown not as an obligation, but as a natural base arising among comrades whose ideas, aims and appreciations represent a way of life.

These workers who are so near to us already in their desires, once they have grasped what we represent, will write for our paper in a way we never could. What we understand theoretically will become alive and meaningful and then will be seen the great potentiality of the working class as even now it strives to reveal itself.

In closing, I beg to give one example (a favorite of mine I had always hoped to present to the W.P. Majority). This particular girl has all the subjective qualities seized upon as the "backwardness of the workers" and to me represents the epitome of what capitalism can do to individuals. Like so many other workers, she has high seniority and is under doctors' care for nervousness, a natural corollary. She is shy, distrustful of the union leadership and was fearful of even mentioning the word "socialist" or "communist" when she was first introduced to our party and probably would not have trusted me so far had not another contact urged her to. After the first forum she seemed to feel more free and agreed to begin attending the union meetings she had long ago given up. At one particular meeting she attended, a negotiations committee was

being appointed. The president of the union had a list he had drawn up, but rank-and-file members were eager to vote for their own representatives. My friend seemed to be ignoring the whole procedure and I felt discouraged. However, I took the floor to urge a discussion of negotiation programs rather than the squabbling between the various cliques. It was at this point my friend told me later that she saw red. Meanwhile everything went into disorder as officers tried to prove me out of order. The secretary started out with: "Your president has chosen a list of your own officers...." At this point my contact shouted at the top of her voice: "And mighty poor leaders they are." For the next three days she was out of work - ill and ashamed of what she had done - and it took us almost a month to draw her out again. For us Johnsonites, the important thing to remember is that this worker, typifying the worker the W.P. Majority thinks full of democratic illusions, in spite of her subjective personality reacted militantly when the objective situation arose.

- Nettie

```

: : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : :
: : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : :
: PUBLICATIONS OF THE JOHNSON-FOREST TENDENCY NOW AVAILABLE :
: : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : :
:   Education, Propaganda and Agitation :
:   (The Americanization of Bolshevism).....10¢ each :
:   Resolution on the Negro Question.....10¢ each :
:   Issues of the Bulletin.....10¢ each :
:   Special Features: :
:   #1 "Why We Appear" :
:   #2 "Building the Mass Revolutionary Party :
:   in the Mine Area" :
:   #3 "The Worker in Modern Industry" :
: : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : :
: Order from Martin Harvey - 101 West 46 Street, New York, 19, N.Y. :
: : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : :
: : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : :

```



"EDUCATING" THE YOUTH

A number of weeks ago, as a youth comrade, I attended a debate on the Russian question, between the Majority and Minority positions given by the youth group of the W.P. (S.Y.L.) In the course of the discussion period, I, for the first time during my short affiliation with the group, asked several questions from the floor. These were directed to the speaker for the Majority.

At the conclusion of the debate, and the general exodus from the building, I was approached by two Majority comrades who began a discussion by asking me about one of the questions I had asked. My question was: "Your position on Russia seems to pose that the economics of the U.S.S.R. stems from the politics. Marx, all the way through, said that the politics come from the economics. Please explain." The Majority comrades wanted to know: "Where all the way through does Marx say this?"

I was slightly nervous and inhibited, for here I was, confronted by two comrades who had been in the movement for years and who had read more and discussed much more than I who had only been in the movement for four months. Finally I gave an answer. I said: "All the way through what I've read." I don't think they were particularly satisfied or pleased with this answer, but they let the question go.

"Why didn't you ask any questions of the Minority?" asked one.

"Because," I answered, "I don't have anything to ask them."

"Do you have a definite position on Russia?" I was asked.

"Yes," I answered. "State capitalism."

"Are you perfectly clear on the position not to have to ask questions?"

"No, but clear enough to take a position."

"What questions would you ask them?"

"That," I said, "I'd ask of them, since they are the ones I want an answer from."

"How," I was asked, "can you take a definite stand on any position. You've only been in the movement for several months. You couldn't possibly be on a high enough political level to form any opinions."

I answered: "I form my opinions on the level that I am at the moment. Perhaps they'd change later on. That remains to be seen, but one cannot be passive in these questions. One must take a stand. Passivity immediately affiliates one with the Majority."

"You," he said, "have no right, I'm not speaking of democratic right. I mean moral right, to form any opinions. Your moral self ought to revolt, you ought to feel humility at forming an opinion at the level you are. How much have you read up until now?"

"Well," I answered, "maybe not as much as you have. I've read 'The Communist Manifesto,' 'Wage, Labor and Capital,' 'Value, Price and Profit,' 'Anti-Duhring'..."

Here he interjected, "I'll bet you didn't understand 'Anti-Duhring.'"

"Perhaps not completely," I said.

"Not at all," he said.

I replied, "I did so."

"I'll ask you some questions from it," he said, trying to frighten me.

"Go right ahead," I said.

"What are the laws of the dialectic?"

The first one I mentioned was "The interpenetration of opposites."

"Explain it," he said.

"All right," I began. "We have a magnet, it has a north pole and a south pole. These are opposites, they are irreconcilably opposed to one another, yet they cannot be separated from each other. The interpenetration of opposites. Or, to take a sociological example. Within capitalism the seed of socialism come into being because of the inherent contradictions in capitalist society. The interpenetration of opposites."

"Those are examples," he said. "I want a definition."

I was slightly taken back, but I answered, "Two diametrically opposed forces are contained within the same framework. They cannot be separated. The interpenetration of opposites."

"You are vague and incoherent," he said.

"What is your definition?" I asked.

"I won't answer that now," he said. I was sorry I didn't press him for an answer of the question, but he went on, "what's your definition of private property?"

"Well," I said, "I can't quote exactly from Marx, so don't hold me to it."

"I will," was his answer.

I went on, "O.K. Hold me to it, but private property as I understand it is the ability of one class, the bourgeoisie, to appropriate the labor of another class, the proletariat."

"You are vague and incoherent," he said.

"What's your definition?" I asked.

"I don't want to get into a political discussion with you," he said. "I only want to show you that you don't have any moral right to take any positions because of your low political level. You should feel a sense of humility. Your inner-self should revolt against you even thinking of taking a position."

Then I said, "It seems obvious to me, since you refuse to answer my questions that you're not trying to educate me, but rather you're trying to confuse and intimidate me. Therefore I do not wish to discuss with you anymore." With this I walked away.

A short while later I overheard Selma discussing with this same person. I was amazed to hear to what a low level his arguments had degenerated. He said, "If a two-year old came into the party, would you consider that his political level was high enough to take any position?"

Selma retorted, "If a two-year old is intelligent enough to join the party, he is able to take a position on any question there is."

.....  
.....  
.....  
TO APPEAR IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE BULLETIN

LABOR AND SOCIETY.....By Freddie Forrest

Contents:

- A. Labor and Society
  - 1. The Concept of Labor
  - 2. The Concept of Property
- B. Role of Labor in a Workers' State
- C. The Trade Unions and the NEP
- D. The International Market  
and the Isolated State

WHO WILL LEAD WHOM WHERE?

The International Movement is today in a state of ferment. All sections are engrossed in a discussion of all problems of the international proletariat today. Differences exist on many questions, some small, some large, and groups' factions and tendencies exist throughout the International Movement embodying these differences. Today's discussion and the nature of the differences are indicative not of a "normal" discussion which is customary in the life of the revolutionary movement, but rather of widespread confusion and doubts on questions of political policy extending to the most fundamental theoretical roots of Trotskyism.

We have said that the essential cleavage in our movement is on the evaluation of the present epoch and our first concern, therefore, is with the struggle for a revolutionary perspective against the retrogressionists and those deluded people who make programmatic concessions to them. We have our own positions but we have drawn the conclusion that we can help to restore the political authority of the leadership of the movement and assist in the disciplining of the "centrifugal forces" by support of the revolutionary-Bolshevik majority.

The confusionists oppose to this the idea of blocs within the movement on limited questions. Pushed vigorously by the Workers Party, some support is being gotten for a bloc on the question of defeatism in Russia or on the question of "regime."

We have already demonstrated how blocs of this kind reveal a total lack of concern with basic theoretical questions. As was made clear by Trotsky in his analysis of the Minority bloc of 1940 in the Socialist Workers Party, there is a terrible danger when principled questions are sacrificed for any agreement that will lead to organizational victory.

The consequences of such light-minded treatment of the theoretical program of Marxism are not, of course, confined to the field of theory and "abstract" politics. The seed of unprincipled bloc bears immediate - and bitter - fruit in all spheres of politics and organization.

To propose seriously a bloc of all defeatists in the concrete circumstances of today is to propose a struggle for the leadership of the International Movement. Otherwise it becomes not a serious bloc on a serious question but a proposal for a debate in the manner of a college debating society. But should such a bloc as Shachtman proposes gain a majority it would have to provide the movement with leadership on all questions, not merely on Russian defeatism. In other words anyone who wishes to examine seriously a bloc on any question must concern himself with the general theoretical and programmatic character of the bloc.

Let us examine concretely the character of Shachtman's bloc in the event of a defeatist victory in the movement. It would have the leadership of the International Movement on its hands. Where would the movement stand with such a leadership? It would be faced with all the problems of the world working class.

It would be faced with the problem of Stalinism. What kind of leadership would the leaders give on this question? Stalinophobia? A pro-Stalinist orientation? That the Stalinist parties are totalitarian parties? The traditional anti-Stalinist course of our movement? A new position?

Who can tell? On this there is no need for agreement on Shachtman's line in Shachtman's bloc. Any majority would be entirely accidental. And it is entirely possible that there would be no majority. Result: No leadership whatever. At best, constant compromise and conciliation of irreconcilable points of view.

It would be faced with the problem of the evaluation of this post-war period. Where would the leadership stand? Retrogressionist? Revolutionary perspectives? Something in between? Does anyone know? Does any proponent of such a bloc even find it necessary to look for an answer? Again, any position on this basic question - and on the host of concrete questions which flow from it - would be either accidental, empirical, conjunctural - or non-existent.

The same could be repeated for the nature of the Russian state and other greater and lesser questions. On all these questions the bloc would not and could not have anything to say. The result: For the sake of a tactical-organizational victory, the movement will find itself in this stormy period, beheaded, without effective leadership, operating from day to day as best it can. Such is the inevitable fate of those who, having abandoned the method of Marxism, having substituted for fundamental theoretical analysis concern with day to day "victories" and "defeats," scurry around to collect the malcontents, the ignorant and the confused, operating on only one "principle": the principle of the largest number.

One needs only to project the proposed bloc into the not-so-distant future. The sight should make us recoil and redouble our efforts to restore to the movement its old concern with theory and with basic principles. When such concern becomes the universally accepted norm we will no longer have to fear the attempts of political adventurers to round up any sort of mish-mash and label it a "principled bloc."

- Martin Harvey

```

*****
* *****
* *
* * We publish as Part II of this issue, our introduction to
* * three of Marx's Economic-Philosophic Essays which we have
* * translated into English. The essays are:
* *
* * 1. Alienated Labor
* * 2. Private Property And Communism
* * 3. Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic
* *
* * These translations will soon be available. Copies can be
* * ordered from: Martin Harvey - 101 W. 46 St. - New York 19, N.Y.
* *
*****

```

### INTRODUCTION

The three essays here presented have been selected and translated from the economic-philosophical manuscripts written by Marx in 1844 and collected in the Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe, Bd. 1, Abt. 3, Berlin, 1932.

We do not publish these translations as archives. Far from it. They are far more alive today than when they were written. We publish a selection in this modest form because we are determined to break through the vast conspiracy of silence which surrounds them.

Marx in his student years had mastered the Hegelian philosophy. Here we see the first fruits of his studies of political economy. It was not only Hegel whom Marx stood on his head. He at once put his finger on the philosophical weakness of the classical school of economists - their limited and superficial concept of private property.

The essay on alienated labor shows Marx making his philosophic concepts concrete, in the relation between wage labor and capital in the process of production. With an amazing certainty and confidence he drives home what is essentially new in his discoveries. What distinguishes him from Smith and Ricardo is that he understands private property whereas they do not. Only his own words must speak for him.

"We have, indeed, obtained the concept of estranged labor (of estranged life) from political economy as the result of the movement of private property. But in analyzing this concept, it is revealed that even if private property appears as the basis, as the cause of estranged labor, it is rather a consequence of it. In the same way, the Gods are not originally the cause but the effect of human confusion in understanding. Later this relationship becomes interchanged."

There he broke once and for all with the classical economists. His problem, the Marxian problem, became the analysis of the labor process. As he says triumphantly, "For when man speaks of private property, he believes he has only to deal with a fact outside man. Where man speaks of labor, he has to deal directly with man. This new posing of the question already includes its resolution."

Twenty years later Marx was to begin Capital by saying that the pivot of the understanding of political economy was the fact that, like commodities in general, labor itself possessed a two-fold nature, abstract labor and concrete labor. Here, in 1844, already, he had not only isolated labor from property. He was seeking the contradiction in labor itself. The worker was dominated by the objective results of his labor. It became the private property of someone other than the laborer. Why? Marx leapt generations ahead with his answer. It was because the very type of labor activity that the modern worker carried out was of such a kind that the appropriation of the result by others was inevitable. Smith and Ricardo took the activity for granted and dealt only with the results of the activity. Marx claimed that in the activity itself the result was already contained. The abstract labor of Capital is the labor for value production. The concrete labor is the production of use-values. Value could only take bodily form in use-value but value dominated. When use-values dominated we would have a new society. Many Marxists still see the domination of use-values in a mere multitude of use-values for consumption. They are unaware that they

are merely repeating the mistake of Ricardo on a higher scale substituting results for activity. The substitution of use-value for value must take place in labor itself. Where, under capitalism, the laborer was valued at his consumption, a new society demands that the use-value of labor itself become the dominant form in production - the full development of the laborer's natural and acquired powers. The laborer must become a fully-developed individual, freedom is an economic necessity and proletarian democracy an economic category. This is no longer a theoretical problem. From one end of the world to the other, today man faces one problem - increased productivity. The rulers of production are helpless before it. Modern man revolts against the very conditions of labor. Except by the forces of men released from capitalist production, there is no solution to the economic and social crisis. All the lamentations and moaning about Bolshevism being a new means of dominating the workers have no meaning for those who grasp the essence of Marx's social ideas of which his philosophy and economics are only a contingent part.

Lenin of all modern men saw this to its last and ultimate conclusion. He took just this and made it revolutionary policy for the masses. He could lead the October Revolution because he saw this mobilization of oppressed humanity as the only solution to the crisis. In Can The Bolsheviks Retain State Power (and The Threatening Catastrophe) he said openly to millions what Marx was writing in the study in 1844:

"The most important thing is to inspire the oppressed and the toilers with confidence in their own strength, to show them in practice that they can and must themselves undertake a correct, strictly orderly and organized distribution of bread, food, milk, clothing, dwellings, and so forth, in the interests of the poor. Without this, Russia cannot be saved from collapse and ruin; whereas an honest, courageous and universal move to hand over the administration to the proletarians and semi-proletarians will arouse such unprecedented revolutionary enthusiasm among the masses, will so multiply the forces of the people in combatting their miseries, that such a move would be impossible to our old, narrow, bureaucratic forces will become practical for the forces of the millions and millions of the masses when they begin to work for themselves, and not under the whip, for the capitalist, the master, the official."

This was not to come afterwards. This was the revolution itself. Lenin continues without a pause

"Only then shall we be able to see what untapped forces of resistance are latent in the people; only then will what Engels calls 'latent socialism' be made apparent; only then shall we find that for every ten thousand open or concealed enemies of the power of the working class, who manifest themselves either by action or by passive resistance, a million new fighters will arise, who until then had been politically dormant, languishing in poverty and despair, having lost faith in themselves as human beings, in their right to live, in the possibility that they too might be served by the whole force of the modern centralized state and that their detachments of proletarian militia might be fully trusted and called upon to take part in the immediate, direct, day-to-day work of administration of the state."

The only slogan he could find to express it was, "Workers, Control Of Production" but what he meant by that was an uncoiling of creative forces imbedded in the senses of modern man and implanted there by the productive forces and the productive process. Lenin's concept of the party, his

insistence on a rigid discipline, democratic centralism, more than ever necessary today, cannot be for a single moment separated from Marx's economic-philosophic concept of the destiny of the modern proletariat.

That is what Marx began with. His philosophy was a philosophy of the activity of man, of man as active in the labor process. The free individual was he whose labor by its very nature ensured his freedom. If he was not free in his labor he could not be free in any sense. Lenin grasped this not as theory but as practice. The Mensheviks in 1917 saw what he saw but trembled to say that the only forces which could save the country was the "latent socialism," the suppressed capacities of the masses. Today, the Stalinists have carried the Menshevik politics to a stage further. That they are tools of the Kremlin and therefore oppose the proletarian revolution is true, but as with so much that is true is only a form of appearance. In essence, terrified at the crisis around them and incapable of placing the solution of all economic and political problems upon the powers of the workers, they are thereby driven to cling to the Kremlin with its established state and its established army and its established apparatus of power. That it is the creative power of millions of men which alone can solve the problems of modern society is not only a philosophical concept. It is the very ruin of society which makes it a revolutionary reality.

The proletariat does not make the revolution and then wait for some "plan" to create a new type of economy. To think in those terms is to make a divorce between economics and politics the repudiation of which was the mid-wife of Marxism. The difference between the proletarian revolution and all others is that the revolution itself releases the new economic forces, the creative power of the people, the greatest productive force history has known. The beginning, middle and end of Marx's scientific analysis of capitalist economy is the conflict between dead capital and living labor. On this hangs the falling rate of profit, the industrial reserve army and the revolution. Without this, one falls into the trap of market economics, underconsumptionism and ultimately, the deepest confusion as to the role of the party. The Mensheviks trembled in 1917 because, among other reasons, they could see neither the economic nor the military forces which could develop and protect Russia after the socialist revolution. Lenin did not tremble because he saw that the socialist revolution in ruined Russia was the creator of forces undreamt of by the bourgeoisie. Thus the most profound philosophical and abstract theories of Marx became the most practical concrete revolutionary policy.

Even the bourgeoisie can babble about the creative powers of atomic energy. Marxism is concerned first and foremost with the creative powers of the masses. That is not Marxian politics and sociology and philosophy. It is Marxian economics. The degeneration of the Russian Revolution has obscured this truth. The revolutionary regeneration of the world proletariat will make the foundation of every aspect of modern life and thought. Without it there is no escape from barbarism.

#### Private Property And Communism

How deeply ingrained was this conception in Marx's thought is proved by that masterpiece of social philosophy, the essay on Private Property and Communism.

For Marx, private property was the material expression of that wealth which alienated men from human living. Its movement is production



and consumption. Religion, family, state, law, morals, science, art, follow the "movement" of production and consumption. In a society where private property is transcended, religion, family, state, law, morals, dissolve in the corporate life of the community.

Such fundamental questions Marx never separated from his analysis of capitalist production. Take the question of the family and the relations between the sexes. In his chapter on "Machinery and Modern Industry" (*Capital*, Volume I, page 536), he gives, almost in passing, a superb example of his method.

"However terrible and disgusting the dissolution, under the capitalist system, of the old family ties may appear, nevertheless, modern industry, by assigning as it does an important part in the process of production, outside the domestic sphere, to women, to young persons, and to children of both sexes, creates a new economical foundation for a higher form of the family and of the relations between the sexes. It is, of course, just as absurd to hold the Teutonic-Christian form of the family to be absolute and final as it would be to apply that character to the ancient Roman, the ancient Greek, or the Eastern forms which, moreover, taken together, form a series in historic development. Moreover, it is obvious that the fact of the collective working group being composed of individuals of both sexes and all ages, must necessarily, under suitable conditions, become a source of human development; although in its spontaneously developed, brutal, capitalistic form, where the labourer exists for the process of production, and not the process of production for the labourer, that fact is a pestiferous source of corruption and slavery."

A few pages before he drew the dialectical opposition between capitalist society as it was and as it would be in the field of education.

"Though the Factory Act, that first and meagre concession won from capital, is limited to combining elementary education with work in the factory, there can be no doubt that when the working class comes into power, as inevitably it must, technical instruction, both theoretical and practical, will take its proper place in the working-class schools." (*Capital*, Volume I, p. 534)

Family, education, relations between the sexes, religion, all would lose their destructive alienated quality in a new mode of production in which the universality of the individual would be the starting point and source of all progress, beginning with economic progress.

The passage in which Marx poses and develops the idea that the cultivation of the five senses is the secret of the whole history of the world to date blows up from below the frustrated fantasies of those who, from the psycho-analysts to the Existentialists, cannot understand that the problem of the modern personality is the problem of modern capitalist production. Man's capacity for seeing, touching, hearing, talking, feeling, exist in the multitude of objects of productive wealth and the achievements of science which surround him. The masses of men must appropriate these or perish.

The personality of the modern worker is assailed upon all sides from morning till night (and even in his dreams) by such stimuli that his needs as a modern human being make him and his class the most highly civilized social force humanity has ever known. But the greater the needs of social living, inherent in the socialized nature of modern production, the greater the need for individual self-expression, the more it becomes necessary for the masters

of society, themselves slaves of capital, to repress this social expression which is no more and no less than complete democracy. Production which should be man's most natural expression of his powers, becomes one long murderous class conflict in which each protagonist can rest not for a single minute. Political government assumes totalitarian forms and government by executive decree masquerades as democracy. The office worker, with black coat and white collar, is transformed into a mere cog in a machine. If the worker is deprived of all the intellectual potentialities of the labor process to the extent that science is incorporated in it as an independent power, the intellectual absorbs knowledge and ideas but is as impotent in the intellectual process as is the worker in the labor process. The intellectual is cut off from the world of physical production and the social organization of labor. The divorce between physical and manual labor is complete. The individual worker or intellectual, is no more than the sport of vast forces over which he has no control. The senses of each are stimulated without possibility of realization. The resentments, the passions of frustrated social existence take revenge in the wildest of individual aberrations. Before these forces psycho-analysis is powerless, and voting once every few years becomes a ghastly mockery. Facing the disintegration of society, capital mobilizes all available forces for the suppression of what is its own creation - the need for social expression that the modern productive forces instills into every living human being. The explosion of this suppression is the motive force of revolution. This is Marxism. These essays will, we hope, remind us of what Marx stood for.

Vulgar Communism as the mere transcendence of private property is denounced by Marx. He had in mind the Communism of Weitling but the analysis is permanently valid. This Communism is not a new form of "appropriation." The level of productivity is so low that in grasping the wealth of society such as it is, the workers do not appropriate a higher stage of culture. Under these circumstances, private property is transcended only in form. This kind of Communism "is only a form of appearance of the destruction of private property." In a passage which reads as if it is a contribution to the contemporary debate instead of having been written over a hundred years ago, Marx says that this type of Communism, whatever its form, "is already recognized" as man once more finding his true place in the social order. But to the degree that it has not yet grasped "the positive essence" of private property, in the shape of "human needs" it is still "a prisoner" of property and "infected" by it. The analysis of alienated labor which is the precursor of Capital merely expresses in economic categories the conception of private property and human relations treated in this essay. Realistic observers of the relations between the sexes today, those who stubbornly refuse to be hypnotized by phrases as they probe into the future of the relations between whites and Negroes in the United States, will see in Marx's conception of human needs, the only basis for emancipation and equality.

All this may seem to the wilfully blind as mere theorizing. They are unable to see what is under their eyes: that as modern society develops, religion, education, the state, family, morals, lose their separate identity and become fused with the necessity for the mastery of society. This is the totalitarian state. Marx, a master of dialectical logic, saw this ultimate development from the very beginning and posed the abolition of these separate forms of alienation in the complete flowering of all the capabilities of the individual, in all forms of social endeavor. The enemy of this was private property. Later he called it capital. But the economic analysis from start to finish is the material supplement of the philosophical concept. The two

are in inextricable unity. The only proof he knew was the objective development of society. Despite the modifications that he introduced after in the working-out of the theory, the original structure, even as a bare outline, stands out today as the only explanation and solution to the collapsing barbarism of modern civilization.

The psychological appeal of totalitarianism, of Fascism in particular, is to transcend all social and individual frustration in the nation, the state, the leader. It cannot be done. In one of these essays Marx says that "We should especially avoid re-establishing 'society' as an abstraction opposed to the individual. The individual is the social essence." A quarter of a century later in Capital he writes in the chapter on "Machinery and Modern Industry"

"Modern Industry indeed, compels society, under penalty of death, to replace the detail-worker of today, crippled by life-long repetition of one and the same trivial operation, and thus reduced to the mere fragment of a man, by the fully developed individual, fit for a variety of labours, ready to face any change of production, and to whom the different social functions he performs, are but so many modes of giving free scope to his own natural and acquired powers." It is a terrible emasculation, in fact a denial of Marx to believe that there was some science called economics and upon this, for decoration, Marx grafted humanistic sentiments. Every fundamental feature of his economic analysis is based upon the worker in the labor process and holds no perspective of solution except the emancipation of the laborer. It is a strange reflection of our times that this conception, that the solution of the economic contradictions of capitalism is the human solution, is opposed nowhere so bitterly as in the movement itself. Where it is accepted, it is accepted as Zinoviev, Kamenev and Stalin accepted the necessity for the October insurrection - in some distant future.

#### The Critique Of The Hegelian Dialectic

The last essay, Marx's settling of accounts with the Hegelian dialectic, is very difficult. Our translator, Ria Stone, hopes on a future occasion, to give the notes and other material to the complete essays, which would guide the average reader who seriously tries to master this essay. In fact it is because some of this work and its associated aspects are crying to be done that we publish this. Our resources are limited, we have tried in vain to awaken particular interests. We hope, we are confident that somewhere there is a response waiting for us.

But the critique can be read and understood as it is. If the two early essays are grasped, then a working knowledge of philosophy will suffice. What Marx is saying over and over again is that Hegel saw the alienation. He saw its root in the mode of labor. What baffled him was that he could not see in the labor process itself the positive, creative elements which would overcome the alienation. Few moments in the history of thought are more dramatic than that related by Marcuse (Reason And Revolution) when the young Hegel, working out his ideas, wrote down the conditions of the workers in capitalist production, and seeing no way out for them, broke off the manuscript which forever after remained unfinished.

Yet alienation had to be overcome or the outlook for man was hopeless. Hegel solved it by making thinking man, the philosopher, overcome it in thought. Instead of getting rid of religion, the state, family, etc., he smuggled them all in again under the guise of philosophy. But to grasp the fact of alienation and the need for reintegration was Hegel's great discovery and his method was the dialectic method. Man was striving for full self-

consciousness, and for Marx full self-consciousness was not the insight of a few philosophers, but the active participation of all men in social life, beginning with production, and expressing and developing their natural and acquired powers. That is the essence of the "Critique Of The Hegelian Dialectic." It is to be noted that one of the three basic books which Lenin studied when preparing State And Revolution was Hegel's Phenomenology in which the critical attitude of Hegel, the driving necessity to negate the existing order and the existing consciousness by a new order and a new consciousness receives its most vigorous expression. Later Hegel, by his inability to transcend, to negate the existing order by an actual social force, would leave the road open for the re-introduction, not only of religion but of uncritical idealism and positivism which are running wild in modern philosophical thought. But he who grapples with these first two essays and then seriously applies himself to Marx's Critique of the Dialectic, will get an insight not only into Marxism, but into all the various currents of social and political as well as literary and philosophical nostrums that bounce their heads in vain against the problems of contemporary society.

We who introduce these writings owe to them a special debt. It is our belief that precisely because of the unbearably acute nature of the modern crisis, theory and practice are linked in a way that was not thought possible in less urgent times. The most profound of the philosophical concepts of Marx of 1844, abstract clarification for the initiator of a theory, now become the imperative needs of hundreds of millions of people. No other generation could understand this writing as we can. For us practical politics today consist in using the phenomena of contemporary society as a means of illustrating these truths, urging the actions that are demanded for their realization. For us, as dialecticians, the social requirements of the age exist in the needs and aspirations of the masses. That is Marx's historical contribution to the dialectical method, to have demonstrated the affirmations of a new society in the negations imposed upon the proletariat by the old. To believe that these affirmations exist only in the heads of a few is merely to repeat Hegel over again, substituting for Hegel's few philosophers, the few conscious revolutionaries. Every political line that we have written has been fertilized by the concepts contained in these translations and the others we are unable to reprint. We have been stimulated to find that those of our colleagues who work in factories and who share our ideas have found that the great masses of the American workers feel and think in a way that invest these century-old essays with a meaning and significance that they could never have had, however assiduously they were merely read and merely studied. Backward in politics, the American workers constantly manifest a range of social aspiration and depths of creative power which in the not very distant future will shake the world. If these essays have helped us to understand Marxism and them, they too have helped us to understand these essays and Marxism. The political tendency which we represent has therefore a great pride and satisfaction in making available for the first time to American readers these precious antecedents of revolutionary Marxism. We are convinced that wherever they have been more warmly welcomed than by Trotsky.

August 7, 1947

J.R. Johnson  
Freddie Forest  
Ria Stone

1023

# INTERNAL BULLETIN

OF THE  
JOHNSON  
FOREST  
TENDENCY

Number 5 August 14, 1947

FIFTEEN CENTS

Address Communications To:  
Martin Harvey  
101 W. 46 St., New York 19, N.Y.

## CONTENTS

### PART I.

The Question of Blocs (Article II.) By Ris Stone. . . . .	Page 1
From A Negro Worker. . . . .	Page 2
The Workers of the Shops. By Sarah Evans. . . . .	Page 4

### PART II.

Labor and Society. . . . .	By F. Forest
----------------------------	--------------

1024

- 1 -  
THE QUESTION OF BLOCS (Article II)

BUREAUCRATIC COLLECTIVISM AND THE BUILDING OF THE PARTY

There has been a good deal of speculation about the merits of a defeatist bloc in the International Movement to defeat the present leadership of the Movement with its defensist position on the Russian question. No one, however, has been able to show how a victory for the defeatist bloc, per se, would contribute toward building the mass revolutionary party on an international scale. Yet, on all sides, it is admitted that the building of such a party is the decisive and burning question of our day.

The decisive question is this: "How would the defeatists who toy with a third alternative, provide the leadership for building the mass revolutionary party?" To toy with the third alternative is to toy with the possibility that the proletariat may not be able to make the revolution.

There is a qualitative difference between the defeatism which is based upon state-capitalism and the defeatism which is based upon bureaucratic collectivism. The Johnson-Forest Tendency has emphasized this distinction from its very inception in 1941, and because of its experiences in the W.P., it feels a special responsibility to bring this distinction before the International Movement at every possible opportunity.

The defeatism of the Johnson-Forest Tendency, which is based upon the state-capitalist position, is a defeatism which is based upon the inevitability that the proletariat will mobilize itself for revolution. The defeatism of the bureaucratic collectivist Shachtman, on the other hand, is a defeatism of the profoundest historic pessimism, i.e., a defeatism in regard to the perspectives of the proletarian revolution.

Hence the desperation of the Shachtmanites on the question of building a mass revolutionary party by all sorts of organizational measures. With every setback or failure to grow, they raise further doubts of the revolutionary perspective, and begin to weave theories about the backwardness of the proletariat. They are continually being plunged into a morass of subjectivism, speculations about socialist consciousness, and recourse to internal party democracy as the only way to build a mass revolutionary party.

Overwhelmed by the Stalin-Hitler Pact in 1939, the Workers Party took its first fumbling steps in this direction, believing that it could substitute dynamism for a revolutionary perspective in the building of a party. Seven years of democratic dynamism have brought it to its present unenviable position. The way in which it has evolved during those years is a warning to those in the Movement who, in their anxiety to defeat the present leadership with its defensist position consider blocs with Shachtman. To transfer the uncertainty, vacillations, demoralization, attacks upon "cliques" and "bureaucracies" from the swamp of the W.P. on the American scene to the international movement would be a crime against the international proletariat in its attempt to build a mass revolutionary party. An international leadership, tainted by the Shachtmanite brush would carry with it into the coming critical struggles the skepticism toward the proletariat which has characterized the W.P. for seven years and which has paralyzed it in the face of every opportunity provided by the American proletariat.

It is not sufficient to dismiss "bureaucratic collectivism" as a unique and fanciful contribution of Shachtman. It is necessary to realize the corroding influence which it has had at every step in building the party.

- Ria Stone

1025

FROM A NEGRO WORKER IN A GENERAL MOTORS PLANT

(Note: In previous issues of the bulletin we have repeatedly referred to Trotsky's insistence that in order to be a workers' paper, the press of the party must be written in great part by the workers themselves.

This contribution by one of the close sympathizers of the Johnson-Forest Tendency, expresses, in their own words, the thoughts and feelings of large sections of the most oppressed layer of the American proletariat.

We hope that it will encourage and stimulate many others to begin to regard the press of the revolutionary movement as the organ for their self-expression.)

\*\*\*\*\*

The Negro question is a very serious problem today. All over the United States the Negroes are in an uproar. They are not satisfied at all with the way they are being treated. I am a Negro working in a G.M. plant. Our union is a C.I.O. union. The C.I.O. is a good union, but it doesn't have the proper leadership in different plants which makes it rotten.

In the plant where I work there is a large number of Negroes. Out of this group approximately seven per cent of these Negroes are machine operators, the rest are laborers or floor-sweepers. If ten Negroes and ten whites went to an employment office, they would hire the whites and tell the Negroes "Not hiring today," unless they had labor work for them. This is a true fact. My brother was a dozen times to the main employment office last week. They sent out thirty-five or forty whites and told all of the Negroes: "Nothing today, come back tomorrow."

When a Negro worker is on production in a plant, when the checker comes around to check the work, he checks all the white workers' work and asks no questions. When he gets to the Negro he says: "Your report shows a certain amount of work. I don't believe you did all this work, come and show it to us." He checks the white worker without question, but the Negro must show his work to him.

I went to a supervisor of a department. I asked for a higher rating job in his department. I told him I wanted the job because of my responsibilities. He gave me the job. I asked him how long would it be before I would get top rate. He said ninety days. When the ninety days were up, I asked him about the raise I hadn't got. He said: "I didn't tell you that you would get top rate in ninety days." He said: "I told you that you would work from six to seven months at the same price you are now getting, then you would get a five-cent raise, then it is up to your foreman to give you the top rate within the next seven or eight months."

I took the matter to a committee-man. I told that the supervisor told me that I would get top rate within ninety days. The committee-man told me: "Your case is hopeless, you don't have any witness." He said: "The supervisor would say 'I didn't make him that promise. Whose word are you going to take, mine or his? He is just a common worker and I am a supervisor,' and that would be the end." This committee-man gave up without even speaking to the supervisor.

How can there be any improvement with a bunch of company stooges running the union leadership. There are a few good committee-men, but the odds are too high against them. They can't win. If three are for the workers,

twelve are for the company.

That is the answer I get when I talk to the Negroes about socialism. Most of them feel that it is a step in the right direction. They say: "How can such small branches of people be of any importance?" Some of the Negroes feel that it is impossible for any real results to come from parties of that sort, therefore they are not very interested at the present time. But I am sure that if the Negroes really understood what Socialism really means then you would have them all on your side. There are lots of Negroes who were born and raised in the Southern States who have given up all hopes of the United States ever improving at all.

I was born in Georgia and I know a lot about what happens down there. I once knew a young Negro who was helping some cracker make whiskey in Georgia. The Negro took an extra gallon of whiskey for himself. One of the crackers caught him with the whiskey. He got a mob together and beat the Negro to death. Nothing was done about it as usual.

In Georgia a Negro must always enter a white man's house from the back. They are not allowed to walk in the front door. When Negroes are hired out to a white man, at lunchtime the Negroes will eat in the back yard under a tree. Very few whites allow their hired Negroes to eat in their kitchen.

The Negroes walk seven or eight miles to school. The whites have school busses to take the white children to school. In Georgia, a Negro is like a rabbit. If a Negro accidentally bumps into a white woman on the street, he is lucky if he doesn't get kicked or slapped. If a cracker sees a Negro bump into a white woman, he will say: "Nigger, why don't you watch where the hell you are going." If the Negro gives him any back talk at all, he is lucky if he doesn't get beat bloody. There are so many crackers in the Northern States, which makes it almost as bad.

I have got on the bus a lot of times and sit by white men or women. They would change their seats. I wasn't dirty or drunk. If they didn't change their seats, they would sit and blow up like a balloon and the further they moved from me, the closer I would move to them. If they don't want to sit by me, I love to see them move further.

All of these things are the basic reasons why a lot of the Negroes feel that it is impossible for any improvement. I am almost sure myself that there will never be any improvement in the Southern States.

I feel that if the small branches of people stick together and keep up the good work, they will be very successful in the future.



#### THE WORKERS OF THE SHOPS

(The following is the speech delivered to the "Trade-Union Session" of the Conference of the Johnson-Forest Tendency, July 6, 1947)

The workers of the shops in which I worked on the line about four years ago were completely satisfied with working on the line. At this time, the war had just begun. The bosses of the shop did not care how long it took to complete a unit. That is, so long as it was out on schedule. Sometimes the workers would take as long as two or three hours to complete one unit; spending about half of the time talking or walking around the shop. The lines were very, very slow. We were given plenty of time to complete the job and rest in between time.

This lasted for a period of time. After V-E Day, the production began to speed up, not too much, but enough so the workers noticed it. It became known that the war would soon be over and the boss would start taking over the shop. The workers began to complain that the lines were too fast and were given some excuse about it.

During the time when the production was slow, you worked all day and had overtime at night. Most of the workers took advantage of this to get extra money.

When the production began to speed up, the workers stopped staying overtime. Only a few stayed overtime to work. They figured that the bosses were getting ready for peace time and would want them to do this after the war. The speed of production did not change after this until after V-J Day, when most of the plants closed for reconversion. When the plant reopened to work, the production line started off fast and speeded up more every day until every worker was producing as much as a machine would produce in one day. The workers complained about it because they could not keep up with the line. The work began to come out very poor. Then the boss would complain and if you could not keep up you would then be fired and someone else put in your place. The workers got together to plan what they could do to stop the line from being so fast and the solution was this: To work on one unit and if the next unit came before you finished that unit to pass it on down the line without your working on it. The work was so hard to keep up with that the workers would work one full week and take off two or three days of the next week. As a result, production began to slow up a little, not very much. The speed of production today is three times more than that of about three years ago.

#### Wages In The Shop

About a few years ago wages were high considering what had been given before to the workers. The workers did not complain very much about them because prices of commodities were at a good level. The wages were at a minimum height at the close of the war. The plant closed and reopened and the boss did not hire back old help, but new, inexperienced help and paid them much less than the old workers; especially non-union shops. In the union shop, the minimum wages were about \$30.00 per week. The workers went out on strike to get higher pay. The wages in some shops were put on the basis of the automobile workers and miners. When the auto workers got higher pay, then the companies would open negotiations for increase for the workers. Now the wages are lower than ever. The prices are sky-high and the workers are still going out on strike for higher pay to meet the demands for the cost of living.

### Attitude To The Bureaucracy

The workers of one shop in which I worked wanted to have a General Strike when the Taft-Hartley Bill was passed. The workers got together and told the union to get a committee and send to other unions to call for a General Strike. The workers were very discouraged when the Labor Bill was passed. They said they would not vote Republicans next year. They would either vote for the Democrats or a Labor Party if one is running. The steward told the workers that the union did not want a General Strike.

The workers think that the A.F.L. stinks. It doesn't do anything for the workers at all. In the shop where I am now they all attend union meeting because they usually have a grievance each week and they have a fight. And the only way they can get anything done is for all to attend the union meetings. This is true of the shop I am in now. But in my last shop which was in the same local, they did not attend union meetings because the union, they said, wasn't doing anything but taking their money every month. In that shop they had been fighting for the C.I.O. to come in. The only way they could get a good meeting was when the workers from three different departments went to the union's office and asked for a special meeting, to be held on the grievances of the workers in the plant. These were not stewards. They were workers. The union called a meeting and held it in the shop where we were working. The workers made sure that no bosses, no supervisors and stooges were there. They asked each one to look at the person next to him and make sure that he belonged there. Then everyone expressed his grievances. The main one was about the lay-off in which only one line was being laid off steadily and the other one only every two weeks. The bosses gave them the reason that the sets were all rejects. The workers said it wasn't their fault because the line was going too fast.

One worker suggested that every line should do one set and if they come down before he's finished to pass it on without his work being put in. This was the second time the suggestion was made in shops I was in. And even though they may be taken off of the line, the speed of production would go down. The union said that they could not tell them to do that. But it was up to the workers themselves.

The workers one very hot day called the shop steward and told him they were going to walk out if they did not get fans. When they were about to walk out, the steward discovered that the girls were on trial and could not walk off. So the girls called the boss over and told him they could not work without fans.

In one shop in which I worked, the U.A.W.-C.I.O. was just coming in to try to organize the plant and called for a strike to be recognized by the company. The union called a meeting for the workers to attend. About 700 to 800 workers attended. The strike was called for about fifteen minutes before the time to punch for lunch. About five minutes before this time, the union stewards came around and said the strike was off. Some of the workers who were ready to go walked out anyway. The others, who were very mad, stayed in. After that they did not trust this local.

### The Depression

The attitude of the workers toward the depression is very clear. They think that the United States will have a depression in three years or two. Each is trying to save some money for it. One worker who was laid off

for a couple of weeks and went to collect her unemployment insurance said, as she stood there on the line waiting, she had such a fear she could not control herself. All she could see were herself and millions of more people standing on the bread line. The shops are beginning to lay off as many people as possible. When the workers get laid off they say it won't be very long before you may see them soon on the bread line, because America could not hold out very long.

The Negroes fear the depression very much, because, they say, they are the first one to be hit by it. They don't have as much money as others. Their conditions are much poorer in every way. They feel that they will be the first one to be hit by the depression which they think is almost here.

Truman and the War

Some of the workers were having a discussion on the Truman speech about Turkey and Greece. They had a fear that the Third World War would be within a year. And a good way to stop the war would be to put Truman and company, and Stalin and company in one field and let them shoot it out among themselves, but to be sure that both sides died. The veterans said they would not fight another war. They would go into another country or spend ten years in jail.

Attitude Of White And Negro Workers

The attitude of the Negro workers to the white worker has changed almost one hundred percent since the beginning of the war. When both workers first started working together, at first they were very hostile to each other. The Negro workers were more hostile to white workers, because they did not trust them at all. As time went along they became more friendly toward each other. They began to see for themselves that the things which were told them by the bosses or taught them were not true, that the bosses were only using it as a tool to keep down wages, etc; they learned they had to fight as a team or lose the important thing they were fighting for. They found in social life together that some of the things they thought were causing the conflict was not so. Today, the worker has experience, through long fights, that they have to work together in order to fight the bureaucrats.

During Brotherhood Week, this incident happened in my shop. On Monday everybody came into the shop expressing their views on brotherhood. Everyone put on extra effort to be kind to his fellow worker. Then the next day came, everything was very quiet because that morning on the front page of every paper, was carried the picture of a young Negro man who was beaten, stoned, knifed and whipped by a group of white men in South Carolina. Then I asked was that the reason for their being so quiet. They slowly then began to discuss the situation of what had happened. I asked why didn't we do something about it. So everyone signed a petition and sent it to the N.A.A.C.P.

After the trial of the lynchers, both the white and the Negro workers discussed it. They said it was whitewashed by the state. They said that the judge and the jury should have been picked by the people and not by those in office because they were all picked by one another and were prejudiced. Both the white and the Negro workers said this. They also wanted a law passed to prevent all lynching both of white and colored, to be put not only in Northern States but also in the Southern States, especially in the Southern States. It seems to me that this brought the Negro and white workers a little closer together.

- Sarah Evans

LABOR AND SOCIETY

A: LABOR AND SOCIETY

"...the key to the understanding of the whole history of society lies in the historical development of labor."

--F. Engels: Ludwig Feuerbach

I. The concept of Labor

Labor has been decisive in the evolution of man. (1.) Historical materialism traces a progressive development in the course of human ascendancy from lower to higher stages, which has asserted itself through all seeming accidents and temporary retrogressions. The driving forces of history have not been great men, but great masses of people, who were set into motion by the incongruity between productive forces and production relations, that is to say, by the antagonism between the development of the material means of production and the relations of people in production. They liberated the new productive forces fettered by the outlived mode of production and production relations, created the conditions for a new social order.

The evolution of man from lower to higher stages takes place by means of the developing process of labor. Labor has transformed the natural conditions of human existence into social ones. In primitive communism labor was a mode of self-activity, the creative function of man, which stemmed from his natural capacities and further developed his natural talents. In his contact with nature, primitive man, despite the limitations of his knowledge, exercised not only his labor power but his judgment as well. He thus developed himself and nature. The method of increasing the productivity of nature through human activity resulted in the further development of man. But freedom and historic initiative of man could not further the progress of mankind until man had learned to master nature. It is true that under primitive communism the producers were masters of production and of the products of their labor, but production was carried on in such narrow limits as merely to procure barely self-sustaining units. So limited a production could not thrust humanity forward. The social division of labor was the necessary prerequisite in molding nature to man's will and creating new productive forces. However, this undermined the collective nature of production and appropriation. Producers no longer consumed directly what they produced, and they lost control over the products of their labor.

(1) "...for the socialist man the whole so-called history of the world is none other than the production of man through human labor." Marx: Private Property and Communism. Archives of Marx and Engels. Russian, Vol. III; also German, Gesamtausgabe, Abt II, Bd. III. (Now available in English)

translation.)

(1) Labor in class societies

With the division of labor - the most monstrous of which is the division between mental and manual labor - class societies arose. The separation of intellectual and physical labor stands in the way of man's full development. Hence labor in class societies - whether that be the slave, feudal, or capitalist order - no longer means the free development of the physical and intellectual energy of man. The product of his labor is alienated from the laborer, and his very mode of labor becomes an alien activity. Labor is no longer voluntary but compulsory. It has ceased to be "the first necessity of living" and has become a mere means to life. It has become a drudgery man must perform to earn a living, and not a mode of activity in which he realizes his physical and mental potentialities. He is no longer interested in the development of the material productive forces, and, in fact, these productive forces seem to develop independently of him. Labor has become a means of creating wealth and "is no longer grown together with the individual into one particular destination." (2)

Labor in class societies has taken the form of one of three types of servitude: (1) outright slavery, (2) serfdom, and (3) wage slavery. The mode of labor corresponds to the mode of production. Slave labor used the rudest and heaviest implements and wasted the soil. Improved methods of cultivating the land led to the substitution of serf for slave labor. However, both under slavery and serfdom the development of the productive forces was on a low level, the economy was stagnant, and the mode of activity of the direct producer was limited by a crude instrument of production. Hence any liberation achieved by an individual slave or serf could not emancipate him from the limitation of that crude instrument of production. Even in freedom they remained bound by the restricted mode of activity imposed by that crude instrument. Each man's particular labor and necessary tools of his craft became his own property but the necessity to protect the laboriously acquired skill led to the formation of guilds. Hence the social relations in the city where the refugee serfs escaped imitated the feudal form of organization prevailing in the country. "The instrument of production became their property," Marx sums up, "but they themselves remained determined by the division of labor and their own instrument of production." (3)

The multitude of productive forces available to men determines the nature of their society. Man is essentially a tool-making animal and the process of the production of his material life, the process of labor, means the process of the growth of the productive forces and his command over nature. "Industry," explained Marx in his Private Property and Communism "is the actual historical relationship of nature to man and therefore of the natural sciences to man." The industrial revolution, the progress of natural science and the general technological advance so revolutionized the mode of production that finally there arose a basis for a true freedom, not only

(2) Marx: Critique of Political Economy, p. 299

freedom from exploitation, but freedom from want. Tremendous progress has been achieved, but the productive forces which have been developed by the bourgeois mode of production have also been harnessed and fettered by bourgeois production relations which have resulted in labor's enslavement to capital. Technology has progressed so far that general want does not reign out of the nature of production but because of the production relation. It becomes necessary to put an end to that relationship to make it possible for the nature of production to assert itself.

(2) Labor in socialist society

Production is no longer limited by a crude instrument, nor does a crude instrument restrict the activity of man as it did in pre-capitalist societies, even when it was his property. Were man to appropriate the modern machines of production, that would open up limitless vistas for the development of man himself, for it would be on such a high material base that the intellect of the masses could combine with their powers and truly lay the basis for a new mode of life. Thus the appropriation of the totality of the instruments of production "is nothing more than the development of the individual capacities corresponding to the material instruments of production. The appropriation of a totality of instruments is for this very reason, the development of a totality of capacities in the individuals themselves." (4) That is the heart of the problem, because the development of man's capacities means the re-establishment of self-activity on a gigantically higher historical scale and the "abolition" of labor.

Because of the class content of the word, labor, Marx, in his early works, never used the term to describe the mode of activity in socialist society. He wrote, not of the emancipation of labor, but of its "abolition". In the historical circumstances of the complete separation of manual from mental labor, he stressed man can become master of himself, not through the development of labor, but through its abolition. Hence the proletarian revolution is not only the revolutionary appropriation of the totality of the instruments of production but is directed against the very mode of activity under capitalism, and "does away with labor." (5)

Marx did not abandon this concept of labor when he abandoned the use of the philosophic term, self-activity, and began, in his later works, to speak of the emancipation of labor. For labor in socialist society was in no manner whatever to be the type of activity as under capitalism where man's labor is limited to the exercise of his physical labor power. No, labor in socialist society would be the type of activity as in primitive communism. The division between manual and mental labor would be abolished and the two aspects of labor thus united would make it possible for "freely associated men" consciously to plan production, and what would assert itself

Page 2 - (3) Marx: The German Ideology, p. 67

(4) Ibid, pg. 66 (5) Ibid, p 69 (

would be the "free individuality of the laborer himself."<sup>(6)</sup>

The emphasis placed by Marx on the individual rather than on society in his late works thus consistently follows and develops the theoretic scope of his early works where he sketched the pattern of the social order to follow capitalism. It is true that the new mode of production does not appear full-blown on the morrow the bourgeoisie is overthrown. But whether the dictatorship of the proletariat will really be transitional from capitalism to socialism will be judged by whether the socialized means of production serve social needs to an ever greater and greater degree. Marx had warned us, in his Civil War in France, that if cooperative production were not to prove to be a delusion, it must be under the proletarians' own control. And in his earlier writings he had written significantly enough: "We should especially avoid re-establishing 'society' as an abstraction opposed to the individual"<sup>(7)</sup>

On the basis of a production of abundance, for which the highly developed productive forces have laid the groundwork, the further development of the productive forces means the all-rounded development of the greatest productive force, the laborer. Labor then will mean the unrestricted development and exercise of man's physical and mental faculties. That is the basis for what Engels calls "humanity's leap from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom."<sup>(8)</sup>

That is not Utopia. That is not the hereafter. That road has to be taken on the morrow the bourgeoisie is overthrown and the dictatorship of the proletariat established if the socialized means of production are to serve any better end than the privately owned means of production. For it is not the means of production that create the new type of man, but the new type of man will create the means of production, and the new mode of activity will create the new type of human socialist man.

## II. The Concept of Property

"All sciences would be superfluous if the appearance, the form, and the nature of things were wholly identical."

--K. Marx: Capital, Vol.III

A great advance in the evolution of political economy as a science was made when the source of wealth was recognized to be not in objects outside of man--prodigious metals or the earth -- but in the function of man, that is, the man's labor was the source of private property. How is it, then, that the living embodiment of labor, the laborer, continues to remain poverty-stricken and the products of his labor are not his "private property"? Here the classical economists could offer no answer and merely tried to pacify the laborer by stating his condition was "temporary", and pointing to his "freedom".

<sup>(6)</sup> Capital, Vol. I, p. 836  
<sup>(7)</sup> Private Property and Communism

They were limited by their bourgeois horizon and labored "to purify economic relations from their feudal blemishes." (8)

"When man speaks of private property, he believes he has only to deal with a fact outside man," wrote the young Marx in 1844, "When man speaks of labor, he has to deal directly with man. This new posing of the question already includes its resolution." (9) But as we saw, that new formulation of the question already involves the solution. Not when the bourgeois economist tackled the problem, but when the revolutionist Marx did. The difference between the science of economics "as such", as a science of objective elements, wages, value, etc. and the Marxian science of economics is that for Marxism, all economic categories are social categories and thus in the science of economics it incorporates the subjective element, the receiver of wages, the source of value, in other words, the laborer. You cannot disassociate property forms from production relations. The laborer, whose function labor, creates bourgeois wealth and his own impoverishment is opposed to his predicament, of being dominated by a product of his own labor. He rebels against the mode of labor and thus becomes the grave digger of bourgeois private property. Private property thus contains within itself the seed of its own disintegration. It is for that reason that the classical economist, limited by the concepts of class which blurred his vision as to the historic nature of the capitalist mode of production, could not probe the problem to the end, and failed to see that the living embodiment of the source of wealth, the laborer, would bring to a head and to an end all the contradictions inherent in private property.

In actual fact, wrote Marx, bourgeois private property is not private property at all, but is based on the expropriation of the peasants, artisans, in general on the abolition of the method of production resting on private property of the direct producer, on his conditions of production and "developps to the degree that this private property and the method of production based on it is abolished." (10) Thus the very basis of capitalist production is expropriation of the self-earned private property of the direct producer. It is the "free" (propertyless) laborer that creates the "private property" of the capitalist and it is he who sharpens the inherent contradictions of capitalist private property that will rend it asunder.

The machine age demanded the abolition of private property; the full development of the productive forces will achieve the true abolition of property, although, "in the first instance" this has taken the contradictory form of capitalist private property. The juridical notion that this is really private property is at complete variance with the bourgeois production relations. The legal concepts of private property, which sprawl across societies, are as heterogeneous as the societies where they exist. Under capitalism, furthermore,

(8) Marx: Poverty of Philosophy, p. 134

(9) Alienated Labor - Economic Philosophical Manuscripts, now available in English translation

(10) Archives of Marx-Engels, II (VII) P. 263



every phase in the development of industry has altered the legal concepts of private property. The manufacturer thinks of it as the legal title he has to the factory he runs. The financier thinks of it as "a bundle of expectations which have a market value."<sup>(11)</sup> It is not the legal concepts, not the appearances of property that interest us. It is the nature of private property, which scientific socialism has investigated to the end, that is of primary importance. In reducing private property to labor and labor to man, Marx got behind the legal fiction of property ownership to the hard reality of the activity of man and the relations of men in production.

The Marxian concept of property stresses the fact that from the very outset the division of labor has meant the division of the conditions of labor, of tools and materials. From the moment that the product of his labor did not belong to the direct producer, man became an "object" for himself. That is to say, "the object which he himself has created by his activity was something outside of him because it was appropriated by another who had power over him. As long as there exists "powers over individuals", wrote Marx in The German Ideology "private property must exist." Private property is the power of disposal over the labor of others. Private property has developed so diversely under capitalism that one's property is only a "bundle of expectations" in the form of stocks and bonds, yet power is still the power of disposing, or sharing in the disposition of, the labor of others.

It is impossible for a Marxist to discuss property forms, of even production relations without knowing the state of production. Marx attributed such great importance to the multitude of productive forces accessible to man that he practically discounted the forms of property ownership. In and of itself, without a high stage of industrial development, a change from private to communal ownership would be barren of historic significance. "Lacking any material basis and resting on a purely theoretic foundation, it would be a mere freak and would end in nothing more than a monastic economy."

So insistent was Marx in stressing that the mode of production was crucial, to the form of property, that he spoke of "communal private property" when he described ancient state ownership, for it was "only as a community that the citizens hold power over their laboring slaves and on this account alone, therefore, they are bound to the form of communal ownership."<sup>(12)</sup> Thus communal ownership in and of itself does not denote a new, non-private property epoch. It is only when collectivist property arises under highly developed industrial conditions that it can denote the new collectivist epoch where society will not be counterposed to the individual and the totality of the instruments of production will be controlled by all and be made "subject to each individual."<sup>(13)</sup>

- (11) Berle and Means: Modern Corporation and Private Property  
(12) The German Ideology, p. 9  
(13) Ibid., p. 67

For Marx the abolition of private property was not an end in itself but a means toward the abolition of the alienated mode of labor. He did not separate one from the other. He never tired of stressing that what was of primary importance was not the form of property but the mode of production; every mode of production creates a corresponding form of property. "But to see mystery in the origin of property; that is to say, to transform the relations of production into a mystery -- is that not," asks Marx of Proudhon, "to renounce all pretensions to economic science;....In each historic epoch property is differently developed and in a series of social relations entirely different. Thus to define bourgeois property is nothing other than to explain all the social relations of bourgeois production."(14)

B: ROLE OF LABOR IN A WORKERS STATE

I. The Party and the Trade Unions

October raised the question of workers' rule from an abstract plane to concrete reality. October was the first historical instance when the workers not only gained power but held it. In retaining power the Russian workers furnished the greatest living laboratory of the working mechanism of a proletarian state. The workers had achieved the revolution in a country which was the weakest link in the chain of international capitalism. The conquest of power was followed by a protracted civil war and international counter-revolution which left them a ruined industry. How could the transitional state achieve the long-range aim of establishing a classless society? How would labor assert its mastery over the economy and in the state? What effect would the international capitalist encirclement exert over the economy? How to rebuild that economy?

The Russian trade unions were young organizations. They held their first nation-wide congress after the revolution. They had valiantly participated in the revolution and felt confident of their role in the workers state they helped to establish. The resolution passed at their first congress held in 1918 thus defined their tasks: "to participate most energetically in all the administrative departments of production, organize labor boards of control, registration and distribution of labor, the exchange of labor between the village and the city; to fight against sabotage and establish complete labor cooperation and discipline."(15)

The Russian Communist Party (R.C.P.) welcomed the participation of the trade unions in the management of the economy, without which they could not have survived, and in their program(1919) stressed the fact that the participation of the trade unions "is at the same time the chief means of struggle against the bureaucratization of the economic apparatus of Soviet power and creates the possibility for the real peoples' control over the results of production."(16)

(14) Poverty of Philosophy, p.168

(15)

(16) Resolutions of the Congresses and Conferences of R.C.P.  
(In Russian) a compilation of all the resol. from the very first congress in 1898)

Nevertheless immediately after the cessation of the civil war the R.C.P. was shaken by a violent dispute over the role of the trade unions in a workers state. Precisely how should the workers participate in the management of the economy was the basis for the controversy. Trotsky said: satisfy the trade unions. Shlyapnikov demanded: turn the management of the entire economy over to the trade unions. Lenin's solution was: let the trade unions continue to defend the interests of the workers while drawing the workers "to a man" into the management of the economy, but turn the unions into "schools of communism." These leaders-- Lenin, Shlyapnikov and Trotsky (later joined by Bukharin) --were the chief disputants in the 1920-1 trade union controversy.

The concept of the historical development of labor had found a testing ground. The trade union dispute has both historic and immediate importance because a comprehension of the contesting viewpoints is indispensable to a correct revolutionary orientation toward the sixth of the world whose singular form of combined development has wrought such confusion in the revolutionary movement.

## II. Lenin, Trotsky, and Shlyapnikov

The trade union dispute related, in part, to the functioning of the Cectran--the merger of the Central Committees of the Railway and Water Transport Workers Unions --which was established in order to facilitate the restoration of railroad transportation. Comrade Trotsky was charged with the responsibility of putting the completely ruined railroad system into efficient operating order. Extraordinary measures were adopted to execute the plan. The reader will recall that for the year 1922 the Statistical Abstract of the U.S.S.R. revealed the disintegration of the entire economy with the exception of electricity and railroads. The railroads, in particular, showed phenomenal growth, from 59 thousand kmts. in 1913 to 71 thousand in 1922. This was made possible through the efficient work of the Cectran. However, the Communist fraction of the Water Workers Union accused the Cectran of handling the job bureaucratically and of unnecessarily disregarding normal democratic methods of trade union work. The dispute developed into one regarding the role of the trade unions in a workers state.

### 1. Trotsky's position

Trotsky contended that the trade unions had a very limited part to play in a workers state - put up its candidates for economic posts and to carry on production propaganda. "No further perspectives are open to it," read the first draft of Trotsky's thesis. (17)

In elaborating his point of view before the plenum of the Cectran held December 7, 1920, Trotsky explained: "We have entered a new epoch... Therefore we say to the working (17) The Trade Unions and their Future Role, included in the book The Party and the Trade Unions, published for the 15th party Congress, and edited by Zinoviev. This book includes all conflicting positions in the trade union dispute.

masses: test us but assimilate new criteria. Previously you had need of leaders who could be good defenders of your interests during times of strikes. Now you have need of propagandists, builders, organizers, i.e. they should raise the productivity of labor." (18)

These ideas he repeated in his thesis as it was finally worked out: "The task of an organization of labor in a workers state can have only a production basis and aim. By themselves the methods of democracy within the trade unions, without changing the situation and the role of the trade unions in a workers state, do not resolve the question and do not point the way out of the crisis...Our platform is one of production contrasted to one of trade unionism. Workers democracy knows no fetishism. It knows only revolutionary expediency." (19) And, revolutionary expediency, Trotsky concluded, demanded the statification of the trade unions.

## 2. Lenin's reply

Lenin vigorously attacked Trotsky's thesis. First of all, there was no point in speaking of a workers state as an abstraction; in the particular workers state, the Soviet Union they had "the reality of the transition." The dictatorship was not something static, composed of constant and inflexible rules. There are constant reciprocal influences and adjustments between the masses and the state, between the trade unions and the masses. It was necessary to examine the trade unions in a workers state "from the point of view of the transition from capitalism to socialism". "It is impossible to effect the dictatorship," Lenin told the Communist fraction of the Eighth Soviet Congress (20), "without having a number of 'transmission belts' from the vanguard to the masses of the advanced class, and from the latter to the masses of the toilers.. the Party, so to speak, absorbs into itself the vanguard of the proletariat and the vanguard effects the dictatorship of the proletariat. Without a foundation like the trade unions the dictatorship cannot be effected... Thus we get as it were a system of cogwheels: and such is the mechanism of the very foundation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of the very essence of the transition from capitalism to communism."

Had Trotsky looked at the "reality of the transition", Lenin insisted, and not been "carried away by intellectual talk or abstract arguments", he would have seen that the Soviet Union was not a "pure" workers state, but a state in which, first, the peasantry predominated, and, furthermore, it was bureaucratically distorted. "Our present state is such that

(18) Ibid

(19) The Role and Tasks of the Trade Unions, included in the same book edited by Zinoviev as mentioned. Also included as Appendix No. 10 to the Minutes of Tenth Congress, in Russian.

(20) This speech, along with two other of his main speeches on the trade union dispute are included in Selected Works of Lenin, Vol. IX where the English readers can find them, and I will therefore make no further references to them. Where quotations are taken from other sources I will mention them.

the entirely organized proletariat must protect itself and we must utilize the workers organizations for the purpose of protecting the workers from their own state and in order that the workers may protect our state."

If the workers were to be the rulers in their own state, their conscious participation in the management of the economy and of the state was quintessential. If the workers were eventually to concentrate in their own hands the management of the entire economy--and that is what the Party program called for--prolonged, hard, organizational work had to be carried on. If the trade unions were to train the masses for this gigantic task, they cannot be mere organs of coercion; they must be "schools of communism." If the vanguard party is to prove its leadership in fact, it must be the agitator, the propagandist, rather than the administrator. "Comrade Trotsky's fundamental mistake lies precisely in that he approached (or more correctly, rushed at) the very questions he himself raised in his pamphlet-platform as an administrator, whereas he could and should have approached these questions exclusively as a propagandist."

Production problems cannot be solved for the workers themselves--if the transitional state was to be transitional to socialism and not to a "return backwards". It was impermissible for Marxists eclectically to separate economic from politics and counterpose production to democracy. "Trotsky and Bukharin make it appear that they are concerned about increasing production whereas we are only concerned about formal democracy. This presentation is wrong because the only way the matter stands (and it is the only way the matter can stand from the Marxist point of view) is that without a proper political approach the given class cannot maintain its rule and consequently cannot solve its own production problems."

Lenin indefatigably reminded his comrades that "Every political superstructure in general (which is inevitable until classes have been abolished, until a classless society has been created) in the last analysis is determined by the production relations prevailing in the given society." And production relations should be the crucial concern both of the party and the trade unions. The trade unions must not merely discipline the worker but urge and train them to administer. Unless the workers were "to a man" to manage the economy and direct the state, socialism would remain "only a wish."

### 3. Shlyapnikov's position

So far as Shlyapnikov was concerned, neither Trotsky's nor Lenin's position lighted the path to the future society. To try to choose between them was like trying to distinguish between Tweedledum and Tweedledee. The real road of the deepening of the revolution was not through statifying the trade unions, nor was it by turning the trade unions into "schools of communism". Rather the party itself needed to be proletarianized. In the resolution of the Workers Opposition (Shlyapnikov's faction) was included the demand: "Every year each member of the party must do three months of manual labor."

(21) Rather than statifying the trade unions, a correct slogan would be: "Unionise the state".

The only correct road for the proletarian state to take was to turn over the entire management of the economy to the producers themselves. His thesis read: "The organization of the management of the national economy is the function of the All-Russian Congress of Producers organized in industrial unions which elects bodies to manage the whole of the national economy of the republic."

#### 4. Lenin, the realist

Lenin hit out against Shlyapnikov's unrealistic, anarchistic approach to the problems that confronted the young worker state. It is true, he contended, that it was wrong of Trotsky to make an abstraction of the workers state. But it was even more wrong for Shlyapnikov to abstract the workers state, and treat the problem of the Soviet Union as those of a classless society. The proletarian state was a new society, but a new society that issued from the womb of capitalism. The Soviet Union consisted not of producers in general, but of workers and peasants. It had to manage the economy not only of industry but of agriculture as one single economic unit and thus fight against capitalist survivals. A task more difficult than the overthrow of the bourgeoisie was the establishment of a new mode of production, the substitution of large-scale Socialist production for capitalist and petty-bourgeois production can alone serve as the deepest source of strength for victory over the bourgeoisie and the sole guarantee of the durability and permanence of this victory." Only the new mode of production will bring about a new mode of labor and thus the abolition of the division between manual and mental labor. Only then (but that was a task not for a day but prolonged over many years) will it be permissible to speak of producers in general, for then we will have a classless society. At the time it was anarchistic--and thus did not solve the problem of labor in a workers state, but brought further chaos to it--to speak of "a congress of producers" managing the economy. Prolonged work in training the masses, was necessary, and in this training the trade unions should act as "schools of communism", before the masses could actually concentrate "in their hands the management of the whole national economy."

A realistic approach to the problem would show that the working mechanism of the existing proletarian state was complicated by the fact that the proletariat took power in a backward industrial state in which the peasant masses preponderated over the proletarian nucleus that had further been decimated by revolution and protracted civil war. Industrial production was down to one-seventh of 1913, and only one-half of the workers employed then were employed in 1920. Many of the Red Army men were returning to the country. Demobilization of the army even had brought about some banditism.

(21) Thesis of Workers Opposition, incl. in book edited by Zinoviev, and in Minutes of Tenth Congress. Of. no. 17.

It was necessary, first of all, to have an economy and "recreate" the proletariat. It was necessary, secondly, to train the proletariat in the management of the economy and in the direction of the state. Ruthlessly Lenin opposed the syndicalist deviation of Shlyapnikov who would transfer the management of branches of industry into the hands of the masses of non-Party workers. It was true that the dictatorship could not be effected without a foundation like the trade unions, which were "transmission belts" from the vanguard of the proletariat to the wide masses. But the motive power of those transmission belts is the vanguard party itself.

### C. The Trade Unions and the NEP

Lenin's point of view won the day at the 10th Congress of the R.C.P. A correct approach to the masses, as exemplified in the trade union resolution which stressed drawing the masses into managing the economy, could not, however, solve the primary problem of "having" an economy. Few of the enterprises were operating. Now the enemy was not a band of White Guards assisted by the international bourgeoisie. "The enemy," wrote Lenin with his usual frankness and perspicacity, "is every-day economics in a small peasant country with a ruined large-scale industry." The young workers state could not lift itself out by its own bootstraps, particularly as it didn't have any boots. A retreat was necessary. The NEP was adopted.

Immediately following the adoption of the NEP, the 11th conference of the R.C.P. adopted a resolution which defined the task of the Party in relation to the trade unions as requiring "a more decisive drawing in of the trade unions and through them of the masses to the resolving of the problems of organization and management in production." Trotsky objected to this postulate and repeated his objections to the congress following the conference. His position was that the transition to a market economy "excludes the possibility of practical participation of the trade unions in the management of the enterprises." (22) The new trade union resolution stated openly that granting of capitalist concessions and concentration of power in the hands of the factory management excluded interference by the trade unions. But it also stressed that "it would be completely incorrect to interpret this undisputed truth as a denial of participation of the trade unions in the socialist organization of industry and in the management of the economy." (23)

The trade union resolution at the 11th congress was adopted unanimously. However, Trotsky was curiously motivated in voting for it. "Daily maneuvering," he explained, "is absolutely incompatible not only with the leadership but with practical control of the trade unions over the practical daily

(22) Minutes of 11th Congress R.C.P., p. 288, Russian

(23) It is significant of the slanderous attitude of the Social Revolutionists to the workers state, that the right SR, Manya

-13-

work of the economic organs."(24) His erroneous concept in 1920: "Parallelism of economic organs is intolerable" is likewise evident in his 1921 position: "Market maneuvering is incompatible with practical control of the trade unions." Lenin was right in both instances for only one reason: to him the role of labor was clear. There was "only one road-- changes from below; we wanted the workers themselves to draw up, from below, the new principles of economic conditions."(25)

Tomsky, who was the official reporter on the trade union resolution at that congress, answered Trotsky sharply: "Trotsky says that on the basis of the market we should throw out the worker from management. Please, what kind of business-like polemic is this? If we approach the trade unions with such a measure and with such an interpretation, then this will get us nowhere, particularly it is good for nothing in the sphere of trade union work where the many millioned non-party masses bring their full pressure to bear upon the trade unions and the Communists in the trade unions." (26)

.....

Lenin, who made no fetish of the workers state, watched like a hawk the further development of the NEP. He knew well that the dictatorship of the proletariat was a transitional state which could be transitional "either to socialism or a return backward to capitalism," depending upon the historic initiative of the masses and the international situation.

(25) continued -

Gordon, in her book, The Workers Before and After Lenin, not only leaves out the above clause when she deals with that resolution, but tries to give the impression that the workers state forbade strikes. If it did, it surely failed to enforce it as in that year there were between 30 to 40 strikes a month in Moscow alone. Naturally, the party thought that the trade unions ought to function so well that workers' grievances are acted upon as they arise, and not let the dissatisfaction grow and cause a walk-out. But not only were strikes permitted but Iozovsky at that very same congress spoke against some Communists who had not walked out with the workers when they struck. How is it possible, he asked, for Communists to lead workers when they remain at their benches at a time when the workers' strike? And Tomsky severely rebuked some for their "chirpyuk attitude" when they proposed that strikes be allowed in private plants, but not in state enterprises.

(24) same as note 22.

(25) Lenin: Selected Works Vol VII p. 277

(26) Minutes of the 11th Congress, p. 289



D. The International Market and the Isolated State

None of the Bolshevik leaders thought they could hold out long in isolated backward Russia without the aid of the European revolution. In explaining the policy of the NEP to the Third Congress of the C.I., Lenin stressed their dependence on the international revolution. "We quite openly admit, we do not conceal the fact that concessions in the system of state capitalism mean paying tribute to capitalism. But we gain time and gaining time means gaining everything, particularly in the epoch of equilibrium, when our foreign comrades are preparing thoroughly for their revolution."

The revolution was successful in no other country and the Russian proletariat was left isolated in a backward industrial country. Lenin knew well that the very backwardness which had thrust them forward would now come to plague them, for they were a link in the chain of world economy and could not resist the pressure of that advanced economy. They had to examine, squarely, he warned the last congress at which he appeared, "the Russian and international market to which we are subordinated, with which we are connected and from which we cannot escape."

Lenin further stressed the fact that a bourgeois like Ustryalov had announced his support of the Soviet government "because it had taken the road that will lead it to the ordinary bourgeois state." The class enemy, stated Lenin, was speaking "the simple class truth and is pointing to the danger that is confronting us. The enemy is striving to make this inevitable... This is the real and main danger." The only way to avoid making the return backwards inevitable is to face squarely the dangers, to realize that the Communists were not leading, but were being led. The state machine must be made to travel in the direction the Communists will guide.

.....

With the death of Lenin the state had lost its most accurate guiding hand. The economy was permitted to develop "spontaneously" and the workers were assured that they could reach socialism "at snail's pace." Trotsky warned prophetically that an unbridled development of the NEP would lead to the Soviet Union's acquiring capitalism "on the installment plan". He pointed further, to the strength of the kulaks and demanded that the workers state begin to plan production on a nation-wide scale. To which Stalin replied cynically: "It isn't a plan the peasants need but a good rain for his crops."

The social legislation of the workers was left intact, but the rise in wages lagged behind the rise in profits of private industry, which had grown so fast that by 1926 20% of the proletariat was employed in private enterprises, including foreign concessions. The worker had his 8 hour day and two weeks vacation with pay; his wages and conditions of work were protected by collective agreements executed by his trade unions. He had regained the 1913 standard of living and there it stopped.

while profits ran ahead.

Meanwhile the kulak who had grown so fat that, although he constituted but 8% of the peasant population, had concentrated in his hands 60% of the grain destined for sale. Stalin still continued blithely on; as late as 1927 he still spoke against planned production, stating that the attempt to build Dieprestroy Hydroelectric Station was tantamount to a muzhik buying a gramophone instead of a cow. The muzhik bought neither, but the kulak hoarded his grain and refused flatly to turn it over to the state. It was then that a plan was hastily elaborated in an attempt to erase all past mistakes by such dizzy rates of speed as completely to disregard the chief productive force - the proletariat, who had in the meantime lost its best defenders when the Left Opposition was expelled from the party and the trade unions, imprisoned and exiled.

The abolition of the NEP and the inauguration of the Five Year Plan consolidated the entire social capital in the hands of the state but did nothing to draw the workers into the management either of the economy or the state. Nevertheless the worker still felt that now that private capitalism was abolished, the state of the October Revolution was his and he was inspired to exceed all established norms. The Workers Conflict Commission was still functioning and the Council of Labor and Defense emphasized that responsibility for fulfilling the financial program rested exclusively with the management. The workers had been given the 7 hour day on the eve of the expulsion of the Left Opposition and the social legislation won through the revolution had been left intact. Hence the proletariat did not appreciate the claim of the Left Opposition that with the latter's expulsion the proletariat had lost its best revolutionary representatives. The workers were first beset by doubts when their economic conditions did not improve, but grew worse, despite the inauguration of planned economy. They saw that the state was the owner of the means of production, but they were not its managers.

J. Forest

(part of the MS on Russia  
which was written <sup>1928</sup> 1942-3  
& remained unpublished in A.W.P.)

# INTERNAL BULLETIN

## OF THE JOHNSON FOREST TENDENCY

Number 6

August 21, 1947

### CONTENTS

PART I.

On a Radio Plant Belt Line. By Nettie. . . . .	Page 1
The UAW In Oakland. By Bill K. and Fil Dari. . . . .	Page 5
The Question Mark Over Shachtman. By I. Blake. . . . .	Page 8

PART II.

Strata In the Working Class . . . . .	By Martin Harvey
---------------------------------------	------------------

15 CENTS

1046

- 1 -

Working on a Belt Line in a Radio Plant

The modern factory belt as it is used under capitalism today is a crime held over masses of workers. By its very nature it is ruinous to the health and the natural, wholesome emotions-- and this has nothing to do with whether the bosses are "good" men or "mean", but is the result of an automatic, exploiting process which becomes everyday more and more the capitalist mode of production. To understand the modern factory belt is to understand the modern productive trend, for the belt is only the last extreme of automatic exploitation. Modern machines for skilled and unskilled work takes upon itself more and more the inherent characteristics of the belt in having a rate set on all work. What on a belt is passed before the worker and must be worked upon, in the machine with a rate of material to be done set by rate-setters, means the worker must rush himself by the clock instead of by a moving belt. All the same in the end-- a worker fatigued by the intensification of labor, nervous exhaustion, and fatigue.

Individual belts (in a radio plant, for example) may have 200 workers lined up, each one having about 3 feet to move along on the belt. At the head of the belt the "load off" girl places the inside cabinet of a radio set, does her own operation on it and then lets it continue to ride down the constantly moving belt, so that each person below may do his or her particular unit of work. By the time the radio has reached the end of the belt it has not only been made, but checked-up, inspected, tested, labeled, dusted and boxed ready to be taken right out to the shipping platform on the trucks waiting at the end of the belt. The idea behind this is the marvelous mass production system which permits the most intricate jobs to be broken down into simple operations, (only 15 basic operations are necessary to make a radio and all of them can be learned in a very short time and performed by unskilled workers knowing nothing about the actual field of radio) and produced by specialization what an equal number of skilled men working alone could never produce. How the capitalists use this mass productive system, however, for their own purposes is as yet the story of the modern degradation of the whole working class.

One of the first things that hits a new worker is the fact that workers are never consulted about their work. Rate-setters are there to tell the worker how much she must do in an hour, "quality" men are there to tell her just how it must be done, engineers are there to correct and constantly improve the models, and her immediate supervisor is always at her nook to show her that her work is easy (some have the audacity to say it can be "fun") provided she does it right. When the worker continues to have trouble with one particular wire the boss may come over to show her how to do that one with ease, and even demonstration goes on, the worker does his 7 other wires. No wonder no one takes the bosses advice seriously or sincerely? She knows well that when she is expected to do an operation of connecting 6 wires 122 times an hour (even the worker figuring how many thousands of wires he does a day is astonished), there can be no concern as to her health, her personal cares and emotions or her dignity as a human being and indeed begins to realize herself as a work-horse as far as the company is concerned. When a worker complains of the speed of the belt, others joke back, "Wait till you have to blow your nose!" The rate-setters don't consider this grim joke that in the winter-time (when colds are frequent) becomes the reality of the horrible frustration of not being able to keep up with the moving belt. But this lesson for the worker

1047

carries over into an understanding of his own exploitation so that she can understand why the company doesn't change the rates even when some of her material is defective or especially difficult to handle. In fact she begins to understand how the company can use 2 different types of wires interchangeably, even though one is easy and quicker to use and the other is heavier and more cumbersome, for the company (except for the supercilious employees' suggestion box that workers pay little attention to), never consults the workers about the materials he uses 8 hours a day, 40 hours a week. The worker is there to do the job, not to think. Only workers control of production could want to change that.

But we, as workers, just because we must work and under such conditions, are forced to think inside. Every morning we come to work by trolleys and get off at the same company station, walk in droves like so much cattle to the gate, show the company guard our numbered pay check and badge and then line up to punch our time card. We take our same working place and one minute after eight, the roll is taken. This is easy for each relief man has 15 girls under him in his "stable," (this is what my boss calls his sections) and can quickly report as the boss goes down the line. Anyone who is out is quickly replaced by 2 "floating" workers until one of them can take over the full job, and the belt starts up. Every worker knows she can be replaced in no time and feels her insignificance and insecurity as far as her job goes. At the same time new worker substitutes, like trainees, often make mistakes and because they do not give a damn about their work under a new boss who will have authority over them for just that day, their work is often sloppy and keeps the repair men along the other side of the belt busy. Of course, even the company expects this, because the belt runs at the same high speed -- new workers or not-- and the work reflects this. But to the company it is cheaper to keep all workers at a high speed with repairmen touching up, than to lower the speed for all. This, in effect, means that production is affected by absenteeism, so much so that workers can be fired for continued lateness and it is very difficult to get the afternoon off. Even to get an infirmary pass out of the building, a headache, is not considered a good enough "excuse", but something that can be measured like a high temperature will get you the all-important pass necessary to pass the well-guarded company gates.

But we go to work for the whole day. The belt has begun and tools are picked up, not to be dropped until the first 15 minute relief in the morning, then lunch for three-quarters of an hour, and then afternoon relief of 15 minutes, until at 4:45 the buzzer ends the day and the belt gradually slows down and stops. The relief man is there for "emergencies", but he is kept busy bringing materials and anyway often finds excuses not to give you a relief because he knows the boss will not enforce this. Few girls will go to the extreme of calling the union shop steward, especially now inexperienced workers.

Sets go down the belt back-to-back at a steady pace. Should the worker fall behind he is in the next person's area. Another choice is to call the relief man, but this isn't too often "practical". To leave the wires off is usually to be caught because checkers must report when operations are off "too often". How wise the capitalists are-- to have such a fine way to cause dissention among individual workers, the check-up system! One of the last resorts is to push the

sets back if there is any space at all. Under the stress and nervous tension (it must be remembered that sets go too quickly to begin with), it is not unusual for girls to feel their hands trembling as they continue to work and often their bodies. Occasionally a desperate worker will sneak a set out and hide it until the relief man can squeeze it in a space somewhere or have it re-run. Here is the unconscious beginning of workers control of production -- the revolt against the company's arbitrarily setting up a rate impossible for the worker. Sometimes a worker will pull out a few sets and replace them when she is able to catch up with the work, regulating in her own tiny way the work to be done instead of bonding herself to the machine. One of the first ideas of production under workers' control and the biggest break with capitalist method will be just that--utilizing the dead, accumulated labor (machinery, tools, etc.) for producing human values instead of human workers (living labor) becoming a mere "appendage to a machine", a "fragment of a man" incapable of realizing his or her full potentialities as an individual with varied interests and developed talents.

Many workers react differently to the same thing, but to watch closely is to realize how similar the reaction actually is, though the expression may vary. One worker helps a co-worker who is "down the bolt", another sits by watching seemingly unperturbed; and at one time the worker who lends a helping hand may the next time refuse to help when appealed to for help, or vice versa. To some watching superficially, the first worker is perhaps more class conscious and cooperative towards her fellow-workers. Actually it is often the worker who refuses to help at all who is most class conscious,--for in her own way she realizes that the entire method of production must be changed and hopes for enough work to go undone so as to effect the rate set. One worker who had always helped me, stopped suddenly and refused to hear me even when I was at my ropes' end. Months later she casually mentioned that another worker had told her not to do my wires. "let the boss see she can't do it herself. That's the only way to change things." Since that time, I myself have seen things differently and have asked workers not to help me even when they offered. Here too, lies the understanding to the resentment workers feel when the boss or relief man suggests you help the person next to you. Your own job is past human decency-- why wear yourself out with more work? One of the most horrible contradictions to find yourself in, is the sincere desire to help a co-worker in trouble and the rebellion against the automatic exploitation of this co-worker and yourself. All your militancy cries out against doing any work at all for this company, and yet you bend down to help your fellow worker, cursing your principles and cursing your actions even while acting. The same contradiction forces you to do all your work meticulously (even when you feel like risking doing nothing) for the sake of workers down the bolt who have the difficult job of wiring on top of your wires, or checking and correcting work.

Workers often speak of each worker leaving a certain number of sets going down undone each hour, but each worker fears that the other worker may not feel that same way about it. As it is, workers realize no one can fight the bolt alone, yet continue to leave off work in an unorganized way. Should the idea of every worker along the bolt cooperatively leaving off a certain amount of work each hour, once got started (perhaps through some sort of workers factory committee?)

the flames of it may rise to the idea of an actual sit-down for enforcing demands. Workers already are saying, as one said to me, "Somoday we'll all stop working at the same time and go on strike". When I smiled, she resentfully asked me why.

"Because I like the idea that we will all go out together at the same time."

"Oh, it wouldn't be any fun if we didn't all go out together."

How marvelous -- this whole picture of a united revolt against capitalist domination and, on the other hand, its' contrast, the futility of singular, ununited anarchistic rebellion! The free feeling of breaking through personal isolation to realize that every other worker feels the same way, but doesn't think the next worker shares his feelings exactly. But patience! The road is begun. "Ideas become power when they seize hold of the masses." (Lenin)

Hettie

INTERNAL BULLETIN  
of the  
JOHNSON-FOREST TENDENCY  
\*\*\*\*\*  
Address All Communications To  
MARTIN HARVEY  
101 W. 46 St.  
New York 19, N. Y.

TWO SHOP REPORTS FROM THE SAN FRANCISCO-OAKLAND BAY AREA

(NOTE: We print below reports from two of our comrades who are in the same U.A.W. local but in different units and different shops.)

I.

I've been working at this plant ten months. Approximately 1200 workers employed. 90% of the work is unskilled, assembly-line work included. Two-thirds of the workers are young veterans from our state, including a strong Southern element.

The workers bring up countless grievances. Half of these are immediately dismissed by the grievance committee. The other grievances go through a protracted procedure, revolving around the question of whether it is or isn't covered by the contract. The grievance committee is not militant. The militant committeemen resigned from the committee in disgust. There have been threats of sit-downs and other job actions. Many of the grievances have to do with the length of the relief period. The plant now has a stop-watch to allow for the full relief period. The plant is an open shop. 75% of the men belong to the union voluntarily. Non-union men find fault with the union. These men would certainly join if the union initiated militant action. Attendance at union meetings is continually dropping due to the role of the leadership. There is no progressive group in the shop. Control is mostly in the hands of the Stalinists.

Other party comrades (this was written when we were still members of the N.P.) in the plant are preoccupied with being stewards, with being on the committee and other official bodies. I concentrated on selling fifteen Labor Action subscriptions, while the others sold less than five. I give the workers a class struggle line including the slogan for a workers' government. No appreciable number of workers have as yet come down to the branch. They claim they are tired, etc. Three workers who like the paper very much are anti-Negro. Frequent complaints that Labor Action has words that can't be understood, are made. The workers like the U.A.W. and the coal-miners articles and are generally interested in events in the United States.

The workers think that the C.P. rank and file are just general militants offering them more than the conservatives. The workers are not fooled by red-baiting. They voted for the labor candidates in Oakland despite the anti-red hysteria. The workers are receptive to a Labor Party idea, while the C.P. pushes Wallace. The recent U.A.W. contract didn't excite them except for holiday pay provisions. The workers like to listen to the labor commentator on the radio and not to the company commentator.

The F.E.P.C. here is organized on a local basis with all shop units involved. I am one of the members. I'm uncertain whether we have direct negotiating powers with the company as to the hiring of Negroes. I tell the workers that they can't be union-minded and Jim Crow at the same time. The Negro question is a test of the strength of union sentiments and can thus be used to isolate the reactionary elements. Anti-Negro prejudice has been declining in the last months. This is due, I think, to the feeling of solidarity that the workers have towards their class as a whole in the present American political situation.

The union local voted unanimously for a one-day general strike against the Taft-Hartley Bill. The Stalinists don't push the general strike as much as they push Wallace. There is a high degree of interest in



the Oakland Veterans' League (a semi-labor political organization). During the Oakland General Strike the workers wanted to walk out and even admired the striking A.F.L. One worker who suggested the use of the Army against the General Strike, was soon surrounded by the men who were looking for a provocation to beat him up.

The other party comrades think of stages. First make the workers into good union men. Then make them socialists. I believe we shouldn't retreat from audaciously displaying Labor Action and talking socialist politics. On this basis I have some following and friends in my shop.

- Bill K.

II.

The Shop is composed of from 200-250 workers. A majority of them are emigrant elements from Utah, Oklahoma, North Dakota, etc. They are mainly from rural districts and are therefore new to factory work. They are part of the general emigration which doubled the population of Oakland during the war.

The work week is 44 hours, with time and a half for overtime. The work is unskilled, dirty and physically arduous. In some departments the assembly line is used. There is a foreman or supervisor in each department. The foreman's primary duty is to keep the workers on their toes every minute during working hours. For example: workers can't sit down during working hours. If their job is finished or they are waiting for material to continue, they must keep busy with something else.

The proportion of Negroes to whites is 1 to 4 - men and women. Since the end of the war the proportion is growing in favor of the white workers. The Negroes are aware that the company has stopped hiring Negroes. No action has been taken in the unit to resolve this problem. The local has assigned an M.E.P.C. committee to investigate. As yet our unit is not represented on this committee.

During working hours there is almost no discrimination. One would hardly think a color line existed. This amiable atmosphere has been created by the Negroes themselves. They've asserted themselves as good, and in many cases, better workers. They are extremely suspicious of the white workers because they know that Jim Crow is prevalent after the work hours.

The general attitude of the workers towards the union and the union leadership is one of indifference. The leadership is extremely chummy with the bosses. The workers have no confidence in them at all. Out of the 200-250 workers, if 35 attend unit meetings it is considered good. About seven or eight attend the local meetings.

An exceptional amount of workers is company-minded. Despite their indifference to their own union they respond, under the impact of events, to the defense of their own fellow workers or to the defense of the working class as a whole. In one instance, seven people were laid off. A meeting was held in which a proposal to cut down the work week in order to divide the work was unanimously passed. Workers who had never taken the floor before, took the floor on this issue.

On Monday, June 23, when the Taft-Hartley Bill was passed, there was an unbelievable amount of talk about General Strike. Discussion was flying fast and furious. Some of the comments were: "We sent our boys



THE QUESTION MARK OVER SHACHTMAN

In the August 1947 issue of The New International, Erber concludes his answer to Germain on the Polish question. Our differences with Germain are treated at great length elsewhere. The specific programmatic points of dispute Erber raises against Germain are of only minor importance to us here. They are much like the arguments of pinochle players as to how the last trick should have been played. But what Erber says in his basic analysis should be of great concern to those who are considering a bloc with the W.P. on the basis of defeatism - or perhaps - on the basis of an opposition to "bureaucratism" which even defensists may join. Shachtman's "infinite adjustability" makes it difficult to predict what precisely will be, tomorrow, the axis of his blocs.

Freed, in an immediate sense, from the Bolshevik vigil of the Johnson-Forrest tendency, this representative spokesman for the W.P. hastens back to a bald statement of retrogressionism. In the shambles that is Europe today, where no class other than the proletariat exists as a dynamic social force, Erber can - and does (p. 178) - refer to "Two mass forces that periodically threaten to erupt into civil war." But he does not pause to inquire into the class character of these "mass forces" or their relation to the socialist reconstruction of society. Not only cannot he answer this question. He cannot even pose it. Erber, and the W.P. with him, have rejected the only two alternatives that Marxism envisages - the proletarian revolution to overthrow bourgeois rule. They frantically hunt their interminable third alternatives. They have therefore, never once, in all the hundreds of thousands of words they have imposed on the Movement, given an unequivocal statement on the character of the epoch today. Or, worse still, they have given their answer inferentially by first flirting with, then turning their back to, and now defiantly espousing the position of retrogressionism.

Erber, throughout his article, continually refers to the fact that the proletariat has been "hurled back;" that "Europe... (is) rapidly slipping backward and that long outlived political problems (are) once more reappearing on its agenda," and that "a position that denies retrogression and preaches the imminent proletarian revolution but finds itself reduced to neutrality between two mass forces that periodically threaten to erupt into civil war becomes a laughable incongruity."

The W.P., like the I.K.D., looks at the degeneration of the Russian state and therefore concludes that the Russian Revolution is dead. But the October Revolution was more than a Russian phenomenon. It was representative of the stage of development reached by the international proletariat in its opposition to world capitalism, and it revealed the revolutionary potentialities of the proletariat. Has the degeneration of the Russian state - in this limited sense only, the defeat of the Russian Revolution - rejuvenated capitalism? Erber doesn't say so. He couldn't. But he has three alternatives and can therefore allow himself the impressionistic luxury of both a capitalism which is declining and a proletariat which is slipping back. Capitalism is declining because, and here a nod to Marx, that is the way of capitalism. But the proletariat is also declining because it has been oppressed so long by totalitarianism, both fascist and Stalinist. The Stalinist oppression is by far the worst because the proletariat has illusions about it, which proves the backwardness of the working class. For the W.P. all roads always lead to that conclusion. Bound as we are to the traditional two alternatives of Marxism - socialism to succeed capitalism - it is difficult to suppress a wry bit of exegesis on Erber's article which reduces him to this absurdity: Both capitalism and the proletariat are

declining because of capitalism's inevitable decline.

As a result of this dual decline - retrogression = third alternative, one of the "outlived political problems" which reappears is the national question as a question for national liberation, per se. For, says Erber, "The unification of Europe through imperialist conquest and oppression... would not be the transfer of the proletarian struggle for power from a national to a continental basis, but rather, the transfer of the struggle in the oppressed nations from directly proletarian goals to national liberation." Europe today is divided into two imperialist camps, the problem has been posed on a continental basis. Nevertheless, according to Erber, the Polish proletariat must struggle as a national entity. The very nature of the European realities gives the lie to the concept of national statehood. Yet this is the message Erber gives to the Polish proletariat. Then, he goes on to say: "The course pursued by the proletariat in the struggle for national liberation - whether it submerges its class interests in the struggle of the nation for liberation or whether it wages its class struggle as a struggle on behalf of the nation as a whole through leading the struggle for national liberation - depends entirely upon the correct strategic orientation of the proletariat, that is to say, of its organized political vanguard." (p. 177) Then why not orient the proletariat toward taking state power? Because there is no party, is the inevitable Shachtmanite answer. And why? Because "All modern history teaches us that national oppression has the general effect of blurring class consciousness and heightening national consciousness." (p. 177) The conclusion is always the same - the backwardness of the proletariat.

The violence these retrogressionists do to the concept of the permanent revolution! How they abstract and "stagify." First national liberation, then build the party, then make the revolution. Trotsky said that in this period of death agony, the revolutionary struggle can break out on all fronts at any time. But the W.P. with its obsessive fear of Stalinist oppression and its corresponding lack of class analysis, transfers its own inability to analyze Stalinism theoretically to the expectation that the proletariat will not be able to rise against it. Full of their own uncertainty they therefore impose a time-table and a sequence upon the working class. They say Trotsky promised us a revolution at the end of World War II. World War II has ended. But there has been no revolution. This is proof positive that our thesis on retrogression is correct. "The failure of the proletariat to make a revolution in post-war Europe does not demonstrate its historic incapacity to play the role which Marx assigned to it. Yet the continued and accelerated retrogressive process places a question mark over the ability of the proletariat to reassemble a revolutionary leadership and take power before it is overtaken and destroyed by the disintegrative tendency of capitalist civilization of which the threatening atomic war is the most potent force." (footnote (1), p. 178)

The Olympian arrogance of these pygmies. "...places a question mark over the ability of the proletariat to reassemble a revolutionary leadership and take power..." "Places a question mark" indeed. The question mark properly belongs over the ability of the W.P. to rise to the historic tasks imposed by a moving proletariat upon those who would be in a revolutionary vanguard. And to whose authority does the W.P. now turn for support of the pessimism with which they regard the proletariat? They turn to Trotsky for support. In the same infamous footnote (1), Erber says that on the eve of the war "Trotsky not only recognized the retrogressive process and the key role of Stalinism within it, but made this recognition an important consideration in his calculations... His brilliant article, 'U.S.S.R. and the War,' written a few weeks after the war began, was his

final rounded presentation on the subject of retrogression and the nature of the Russian state. In this article he poses the entire question from the point of view that either the war will conclude with a revolution...or the proletariat will fail to take power and require a complete re-analysis of Marxist fundamentals, including the possibility of a world of bureaucratic slave states." The recklessness of the W.P. comrades is astounding. Trotsky never left any doubt as to where he stood on the character of this epoch. He posed third alternatives only to destroy them. Re-read "The USSR In War". Read how Trotsky demolished Bruno R. who was among the first to posit the "bureaucratic collectivist" third alternative in whose embrace Shachtman now languishes. Study Trotsky's intransigence on this question. When Trotsky considered retrogressionism, he considered it only negatively by saying that if there were retrogression, if the proletariat failed to make the revolution then we would have to abandon Marxism as a science of revolution. And this Trotsky never did, nor gave any indication of doing. Or does Erber now wish to draw this conclusion for Trotsky? And in re-reading "The USSR In War" it would be well to pay especial attention to this passage from it: "Twenty-five years in the scales of history, when it is a question of profoundest changes in economic and cultural systems, weigh less than an hour in the life of man. What good is the individual who, because of empirical failures in the course of an hour or a day, renounces a goal that he set for himself on the basis of the experience and analysis of his entire previous lifetime...The Fourth International did not by accident call itself the world party of the socialist revolution. Our road is not to be changed. We steer our course toward the world revolution...." (In Defense of Marxism, p. 15) Yet it is to this same Trotsky that Erber now attributes retrogressionist tendencies.

Like the I.K.D., the W.P. looks at the degeneration of the Russian state and from this it makes its appraisal of the world situation. It therefore can understand, analyze and explain nothing. It is fearful that the proletariat may be defeated. It blames Stalinism for this. It therefore takes its defeatist position as regards Russia on the basis of its pessimism regarding the proletarian revolution. And on the basis of this defeatism it heaps abuse on the heads of those leaders of the Movement who reject Shachtman's miserable positions and insist on the revolutionary perspective for today.

The Johnson-Forest tendency is familiar with this Shachtmanite rubbish. We have fought it for years at every turn. We shall use our energies to rip the masquerade of the W.P.'s defeatism from the "question mark over the ability of the proletariat" which sulks beneath it.

This pessimism running unchecked in the Movement can do it incalculable harm. Let those who would oppose the official defensism of the Movement by blocs with Shachtman be warned that they bloc thereby also with his retrogressionism. Or, as the wind now seems to be shifting, let those - defeatist or defensist - who would oppose the "bureaucratism" attributed to the leadership by blocs with Shachtman be warned that they too thereby bloc also with his retrogressionism. That is where the question mark belongs.

- I. Blake

" 1 4

## STRATA IN THE WORKING CLASS

1

In the discussions we have held and in some of the articles that have appeared and will appear in this Bulletin we have begun to concretize one of our most basic political concepts which has appeared in generalized form in our political resolutions and documents. We have based our politics in large part on Trotsky's conception of the instinctive urge to socialism of the working class. This theoretical statement is, for us, not a holiday phrase for manifestos and May Day speeches but, as all theory, a guide to action. Our theoretical analysis and concrete understanding of the proletariat must form the basis of the theory and practice of the revolutionists. How can it be otherwise with a movement which bases itself first and foremost on the conquest of power by the working class?

We began, therefore, by learning to seek out in the daily life of the workers in the factory the expression of their instinctive striving toward their liberation and the liberation of all humanity. We learned to analyze the thought, the speech, the actions of the workers - not at face value, superficially - but rather fundamentally, in its innermost essence, in word, dialectically. In this study and preparation our worker comrades have contributed immeasurably from their store of personal and immediate knowledge of the life of the proletariat.

The concrete knowledge we are now acquiring is serving to confirm and deepen our theoretical understanding of the proletariat as a class and its relation to other classes. Full Marxist understanding, however, requires that we extend our analysis deeper. Understanding the nature of the working class as a whole, we can go on to an appreciation of the conflicts and contradictions within the class, the conflicting currents that play their part in the class struggle. Fundamentally the proletariat is tied together by common conditions of life, by common aspirations. But to view the working class as one homogeneous whole is to view it statically and abstractly. In discussing the working class itself, Lenin rarely failed to describe the different strata of workers and their differing, often contradictory relation to the class struggle. Probably the most outstanding dialectical analysis of the proletariat is contained in Trotsky's History of the Russian Revolution and the book deserves a careful study from this point of view alone.

Basic to an understanding of the working class as a whole is its relation to production. And a further analysis must also proceed from this point, which is at the heart of the contradictions contained within the proletariat.

The relation of workers to production, their role in the process of production, is not uniform or identical. One of the most easily recognized differences is that of skill. The tool and die maker has a different relation to production than the worker on the assembly line. His work involves a substantial degree of special training and skill. He is one of the few workers that can get a certain amount of satisfaction from his work. He feels a greater freedom on his job since he exercises a degree of influence over his machines unlike the assembler or production machine operator who is completely dominated by the machine or the assembly line. He even owns certain expensive tools himself. And he stands in a relation with other phases of production which give him an understanding of his strength. Unskilled and semi-skilled work in the modern factory is impossible without the skilled worker - the builder of machines, the makers of tools and dies, the maintenance and repair men. His special skills and training also command higher wages and make him a bit less susceptible to unemployment.

- 2 -

All this affects him socially and politically. It is the basis for the fact that skilled workers were the first to achieve powerful and stable union organization which in turn helped to raise them even further above their fellow workers, economically and socially. But the development was contradictory. At the same time that they were the first to struggle militantly for their unions, their higher social status and their special conditions of work introduced a strong counter-tendency of conservatism. They are the backbone of reactionary craft unionism - defending their special position not only against the capitalists but also against the rest of the working class. Their higher income, home and car ownership, occasional entry into the ranks of the lower bourgeoisie, etc. make them especially susceptible to bourgeois ideology in general and bourgeois politics in particular. As Lenin pointed out long ago, these higher strata of workers are corrupted by capitalism (and colonialism) and provide the social base for reformism - in the United States, New Dealism and the alliance between local unions and municipal political machines. Their features can be summed up by the contradictory role the skilled workers play in the auto unions. In most locals of the UAW there is a solid core of union leaders from the skilled departments. They are the ones with ability and experience, untiring in their efforts to maintain the union and fully educated in the principles of unionism. But their understanding goes no further than formal unionism. When militant struggle is required which clashes with the peaceful running of the union, they are a conservative and backward force that acts as a break on the rank and file workers.

The size of the plant in which they work plays an important role in forming the thought and determining the actions which workers take. Compare, for example, the huge Ford Rouge plant in Detroit which employs over 60,000 workers (about 90,000 at the height of war production) with the plant of an independent auto parts manufacturer employing, let us say, 2000 workers. Marxists have always understood that workers are organized by the process of production itself. But in the Ford plant the effects of this on the workers' consciousness are much more direct and immediate. Within the gates are assembly lines, production lines, machine shops, a tire plant, a steel mill, a glass factory and much more. The worker understands the complexity of modern production but sees directly its integration, its social character. He has a direct relation with workers in very different occupations. He can see at a glance that he has tremendous power over the whole productive process. A strike at the Rouge plant has extensive and visible ramifications. In a matter of hours other companies in Detroit begin shutting down, producers of parts which can no longer be used. The huge international empire of Ford can be tied up.

Even outside the factory: In the huge anti-Taft-Hartley Bill demonstration in Detroit the presence of the Ford workers made a qualitative difference which they could see. Through force of numbers they could run the city of Dearborn. A demonstration of Ford workers has national repercussions. They are a power in the factory and outside it.

Compared to this the 2000 workers are as nothing. They don't see and can't see as readily and as concretely how any action they might take can have substantial significance other than on narrow shop and union questions. The tendency is always to wait for the lead from the bigger shops and locals for that is where the power lies.

All this is reflected in the Ford worker. The Rouge plant contains within it among the most advanced and militant workers in Detroit and, therefore, in the nation. Directly political questions play much greater part in the life of the union than in other locals. And the special history of the Ford Rouge local reflects this in part, particularly the influence the Stalinists have gained and retained since Ford was organized.

There are many more sources for the differences that exist within the working class, most important among them, the question of the Negro and national minorities. But one final one will be considered here. That is the relation of workers in different industries to the class struggle.

We accept as a commonplace the distinction between heavy and light industry, between production goods and consumer goods industry. But very often the effects of this distinction on the workers themselves are not appreciated. What are the differences between the two types of industry? (Actually, for a serious analysis, this should be broken down further for there are many gradations from the heaviest to the lightest.) By and large, heavy industry is characterized by larger factories, greater centralization and larger corporations and a greater proportion of constant capital to variable as against smaller shops, decentralization and a minimum of heavy machinery in light industry. In addition, heavy industry has a decisive influence over the economy as a whole which is not shared by light industry. All of this has different effects on miners and steel workers on the one hand and textile workers and agricultural laborers on the other.

The effects of large factories, great corporations and extreme centralization we have seen. Heavy industry workers tend to be organized in huge combinations, often centralized in one or two big cities. In light industry the workers are dispersed and are deprived of the feeling of strength which characterizes the others. The mass of constant capital which the workers in basic industry face, their direct domination by the machine, makes it easier for them to see the impersonal and generalized character of their exploitation and their anger and hatred is turned readily against the "system." In light industry the exploitation is more personal, the capitalist or his direct agents can more easily be held responsible rather than capital itself. There is a greater tendency to believe that in the next factory or the next town things are better. The knowledge that any miner or steelworker or railroad worker has that when he shuts his industry down the whole economy cranks to a halt is absent in non-basic industry.

These differences have had their influence on the history of the workers. The workers in light industry are only partly organized, have a much lower standard of living, are more backward politically. The workers in heavy industry are more "progressive."

But the matter does not end here. The situation does not remain static but develops dialectically. The advanced workers who have demonstrated their ability to set up permanent organizations, who have fought their way upward, are subject to a counter tendency which is the result of this very progressiveness. The very organizations which they have built in struggle act as a partial brake on their further movement. They treasure their unions and their traditions and are loathe to break from them when a higher stage in the class struggle is reached. They develop a certain organizational conservatism - a very understandable conservatism to preserve what they built at such cost - but a conservatism nevertheless. Certain strata of the workers achieve a petty bourgeois standard of living and enter the corrupting atmosphere of the aristocracy of labor. The permanent crisis of declining capitalism tends to lessen the importance of these differences - but they remain and must be understood.

The more backward workers, oppressed by their greater exploitation, by illiteracy, by subsistence or below subsistence standards of living, are not bound by the confining influence of fully developed class collaboration and their hatred for their lot, which has not the safety valve that traditional unionism can supply, explodes with the greatest fury in times of crisis. At such times strata which have been retarded for many years can leap far ahead of the more advanced sections of the working class and what they lack in stability



and tenacity is made up in striking power and explosive force:

Indications of this are visible around us. Poor southern whites who flocked to the northern factories during the war demonstrated in themselves these contradictions. They had no union tradition, rarely attended union meetings and often spoke antagonistically of the union and its leaders. Yet they played an important part in the wild-cat strikes and resorted regularly to direct action against the boss with total disregard of the no-strike pledge and the discipline imposed by the union bureaucracy. Another indication is the greater violence with which more backward strata enter into the class struggle, particularly the great post-war strike waves. The great mass strikes of the CIO demonstrated perfect organization and an extremely high level of consciousness. So solid were the workers in these industries that practically no defense of their picket lines was required except in special local situations. Compare this to the militant struggle of the telephone workers for lesser demands, or even the foreman and the violence in their strike at Ford, and the potentialities of strata of the workers that arrived late on the scene of the class struggle can be clearly seen.

An understanding of the different strata within the working class and their movement is essential to guide the politics and daily activity of the revolutionary party. Comrades should develop within themselves a perceptivity to the slightest shift in current or change in mood in the working class. For it is with such understanding that the program of revolution can most effectively be brought to the workers.

2

The decisive field of work for revolutionists today in the United States is the organized labor movement. That is, therefore, the section of the working class we should study with the greatest care. One section of the organized working class has a special status. Born out of the working class, based on the working class yet standing apart from and above the working class is the labor bureaucracy.

The union bureaucracy has its origin in the struggles of the proletariat to improve its conditions of life and to assert its position in society. From the very beginning of working class organization for struggle leaders have been thrown up to guide, to direct, to organize the fight. Some of these leaders have come from outside the working class; others were motivated by the purest self-seeking opportunism, yet fundamentally all were put forward by the ranks because in one way or another they represented the strivings of the workers. They were able to formulate more clearly or do more effectively what the workers wanted formulated or what the workers wanted done. But they expressed not merely the progressive aspirations of the workers but also their backwardness, contained in the bourgeois ideology that dominated the formal thinking of the proletariat, and this, too, they expressed with greater clarity and consciousness.

In the newer unions in the CIO the roots in the ranks of even the top layers of the bureaucracy are still visible. Dodge workers still recall when Frankenstein worked by their side in the Dodge Main plant and held secret meetings in back rooms and basements to organize the union. R. J. Thomas is still remembered by Chrysler workers in the same way.

But the upper layers of the bureaucracy are completely divorced from their origins in the ranks of the working class and play a special role dictated to them by the positions which they occupy.

Their conditions of life are no longer that of the workers. Their

high salaries and expense accounts, their homes and vacations, the social environment of capitalists and government officials in which they feel very much at home remove them from the problems and pressures of the workers and remove from their thinking the worker and his point of view. The influence of the workers on these people is indirect and distorted and derives only from the fact that the social basis of their positions, salaries, etc. is the membership of their unions.

Much more decisive than their personal living conditions, however, is the role dictated to them by the nature of the trade union movement under capitalism. The trade unions arose as instruments of struggle of the working class under capitalism. Their function is to represent the workers in their day to day conflict with the capitalists in the factory. But the unions are limited by two considerations: first is the all-inclusive character of union membership. The most backward workers in a shop must be included in the union if it is to be effective. The result is to tie the union movement to an elementary minimum program on which all workers, or most workers, can agree at all times. Secondly, the unions are limited by the fact that "normal" functioning in a capitalist society requires relative labor peace and some sort of agreement or understanding with the capitalists, usually embodied in a contract.

Thus, although one essential element of unionism is its character as an organ of struggle, contradictory to this - even because of this - the unions are also organs of class peace. Just as the state exists to control and confine the class struggle in society as a whole, which otherwise would be torn apart, similarly the unions control and limit the class struggle in the factory and make possible longer or shorter periods of class peace.

The union contract itself embodies these contradictory elements. On the one hand it contains the gains won by the workers and obligates the company to carry them into effect. On the other hand it stabilizes the worker-capitalist relation for a year (or two years) and is enforced against militant workers who utilize opportunities to make greater gains.

This contradiction cannot be contained indefinitely in the labor movement. With increasing force as capitalism declines and makes more and more difficult the achievement of even the smallest gains, this contradiction tears the labor movement apart and can only result in the explosion of the revolution which overthrows completely the element of class peace and its human agents in the labor movement. An increasing polarization in the labor movement is taking place today in which the forces of revolt, the hatred and resentment of the workers, are collecting at one pole and all the weight that bourgeois society can muster to enforce class peace is being assembled at the other pole. In this situation the labor bureaucracy, driven by the need to maintain the labor unions in their traditional form, goes over completely to the side of class peace and abandons entirely its original role of representative of the workers in their struggle against capital.

It is thus the need of capitalism to limit the class struggle and the nature and role of the labor unions that makes of the labor bureaucrats agents of capital in the working class movement, labor lieutenants of capitalism - a position, it must be said, which they occupy very willingly, without any visible remorse and for what is really a pittance considering their importance to capitalist society.

The union leadership is not, of course, an unrelieved swamp. It extends from the summits where it is in regular contact with the government and the bourgeoisie to its lowest ranks - the stewards and the committeemen in the

shops who represent the men directly against the foremen and plant management. As one goes down the ladder the contact with the ranks is strengthened and the officials become more responsive to the needs and desires of the workers. Even in the lowest ranks of the union leadership the contradictory elements can be found but the greater weight is usually on the side of class struggle leadership.

The committeemen and stewards come directly from the rank and file. They share their income and their existence. The response to a failure to struggle militantly or to represent the men adequately is immediate and strong. In the lowest strata of the leadership can be found many of the most self-sacrificing workers, workers with ability who have already established themselves as leaders of other workers, workers with a high level of consciousness and understanding. Here are workers who, when they become revolutionists, can provide the most conscious leadership to the workers in the shops and can recruit and build the party with the greatest effect. They are an important field for party recruitment.

It is because of this, however, that comrades should understand the contradictions which are present even here. The committeeman and steward is called upon to enforce the contract and while a good steward fights for all he can get for the workers he represents he is tied to the contract and feels duty bound to support it. He accepts the contract as a normal way of life in the factory and is often in a position where he has to enforce it against the workers, or at the least, inform workers that they have no claim or grievance under the contract. The aim of the capitalists and the top labor leaders and the tendency in labor contracts is to separate the lowest officials from the rank and file. There has been a considerable development in the direction of having fewer shop representatives and putting committeemen on full time. Where a steward represented 50 or 100 men with whom he worked, now (as in the Ford contract) one committeeman will represent 500 workers and will not have to work on a machine at all. Company representatives are constantly attempting to bribe stewards with favors of all kinds - easier jobs, higher rates of pay, passes from the plant, etc. - provided the steward will play ball with the company. The job of a steward is becoming increasingly technical (time study, etc.) and many militants are scared away from the post by its complexity. The result is that many of the lowest union officials have been separated from the ranks to some extent and try to keep their jobs to keep the protection and favors which the job gives them. The lowest layers of the union leadership also develop a legitimate organizational loyalty to their union. They are the conscious union propagandists. But while this is a necessity in the building and maintenance of any organization, in times of crisis this loyalty can temporarily retard good union militants from striking out on a new road.

Between the lowest and the highest levels of union leadership there are many gradations. An understanding of the leadership as a whole and its different strata are required for an effective struggle against the labor bureaucracy and for the building of the revolutionary party in the factories.

- Martin Harvey

# I N T E R N A L B U L L E T I N

of THE  
JOHNSON  
FOREST  
TENDENCY

Number 7 August 28, 1947

## CONTENTS:

PART I

Export Politics. By Martin Harvey. . . . .	Page 1
Night Shift Workers. By Jack Meade. . . . .	Page 7
Changes in the Youth. By Zeb. . . . .	Page 10
The Grapes of Wrath Are Brewing. By Richard Page. . . . .	Page 12

PART II

The Economist Tendency in the Fourth International. . . . .	By Ria Stone
---	--------------

15 CENTS

1063

EXPORT POLITICS

After seven years, the "unique contributions" of the Workers Party have been proved bankrupt by the test of events. This is demonstrated by the test of the W.P. itself. For how else can one explain their substitution for their political contributions of organizational politics, their overwhelming concern with questions of clique, of regime, of organizational maneuvering, of "honesty" and "sincerity." Their latest demonstration along these lines is the "Statement of the National Committee of the Workers Party" (Bulletin of the Workers Party, Vol. II, No. 6) on the Johnson-Forest tendency and our resignation from the W.P. A study of this document reveals that the method of "honesty," so fervently recommended by the W.P. is a commodity for export only and not for internal consumption.

The decisive section of the Statement is what amounts to a revised statement on unity which is tacked on to the end. It says "the NC, without involving itself in any way in the decision as to the relations between the Johnsonites and the SWP, is fully aware of the fact that the split of the Johnsonites and their application for membership in the SWP is tantamount to a declaration that for their part the question of unity between the WP and the SWP has been removed from the order of the day... The NC is likewise fully aware of the fact that a corresponding action by the SWP would similarly be tantamount to an open declaration on its part that the Statement on Unity no longer retains even the formal meaning to which the actions and statements of the SWP leadership have reduced it.

"The Workers Party will not hesitate to draw the conclusions from the particularly hypocritical blow at unity delivered by the Johnsonite split and all those responsible for it and will continue to act in unwavering fidelity to its conception of the democratic character of the party and its revolutionary principles in general."

The transfer of membership of the Johnson-Forest tendency has followed both the letter and the spirit of the unity agreement between the WP and the SWP. The unity agreement provides for such a transfer providing both parties agree. Both have agreed. Once this is established we can grasp the none too subtle implication of the WP Statement.

A prefatory note to the Statement announces that the coming plenum of the WP National Committee will completely review the situation "not only with reference to the Johnson capitulation but to the question of unity itself." It is to be a full review and there will, therefore, be no need for ambiguity or double talk. What sort of review is intended? Do you intend to continue along the lines of your Statement? Let us be concrete. What do you mean by "no longer retains even formal meaning?" Do you now reject unity? Do you now envision a rosy future in combination with the "centrifugal forces" in the International?

If that is your new position then understand that you and you alone bear responsibility for it. Not we, who have motivated our transfer adequately in our July 5 Conference Resolution. Not the SWP which announces its continued adherence to the unity agreement. Not even a technical violation of the agreement exists to justify such a position.

Should such a turn be attempted by the WP it would stand fully exposed before the world as unprincipled splitters of the movement, as bankrupt politicians who subordinated the political needs of the movement to their own "unique" conception of the organizational character of politics

and the theory that principled political behavior is for export only. The duty on such exports comes high. The WP will inevitably pay the price for treating so cavalierly the fundamental conception and method of Marxism.

The introduction to this playing with unity, its political rationalization provides the body of the Statement. The political charge contained in this Statement is, of course, "capitulation." The proof? A list of no less than seven questions on which we allegedly either agreed with the WP as against the SWP or had our own position against both parties and on which we are now supposed to have abandoned our positions.

The charge of capitulation to Cannon is not new. It was raised for the first time in the discussion that preceded the 1946 Convention of the WP at which we presented resolutions opposed to the line of the WP Majority on all major questions facing the party. It is only necessary to describe the original charge, however, to refute the new one. The charge at that time was that of political capitulation to the SWP. It referred to the fact that our political positions (on the United States, on the Negro question, on the European revolution, etc.) were in general closer to the general line of the SWP than that of the WP. In this they even included the Russian question, pointing out, correctly enough, that we shared with the workers statista a fundamental rejection of any "third alternative."

The WP leadership concluded from this that our political line if carried to its logical conclusion, would result in our organizational affiliation with the SWP. Merely extend 1946 to August 1947 and now these same honest and sincere fakery claim that our proposal to join the SWP means the "abandonment" of the same positions which in 1946 were closer to the SWP than the WP. Shachtman now embraces our political line in a unilateral "bloc" - the same line which in 1946 he rejected as "ultra-leftism," "sectarian" and, if you please, "Cannonism."

This in the school of "honest" politics is accepted as serious politics, principled politics. Not (God forbid!) unprincipled combinationism and the subordination of politics to organizational needs.

We have neither the space nor the desire to discuss in detail each of the questions on which we are supposed to have "capitulated." The positions we have taken are recorded in articles and resolutions and are available for all to see. Unlike the WP leadership we are loyal to our past. We have developed our positions openly and publicly and will change them in the same way. Further, our point of view will be presented once again in two major documents that will be published shortly. However, if only to prove that "honesty" for the WP is an export commodity - to increase their currency abroad - and not for internal consumption, it is necessary to review the imposing list of "capitulations" mentioned in the Statement.

On what questions have we "capitulated?" The Russian question. Why? We don't propose to raise it artificially in the SWP today. Horrible capitulation! But there has been no formal discussion of the Russian question in the WP (and we have asked for none) since the 1941 Convention of the party. Have we, therefore, capitulated to Shachtman and bureaucratic collectivism for six years? Even Shachtman, who has just discovered that we agree with him on everything else, has not suspected this. Who, in the United States or abroad, that knows of the Johnson-Forest tendency does not know our position on the nature of the Russian state? And who can indicate one word, written or verbal, in English or Arabic, where we have modified our position in the slightest or show any intention of doing so? Whence, then, comes the charge? The sole point introduced as

evidence is that we propose to fuse with a party that has a workers statist position and agree to accept the discipline of that party. But did not Shachtman propose to do the very same thing just a few short months ago? Of course, of course! But the WP locks its positions in underground steel vaults and treasures them forever. Other groups must resign themselves to being bound by the rule of "honesty."

We have also "capitulated" on our former "rejection of the Cannonite position during the war as semi-social patriotic..." Does this refer to the formulation of telescoping the struggle against invasion and the struggle against the bourgeoisie at home used by the SWP in 1941? To drag this issue out now, after the WP concluded its last polemic on the question six years ago changes six "capitulations" to seven. But what other function does it serve? Tell us, dear comrades, what are we to do? Launch a polemic on the question? But you who have seized every opportunity to sharpen the differences between the WP and the SWP have said nothing for six years. Or are your canons of political conduct only for export?

Next we have the question of defeatism in China during the imperialist war. At this point, quantity changes into quality. What was, in a pitiful way, humorous with its total lack of relation to reality, becomes, as the list of "capitulations" grows longer, the most colossal brazenness seen in many a year. The effrontery is so huge that it becomes impossible to answer. There is not a hint, not a sign, in what the WP has written or what we have written, to indicate what could possibly be meant. We don't even ask for proof or evidence that the charge is justified. Just what is the "capitulation?" But we don't really expect an answer; for from politics based on the homily "honesty is the best policy" it is only half a step to "silence is golden."

The "capitulation" that follows is anti-climactic. It descends to solid earth (a little lower perhaps) and can be characterized simply as a lie. We have abandoned, says the Statement, "the Johnsonite support, even if with an ultra-leftist motivation, of the national resistance movements during the war, and its rejection of the Cannonite position as insanity." Believe it or not; turn the page upside down or read it under infra-red light, there it is. "Even with an ultra-leftist motivation! There is a formulation for you! In the school of "honest" politics it rates "A" and a trip to the head of the class. What does this say? That our position on the resistance movements was the same as that of the WP; only the motivation was different. Here we submit some evidence. In 1944 the WP held a Convention at which this was the main question. At that Convention the resolutions of the Majority and the Johnson-Forest Minority were presented in direct opposition to each other, the first being based on the perspectives of the democratic revolution, the second on the proletarian revolution. This basic difference has, since 1944, not disappeared but been aggravated and extended. It is what divides us today on our world orientation. In the hands of the "honest" politicians this difference becomes a difference - in "motivation."

The fifth "capitulation" is on our alleged support of the revolutionary policy of the WP in the mass organizations during the war against the opportunism of the SWP. These people remember only what suits them - and they are difficult to suit. Let us refresh their memories from our resolution on the American question. The Workers Party, we said, "within the confines of the program of the Fourth International...adopts the Menshevik mode of thought and analysis of the American proletariat." "Sections of the Party, unable to reconcile themselves to the opportunist

practices which result from this conception..." etc., etc., etc. And the SWP? We said that its practice, too, was opportunist. But - "The Socialist Workers Party has had one inestimable advantage over the Workers Party in that in general, and in particular in its treatment of international news, it shows not the faintest trace of retrogression and places itself before the American working class as the Trotskyist party of the socialist revolution at home and abroad. Not only in relation to Europe but in relation to the United States the SWP propaganda is in the full Trotskyist tradition in that it is conscious always of the challenge to the bourgeois order contained in the aggressive actions of the proletariat...." There you have our support of the revolutionary policy of the WP. We have thus eluded the affectionate embrace of the WP. Politics makes strange bedfellows - and an "honest" girl doesn't stand a chance.

We are also charged with "capitulating" on the question of regime: "the Johnsonite solidarity with the principle of genuine party democracy proclaimed and unwaveringly practiced by the Workers Party, and its condemnation of the Cannonite conception of the party and party regime as monolithic...." Warily we proceed once more. We have said that the monolithic conception of the SWP will be ended when the SWP endorses unity. (1946 American Resolution) That has taken place. Now for the WP. It is apparently necessary to remind them further of their 1946 Convention and the opposing resolutions introduced by the Majority and the Minority on - remember comrades? - the nature and role of the party. And what was the unique contribution of the Majority, more specifically of Shachtman, on this question? Is this, too, lost in the swamp of "honesty?" The cadre conception, against which we fought so vigorously; the division of the party into first and second class citizens based on - not adherence to revolutionary Marxism - but on adherence to the unique contributions of the WP. This attempt to establish the factional authority of the leadership through an organizational division of the party (the inevitable result of their failure to establish the authority of their political program) and their petty-bourgeois concern, to the exclusion of all else, with the "rights" of minorities - to discuss, to publish, to do as they please - is the conception of the party held by the WP leadership. Tell us did we in 1946, introduce a resolution opposed to yours to demonstrate our solidarity with you? Or is this just another crate of "honesty," packed and ready for shipment?

And finally, there is "the Johnsonite solidarity with the Workers Party course on unification...." It is tiresome, but it is necessary to repeat: what solidarity? We based unity on the needs of the objective situation in the United States and opposed the conception of the WP that unity was an organizational question determined by conditions and concessions. Since the unity agreement we have charged in several documents that the WP leadership has imperilled unity with its frantic campaign of slander and virucity stories against the Johnson-Forest Minority, the leadership of the SWP, and the international movement. We allowed Shachtman, the leader of the party, a free hand in unity as long as we could. But silence did not mean consent. We had and have our position on unity - it remains unchanged. We also have a point of view on how unity is negotiated - and we reject the method of guerilla warfare. If this be solidarity with the WP then we have capitulated.

This concludes the list and a sorry list it is indeed. This kind of politics can bring no return to its practitioners. But that will not deter the WP, for "honesty" is its own reward. For the WP nothing will do but to bow to the East three times daily and recite as a prayer all our positions on all questions. We treat our politics seriously. We do not.

1067



As does the WP, worship our politics in public only to trade it off for an ephemeral and unprincipled bloc behind the scenes.

The confusionist politics of the WP is nowhere indicated more clearly than in a weapon recently added to their arsenal and brandished vigorously in their Statement. Let us hear them. "Johnson now considers a discussion of these decisive questions (Russian question, national question, etc.) 'nothing else but a demoralizing repetition of the disputes of 1940'. His resolution states that the political evaluation of unity 'cannot be based upon anything else but the strategic perspective of the American revolution and the building of the American Party;' that it is necessary to 'proclaim the needs and tasks of the American Revolution as the base for the unified American Party....' It is a conception that breaks with the spirit of internationalism, with the program and traditions of the Trotskyist movement and all Marxist movements before it, and is only a new variety of National Bolshevism...The world movement is divided into two main tendencies by the question of the nature of the Stalinist state and its defense, and the attitude of revolutionists towards Stalinism and the Stalinist parties. One tendency would transform the Fourth International increasingly into a left wing or left cover for Stalinism. The other would preserve its historic role of revolutionary vanguard, left wing of the proletariat... The artifice of the so-called 'American question' is, so far as Johnson is concerned, merely a cover for his capitulation on the key questions of the movement. Johnson is a shield of the right wing in the international movement...."

Who are the internationalists and who are the shields of the right wing of the movement?

The WP defines the basic division in our movement as being around the questions of the Stalinist parties and the Stalinist state. This is completely false - and the WP will be the first to demonstrate this in life when they attempt a bloc with the defensist, pro-Stalinist French majority on the question of regime; even the IKD - arch anti-Stalinists - now propose this. This division is evidence of the superficial concepts of the WP. What divides our movement fundamentally today is clashing concepts of the nature of the proletariat and the world revolutionary perspectives. All other questions are derivative. All tendencies, factions and groups are gravitating either toward the left wing which stands on Trotsky's concept of the instinctive drive of the proletariat to reconstruct society and his characterization of this epoch as the epoch of proletarian revolution; or the right wing which stands on the supposed backwardness of the masses, "democratic illusions," lack of a party and, therefore, the rejection, as the program for today, of the struggle for workers power and the Socialist United States of Europe and the world.

It is this division which puts Shachtman in the same camp as the comrades in Europe who have an orientation toward the Stalinists. The right wing, seeing no independent movement of the proletariat, attributing to the masses their own democratic illusions, pulling out of thin air the capitalist "boom" and temporary stabilization, adapts itself to the strongest force. In Europe this force is Stalinism and the democratic illusionists of the French majority adapt themselves to it. In the United States this force is the trade union bureaucracy and the WP adapts itself to it. That is why the WP is so anxious to discuss Stalinism in Europe - there they can masquerade as the left wing. But in the United States their retrogression cannot be concealed - so they coyly push forward the question of Stalinism.



## DEGRADATION OF NIGHT SHIFT WORKERS DRIVES THEM AGAINST CAPITALISM

The American working class has reached an impasse. The working class as a whole is fed up with the same daily routine of going to work five days a week, then having the week-end fly by, then starting the same routine all over again. Eight hours a day, five days a week; week in and week out - monotony, routine, boredom and tension. Consequently the proletariat is seeking ways of solving this dilemma.

All workers are expressing sentiments of this type; however, the men who work nights are expressing these feelings in an accentuated form.

It is interesting to note that night work is a phenomenon of dying capitalism. When Marx wrote Capital back in the latter part of the 19th century, he could only point to one small section of the working class, the bakers, who worked nights. It was only when capitalism began to decline that night work started becoming a universal phenomenon. The first World War, one of capitalism's greatest crises, brought night work to many other sections of capitalist industry besides baking. After the first World War, night work receded somewhat. The depression of 1929-1940 saw the further lessening of night work, because of the general unemployment of that period. However, with the coming of the second World War, night work increased beyond what we've seen before. The end of World War II brought a very slight decrease in night work. Almost all of the large factories still have night shifts.

The effects that night work has on the men will be related here. The men come into work Monday afternoon feeling disgusted and tired. They get more tired as the week drags on. Their tiredness seems to permeate them at all times, they're even tired when they don't work hard. It's obviously a psychological tiredness because of their disgust with night work. The workers go through all the motions of working - but wait impatiently for quitting time. The men gain some energy as the night draws to a close; similarly, when the work week ends. The men rush out of the shop when the night is over as fast as their feet will carry them. They all seem to live for the week-end. All week long the men have little or no social life. On week-ends they try to accomplish everything. They try to crowd seven days into two. The single men have a double dilemma because many times they forego dates with their girl friends in order to have some sort of social life with their male friends. This in turn has a frustrating effect because feminine companionship is missing.

The daily routine of the night shift men during the week is something like this: get up, tumble out of bed, eat - and little else. Then they go to work. When the work day is over, they go home and try to relax to relieve their tension. Very few men go right to bed. They can't because they must relax first. Eating and reading a newspaper has a relaxing effect. Finally to sleep - only to get up the next day to do the same thing all over again. Many of the men don't get up early anymore, but sleep eleven or twelve hours. - Since they get nothing done while they're up, they figure that they may as well sleep instead.

Most of the night workers sleep restlessly, because of the tension of night work. Increasing numbers of them are beginning to realize that the type of life they lead is causing them to be tense and nervous, and that their kind of living is directly due to night work. A couple of men claim that lately they've been getting the "willies." Another man, who is planning to get married, says that he won't get married while he's working

1071

nights, because night work makes him nervous, which will lead to fights with his wife, which in turn would make for an unhappy marriage. Other men say that working for a living is bad enough, but working nights is murder!

Most of the night men are constantly talking about and trying to get off the night shift. A number of men have tried looking around for other jobs - but the low rates of pay and the present scarcity of jobs, makes them keep their present night jobs. Other men have tried speaking to the chief foreman, personnel manager and the union leadership to help them get on the day shift but to no avail. The foremen and personnel managers don't want to be bothered. However, they do play favorites. In some cases they've forced the day men on certain machines to work the rotating shift with his night man. Most of the night workers have at one time or other spoken to various company representatives about working days; yet, very few men were given the chance to rotate with their day men. However, there are a handful of day workers who voluntarily rotate, because they think it fair to give their fellowworkers a break. Most of the other day men admit that it's fair to rotate, but hate night work so much that they won't switch.

The union leaders act as if they would make the day shift men anti-union if the union tried to change the present day and night shift set-up. They say to the night shift men who are asking for days, that they're disrupting the union. The union leaders have so little understanding and faith in why the men stick to the union that they say, think and act as if the men would drop out of the union at the slightest provocation. Besides this, the union leaders always try to maintain as good relations as possible with the company, even at the expense of the men. They don't want to be bothered with anything that isn't in the contract. Whenever possible the union leaders look the other way when the company violates what they consider to be minor clauses in the contract. It is only when the men raise a protest against some flagrant company act, that the union officials take action. The night workers are completely disgusted with the union officers and constantly say so.

As a direct result of the boring, tense and monotonous existence on the night shift, most of the men talk about having a four hour day, or a five hour day four day week. Much of the workers' talk revolves around the twenty hour week as a necessity and a desirability. The men know, too, that the company will never grant a twenty hour week, because it would cut down on their profits. Not a single night shift man has any illusions on this score.

The night workers are seeking a solution to their dilemma, just as the rest of the proletariat is doing. They want to get out of their present impasse. They want to get out of their present rut of working for the finance and monopolist capitalists. A number of the men seek solutions by trying to go into business for themselves. But they're quickly learning that small businesses are constantly folding up even in the midst of a "prosperity" period. As a result, many of the men who wanted to go into business are staying in the shop instead.

Capitalism itself is teaching the workers that they'll have to find a solution outside of the past and usual manner. The answer lies in the men themselves taking over the factories, mills, shops and mines. Forming their own factory committees of rank and files to run production and management of the shops. The workers can't do this on just one shift or in just one factory, because the company officials would call in the federal government who would smash it up and arrest the rank and file committee leaders. The working class has to do this on a national scale in all

the factories. The workers then have to take over the government, its bureaucracy, army and police and replace it with the armed working class itself, with government officials directly responsible to the workers themselves. Only by taking these actions can the working class be sure of reconstructing society and avoiding the dangers of capitalist "human nature!" Then the men in the factories, shops, mills and mines will be able to get down to work of cutting their working hours, of making other fair arrangements about night and day shift work, of not having a foreman over them, driving them and stifling their initiative.

- Jack Meade

\*\*\*\*\*

NEW AVAILABLE

50¢ a copy

SELECTED ESSAYS

ECONOMIC-PHILOSOPHICAL MANUSCRIPTS

of  
Karl Marx

- 1. Alienated Labor
- 2. Private Property and Communism
- 3. Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic

Translated into English for the First Time  
by Ria Stone

With an Introduction by J.R. Johnson, F. Forest and Ria Stone

Order from Martin Harvey  
101 W. 46 St.  
New York, 19, N.Y.

### CHANGES I'VE NOTICED IN THE YOUTH

When one looks at the youth of today, he can notice a certain heightened political and social consciousness in comparison with that of several years back.

To look at it superficially, one might say: "The youth are politically backward. It is evident; they haven't even formed any political discussion groups in the schools." To say this, however, means that one approaches the subject statically. The question is not merely one of whether they do or do not form political discussion groups. It is how they think; how they are thinking along political lines; what they say among themselves; what types of action they participate in, and why! To say the youth is politically backward for not forming discussion groups is much the same as saying the workers are backward because they have not formed an independent labor party.

I have noticed in my limited experience with the youth, (practically all of whom were petty-bourgeois) that they are anxious, disturbed and frightened about the whole conditions and relations of life. They are unable to express their own individuality, and many feel that their individuality, their creativeness will be even more suppressed when they leave school.

From the beginning of their lives, especially their school life, they've been constantly indoctrinated with "America is a great country, the most democratic. Here people are most able to get ahead, to show their creative genius, etc." Then they go out and see things for themselves. Doubt enters their mind. Many probably think to themselves: "Hell, maybe it isn't as good here as they say it is." They see and feel this contradiction and become confused and annoyed by it. That is why many youth vacillate and are indecisive about many political and social problems.

To turn to the more concrete. One way in which they express their indignation is in the individual and mass revolts against the teachers and against the schools as a whole. I will speak of the high schools for they are what I am most acquainted with.

The individual resistance goes from refusing to clean peanuts out of a desk, to turning bulbs out and talking back to teachers. There have been few mass student strikes in the high schools. There is, however, a significant one which occurred about two years ago and one in which I took part.

Many schools went out en masse as a protest against the curtailment of certain athletic activities. I remember when my school began to walk out it was stopped in the first stages by a cordon of police which was thrown around the school. But many other schools went out. The school officials brushed this off as some adolescent prank. They said the athletics incident was just an excuse to take a holiday. This however is not quite true. They took it out on the particular incident of athletics for two reasons: (1) because athletics is one of the means by which the student is able to show his individuality, it is something that both the players and spectators get a good deal of enjoyment from. Taking it away means the removal of one way for the student to show his creativeness, and (2) the strike was a way to show the resentment and antagonism of the students to the entire school system.

1 0 7 4

11

I've noticed the heightened political consciousness much more positively in classes, particularly in the English classes. Whenever we would have a discussion, no matter what topic it began on, the discussion would almost invariably end on politics.

Although many speak - and still more know by their own personal experiences and the experiences of friends and parents - that something is fundamentally wrong with the way we're living, they are reluctant to join radical movements. This is not only my own observation but that of others as well. (I'm still speaking of essentially petty-bourgeois youth.) For instance, I had a lengthy discussion with one of my friends on Socialism. He seemed very interested. I asked him if he would come to one of our meetings. Reluctantly he answered, "Maybe, but I'm afraid I'll become too interested." Although most youth won't answer as bluntly, I think it is indicative of what a good many think.

Sometimes they may be afraid to discuss Socialism at all because "they might become too interested." Another friend of mine said to me, "Promise you won't discuss Socialism with me any more." I refused, telling him he'd want me to answer his questions. He laughed; and yet each time we meet I do have to answer questions about Socialism.

This question of being reluctant to join a radical movement is, I think, an indication of a reluctance of the youth to part with the "American way of life" insofar as they are afraid of losing some of their free time, of having to exercise a little more self discipline.

- Zeb

- 12 -

THE GRAPES OF WRATH ARE BREWING

In many of the AFL building trades there have taken place significant changes in the last 6-7 years.

With the general industrial development during the war these unions have grown greatly in numerical strength. The type of worker has also changed from a select group of skilled craftsmen to a group whose average skill is much less. This is due to the fact that in their organizational drives they have branched out from the strictly construction industries to embrace many manufacturing establishments and mass production industries. Also, the increase in the size of the shops has brought about that specialization and division of labor that does away with a worker's skill.

These changes have brought about internal union antagonisms and contradictions. Antagonisms between the old leadership and the rank and file. Contradictions that continue to pile up as the old leadership proves its inability to solve the needs and desires of the rank and file members. The old leadership is made up largely of the older and more highly skilled men who have the most highly favored jobs in the shop and on the outside jobs. Men that in many cases held jobs of foremen and yet continue in their positions of stewards and on various committees in the union.

I want to write particularly of the AFL Sheet Metal Workers union Local 108 of Los Angeles. (All of the previous remarks apply particularly to this union and local).

The union has grown from 300 in 1940 to 2300 in 1947. Many of the newer members came from the shipyards during the war and transferred over to general sheet metal work after the war. Our union branched out and organized manufacturing establishments which operate on more of a mass production basis than the general sheet metal working shop. For example, the restaurant equipment and showcase companies. At every contract negotiation, they lead a fight against the wage scale.

Never does our union talk of a strike officially. Instead there is a great deal of pride in the fact that our union gets along so well with the employers. Organizational campaigns are conducted generally from the top down. The bosses are organized and then the workers come in. Contract negotiations are strictly on a "buddy-buddy" basis.

Two wage negotiations ago, a contract was signed that dismissed the subject of retroactive pay. The membership at a very rowdy meeting voted to send the negotiating committee back to the bosses to get the retroactive pay. At the next meeting the international representative was down to pressure the men into accepting the terms. It was not accepted cheerfully, and with mutterings and curses against the leadership the men walked out of the hall.

During the last wage negotiations, when the negotiations were stalled, not only the international representative visited us but also the international president. Their function was chiefly to persuade the men to calm down. At this meeting one really gained a sense of the terrific resentment against these labor fakers. They were called crooks right from the floor and these high officials could do nothing about it. Actually, it wouldn't have taken much to start a real fight against these leaders. However, they did manage to foist an arbitrator on the stalled negotiations. This arbitrator arrived at a compromise figure. Again the international representative had to come down to give out the news.



This is one side of the story. The inadequacy of the leadership. But as I said in the beginning, things are changing.

The rank and file, as one could expect, resent the attitude of the leadership. They want to change these conditions. But they haven't had much experience in internal union affairs. The present business agent has been in for 13 or so years. They didn't seem to know how to organize an opposition to the business agent. Occasionally some one would run against the incumbent but never win. Not many members would come to meetings. Some said: "We'll never get the incumbents out."

But this was just the appearance. If one looked a little more closely, one could see a change coming. At regular meetings individuals would get up and criticize and complain about this and that. At another meeting another individual would complain and criticize. If only these individuals who had so much to criticize could get together, something could be done. Somehow more members started coming to meetings. These meetings became increasingly rowdy. This is of course due to the fact that there was no way fruitfully to express their resentment. There was no organized opposition.

Then the yearly auditor's report is made. It shows certain discrepancies. I wouldn't say there was deliberate intent to defraud or embezzle, but certainly it showed a great deal of sloppiness and incompetence in the running of the union. This report provided the opportunity for some action. One of the men that ran for business agent a year ago, brought the subject up on the floor of a meeting. He brought very serious charges against not only the business agent but also the entire executive board. They are charged with gross incompetence, negligence and mismanagement of the union's affairs. A trial committee is elected. Dates set for the trials. The incumbents refuse to recognize the committee. The trial committee goes ahead and tries the accused in absentia and in addition to the regular charges, charges them with contempt.

A special meeting is called to hear the report of the trial committee. Again the meeting is very rowdy. Again we have our friend the international representative present. Because the meeting is rowdy, the incumbent chairman adjourns the meeting. This creates quite a scene. The men surround the international representative and demand he reconvene the meeting. This he does. He presides too. Warns the men that their continued rowdiness will force the international to take over the local. The meeting calms down. The trial committee makes its report. Finds all the accused guilty and recommends various punishments. In all cases it involves removal from office with varying restrictions on the length of time before they can again hold office. The membership upholds the trial committee by at least a 3 - 1 vote.

But here is the joker. The business agent and executive board are still running the affairs of the union. As a matter of fact, the business agent went to the recent California AFL convention and was elected a vice president.

I think it is on a technicality that the incumbents still retain office. The ten men who called the special meeting which is provided for in our constitution, were not all present at the meeting. Two were absent. And because of this, they say it isn't legal. Technicality or no technicality, it's a clear violation of the membership's desires.

For the present, the opposition seems to sit back again. Just waiting. However they have been given a lesson in organization. In a negative sense. They have been forced to learn certain lessons of organization. People just don't kick out and keep out a ruling group without proper organization. And not only that. This also involves stimulating the hundreds of members into a more active participation in the affairs of the union. As after all the only real answer to these labor fakers is a real rank and file participation in all phases of the union's affairs.

The antagonism in the union still remains. The resentment is still there. They have not been resolved. Another explosion will inevitably take place. And this time it will take up where the other one left off, and continue to a higher level. It will be better organized. More will take part. The future belongs to the rank and file.

- Richard Page

## THE ECONOMIST TENDENCY IN THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

(NOTE: The following is the first document which we have submitted for the International Discussion.)

The Johnson-Forest tendency is unalterably opposed to the Russian position of the Fourth International. Since 1941 we have maintained our position unchanged. As we wrote then:

"Capitalism, we must remember, is not a thing at rest; it is a thing in motion. And its motion is toward socialism. The socialist society grows within capitalism, due to the increasing concentration of capital and the consequent socialization of the labor process. The interrelations of production at last reach a stage where they call for a plan and regulation. This plan society must have. The capitalist class in its own interest realizes that it cannot leave the economy to be regulated by the market any longer. This is the significance of Engel's statement in Anti-Duhring as far back as 1878, that the increasing socialization of production compels the capitalist class to treat the productive forces as social forces so far as that is possible within the framework of capitalist relations. In a dialectic sentence he describes the capitalist class as compelled to capitulate to the necessity for a plan of the invading socialist society. It adopts the technical forms of socialist production while evading its entire content. Today that capitulation is plainly visible. The capitalists more and more turn against their own system, except in one respect. They cannot remove the worker from his increasingly degraded situation in the labor process, and society will continue to decline as long as the 'workers remain wage-earners, proletarians.' As Lenin said, there is no 'pure capitalism.' Today it is very, very impure. But its impurity stops at one point. The workers remain proletarians." (The New International, September 1941.)

For us, therefore, the creation of states like Yugoslavia, Poland, etc., offered no serious theoretical difficulties. The concrete exposure of the terrible confusion and blunders of the Fourth International on this question has been made by many comrades. We intend to develop our own position in another document. That Russia is state capitalist, that state capitalism is no longer an abstraction, that a policy of revolutionary defeatism is necessary for state-capitalist Russia - these have been the basis of our thinking since 1941. However, at this stage, it is necessary not only to develop these ideas but to go to a stage further. What precisely is represented by the maintenance of the workers state position after the seven years that have passed since the death of Trotsky? Subjectively it may be said that the comrades are merely following out the position of Trotsky. This is undoubtedly true. But Trotsky or no Trotsky, today they represent a logical stage in the development of the revolutionary movement. They represent, particularly in regard to Russia and the specifically related problems, a tendency well-known in the revolutionary movement, the tendency of Economism. This tendency, exemplified in its most extreme form by Germain, has not only historic roots but a certain political framework. In the case of Germain, this political framework consists of a determined attempt to fit the objective situation of the world today into formulae developed by Trotsky for the defense of the world revolution yesterday.

Historical Materialism and Vulgar Materialism

The fundamental task of the theoreticians of the Fourth International is to separate themselves in all fields from the Stalinists. In his analysis of Stalinism, Germain seeks vainly to pose "the fundamental difference separating us from the Kremlin agents." (Fourth International, May 1947) The net result of over 10,000 words is his recognition that the Stalinists betray the revolution and that the Fourth International must take the leadership in the overthrow of Stalinism by the working class. It is very true but not very enlightening. Fundamental differences require fundamental understandings. In 1924, Trotsky saw the fundamental difference between Stalinism and Trotskyism in the opposed political programs of building socialism in one country or building it on an international scale. Germain proceeds in 1947 as if the theoretical basis of Stalinism remains the attempt to build socialism in a single country. On this basis it is impossible to do anything else but make mistakes. For Stalinism today survival means the struggle for world domination. Who does not understand this does not understand the depth of capitalist barbarism on an international scale. Germain preoccupies himself with the defense of the nationalized property in Stalinist Russia against the private property of the millionaire kulaks. He does not understand that today, from one end of the earth to the other, not only in areas of the most colossal devastation but the physically intact centers of America, the decline of capitalism has posed the fundamental questions with which Marx began, the question of the productivity of labor. Workers all over the world are refusing to exert themselves to produce. This is their way, elemental but compelling, of revolting against the old production relations. This is their way of proclaiming there will not, there cannot be any reconstruction of economy except through control by workers over the process of production and the exercise of their creative energy in undertaking economic transformations. The alternative is a capitalist tyranny over the workers, a military prison for all of society, outside as well as inside the process of production, compared to which Hitler Europe was a mere harbinger.

This is the concrete meaning of the expression that society today faces the alternative of socialism or barbarism. It is in production, where the workers are, that humanity's problem and therefore the problem of the Fourth International must be faced. Here lies the basic contradiction of capitalist society. In 1867 Marx wrote:

"Modern industry indeed compels society, under penalty of death, to replace the detail-worker of today, crippled by life long repetition of one and the same trivial operation, and thus reduced to the mere fragment of a man, by the fully developed individual, fit for a variety of labors, ready to face any change of production and to whom the different social functions he performs, are but so many modes of giving free scope to his own natural and acquired powers."

Not theory but life teaches us today the profound concreteness of Marx's prognosis. How will productivity be raised? Through the appropriation by the workers of the potentialities of development inherent in the mass of accumulated labor? Or by increasing the discipline and control of the products of labor over the laborers themselves? That is the gulf between historical and vulgar materialism today. It is the gulf between the new order and the old disorder, between the freely associated productive activity of social man and the domination of dead labor over living labor. This is the gulf, deeply rooted in the production relations which must divide unmistakably the theoretical foundations of the Fourth

International from those of the Stalinists. The greater the physical devastation, the more backward the economy, the more urgent it is for the Fourth International to pose the solution to the question of productivity in terms of the development of the masses who are the chief of the productive forces. This is true for Russia, for the United States, and it is true for India and China. The mobilization of the masses for the seizure of power must move without a break to the application of this revolutionary creative energy for the development of the productive forces, for the solution of the economic problem.

The Dual Character of the Bureaucracy

If, however, one looks at the productive forces, as Germain does, in terms of industrial plant, one must regard man statistically only as manpower. It is this vulgar materialist orientation in theory which marks Germain's fundamental error, the monstrous attribution of a progressive role to economic regulation by the bureaucracy. Listen to him:

"The war unquestionably, under the given concrete conditions, prolonged the life and the objective role of the bureaucracy. Economically, the devastation gives it the possibility of raising production for another decade." (International Information Bulletin, vol. 1, # 2, p. 20)

This is not only factually ridiculous. What is the theoretical foundation of a writer for the Fourth International who can say that the destruction of the economy gives the Russian bureaucracy the possibility of raising production for another decade? In other words the catastrophe which the bureaucracy has brought upon the country transforms it from a reactionary to a progressive force. But in order to guard himself against the attack that he has capitulated to Stalinism, Germain gives the bureaucracy a time limit, ten years. This is not Trotskyism. It is a misuse of the theories of Trotsky. How can you believe this and at the same time believe that you are following the author of the theory of the permanent revolution who posed the power of the working class as the only force which could reconstruct society?

Germain has no idea into what quicksand he is stumbling when he places the "economic limits of bureaucratic management" in the future. He believes that he can assign a progressive economic role to the bureaucracy so long as he attacks it for being politically reactionary. The only way that today Germain can continue to make a distinction between the political reaction and the economic progressiveness of the bureaucracy is to give it this perfectly gratuitous role of rebuilding the devastated areas. Presumably, when this is completed, the bureaucracy would become thoroughly reactionary, both politically and economically; and by then either the world revolution would have intervened or it would be necessary to refine the theory of the dual character of the bureaucracy some more.

The only economic progress that remains for Stalinist Russia is a revolutionary mobilization of the masses for the overthrow of the bureaucracy and the application of this revolutionary energy to the problems of economic reconstruction. As long as Germain does not face this, he will be driven into economic rationalizations for the bureaucracy.

Economism and Menshevism

Such a vulgar materialist orientation has a long history in the revolutionary movement. Its name is Economism and it reveals itself in any period by its failure to understand that the mass revolutionary struggle for democracy is also the mass revolutionary struggle for socialism. The Economists are hostile to the theoretical illusions or deliberate deceptions of the

petty-bourgeois Menshevik fighters for democracy. The petty-bourgeois struggles for democracy in order that a political arena may be created for the counter-position of different ideas. In typically idealistic fashion, it believes that truth is arrived at through freedom of discussion. This conception, Shachtman applies to the Workers Party, the Fourth International, the Stalinist parties and Stalinist Russia.

The proletarian struggle for democracy is something entirely different. It is the struggle to break the oppression and subordination of capitalism, to unleash the creative social energy of the proletariat in all spheres of its actual material life, above all, in production. The greater the economic crisis, the greater the need for proletarian democracy in this sense of the term. And it is precisely the insoluble nature of the crisis in the bourgeois democracies and in Stalinist Russia today that demands from the proletariat the most complete democratic expansion of its powers. When democracy is won through mobilization of the masses what has been won is not the abstract form of "rights" but a new way of life. This, the recognition that the mass democratic revolution must be a social revolution, was Marx's concept of the permanent revolution.

Germain, however, still believes that the revolution which will release the Russian proletariat, and therefore the Russian economy, from the greatest bureaucratic terror, maladministration, and burden that the world has ever known, will be a "political revolution." On this basis, how is it possible to mobilize the Russian masses to revolution?

The new social order is rooted not in property or political forms but in the revolutionary achievements of the socialized proletariat created by capitalism. In Japan, since the decree of the "new freedoms" by MacArthur, the workers have formed nearly 20,000 unions, at the rate of more than thirty-four a day. Whoever believes this demonstrates democratic illusions among the workers understands less about the working class than does the bourgeoisie. The American authorities complain that the Japanese masses do not understand the principles of democracy. In other words, despite Shachtman and the IKD, the Japanese masses are revolutionary democrats of the deed and not of abstract political forms. In organizing themselves into unions, they are expressing democratic tendencies. Their desire to establish workers' control of production is merely the expression of the democratic tendencies which will be developed by the revolution.

The same applies to the Russian masses. The revolutionary movement of the proletariat in Russia as elsewhere, carries in itself the destruction of private property. It is the revolutionary proletariat which establishes the economic forms and not the economic forms which preserves the revolutionary proletariat.

Germain leaps at the opportunity to accuse Shachtman of bourgeois democratic illusions. But instead of himself plunging confidently into the mass revolutionary struggle for proletarian democracy, he must constantly stop to think whether revolutionary democracy will destroy nationalized property or assist the millionaire kulaks. This is the Economist concept to perfection. What does Germain think is the problem today? To nationalize the banks and industry? As Lenin pointed out and as we have seen without possibility of misinterpretation since the end of the war:

"No special apparatus, no special preparatory steps on the part of the state are here required; this measure can be actually realized by one decree, at one blow." (The Threatening Catastrophe)

Lenin insisted that "what remains to be done here," was the revolutionary democratic content of the nationalization, the establishment of control from below, through the union of employees, through the workers, by means of terror against the exploiters. Without this revolutionary content, nationalization is no more progressive than the continued centralization of capital.

Germain, however, has eyes only for the contrast in economic form between nationalization and de-nationalization. He ignores the law of motion of capitalistic production towards stratification, on the one hand, and socialization of labor on the other. Hence, he views the class struggle abstractly as one between the proletariat "representing" nationalized property and the bourgeoisie "representing" private property.

If Menshevism, the tendency of Shachtman, is based upon the metaphysics of political democracy, Economism, the tendency of Germain, is based upon the metaphysics of political economy. Both Shachtman and Germain fail to see the revolutionary movement inherent in the accumulation of capital and the socialization of labor. The former bases himself upon the alienated activity of political man, the latter on the alienated activity of economic man. Whereas Shachtman's preoccupation is the preservation of political democracy against bureaucracy, Germain's preoccupation is the preservation of the centralized economic organization of the state against the decentralizing tendencies of the new kulaks. Both are looking at the masses as object rather than as subject. Shachtman's theory of stages is that political democracy is a prerequisite to the social revolution. Germain's theory of stages is that collectivization is a prerequisite to the social revolution. Shachtman projects a political program to develop socialist consciousness in the masses. Germain projects an economic program. Germain even defines the necessary time interval - "a half decade" - at the end of which will coincide, fortuitously enough, the completion of the fourth Five Year Plan, the profound social crisis and a minimum of well-being in the proletariat. Presumably, the bureaucracy is so strong because it over-consumes, i.e., plunders the surplus product, while the masses must have more to eat before they can reestablish their cohesiveness. This is the bookkeeping of revolution.

Germain rejects the ideas of Shachtman. To understand why this rejection does not lead Germain to the Leninist approach to the mass movement, what is necessary are not accusations that he is an epigone of Trotsky, which he is, but a consideration of the development of the Economist tendency, which he represents.

#### Development of Economism in the Marxist Movement

Economism is a tendency in the Marxist movement which reappears in different forms corresponding to different stages of development of capitalism. These forms have changed along with the advance from industrial capitalism to monopoly capitalism to state monopoly capitalism.

In backward Russia of 1902, Economism expressed itself within the Second International as an apology for industrial capitalism. Against the illusions of the Narodniki that an agrarian democracy could supplant the feudal autocracy, the Economists reasoned that capitalism was inevitable and therefore that the political struggles for democracy should be left to the liberal bourgeoisie. To this Lenin counterposed the mass revolutionary struggle for democracy. Lenin was not fighting for "democracy." His aim was the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, i.e., the self-mobilization of the masses against the feudal autocracy, an aim which found realization in the Soviets.

During the first World War, Economism expressed itself as what Lenin called an apology for imperialist annexation. Against the social chauvinism of the Kautskyists on the Right, there emerged the imperialist economism of the Polish and Dutch Social-Democrats, together with Bukharin. These were in Lenin's phrase, among the "best revolutionary and most internationalist elements of international Social-Democracy." However, their economist reasoning led them to reject the national struggles of the colonial and oppressed peoples on the ground that free national capitalisms were economically impossible in the monopoly stage of capitalism. Against Bukharin et al. Lenin argued that the national struggle need not divert the proletariat but rather should and could be indissolubly united with its revolutionary mobilization against the bourgeoisie.

Economism has usually been associated with backward or small countries or minorities where the fear always exists that the country may predominate over the town, or that the nation or minority may be isolated from the economic and political assistance of larger or more developed countries. While the conservatism of an advanced country expresses itself as the defense of democratic political forms, the conservatism of a backward or small country expresses itself as the defense of economic achievements. To overcome this conservatism, Lenin, who in backward Russia had the best opportunities to observe economism in action, never wavered of insisting that the only defense of either political or economic successes is a tremendous exertion of revolutionary energy by the progressive masses. Thus, against the attempt to preserve the economic form, he counterposed always the revolutionary mobilization of the masses as the best guarantee for the preservation and extension of economic or political advances.

The majority in the Fourth International today is dominated by economist categories which have been nurtured in a political background of thirty years defense of the world revolution which took place in a backward country. In the tradition of Economism, it is vigorous and Bolshevik in opposing the Menshevik illusions of Shachtman that the struggle, e.g., in Poland, is for free speech, right of organization, etc., "all finding their final expression in the slogan: 'Out with the Russians' and 'Long Live a Free Poland'." But Germain has constructed an illusion of his own. On the one hand, he welcomes the "progressive" economic steps towards "structural assimilation" of the Eastern European countries into the planned economy of Stalinist Russia; on the other hand, he abuses the "reactionary" police character of Stalinism. He regards Poland as a bourgeois state ruled by the Stalinist bureaucracy. He admits that the Polish workers expropriated the bourgeoisie and the Stalinists expropriated the workers. Nevertheless, "because economically, socially and technically, the reforms of 1945-46 facilitate the realization of the socialist revolution, the Polish workers have the duty to defend them against the restorationist tendencies of the bourgeoisie." Note well, "Economically, socially, and technically, "property reforms facilitate the realization of the socialist revolution and must therefore be defended. This is the essence of Germain's position. It is the Economism of our day, and it has emerged among the most revolutionary and internationalist elements of the Fourth International as an apology for nationalization and the planned economy of state capitalism.

This comes straight from Germain's Russian position, and in this there is not an ounce of Trotsky's method. If Germain wanted to say that Poland today should be defended owing to the destruction of bourgeois property by the proletariat under the influence of the October Revolution, we could understand it. If Germain wanted to say that in the present situation of Europe, it would be suicidal for the workers state to abandon either the



direct or the indirect military control of Poland, that position could at least be respected. But Germain is the chief cause for the flourishing of the retrogressionists and Shachtman when he puts forward the theory that Poland is a bourgeois state where property reforms have been instituted and at the same time cooks up a defense for Stalinism in Poland.

The Johnson-Forest tendency repudiates both the position of Shachtman and that of Germain. We begin from the social structure of contemporary capitalism. We pointed out early in 1946 that the international character of the capitalist barbarism had reached a new stage in which politically independent bourgeois states in areas like Eastern Europe were an impossibility. We wrote:

"During World War I, it was one of Lenin's basic arguments on self-determination that economic domination did not mean political domination. Today, and that is the new stage, economic and political domination go hand in hand. With trifling exceptions (e.g., Norway and perhaps Denmark) every single European in existence was established by imperialist power, could not have been established without and is maintained by it. Stalin maintains the bourgeois states in Eastern Europe. With the possible exception of France, Truman is responsible for the maintenance of every government in Western Europe. That is the New Europe." ("Historical Retrogression or Socialist Revolution," The New International, February 1946)

For us, and we shall demonstrate it elsewhere, this basic change in the social structure of Europe in particular requires a strategic change in our approach to the revolutionary masses. As we went on to point out in our resolution (May 1946) on the "International Situation, the Fourth International and the World Socialist Revolution":

"In Eastern Europe the proletariat faces the colossal task of overthrowing not the delegated but the direct military power of the Russian state. In its rear, it has the armed forces of Russia occupying Germany. Under these circumstances the movement against Russian domination in the separate countries must therefore orient towards the unification of proletarian struggle in the directly oppressed states, including Germany. A mass revolutionary movement with a common program and an advanced social goal has the best possibility of shaking the discipline of the Russian armies and re-awakening in them the traditions of the October Revolution. With this perspective, the proletariat is assisted in the carrying out of the daily struggles against the oppressing imperialist power. Without a perspective of international struggle, the advanced workers will be less fortified against Stalinist propaganda or the defeatism which will await intervention on the part of another imperialist power as the only means of ridding itself of the Russian domination, exploitation and plunder.

"A similar situation in Eastern Asia, (Korea, Manchuria, etc.) poses similar tasks for the Fourth International."

The political superstructure and historical events in Europe today confirm the fundamental soundness of this approach. The whole European chaos demands that our strategy be concretely guided, not tomorrow but today, by the concept of the revolutionary seizure of power and the revolutionary reconstruction of society by the allied proletariat in a Socialist United

States of Europe. The proletariat of the different countries is not commanded by us to act all at once, but it is the structure of society itself which is driving the proletariat of the different countries to unity against the common enemy. Not to see this results inevitably either in the putting off until tomorrow of the perspective of the Socialist United States of Europe (Shachtman) or the utilization of it as revolutionary bunting around the defense of the bourgeois state in Poland.

Bureaucratic Collectivism and the Johnson-Forrest Tendency

The Johnson-Forrest tendency, however, must clarify its rejection of any compromise with the defeatism which is based upon bureaucratic collectivism of the Shachtmanite variety.

If degenerated workers statism is today, 1947, the Economist analysis of Russian state capitalism, bureaucratic collectivism is the Menshevik analysis.

The conflict between the bureaucratic collectivists and the degenerated workers statists has taken place, as all serious struggles within the revolutionary movement must take place, not over the concrete phenomena of Soviet Russia but over the question of revolutionary perspective. Trotsky was not blind to the existence of wage labor nor the horrors of the counter-revolution in Stalinist Russia. Why then did he refuse to yield an inch to the state capitalism and bureaucratic collectivism of Kautsky, Urbahns, Bruno R., etc.? Because all these revisions of the theory of workers statism implied a third alternative to capitalism or socialism. Trotsky warned that to pose such an alternative is to toy with the "conclusion that the proletariat has forfeited its revolutionary possibilities and must renounce all aspirations to hegemony in an era immediately ahead." (In Defense of Marxism) Behind the theory of the third alternative, therefore, there always lurks the possibility of support to bourgeois democracy. For if the proletariat cannot make the revolution, then bourgeois democracy is infinitely better for the masses than the Stalinist prison. This is the road which is continually threatening Shachtman.

The method by which Trotsky analyzed the third alternative holds all its validity today. His position of degenerated workers statism, although we are unalterably opposed to it and to his conclusion of defensism in Russia, was a Marxist analysis because it contained the Marxist perspective of capitalism or socialist revolution. We do not expect this to be understood by the shallow empiricists of the W.P. Majority. They have no method and they are therefore incapable of understanding the method of others. For the same reason that the Johnson-Forrest tendency supports Trotsky's method in destroying the bureaucratic collectivists, we hold that the only possible Marxist revision of Trotsky's position on the Russian question is on the basis of stratification as a world-wide phenomenon. France, Britain, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia, all form links in a chain. They are not all the same, although it is impossible for Germain to say what distinguishes, for example, Yugoslavia from Stalinist Russia. But Stalinist Russia, whatever its historical origins, being the most highly developed exemplification of this phenomenon gives the key to the present stage of the development of capital as an economic form. The extreme development of capitalism brings with it as an attendant corollary the socialist tendencies of the masses for the revolutionary seizure of power and the revolutionary reconstruction of society, thus making our age more revolutionary in character than any previous period. As we wrote in 1946:

"Trotsky in 1940 left the Fourth International with a strategic orientation which can be divided into two sections:

- 1) The Leninist conception of our epoch as the epoch of imperialist war or social revolution and the political and organizational conclusions of Bolshevism adapted to our day.
- 2) His position on the Russian question.

"Today the Fourth International as a whole continues to hold these positions although the signs are many that it cannot continue to hold the Russian position much longer. The Workers Party is the first important organization which broke with the official position and its development is therefore of enormous importance for the International as a whole. Six years of the Workers Party have shown a clearly marked political division which can be summed up as follows:

a) The Majority, in empirical fashion, seeks to revise the strategic conceptions of world revolution in the light of the degeneration of the Russian revolution and the defeat of the proletariat elsewhere which it considers a confirmation of the Russian experience.

b) The Minority, on the other hand, has revised the Russian position of Trotsky and brought it into harmony with the philosophic and economic basis of Marxism and the Leninist-Trotskyist conceptions of world revolution."

The majority of those who still adhere with such tenacity to Trotsky's conception of degenerated workers state today sincerely believe that they, like Trotsky, are holding the fort against those profound pessimists and petty-bourgeois sceptics who have concluded from the degeneration of the Russian revolution the postponement of the perspective of world revolution for our time. But the road to the defeat of the pessimists is the road to the revolutionary masses.

For Trotsky, the only defense of the Russian Revolution was the offensive of the world revolution. All his thinking was governed by this. He could not have, he did not, fit his strategy for world revolution into the framework of defense of the conquests of one revolution, any more than he could have fitted his concept of international socialism into the confines of building socialism in a single country.

Nevertheless, today, 1947, the basis of Germain's thinking continues to be the defense of nationalized property. He thinks this is Trotskyism. But if any proof were needed that Trotsky's politics on a world scale were governed not by nationalized property but by the historic stage of mass activity and mobilization demonstrated in the events of 1936, it can be found in the Transitional Program upon which the Fourth International was founded. As conceived by Trotsky, the Transitional Program was a program for social revolution, i.e. a program for the working class to create its own organizations, factory committees to control industry and control the economy, workers' militia to fight the resistance of the ruling class, etc. Until Germain has clarified this in his own mind and in that of his co-thinkers, he will be unable to rout the IKD and Shachtmanite conceptions of democratic political revolution.

Germain will protest that he agrees with this conception of the Transitional Program. How, then, does he reconcile the Transitional Program with his position on Poland and the defense of property reforms which "facilitate" the proletarian revolution? It is obvious, as Trotsky used to write, that the question needs a little more examination.

- 10 -

Lenin and the Transitional Program

The method that Trotsky used as the basis for the Transitional Program of 1938 was the same method that gave birth to the Transitional Program of the Third Congress. The significance of the Program today can best be understood in the light of the historic period which first gave birth to it. Like every strategic orientation of Lenin's, the 1921 program can be understood essentially only in relation to the masses in motion. We must watch Lenin's method develop stage by stage in the Russian experience at Brest-Litovsk, when the revolution was in full tide, and in 1921 when the isolated workers state had to retreat to the NEP. These experiences are exceptionally valuable because the one is a political conjuncture and the other an economic one. They will demonstrate how utterly false and un-Leninist is the position to which Germain has been driven on the Polish question.

Lenin's opponent at Brest-Litovsk was Bukharin. Bukharin's position for revolutionary war was an Economist program based on the correlation of economic forces, e.g., the relation of revolutionary Russia to the productive regions demanded by Germany, and the deduction from this of an immediate outbreak of the European revolution. Bukharin's position anticipates the "structural assimilationists" in their contradictory attitude, on the one hand, toward the Eastern European proletariat, and on the other, toward the revolution in the West which will solve all problems.

Lenin's position for peace, on the other hand, was based on the correlation of class, i.e., human, forces and the actual manner in which the socialist development of the Russian proletariat could be furthered pending the outbreak of the European Revolution. As he posed it in March 1918, in the Majority resolution for peace: the "first and most fundamental task of our party" is the "raising of the discipline and self-discipline of the workers and peasants of Russia...uniting the masses into organizations possessing an iron will," etc. For Lenin, revolutionary war or peace was a tactic within the strategy of the socialist development of human forces. For Bukharin, revolutionary war was an anti-capitalist principle to be upheld in opposition to the reformists regardless of the readiness of the peasant masses. Whereas Lenin transcended reformism by understanding the uneven development of the masses upon which it was based, Bukharin remained in the framework of political opposition between reformism and revolution. For this reason, Lenin could propose formally reformist measures in a revolutionary way, while Bukharin's thinking remained within the framework of Red Guard attacks against capital.

In June 1919, Lenin generalized this essential distinction which history has made so vital:

"In order to achieve victory, in order to create and consolidate Socialism, the proletariat must fulfill a twofold or dual task first, by its devoted heroism in the revolutionary struggle against capital, to draw in its train the whole mass of the toilers and exploited, to carry them with it, to organize them and lead them in the struggle to overthrow the bourgeoisie and to utterly suppress its resistance. Second, it must lead the whole mass of the toilers and exploited as well as all the petty bourgeois strata on the road of new economic construction, on the road to the creation of new social ties, a new labour discipline, a new organization of labor, which shall combine the last word of science and capitalist technique with the mass association of class-conscious workers engaged in large-scale production.

- 11 -

"The second task is more difficult than the first, for it cannot possibly be fulfilled by single acts of heroism; it requires the most prolonged most persistent and most difficult mass heroism and prosaic everyday work. But this task is more material than the first because in the last analysis, the new and higher mode of social production, the substitution of large scale socialist production for capitalist and petty bourgeois production can alone serve as the deepest source of strength for victory over the bourgeoisie and the sole guarantee of the durability and permanence of this victory." (Selected Works, Vol IX, p. 435)

The difference between 1919 and 1947 is that the objective situation today has made this fundamental Leninist approach to the question and this solution the indispensable key to revolutionary strategy. In Lenin's day, and particularly in Russia, the political and the economic subject were still separated by the gap between the revolutionary determination of the masses on the one hand, and on the other, their "culture" or ability to develop and complete the new social relation. This, and not the absence of machines, coal and wheat, was what Lenin meant by the backwardness of Russia.\*

It was the revolutionary transformation of the masses which Lenin saw as the "source of strength and guarantee of the inevitable and complete triumph of Communism." Because it was not possible to achieve this transformation by a direct collectivization of the peasant economy, the NEP was necessary. But although the NEP was a retreat in economic form, an examination of Lenin's speeches and writings on it show that, with all its dangers he adopted it because it was the only means of developing the initiative and energy of the lowest masses and the deepest foundations of the workers state. Only one example from innumerable others:

"All-sided development of local initiative and independent action in encouraging exchange between agriculture and industry - this must be done to the utmost extent and at all costs. The study of practical experience in this. The greatest possible variety in this." (Selected Works, Vol IX)

It is a commonplace in the movement that the retreat to the NEP was an example of the strategic genius of Lenin. Today, it is necessary for us to emphasize that for Lenin, the NEP had one purpose, the economic mobilization of the masses on the countryside by developing their individual initiative and their creative energies. For the sake of the mobilization of the masses, Lenin was willing to run even the risk of the workers state being over-run by capitalism. This is the quintessence of what Economism is not.

For the majority in the Fourth International, the national revolutionary movements in France and Poland were not to be supported, but the Stalinist regime in Poland is to be supported. Because there was no nationalized property in France, the Fourth International failed to see the creative energy and revolutionary initiative which finally ended in armed insurrection. In Poland, however, because of the nationalized property, the masses are called upon to support those who can only exist by crushing

\* Today, in the physical devastation of Europe, this historical materialist approach is decisive to any perspective of world revolution. Otherwise, economic revival appears a prerequisite.

their revolutionary energy and initiative both in politics and in production. This standing of revolutionary policy on its head is not at all accidental. It is the result of preoccupation with economic reforms learnt by the epigones from the theory of the degenerated workers state.

What reformist nonsense is implied by the statement that the socialist revolution of the Polish workers "can and must start from the present reforms"? (Fourth International, February 1947) Not only "can", mind you, but "must". Is Germain afraid that the Polish workers in their revolution might, after seizing the factories, hand them over to the bourgeoisie or to the peasants? Does he mean that the Polish Soviets must not repudiate the Stalinist laws expropriating private property? Is he afraid that the Polish workers might loot the factories as did the backward Russian peasants in 1917-8? What reformist conception do we have here of revolution in general and of the Polish workers in particular which requires our warning them that they "can and must start from the present reforms." Germain sets up a straw man, namely, Shachtman's fantastic proposal that the Polish workers do and should support Mickolajczyk, in order to knock it down. But he can knock it down so vigorously because he himself believes and therefore fears the influence of Mickolajczyk over the workers. Yet the only influence Mickolajczyk could possibly have over the workers is due to the strength that he derives from Anglo-American imperialism and the horrible reality of the concrete Russian domination. To support the Stalinist regime is only to encourage reactionaries of the stripe of Mickolajczyk. This is the fate of all Economism, increasing with the years, to fasten itself upon a progressive economic form and therefore inhibit itself from penetrating to the inner strategic link which most powerfully unites the broadest masses for the revolutionary task at hand.

#### The Political Consequences of Economism

Germain claims that he is merely following Trotsky. His opponents make this as an accusation. Neither the claim nor the accusation is decisive. We must see what Germain represents logically and historically in order to wage the political struggle against him effectively and in a Bolshevik manner.

Germain has taken one aspect of Trotsky, the theory of the degenerated workers state and built it into a whole political method, the method of Economism. Like all Economist tendencies, his views inhibit the revolutionary perspectives of the masses because they neglect the decisive role of the masses as a social force. Yet today more than ever, the economic and the social force of the revolutionary masses coincide. Stage by stage, the revolutionary problems of the proletariat and therefore of humanity as a whole have moved closer to the very process of production and the revolutionary reconstruction of society, not only on a national but on a multi-national basis.

In its resolution on the International Situation, the Johnson-Forest tendency posed, without equivocation, socialist relations of production as the climax to the social revolution and as the only way out for the solution of the immediate needs of the masses. As we wrote:

"For this reason the Fourth International does not merely pose the struggle for immediate demands in terms of the actual intervention of the masses (factory committees, consumers committees, etc.). It must ceaselessly propagate to the masses the genuinely transitional character of the relationship between factory committees, etc., the social revolution

and socialist relations of production. To the masses who, lacking leadership, are bewildered by the magnitude of the problems which face them, the Fourth International must place the organized rule of society by the workers as the only way to pull Europe and Asia out of the chaos and ruin in which capitalist society has placed them. It must categorically say to the masses there is no hope for a reconstruction of society except by means of the productivity of labor and social reorganization which only socialist relations of production can initiate....

"The Fourth International must at the same time pose to the workers in broad outline a plan for the reconstruction of Europe on a continental scale. Thus, in Europe, it poses the socialization of production on a national scale. But it responds to the concrete situation by linking this demand to the industrialization of Germany and its incorporation into a European economy as the indispensable basis not for some distant socialist well-being but for the satisfaction of the elementary needs of the masses and for the salvation of European civilization."

If we now look at Germain's theoretical ancestors as stages in the historical development, we shall understand his position.

In 1902, the Economists governed themselves by the economic necessity of large scale production rather than the mobilization of the masses to fight Tsarism and establish their political unification in the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry. In 1916, the imperialist Economists governed themselves by the economic necessity of supra-national centralization rather than the unification and mobilization of the proletariat and peasantry of the oppressed and oppressing countries. In 1918, Bukharin posed the economic necessity of nationalization rather than the mobilization of the Russian masses into their own organizations to control production and safeguard against counter-revolution.

What does Germain propose today? In the Full Economist tradition, adapted to the present situation, he continues to speak of the economically progressive character of nationalization and planned economy. Already in Poland, his position shows the political seriousness of his basic error. The Economists of 1902 thought that they were only defending the economic organization of large scale capitalism. In reality, they were defending Tsarism because only the revolutionary democratic mobilization of the proletariat and peasantry could destroy political feudalism. The imperialist Economists in 1916 thought they were only defending the economic centralization accomplished by imperialism. In reality, they were defending imperialism because only the mobilization of the masses of the oppressed and oppressing countries could destroy national domination. Germain in 1947 thinks he is only defending the nationalization and planned economy of the bureaucracy. In reality, he is defending Stalinism because only the strategic perspective of revolutionary reconstruction by the European masses as a unit, and particularly in Russia, Eastern Europe and Germany, can oppose both the internationalism of Stalinist Russia and the internationalism of American imperialism.

Economism and the Building of the Party

The masses all over the world are groping for a revolutionary leadership which sees in their own practical mobilization the road toward the socialist reconstruction of society and at the same time the solution of the most pressing immediate problems.

The Fourth International poses a revolutionary perspective to the masses. But at every critical stage, what emerges is that it considers nationalization, etc., by the Stalinists, albeit carried out by counter-revolutionary measures against the masses, to be steps on the road to the socialist revolution. When the revolutionary perspectives of the Fourth International are linked to its concept that Stalinism is carrying out the collectivist revolution, is it any wonder that there emerge in the Fourth International tendencies which attribute a historical role to Stalinism and correspondingly question the revolutionary capacity of the masses?

The Fourth International believes that the war has created a revolutionary temper in the masses and that there is no alternative to the socialist revolution. But at the same time, looking at the chaos of modern Europe, but seeing a new industrial plant here and there, it asserts that there has been an economic revival (Manifesto of May Day, 1947). This is where Economist preconceptions can lead you. Instead of realizing that the revolt of the masses in the very process of production makes economic revival impossible, instead of making their propaganda and agitation on this point, and calling for the complete overthrow of the bourgeois state in the manner that Lenin called for it in 1917, our Economists complain that the masses have not shared in the profit of the "national recovery." This is the illusion which rests not, like Shachtman's, upon questioning the revolutionary possibilities of the proletariat but rests rather upon attributing to the capitalists, with whatever reservations, the ability to stabilize their economy and "recover" in the present period. This is what comes of looking at productive forces, not as human forces but as machines, coal and wheat.

The Fourth International believes that it is the third world war which "will inevitably precipitate humanity into barbarism." (May Day Manifesto, 1947). As if in Europe and Asia today barbarism were a question of the future! The domination of its thinking by the perspective of the third world war rests upon its Economist conception that there is something progressive in the nationalized economy of Russia and Eastern Europe which is being threatened. It is afraid that the planned economy of Russia will become the tool of Wall Street. This is the result of viewing the Russian and Eastern European proletariat in abstraction from the world revolutionary perspective because they live under a "progressive" economy.

This is the dilemma of the Fourth International today. So long as it maintains its Economist conceptions, it breeds in its own ranks Menshevik concepts of the weakness of the proletariat and the strength of the bourgeoisie. The way out is to revise Trotsky's Russian position in the light of his Transitional Program. To do that requires the analysis of Stalinist Russia as state capitalist in a world of developing state capitalism, in which the Russian proletariat along with the world proletariat is being prepared for social revolution. To meet the needs of the masses, the Fourth International must turn not only its slogans, but more important, its thinking away from Economist abstractions and toward the new stage of world revolution.

- Ria Stone

August 1947



1092

# INTERNAL BULLETIN

of the  
Johnson  
Forest

177110717

Issue 8 - September 4, 1947

## CONTENTS

### PART I\*

Auto Workers in Oakland. By Bill Kaye.	..... Page 1
Why Radical Youth? By Madeline.	..... Page 2
On a Radio Belt Line. By Nettie. (Part ii)	..... Page 4

### Part II

The American Worker. By Ria Stone	..... Page 1
-----------------------------------	--------------

15 CENTS

1092

WITH THE AUTO WORKERS IN OAKLAND

(Note: The following are some of the incidents which take place in my shop. In the last weeks of our dispute with the W.P. I confronted them with the opinion that 95% of the workers in my shop are communists. It was easy for them to laugh at this "unprecise" estimation of the revolutionary instincts of the workers on the assembly line and in other sections of the modern auto factory. But in time a selection of these workers will be recruited into the revolutionary party to confirm my "estimate.")

Absenteeism is very high. They now pay the workers on Friday afternoon because when they were paid in the morning, the workers would knock off before the day was over.

After I gave a boy "Plenty for All" to read, he came back to tell me that it would be worthwhile to take over the plant and pay the bosses to stay away.

F. read "The Coming American Revolution." He saw the foreman smiling. He said to him: "When the revolution comes, we'll wear that grin off your face. You'll be working with the rest of us fellows." When the foreman went away, F. said to me angrily: "He thought I was kidding him!"

F., a union committeeman said that if the men don't hit the quota and stop absenteeism, management will have to hire Negroes. I said: "Instead of forcing workers to work harder and stick to the job by scaring them with discrimination, we want to get Negroes in to end the division between Negro and white workers." Fifty workers stood around. I spoke loudly. The louder I spoke, the more people came. F. backed down, said that he didn't mean what he said before. He's now playing a different role, helping to organize the FEPC in the local.

B., a W.P.'er came to me during the Oakland General Strike. He said that one of the workers he talked to was a real s.o.b., having suggested that the veterans organize to break the strike since it was causing disunity, a disturbance, etc. I asked this worker whether he knew how many veterans were in the plant and that more than half of them would want to break his neck. At this he rose to his full six foot two inches. (I'm five-foot-eight.) "It's just a radical outfit behind the strike and you're one of them," he answered. When he saw the crowd of workers gathering around, he slowed down and turned chicken. Other guys took on the fight. Twenty to thirty men began throwing words at him. F., a fellow worker, told me later: "Kaye, this is a good thing. The only trouble is I had to hold four guys back from socking him. We expected him to throw a punch but he kept getting softer and softer. If he'd hit you, we'd have thrown him out so fast." Next day the "strikebreaker" joined the union.

The coffee man would stop by each individual worker on the assembly line to give him a chance to get his coffee. F., a big boss, told the old coffee man to hurry up since he was keeping the men from production. As he said this he shoved the old man along. A worker came off the line and almost shoved F. on his behind. He said: "If you want to shove somebody, pick on me. If you push that old man again, I'll shove your teeth down your throat." That worker is still working here.

1094  
- 2 -  
WHY THE YOUTH IS RADICAL

Although the history of the American youth cannot even be compared with that of the European youth, yet practically every American youth calls himself a "communist" or "socialist" or boasts about his liberal reformist tendencies. Their ideas about socialism are completely distorted, however their intention is to help in the establishment of a completely different society.

Here are some reasons why the youth are radical.

In the home, children are the unfortunate who suffer most because of the distorted existence of their parents. The exhausted husband quarrels with the equally overworked housewife and both of them direct their anger and resentment at the children who are inevitably bubbling over with excess energy at inopportune moments. It is unfortunate that a child's life must be regulated until it realizes the necessity of eating, sleeping, and keeping fairly clean. However, in our society practically all children are forced to fit into their parent's schedule so that they won't be a disturbing factor in the struggle to squeeze out a living. Even the bourgeois psychologists admit that the existence of children in this society is horribly inadequate. Most neuroses can be traced to childhood, not only because people are particularly sensitive and impressionable at an early age but because the oppression is particularly extreme then.

When they come to the stage where they can express themselves, they immediately start to rebel. They realize the necessity to transform society but they are not attracted by adult political organizations. Instead they band together in discussion groups or independent youth groups; i.e., Y.C.L., Liberal Party Youth, Hashomer Hatzair, etc., and present programs for the solution of the problems of the adult world.

Their oppression is so complete that the most liberal child psychologists, parents and even revolutionaries think nothing is wrong if a young person is forced to retire at a certain time, has to wear clothes which were chosen by parents, has no property rights, can't go with friends whom the parents don't approve of, and so on. The whole society works on the assumption that youth are mentally incompetent. When a young person has a political conviction which does not coincide with that of his parents, relatives or teachers, he is subjected to personal insults which are almost unbearable. The same is true if he decides on a future which they don't approve of. He is stopped from doing what he wants by having financial aid cut, free hours limited, or the humiliation of a beating whose purpose is to prove his mental inferiority.

When it comes to finding a job they are torn by conflicting emotions. They do not want to work because of the drudgery which the adults are continually warning them about. On the other hand, getting a job means independence and a feeling of competence and responsibility in taking part in the adult world which gives him self respect. Even so, youth are barred from good jobs or are paid low wages. The sex education of youth is one of society's "recognized" scandals. The insinuations which are projected, are that if a youth engages in sex relations it is horribly filthy and vile, but when you get older and are capable it's normal. The results of this are apparent enough without writing of it here.

All these things and many others which are the products of this society help make the youth radical. The fact that they do not participate directly in the process of production doesn't mean that they have no interests which conflict with the existing relations in society. However, precisely because they lack such direct participation, they cannot adopt an independent political line to precipitate the change which they desire. That is why they have followed

all sorts of ideologies such as Fascism, Zionism, etc., which appear to demand a change.

Some youth who were recruited to the party, go into industry to recruit workers and help build the revolutionary movement that way. But for every youth who is recruited as an individual or on intellectual conviction, there are a million more whose oppression under this society has not been alleviated. The concrete inequalities which I have mentioned above will become more and more oppressive as the society continues to decay.

The working class as the only force which has the ability to change society will lead the youth and show how it can help in this change. However, we cannot appeal to them by ignoring their own problems and recruiting them as individuals. We must show that we understand their oppression as a group in society and recruit them on that basis with the purpose of establishing a new society which will solve their problems completely.

- Madeline

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\* Address all communications to: MARTIN HARVEY - 101 W. 46 St., N.Y. 19, N.Y.  
\*\*\*\*\*

NOW ON SALE:

BALANCE SHEET - Trotskyism in the United States, 1940-47	:	Three Essays by
Contents	:	KARL MARX
I. The Unprincipled Split	:	Selected from
II. Trotsky's Role in the 1940 Split	:	
III. Political Evolution of the W.P.	:	
IV. The Johnson-Forest Tendency	:	
V. The Organizational Question	:	The Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts
VI. Perspectives in the United States	:	Contents
VII. Lessons of the American Experience	:	1. Alienated Labor
Appendix: Conversations with Trotsky on the Transitional Program	:	2. Private Property and Communism
	:	3. Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic
Price: 35¢ a copy	:	Price: 50¢ a copy

ON A RADIO PLANT BELT LINE (Part 11)

A worker who works on the modern factory belt soon learns it is not the belt that makes him miserable, but the bosses who dictate just how fast that belt runs, how close the material is to run, how many units each operation shall contain, etc., etc. At the same time, workers who are constantly being moved around and transferred (I've had six supervisors within the last year) soon realize that be a supervisor "diplomatic" or a real company "pusher," the work put out on each belt is approximately the same and at the end of the day leaves the worker tense and exhausted. Thus it is the school of capitalism itself that teaches the worker through experience that no one individual is responsible for the intensification of labor today, but rather the whole capitalistic system which drives itself forward at the expense of everything decent and natural.

This same school of capitalism also teaches through the tremendous socialization of labor that no one worker can fight for anything alone, but the bulk of workers must fight together. But on a belt everyone is so similarly affected by the slightest change that reactions are almost stereotyped. Once a reaction takes a strong hold of the bulk of workers most of the others will join in any demand even before they realize what the noise is all about. The idea seems to be if enough workers want it and are willing to yell for it now, give your support and then find out what it's all about. I hope my illustrations will make this clearer.

The shop where I work usually plays music for the girls while they work. Sometimes the recording machine will be shut off for a while or the radio program will change from music to something that just can't be heard above the factory racket. Girls will bang their "flats" (pliers) against the belt and stamp their feet often to a definite rhythm and call in unison "We want music." If nothing is done the girls may stop for ten minutes and then take it up again. The banging for music is usually casual and mild, but this is just the beginning.

During the winter months the air was stifling. It was filthy with colder fumes and fans were kept circulating intermittently. Many girls would argue among themselves about this, some wanting the fans on because of the solder fumes, and others wanting it off because of the draft. Most of the girls would try to stay out of any arguments. The climax of this was the girls joining together and shouting: "We want air. We want air." It's difficult to describe the emotions behind this episode. Girls shouted to each other about the new building just built without any air conditioning and demanded: "What do they think we are? Rats in a cellar?" Many a worker has said when the work was speeded up or the day dragging on: "They're out to kill us." This isn't fancy talk - the workers know what causes their headaches and nervousness. One girl said to me: "Why should I worry about their wires? They're making more money out of these radios than I am making them." (Theory of surplus value!)

Last week the work was very hot and perspiration dripped off some girls' faces and into the sets, literally, for there was no time for handkerchiefs. On Thursday the girls began banging with their "flats" and calling: "We want to go home," etc., etc. It was started by a few, but the others wasted no time and it continued intermittently until lunch. This sort of thing disturbs most of the supervisors, who try to convince everyone it won't help but "overheat you." When we returned from lunch, girls were more insistent than ever. Five girls can start off five hundred girls and more once they are in the mood. The important thing is that the girls must be ready. There are times when no one could get a response, but once the girls are worked up you can't hold them back. Well, we kept up all afternoon and just when it was beginning to seem futile, the word

came around that we were to get out at 2:45. We were also asked to be careful of our wires. The last hour work had been coming down undone. After that, however, everyone felt triumphant and the work seemed easier.

The next day banging started early. In the meantime many girls had learned of a belt on another floor where the girls had stopped working in order to go home, and began to see how to affect the company. Where previously, the day before, the union shop steward had taken up the fight for the girls, today they said "Not a chance!" They realized this could become a daily issue. For the worker the shorter day meant release, for the shop steward, it meant overstepping the bounds. For one hot day there can be an exception, but as a reasonable demand - "Not a chance!"

A few of the men who have comparatively easier jobs asked the girls: "Why go home? You'll only loaf in this heat. You might as well get the money." But no girl took this seriously - only indignantly. On Thursday some of us had questioned whether the company would pay us or not, but the general tone was, "Who cares about the money - we want to get out of here." The worker learns he must take time when he can get it, not when he can afford it.

Outwardly it often appears that workers are rationalizing their accepting the monotony, but the necessity under capitalism to increase production constantly at the expense of the working class, (i.e., expropriate greater and greater surplus value from the workers instead of producing according to the abilities and the needs of the population) permits no worker this pounce. Last week, four girls fainted that I know of. We had been banging to go home and when the first girl fainted, we disintegrated into rambling among ourselves until she was carried past our sight. Spontaneously every pair of "flats" started off in such an indignant protest it could hardly be contained. Every worker seemed aware of the full significance and identified themselves with that fainting girl. During relief, one girl I know was still completely unnerved and shaking by what she had seen - a very common reaction - and she said: "I'm getting out of this place. I can't take it." But she hasn't left.

Rumors constantly go around about what's happening in other departments. One girl told me that she had heard 25% of the girls in a certain department had fainted. This can't possibly be true, but what is important is that other girls, hearing of this, did not challenge it. They accepted this as a possibility. Yet workers continue to work in a place they themselves refer to as a "slaughter house." Isn't it clear that the worker places little stake in his chances of getting a decent job, let alone one that satisfies him, under capitalism?

But this is not just a question of "I win today, I may lose tomorrow!" To the belt worker it is a driving necessity to get away and a demonstration - whether he wins or loses - shows that all his fellow workers feel the same way he does and desire the same things. What, under capitalist production (dead labor dominating living labor) drags down the worker's personality and health and causes him to fight with his fellow-worker, will be no problem at all under the workers' control of production.

- Nettie

THE AMERICAN WORKER - Part II

(The following article will appear as a supplement to the forthcoming pamphlet by Phil Romano on the American worker today.)

The crisis of contemporary society, the barbarism and chaos which govern the daily existence and immediate perspectives of men from one end of the earth to another, have provoked in all layers of society a probing into the ultimate perspectives of humanity. This probing, haltingly begun during the years of the depression, was momentarily suspended in the holocaust of the second World War. But in the war also the myth of salvation through the Rooseveltian New Deal was exploded and with it the last barrier to the most relentless probings. The desperate efforts of the Wallace-ites and the Stalinists to perpetuate the Rooseveltian myth, while condemning its contemporary international expression in the Marshall Plan, only make more pathetic the gulf between the memories of one dead man and the profound yearnings of two billion living ones. Today, in all strata of society, a search is going on for the way to create a world, one world, in which men can live as social and creative individuals, where they can live as all-round men and not just as average men. Out of this search a new philosophy of life is being created. Neither the Christian Revolution nor the Protestant Revolution, the only comparable milestones in the history of Western civilization, can parallel in depth and scope the process of evaluation and re-evaluation now going on in the activity and in the thoughts of men.

This report by Romano, a worker, of the life of a worker in the United States today, is a fundamental contribution to this evaluation. Unlike the writings of intellectuals and statesmen, it is a social document describing in essence the real existence of the hundreds of millions who constitute the basis of our society. The cultural life and philosophy of every society has always been determined by the life of the working class at its base. But except in periods of revolution, the world is wont to forget this. Nothing shows more clearly how close the social revolution is to the surface than the fact that today, wherever political and industrial statesmen meet to try to resolve the crisis of modern society, one problem haunts their minds - how to develop the productivity of the workers. In every country, whatever the social denomination, the ability and willingness of the workers to produce is regarded as the foundation of national and international policy. If, as we believe, this is a problem actually resolvable only by placing the control of production into the hands and heads of the workers, it is also a problem which can be fundamentally understood only by probing into what the workers are doing and thinking as they work at their benches and at their machines. As the working class today is the only class which can reconstruct society on new beginnings, so everything that it thinks and does provides the key for all those who seek in the modern barbarism for a unifying principle by which to understand the past and build the future.

Only by this means, by understanding the actual conditions of life and the actual strivings of an actual working class at a certain stage of its development, can the problems of humanity as a whole be understood. The alternative is to probe into the problems of men in general and their interminable sufferings. This is what the Existentialists have done. But the fruits of their efforts, however effective in portraying the agony of men, can only be half-truths and abstractions. Those seeking answers to the modern barbarism must turn their attention

- 2 -

to the living degradation of the individual and the concrete struggle for liberation which is developing in the working class.

We make our analysis of the American working class, not only because it is the working class which we know best but also because it is the most powerful, the most advanced in social productive powers in the world. As Marx in the nineteenth century made British capitalism the foundation for his economic analysis of capitalism, so today the American working class provides the foundation for an analysis of the economic transition from capitalism to socialism or the concrete demonstration of the new society developing within the old.

#### The Permanent Revolution in the United States

The vanguard of the workers in the United States is the new semi-skilled workers of mass production. Between 1921 and the present day, and especially after the 1929 depression and during the second world war, American industry underwent an industrial revolution which for depth and extent, has an antecedent only in the industrial developments of the early nineteenth century. As those developments erupted in the Chartist movement, the 1848 revolutions in Western Europe, and the Civil War in the United States, so the industrial revolution after the first world war has been preparing a world-wide social revolution.

Between 1888 and 1919 electric power had been utilized mainly to drive the old type of machines. Between 1923 and 1929 new type machinery was introduced to exploit this electric power. On the basis of this new machinery and the centralization of capital resulting from the 1929 depression, production was then expanded and concentrated into enormous factories exceeding in size most of the towns of the world. These factories attracted into the ranks of the working class individuals from all sections of the country and from a multiplicity of former occupations. Farmers from the dust belt, white collar workers, the student youth who had dreamed of professions and the old folks who had given up all hopes of a useful social existence, Negroes but lately tied to the latifundia of the South, women whose lives had been confined to husbands and children - all these were sucked into the maw of the machine and had now to reconcile their previous mode of social existence with the new reality of work at the bench or on the line. Those who did not immediately enter the newly developed productive apparatus between 1934 and 1939 were sufficiently torn from their traditional moorings by the depression so that at the beginning of the war they were available for a stampede into the shipyards, the aircraft factories and the radio shops of the "arsenal of democracy." Not since the expropriation of the yeoman farmers by the enclosure of grazing lands has there been a comparable uprooting of populations and the entry of new workers into capitalist production.

If these workers had but recently been carrying on their social existence within the confines of family, church and village, they were now part of an industrial community. If they had but recently come actually or in prospect from occupations in which they controlled their pace of work or lack of it, they now found their lives completely dominated by the schedule of the time-clock, the machine and the assembly line. By the very nature of the new semi-skilled labor, which on the one hand, necessitated the rapid learning of skills and on the other, degraded the worker to the monotonous repetition of certain operations, these workers were from the very beginning caught in a contradiction. They were neither the skilled artisans of the old aristocracy of labor nor were they the



common laborers whose only asset was their brute strength. Their skill was not expendable but it was not a monopoly so that they, if not the skills, were expendable. The more each became fit for a variety of labors, the more, he as an individual, became replaceable. Out of this contradiction the CIO had exploded in 1936-37. It represented the instinctive striving of the American working class to tear itself loose from the contradiction between its degradation into detailed labor by the machine and what Marx eighty years ago called the necessity for "variation of labor, fluency of function and universal mobility" demanded by the new industrial revolution. Deepened and expanded by the war, this contradiction became during the war years a cancer slowly eating away at the vitals of American bourgeois society.

If this contradiction pervaded the roots of the industrial community on the home front, it was even more sharply present in the army. Fourteen million men and women, irrespective of their former occupations, found themselves assigned to functions not only in combat but in transport, ordinance, office and hospital. A farmboy was transformed into a signal corps specialist; a clerk in a shoe store became a medic whose function was to administer morphine or plasma to a group of wounded men in accordance with his judgment of the nature of their injuries and the possibility of their recovery. All this was part of the routine experience of every enlisted man. And equally routine but more dramatic was the expendability of any one of them.

For millions of workers, therefore, the industrial revolution of the last two decades has meant a combined and concentrated development of the history of modern capitalism. From farm to assembly line, from the home to the shop, from the desk to the machine, from the village to the metropolis, from Texas to Paris, they have experienced within a few short years the infinite variety of the modern world along with the deadly monotony of the labor process, the social insecurity and the circumscribed opportunities of capitalism.

What Marx described one hundred years ago as the essential movement of bourgeois society has come to life for sixty million workers:

"Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life and his relations with his kind."

The American worker today is facing "his real conditions of life and his relations with his kind." The post-war strikes were the first empirical eruption of this evaluation. Following upon the great waves of strikes, individual workers and groups of workers, in their attempt to explain their actions to themselves, have been carrying on a restless search within their own thoughts, in conversations at the bench and at the bar, and wherever they meet and talk. The suddenness with which millions of workers have had their lives revolutionized by production against the background of capitalist depressions and wars, has transformed the American worker from an easy-going practical empiricist into a thoughtful, questioning, investigator into the realities of the society around him. Whether he goes on strike himself or only reads of others striking, whether he wins or loses his demands, the same question haunts the worker--

where is all this leading to? Like the adolescent who seeks to create a Weltanschauung during the transition from the comforts of the God-revering family to the rigidity of natural law, the American workers are today trying to create a conception of social history out of their shattering disillusionment with the promise of the American way of life and the new conception of productive forces which they have gained by their experiences in industry and in the army.

#### The Creativity of Labor

Nowhere more than in the United States do the workers, in putting forward their claims as workers, also put forward their claims as human beings. For geographical and historical reasons, based on the absence of feudal restrictions in the United States, the outlet of the frontier and the continual replenishment of the labor force through immigration, the expansion of the country has proceeded uninterruptedly through the expansion of the productive forces of man. The natural riches of the country have been taken for granted. The social wealth, prestige and power of the country is, and has been recognized to be, the result of industry, which robbed of its capitalist integument, is no more than human productive powers. In an impoverished agricultural region like Southern Italy, or on a small island like England which must maintain its empire by maneuverist alliances, the intervention of God or the political genius of statesmen may have been regarded as the decisive factor in the nation's history. The American universe, however, is a Copernican universe. While the nation as a whole lacks social thinking, the pervasive ideology of the United States has been dominated by the concept that it is through human energy and foresight that the universe around us has been created. The result is the domination of the thinking of the workers by the idea that work has or should have a positive and creative value.

It is not the right to vote which has endeared the American workers to the American way of life but the opportunity for individual freedom and mobility. The democratic dream which is the ideological fabric of the United States, has never been the dream of political democracy. It has been the conviction, nourished by the actual opportunities in the country for over a hundred years, that every man, the common man, could test his capacities in a variety of ways. Freedom has been to the American workers an economic force. The hope, with every year less frequently realized but nevertheless always present, was that every man could be his "own boss", by which was meant not that he could become a boss over others but that he could in his own little shop or farm, regulate his own hours, put his own ideas into operation. Yesterday, millions of workers actually became their "own boss" in a tavern, an ice cream parlor, a gasoline station, a radio shop. Today the workers in the shop torture themselves with the thought of the impossibility of ever escaping from the factory prison. To the entrenched big bourgeoisie, "free enterprise" meant the right to extort surplus labor from the workers; to the workers "free enterprise" meant freedom from the necessity to sell their labor power to the boss and freedom from control by a boss over their productive hours.

The workers today have lost the sense of economic freedom and look upon their work as a form of bondage. Work has become to them just "labor", just "putting in time." It is to them neither the expression of their own humanity, a means to the development of humanity in general, nor a preparation for eventual freedom. It is only for the "company,"

and will always be only for the "company." The company is interested only in production and more production. The worker, created by the development of the productive forces, is interested in producing as a human being. The worker enjoys work. On his days off from the auto assembly line, he is as likely as not to spend his time tinkering with his car. Thoroughly, he expresses in his "free" time the characteristic distinguishing the human species from the animal species. But the difference between free time and working time is never absent from his mind, either in retrospect or in prospect.

It is this much more than the unequal distribution of wealth in the United States which has convinced the American workers of the class character of capitalism. The typically petty-bourgeois concept of "equality, freedom and Bontham" has no roots in a country where there is such overall plenty that there is little room for envy. The alienated non-creative character of his productive activity keeps the American worker in a constant turmoil and questioning regarding the perspectives of such activity. The economist sees unemployment and a lack of purchasing power for the workers as the basis of the social crisis and thinks he can resolve the question by full employment, and higher or guaranteed annual wages. It is a typically bourgeois illusion. The workers today are, as one bourgeois analyst has described it, psychologically unemployed.\* Working or not working, they are constantly haunted by a feeling of frustration and a fear that they are doomed to remain victims of the attraction and repulsion of capital.

Precisely because American capitalism has been the most revolutionary and progressive of all capitalisms in the sense of unlocking the mysteries of production, there is organic to the American workers a conviction that any social order to which they give their devotion must be revolutionary and progressive in the same sense. It is therefore precisely the previous vigor of American capitalism which is today its greatest weakness in the face of the American working class.

The Alienation of the Worker.

The American worker today makes in practice the distinction which Marx made nearly a hundred years ago in theory - the distinction between abstract labor for value and concrete labor for needs. Marx denied that the essence of value production was the search for profits by the individual capitalists. He specifically denounced the bourgeois political economists who could see the law of motion of capitalist economy only in the greed of individuals. Marx was concerned with the activity of the workers. By value production, he meant the production which expanded itself through the degradation and dehumanization of the worker to a fragment of a man. The essence of capitalist production was that it was a dynamically developing relation wherein the dead labor in the machine, which had been created by the workers, oppressed and degraded to abstract labor the living worker which it employed. Abstract labor is alienated labor, labor in which the worker "develops no free physical and spiritual energy but mortifies his body and ruins his spirit. \*\*

\*"What to Do About Strikes" by Peter Drucker, *Colliers*, January 1947.  
\*\* "Alienated Labor" from the 1844 *Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts* of Marx, translated into English and published by the Johnson-Forest tendency, 1947.

1 1 0 3

Concrete labor for needs, on the other hand, is not merely nor even essentially the labor which produces butter rather than guns but is the labor in which man realizes his basic human needs for exercising his natural and acquired powers.

Marx described abstract labor in human terms which penetrate to the very roots of the psychological and social reality of today. Alienated labor, he said, "is external to the worker, does not belong to his essence. Therefore, he does not affirm his labor but negates himself. He does not feel contented but dissatisfied.... The worker therefore feels himself to be himself away from labor and in labor he feels remote from himself. He is at home when he does not work and when he works, he is not at home. His labor is therefore not free but coerced forced labor. Labor is therefore not the satisfaction of a need but is only the means to satisfy the needs outside of it."

To read Romano's description of the worker in modern industry is to realize with shocking clarity how deeply the alienation of labor pervades the very foundations of our society. All the preoccupations of the intellectuals with their own souls, the economic programs for full employment and a higher standard of living fade into insignificance in the face of the oppressive reality of the lifetime of every worker. That is the importance of Romano's document.

With equal sharpness and penetration, Marx contrasted the activity of the workers in the new society.

Socialist relations of production, he said, are those in which "labor becomes not merely a means to live but is itself the first necessity of living; the powers of production have also increased and all the springs of cooperative wealth are gushing more freely together with the all-around development of the individual."

By the powers of production, Marx meant the fully developed productive powers of the individual workers, freely associated with their fellow workers. Such universality in the workers was the only means for developing universality in the rest of society. The potentiality of such universality is created by capitalism itself and nowhere more than in the United States. The American worker has little sense of the political history of the country except insofar as it is embodied in a few great names, but the daily experiences of his conscious years give him a conception of the revolutions in production which constitute industrial history. He is therefore in constant revolt against the attempts of bourgeois society to give a mystical character to capital in the process of production by confining him to certain detailed operations. Outside of his working hours, the worker drives a car, a new model every few years, a process which demands from him confident control over the machine and the spontaneous adjustment to a variety of signals. Electrical appliances, the press with its variety of subjects, the movies and television surround him and stimulate his human appreciations. The American worker, and particularly the young worker, is the most mobile in the world. During the course of a year, he may fulfil the technical requirements of a half-dozen jobs as he wanders from factory to factory seeking to escape from the factory altogether. The potentiality of such productive powers forced into the regimen of their limited exercise in the factory is a source of constant frustration to the workers, intensifying their hatred of their work and their anxiety to find another mode of expressing their humanity.

- 7 -

"The Social Productive Powers"

But is not only a question of the potentiality of such productive powers in the workers and their consequent subjective yearnings for universality. The means of production themselves have been developed to the stage where only through the exercise of such powers by the workers can the machines themselves be employed.

For over one hundred years the development of the means of production has been through the transference from the worker of all his skills, capacities and sensitivities. First, by division of labor and the perfection of the detailed operations of the workers under manufacture, the technical basis for the machine was created. Then the machine itself emerged as the embodiment of these detailed operations. The machine had a strictly capitalist use. It was the basis for extracting more surplus labor from the workers by means of its greater regularity, intensity and uniformity. Hence, every technical development of the machine was at the same time an impoverishment of the activity of the workers. Every incorporation of human powers into the machine was a corresponding dehumanization of the worker.

However, at a certain stage of its development, the machine itself began to become so valuable, not only in terms of the capital invested in it but also in terms of the complexity of operations which it embodied, that new qualities were demanded from the workers. At first, it was primarily physical energy which was demanded from the workers. Then with the technical development of the machine, the irregular energy supplied by the workers became insufficient, and first steam power and then electric power became the source of energy. With the substitution of the electric motor in the late nineteenth century, and the increased mobility, and flexibility of the machinery, the basic requirements from the workers became training and discipline. What was demanded from the workers was manual dexterity and control, combined with complete subordination to the management in the assignment of tasks. This combination, euphemistically known as efficiency, gave birth to a new pattern of thought known as Taylorism. The machine was semi-automatic and demanded a semi-skilled worker, a worker capable of certain manual skills and control but with no intellectual skills or overall conception of the production process. All such skills and responsibilities became the province of engineers and technicians.

"The Appropriation of Human Nature"

Today, the knowledge, science, etc. of the means of production have reached a new stage. With development of electric power and electronics, completely automatic production is possible and necessary. The units of production can now incorporate complete flexibility, power, precision, freedom of movement and ease of control. But what is required from the workers on such production units is equal flexibility, precision, freedom of movement and ease of control. The workers must themselves become complete masters of the productive powers developed in the instruments of production. The universality which is embodied in the machines must also be developed in them. What is required in each worker is not only manual but technical knowledge. Even more important, the objectification of all-around human activities in the machine demands the creation of a comparable human sensitivity. The semi-skilled worker is not sufficient, nor is the specialized technician. As the objective world more and more incorporates the subjective sensitivities of man, man himself must increasingly assimilate the acuteness in perception which characterizes the operations of the objective world.

"Within the capitalist system all methods for raising the social productive ness of labor are brought about at the cost of the individual laborer; all means for the development of production ... estrange from him the intellectual potentialities of the labor-process in the same proportion as science is incorporated in it as an independent power." "Let not theory but life shows us that at a certain stage, the increased transference of human science, skills and sensitivities to the machine demands a corresponding integration of the same science, skills and sensitivities in the workers employing the machine. This is the dialectical process so sneered at by the intellectuals. Without a dialectical transformation in which the worker is enriched in human capacities in the same proportion as the means of production, the productive forces inherent in the means of production themselves cannot be unleashed.

This dialectical transformation is the essential content of the appropriation by the workers of the means of production. This is the new production relation which the social revolution must introduce - a production relation in which the productive forces inherent in both machines and men are unleashed. This production relation is therefore also a new human relation of men to nature and of nature to man.

The workers in the shop who wander about the plant, hungrily eyeing different machines and different operations, are seeking to make this appropriation and create this new human and natural relation. Their absorption in popular science magazines, startling science stories, museums of industry and art, is also part of this desire for re-integration. To the intellectual, smug in his contempt for the labor process; Marx's social program for the human appropriation of the social productive powers may seem abstract. But to the worker who ingeniously devises new tools and lo'ingly creates his "government job", although he would cheerfully break up the machine which dominates him, there would be no difficulty in understanding that the new relations of production must be based upon the free development, intellectual and social of the individual."

There may be vulgar materialist whose conception of completely automatic production provides only for robot operators. They betray the typical empiricism and naive realism of those who have only contemplated the world and never realized that the world develops through the practical activity of man. Let them ponder over the description of the actual design of "machines without men" developed by bourgeois engineers.\*

We must begin by reaffirming the fact that the social and historical essence of the machine, stripped of its capitalist employment, is that it embodies human activities. This social essence has been lost sight of in bourgeois society which in its irrepressible need to expand surplus value by developing ever more powerful machines to exploit the workers, have increasingly designed the machine in terms of end product rather than of operation.

Automatic production requires that the machines be designed in terms of operation rather than of the end product. The new machine is made up of many small units plugged together. Each unit is capable of performing one function, and several plugged together will be capable of doing all the operations required to build a given part. A great number of units linked electrically and by conveyors will produce and assemble a complete product. The complete machine will be highly adaptable and can be rearranged at any time to build a completely different product.

The basic units of the fully automatic factory will perform the following functions:

\*Summarized from an article entitled "Machines Without Men" by E.W.Leaver and J. Brown, Fortune, November, 1946.

- 1) To give and receive information
- 2) To control through collation
- 3) To operate on materials

All these can be performed automatically. The giving and receiving of information can be done through electronic detection devices such as the photoelectric cell; the carrying of information by devices such as the electric circuit; the recording of this information by devices such as the dictaphone and film and the calculating of such information by devices such as the new electronic-tube counter.

The collation and control device is a chassis of electronic tubes and circuits that accepts information fed into it by information units and in turn feeds controlled power to the operation units in accordance with this information. The actual operation on materials - transport, fabrication and holding - can all be done by familiar automatic machinery.

#### Nature- a "Social Object"

When Marx analysed the instruments of production as essentially "social objects", he was anticipating just such automatic machinery. A social object contains the totality of human activities as perfected by the previous industrial history of man. Fifty years ago, even twenty years ago, it might have been possible not to understand what Marx had in mind. But the actual inclusion of human sensitivities in the automatic machine being designed today dramatically reveals the essentially human nature of industry.

A social object requires for its control men who embody this human nature in themselves, i.e., social man. Without this social man, the social object has no sense. "Just as for the unmusical ear the most beautiful music makes no sense," the completely automatic production unit is social also in the sense that it requires the most complete continuity of operations. For this continuity what is required is complete overall planning and integration. If at any stage in the process, there is a loss of time, then the whole process is interrupted. Each man, therefore, in control of any particular stage of the process must be aware of the relation of his role in production to that of every other man. That is the essence of planning. Not coordination from above of pieces of steel, or inanimate chess men. Planning as control from below, is an economic necessity based upon the enormous scope and variety of modern industry. The bourgeoisie cannot even conceive of planning in this sense, let alone introduce it, because its mental horizon is fettered by the class conception of workers as cogs in a machine, a conception as outmoded in the modern world as the mode of production out of which it developed.

Moreover, only arising from the exercise of their human capacities can there exist in the workers the willing cooperation and self-discipline without which the employment of the completely automatic unit is impossible. What has been called by Polakov,\* a power production engineer, a "discipline of mind complying with the laws of nature," life, limb, product, plant and perhaps the whole neighborhood are in serious jeopardy. The example of an airplane crew can give an indication in microcosm of what is necessary on a social scale. The bourgeois during the war had to train each member of an air crew in multiplicity of operations and a knowledge of the sciences embodied in flying. The navigator had to be able to fly the plane, had to know something about radio operation, perhaps not as expertly as the pilot or the radio operator, but well enough to take over in case of emergency. Equally important were the

\* The Power Age by Walter N. Polakov, Covici-Frieds Publishers, New York, 1933. Born in St. Petersburg, Russia 1879, M.E. Univ. of Dresden 10-2, post- (cont.)

1197

sensitivities of the individual members of the crew not only to new conditions but to each other. The human nature of the man was decisive for the functioning of the mechanisms. What is true for the plane isolated in the air is even more true of automatic production on a community scale. Unless the workers as individuals and as a social unit are completely cognizant of the laws of nature as they apply to production, unless they are using all their human senses, unless they have appropriated the capacities of the machines, unless they have a human social relation to one another, the mechanism is not only useless to them but a danger to the whole of society.

It is this economic need for universality on the part of the workers which makes it so difficult for the capitalists today to introduce completely automatic machinery. The semi-skilled worker of today is a worker within the transition process from semi-automatic machine production to completely automatic power production. His contradictions and frustrations are the contradictions and frustrations of a class society which cannot complete the revolutionizing of the instruments of production. The bourgeoisie uses the most advanced techniques, the completely automatic processes, to propagandize the worker as to the advantage of capitalism - in advertisements, gadgets, means of consumption, but it cannot use them in production because that would require a complete destruction of the class relations of bourgeois society.

The economic necessity for new production relations for fully automatic production is recognized even by bourgeois consultants: Leaver and Brown in the article which we have cited, write:

"The whole trend of present automatic controls and devices applied to present production machines is to degrade the worker into an unskilled and tradeless non-entity. The development of completely automatic production lines would reverse this by demanding a skilled force of technicians and operators. The astonishingly rapid development of new skills and occupations under the pressures of war shows that men are up to it."

Even more dramatically, Polakov wrote a dozen years ago:

"With the advent of the Power Age, the tendency toward specialized men and universalized machines is gradually changing toward special single-purpose machines and all-around 'universalized' mechanics."

"... What the Power Age requires of workers is something altogether different from the qualifications of the Machine Age of the pre-machine era workers."

"The Power Age worker's new requirements - his mental alertness, general intelligence, 'polytechnic literary' and loyal dependability - are making him less and less a 'beast of burden', a mere 'machine hand', and more and more an intelligent human being, an all-around educated man, defining 'educated man' as 'those who can do everything that others do.' (Hegel)"

\*\* (cont.) - graduate training in psychology and industrial hygiene at Univ. of Moscow. Served in various capacities as a consultant engineer. In 1929-1931 was a management consultant for the Supreme Economic Council of the U.S.S.R. Consultant engineer for TVA, 1933. Who's Who in America lists him as president of Walter N. Polakov, Inc., Industrial Consultants.



But it was Marx who eighty years ago in Capital posed the problem with the most dramatic sharpness:

"Modern Industry, through its catastrophes, imposes the necessity of recognizing as a fundamental law of production, variation of work, consequently fitness of the laborer for varied work, consequently the greatest possible development of his varied aptitudes. It becomes a question of life and death for society to adapt the mode of production to the normal functioning of this law. Modern Industry, indeed, compels society, under penalty of death, to replace the detail-worker of today, crippled by life-long operation of one and the same trivial operation, and thus reduced to a fragment of a man, by the fully developed individual, fit for a variety of labors, ready to face any change of production, and to whom the different social functions he performs, are but so many modes of giving free scope to his own free and acquired powers."

Modern Industry, contemporary industry, has proved the scientific character of Marx's prognosis. It was no abstract philosophy regarding the universality of man nor sympathy for the degraded detail workers which enabled Marx to write with such penetration and foresight. Because he recognized that the essence of the machine was not its employment of mechanical powers, but rather its human nature, not what it produced but how it produced, he was able to anticipate that in time all human sensitivities would be embodied in machinery and that this, the human nature of industry, would be meaningless to man unless their human capacities were developed correspondingly. As he wrote in 1844:

"On the one hand, therefore, inasmuch as everywhere for man in society, objective actuality becomes the actuality of human essential capacities, human actuality and thus the actuality of his own essential capacities, all objects become for him the objectification of himself; objects affirming and realizing his individuality, his objects, he himself becomes object... Not only in thought but with all his senses, man is thus affirmed in the objective world.

"On the other hand, from the subjective point of view, just as... an object has sense for me only insofar as my essential capacity is subjective capacity for itself, because the sense of an object for me... goes just so far as my sensitivity goes, in the same way for the unmusical ear, the most beautiful music makes no sense, is not an object because my object can only be the assertion of my own essential capacity."

Then, in order to show what the emancipation of labor would mean for the emancipation of all human relations and all humanity, Marx went on to write:

"The wealth of subjective human capacity develops for the first time through the objectively unfolded wealth of human nature... For not only the five senses but also the so-called spiritual sense, the practical senses (volition, love, etc.) in a word, human sensitivity, the humanity of the senses, will be achieved for the first time by means of the existence of their object, by means of humanized nature... Thus the objectification of human essence, both theoretically and practically, is a function of making the sensitivity of man human and of creating for the whole wealth of human and natural essence a comparable human sensitivity." (ibid)

This is one of the deepest aspects of Marx's concept of historical materialism which has been concretely disclosed by the development of modern society with all its wealth in productive machinery and its poverty in social relations. The class relations of bourgeois production, by being a fetter

\*"Private Property and Communism", from the Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts of Marx, op. cit.

upon the productive powers of the workers, are also a fetter upon the development of the means of production. The yearning and capacity of the masses for universality is only the concrete proof that the emancipation of society rests with them.

"Under Penalty of Death"

Marx did not write lightly of the penalty of death which faces modern society. The problem of revolutionizing the social relations to conform to the development of the productive forces is so critical for capitalist society, and particularly for American capitalist society, that the bourgeoisie has been forced to take cognizance of it in an organized fashion. The nub of American scientific research is not, as the superficial observer might think, at the observatories of Princeton and Pasadena. It is at the various schools of Business Administration, particularly in the Eastern universities, where studies in scientific management have been going on since the end of the first world war. At Harvard, for example, under the direction of Professor Elton Mayo, the intellectual servants of the bourgeoisie have advised it that "economic logic" and "technical invention" go hand in hand with an increasing social disintegration.\* The problem of bourgeois society is not only the production of more machines, full employment, nor an increased mass of profits. It is, as the bourgeoisie recognizes with greater urgency every day, how to keep bourgeois society from falling to pieces altogether. So hostile is the working class to existing social relations that it carries on an incessant revolt in the labor process itself not only against any attempts to increase its productivity but also and essentially against any attempt to maintain productivity at all. As early as 1919, Herbert Hoover, head of the European Relief Commission, reported that what was holding up the reconstruction of Europe was "demoralized productivity." Today, the demoralized productivity is so deep-going, so pervasive, that without the destruction of class production relations and the development of universality in the workers, what society faces is the common ruin of the contending classes.

Mayo's researches, carried on in the factories, have led him to the conclusion that the workers function as a group and not as individuals. He writes:

"In every department that continues to operate, the workers have -- whether aware of it or not -- formed themselves into a group with appropriate customs, duties, routines, even rituals; and management succeeds (or fails) in proportion as it is accepted without reservation by the group as authority and leader."

The bourgeoisie is deeply disturbed at the attitudes of this working group. Nor is their concern only with the workers' hostility to the foreman, supervisor or boss. According to Mayo, the workers govern their activity in the shop by a social code which includes four axioms:

"You should not turn out too much work; -- if you do, you are a 'rate-buster.'

"You should not turn out too little work; if you do, you are a chiseler.

"You should not say anything to a supervisor which would react to the detriment of one of your associates.

\*Elton Mayo, The Human Problems of an Industrial Civilization, Harvard, 1946. See also "The Fruitful Errors of Elton Mayo", Fortune, November 1946.

"You should not be too officious; that is, if you are an inspector, you should not act like one."

These four "don'ts" are the expression of the workers' alienation from any social purpose beyond those of the protection of his working group. They symbolize the disintegration of the old social ties of bourgeois society, a disintegration going on apace at its very core. The workers create a new social tie, their class solidarity. But precisely because the class does not find within the given, i.e., capitalist society, any expression of social needs, precisely because it instinctively realizes that the existing social needs are the class needs of an alien class, this new social tie is expressed in a negative manner, creative only in devising means to oppose the given society.

Mayo goes on to say:

"Insistence upon a merely economic logic of production - especially if the logic is frequently changed - interferes with the development of...a code (of human collaboration) and consequently gives rise in the group to a sense of defeat. This human defeat results in the formation of a social code at a lower level and in opposition to the economic logic."

Mayo does not know how profound are his observations. The workers today, pressing toward the revolution in the productive forces which require their classless universality or existence as social individuals, are instead forced by the production relations of capitalism into a class community. They create new social ties negatively because the production relations prevent them from creating them positively. Their discipline, unity and organization as created by large-scale capitalism, is exercised in the service of their class, and class existence is not social existence but alien existence.

So long, therefore, as class existence is necessary, the workers cannot exercise their complete human capacities. They belong to the community "only as average individuals, only insofar as they live within the conditions of existence of their class...a relationship in which they participate not as individuals but as members of a class." (Marx, German Ideology) The desire of the workers and the economic and human necessities of society is that the workers exist as social individuals. The oppressive weight of bourgeois relations forces them to exist only as average class individuals. "The lower social code" by which they govern themselves is their only protection against the enemy class.

The capitalists fear this "lower social code" because it impedes their need for surplus value and they seek to undermine it by destroying the unity of the workers, creating company men, etc. The workers hate this code because it conflicts with their natural human desire to do a good job and forces them to subordinate their individual personalities to the defensive needs of the class. Nowhere more than in the United States is there such a sharp division "within the life of each individual so far as it is personal and insofar as it is determined by some branch of labor and the conditions pertaining to it." (German Ideology) The U.S. working class is hostile to class existence because it is a comparatively new working class without the heroic European tradition of opposition to the feudal aristocracy and the bourgeoisie. The American workers must struggle as a class and yet they find their confinement to a class position continually oppressive.

Degraded to badge numbers, the individual workers seek to distinguish themselves by their clothing, their knowledge of baseball players, movie stars, etc. They are pressing against the conditions of life of class

society. The Negroes, the most oppressed layer and therefore the layer of society most compelled to average existence against the existing alien white society, reveal this contradiction most clearly between the human need for individual expression and the class need for uniformity. They hate being regarded as Negroes and yet are determined that society should recognize their growing revolutionary mobilization as Negroes. Each individual Negro may seek individual distinction in dress etc., but the individual distinction immediately becomes a uniformity of the race.

The bourgeoisie seeks to inculcate into the workers the idea that under the new socialist society their individuality will be destroyed. With the horrible example of Stalinist Russia before their eyes, the workers are not unresponsive to this propaganda. Yet it is the class relations of bourgeois society which regiment the workers at the machine and impose average uniform existence upon their social lives. "With the community of revolutionary proletarians, on the other hand, who take their conditions of existence and those of all members of society under their control, it is just the reverse; it is as individuals that the individuals participate in it." (German Ideology)

#### The Social Individual

Marx never wrote of the new socialist society without specifically emphasizing the fully developed individual who would be the basis of such a society. But the essence of individuality for Marx was the expression of self-activity in relation to the development of the productive forces and therefore a historical and not an abstract reality. To be an individual at any stage of society's development, the person must embody the previous gains of the species and the multiplicity of talents which these have made possible.

For nearly a century, capitalism, with its fetishism of commodities, has so dulled man's understanding of himself that he has believed individualism to be indistinguishable from personal aggrandizement and competition with others. Yet, when the bourgeoisie was revolutionary, i.e., could speak in the name of society, the essential characteristic of the successful capitalist was not his increase of his private coffers at the expense of others, but rather his "enterprise" which tore apart the mysteries in which the feudal guilds had surrounded production and destroyed the local barriers separating men from one another. Because the bourgeois revolutions destroyed the fetters surrounding man's self-activity, the bourgeois individual was essentially a co-worker with other individuals, expanding the horizon of society. He was in this sense a social individual. For this reason, the bourgeois individual not only expanded his wealth but also his physical and mental capacities, creating the most vibrant, energetic and cosmopolitan individual that society had ever known.

This concept of the social individual has been lost in bourgeois society precisely because the bourgeoisie is no longer self-active, but has become the victim itself of the system which accumulates wealth at one pole while accumulating misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality and degradation at the opposite pole, i.e., on the side of the class that produces its own product in the form of capital. As Marx was the first to point out:

"Private property has made us so stupid and one-sided that an object is ours only when we have it, when it exists for us as capital, or when we possess it directly, eat it, drink it, wear it on our body, in short, use it... For all the physical and spiritual senses, therefore, the sense of possession which is the simple alienation of all these senses, has been substituted."  
("Private Property and Communism.")

Hence, with the decline of bourgeois society, or the development of all production relations into fetters upon the self-activity of individuals, the essence of the bourgeois individual becomes ruthless competition in antagonism to the rest of society. To get there the "fustest with the mostest," the bourgeois individual must deprive all men, including himself, of all the human senses. Not he but value becomes the subject. He becomes respectable only as personified capital, i.e., to the degree that he serves the self-expansion of capital.

In opposition to the ruthless antagonistic competition of the bourgeoisie, the working class exercises all its ingenuity to devise means of suppressing its productive energies, at the expense not only of the bourgeoisie but even of the working class itself. In many shops what tires the workers out is not chiefly the physical exertions of their labor but the constant attention needed not to give the company a "fair day's work," because the worker refuses to be measured in terms of a "fair day's pay." Since man's essence, is to exercise his self-activity and all his senses in a socially productive way, the slowdown, the self-imposed discipline against making suggestions for improving production, the deliberate neglect of the machine, are a constant source of frustration to the workers themselves. It is only when the routine daily struggle of the class explodes into violent activity against the bourgeoisie (the throwing of a foreman out of the window, the conflict with the police on the mass picket line, etc.), activities which require an overt exercise of their creative energies, that the workers feel themselves as human. As a result, the return from the picket line to the covert class struggle is even more frustrating than if the strike had never taken place. The molecular development of these offensives and retreats can only explode in the revolution.

If the bourgeoisie in its revolutionary days could exist as social individuals only because it unleashed the creative capacity of human forces, it is the unleashing of these more developed forces today by the proletarian revolution which will make the workers into really social individuals who will be more inclusive of society and more representative of the gains of the species than the bourgeoisie was in its day because today both the material and the human forces can become truly social.

In the very process of socialist production, "man appropriates himself as an all-sided essence in an all-sided way, hence as a whole man. Each of his human relationships to the world, seeing, hearing, smell, taste, feeling, thought, perception, experience, wishing, activity, loving; in short, all organs of his individuality, like the organs which exist directly in the form of communal organs, are in their objective behavior or in their behavior toward the object, the appropriation of it. The appropriation of human actuality, its relation to the object, is the affirmation of human actuality." (Private Property and Communism).

The solidarity of the working class in its struggle against the capitalist class is only one side of the concept of socialized labor, a side which even the AFL bureaucrat can understand. It does not by any means begin to exhaust or even approximate the profound concept of the new social ties which Marx saw as the essence of socialism. Marx well knew the vulgar Communists of his day with their crude conception of levelling, and he answered them with a historic sweep which has been amply justified by the development of the instruments of production:

"Social activity and social spirit by no means exist merely in the form of direct community activity and direct community spirit, although community activity and spirit, i.e., activity and spirit which are expressed

and asserted directly in actual society with other men, are to be found wherever such an immediate expression of sociality is based on the essential content of the activity and are suited to its nature.

"However, when I am active scientifically, i.e., engaged in activity which I myself can pursue in direct community with others, I am social because I am active as a man. Not only the material of my activity is given to me as a social product - as is the case even with language in which the thinker is active - my own existence is social activity inasmuch as what I make for myself I make also for society and with the consciousness of myself as a social essence." (Ibid.)

The division of labor in class society has created the illusion that scientific activity and social activity rests only in the contemplation of the laws of nature. The worker who longs for an overall conception of his production and its relation to others, who walks about speaking to other workers about their work, who empathically goes through the motions of his co-workers, will understand what Marx meant by scientific and social activity because it is precisely this which he is instinctively striving to create.

#### The Intellectuals and the Quest for Universality

The petty-bourgeois intellectuals, today, are also seeking for universality but in an alienated fashion because they are themselves the product of the division between manual and mental labor which is the climax of class relations. This division of labor is the culminating point of the inhumanity of class relations because it deprives both poles of the division of one essential aspect of human existence necessary to develop even their economic functions. To the degrading alienation of the manual worker from the intellectual processes of his production, there corresponds the debilitating alienation of the brain worker from the manual application of his ideas. The army aphorism that every officer needed a group of enlisted men to take care of him illustrates the impotence to which even the ruling class is condemned by this division of labor. And corresponding and arising from the monotonous repetition of certain manual tasks by the worker at the machine is the specialisation in various detailed phases of technical production by the brain worker. In the oil refining industry, for example, one technician is confined to designing the cooling towers, another to fractionating towers, a third to piping and a fourth to chemical processes. In the rest of society, the same fragmentation develops. To the nurse whose daily existence is haunted by the thermometer and the bed pan, there corresponds at the other pole the eye, ear and nose specialist who performs fifty routine tonsilectomies in a working day.

If the workers feel their incomplete humanity and struggle against it, the intellectuals and technicians are even more restless because more inclined to introspection, more isolated from one another and therefore without the means for struggle which capitalist production creates for socialized labor. Being more facile and less confined by the immediate needs of their work and with a deep-seated conviction, nourished by their status in society, that they should be universal men, they develop hobbies, create fantastic dreams of a new world or escape to the "sweet monotony of toil" close to the earth. The Utopian or True Socialists of the Romantic period of the nineteenth century were only a dim anticipation of the petty-bourgeois critics of contemporary society. The crisis is deeper, the vistas are broader and the frustrations are therefore greater.

With the decline of every society and with the consequent inability of the individuals of the ruling class to express any more the social essence of humanity, the petty-bourgeois moralists, horrified by the barbarism and

decay, begin to get lost in the philosophic jungle of counterposing the individual as representative of individuality to society as representative of totality. As Marx pointed out, in exposing the idealism of the True Socialists, "Society is abstracted from these individuals, it is made independent, it relapses into savagery on its own, and the individual suffers only as a result of this relapse." (German Ideology) That is what the Existentialists are proposing today. They would rescue the individuals from society ("Hell is other people" - Sartre).

By contrast, Marx, with his eye on the development of social activity and social objects, specifically warned: "We should especially avoid re-establishing society as an abstraction opposed to the individual. The individual is the social essence. His expression of life, although it may not appear in the direct form of a communal type life carried out simultaneously with others, is therefore an expression and assertion of social living. The individual and the species life of man are not distinct."

The basic philosophic reason for the incapacity of the petty-bourgeois intellectuals to develop the concept of the social individuals is their confinement within the vulgar materialism and uncritical idealism of declining bourgeois society, which is a reflection in thought of the class division in society between manual and mental labor. In its revolutionary days, the bourgeois ideologists could see the basis of society in the productive activity of individual men. (Adam Smith - Labor is the source of all wealth.) But with the increasing class differentiation of bourgeois society and the increasing degradation of the worker, productive activity becomes a symbol of degradation. Industry is not "regarded in connection with the essence of man" but "only in terms of the external relations of utility." Although the products of industry are in reality the "objectified essential capacities of man," they are regarded only as "useful objects in ordinary material industry." Correspondingly, the true universality of man is sought not in the productive process but only in intellectual pursuits like art, science, religion, etc.

The economists, therefore, who seek to alleviate the ills of bourgeois society, think only in terms of the underconsumption or inhuman consumption of society. The agitation around atomic energy, for example, is always in terms of its inhuman use and not in terms of the objectified human capacities which it represents and can develop. When a depression threatens, the only solution the economist can find is increased purchasing power for the workers. When automatic production is recommended, the alarm is immediately set up that it will throw men out of work and therefore leave no market. This is the typical petty-bourgeois concern exclusively with consumption and the complete indifference to the workers productive life and therefore to the essential activity of man.

Not only is this so. It cannot be otherwise so long as the degradation of the activity of the worker is the means whereby production is expanded, i.e., so long as the proletariat remains proletariat. All the concentration of the economists and the reformists upon increasing consumption is only a reflection of this essential disregard, inherent in bourgeois society, for the inhumanity of the activity of the producers. The problems of consumption will never be resolved until the release of the human capacities of the producers resolves the problems of production. That is why the proletarian revolution which will release these capacities will bring about such a profound social change. By releasing the productive forces of the producers themselves, it will also release society from the preoccupation with the end product and the accumulation and distribution of this end product. Men's thoughts can then be turned to the development of man's humanity in the process of production itself.

Marx never took his eyes off the workers' activity in production because he never lost sight of the revolution which would transform labor into a human activity. Conversely, because he always had this revolution in mind, his main concern was always the actual life of the workers. \* As he insisted: "If you proceed from production, you necessarily concern yourself with the real conditions of production and with the productive activity of men. But if you proceed from consumption, you merely declare that consumption is not at present 'human', that it is necessary to cultivate true consumption and so on. Content with this, you can afford to ignore the real living conditions and the activity of men." (German Ideology)

#### Humanistic Naturalism

The development of all-sided universal man in the productive process is the key to the solution of all relations between man and man outside the process of production. "That man is alienated from his species-essence means that one man is alienated from another and every man is alienated from human essence." ("Alienated Labor") Conversely, when man becomes all-round universal man within the process of production, he can have human relations to other men outside the process of production. This is the key not only to the quest of the intellectuals for universality, but also to the abolition of the alienated relations between the sexes and the antagonistic relations between the races.

Under the conditions of class society, the relationship of man to woman develops primarily as a sexual relationship and not as a relationship between human beings. "Because man is alienated in the productive process he feels himself more at home in his animal functions, eating, drinking, procreanting, while in his human functions he feels more like an animal." (ibid)

The more man feels alienated from his humanity in production, the more he is driven to try to find his humanity, that is, to realize himself as a man, in consumption, and particularly, in the sexual relations. This is true of the genus Man, i.e., both men and women. The more women are drawn by capitalism out of the division of labor between the sexes in the domestic sphere and into the alienated labor of production in the factory, the more they also feel at home not in their productive activity but in their sexual relations to men. For both, the sexual relation is what Marx called an animal relation because it is abstracted "from the rest of the range of human activity." (ibid) The greater the alienation in production, the greater the necessity to intensify and glorify the sexual relation with romance, etc. In the United States, this glorification has achieved its purest expression because in the United States, without feudal hangovers and with advanced industrial production, the relationship between men and women is a product of the alienated activity of both in the process of production. Within this framework the equality of the sexes is the equality of alienated man and alienated women.

Within the framework of class society, therefore, the emancipation of women is an emancipation of them as females and not as human beings. In order for the sexual relation to become a human relation, i.e., for eating,

\* See "A Workers' Inquiry" by Karl Marx in which one hundred and one questions are asked of the workers themselves, dealing with everything from lavatories, soap, wine, strikes and unions to "the general physical, intellectual, and moral conditions of life of the working man and woman in your trade." (N.I., Dec. 1938 Reprinted).



drinking, and procreating which are also human functions, to become human relations, it is necessary that the genus Man be emancipated from alienated labor.

This is not to deny the importance of women struggling as women for emancipation. The workers must assert themselves as a class in order to achieve recognition as human beings and in order to recognize their own strength as human beings. Their class struggle is "the necessary form and energetic principle of the immediate future but it is not as such the goal of human development and the form of human society." (Private Property and Communism) Analogously, in order for women not to have to assert themselves as women in order to achieve recognition, it is necessary that the genus Man not be driven to seek in the opposite sex what Marx called his "common needs" rather than his "human needs."

A revolution in the relations between man and woman requires a revolution in the mode of production according to the development of the wealth of human capacities contained in industry and hence also in man. "The restricted relation of man to nature determines their restricted relation to one another." (German Ideology) Today, the basis for overcoming this restricted relation of man to nature lies in the appropriation of the productive powers by man. There can thus be built a new economical foundation for a human rather than a restricted relation between the sexes. In no sphere of human relations will the new social ties be more obvious. As Marx wrote in his polemic against the Vulgar Communists who sought freedom from monogamy in communal women, & freedom from private property in communal property:

"In this relationship, there is sensuously disclosed, reduced to an evident fact to what extent the human essence of man has become that of nature, or to what extent nature has become the human essence of man. From this relationship, we can judge the whole stage of development of man. From the character of this relation, it follows to what degree man as a species has become human and has recognized himself as such. The relationship of man to woman is the most natural relationship of man to man. In it is revealed to what degree the natural behavior of man has become human and to what degree human essence has become his natural essence. In this relationship is also shown to what degree the needs of man have become human needs, to what degree the needs of man have become human needs, to what degree another human being is needed as a human being, to what degree, he, in his most individual existence, has at the same time a communal essence." (Private Property and Communism)

The antagonisms between the races will also find its final resolution only through the development of all-sided universal man in the process of production. The Negro is forced by the oppression of his race in the existing, i.e. capitalist society, to fight as a Negro. This nationalistic revolt continually shakes the stability of the existing society and is therefore one of the most important contributing factors to the success of the proletarian revolution. Yet, at such times as there appears to be a signal disproportion between the revolutionary activity of the Negroes and that of the white workers, the tension between the races appears to increase rather than abate.

However, in the social community that is created in the heat of the class struggle, e.g. in the sitdown strikes which built the CIO, the relations between white and Negro workers are the relations between revolutionary men, i.e. men who feel themselves bound in a social cause and

therefore instinctively recognize themselves and each other as universal men, social individuals. The pattern laid in this self-mobilization is the pattern which will be created in the process of production itself by the social revolution. A completely new mode of production will be created which will develop the men of both races as universal all-sided men who can have human relations rather than race relations with one another.

So long as each man has an exclusive sphere of activity which is forced upon him and from which he cannot escape, he must have an alienated relation to other men and particularly to those men from which an easy distinction can be made on superficial characteristics. The inhumanity of man to man is the result of the inhumanity of every man in his specifically human, i.e. productive functions. The increasing frustration of man in production drives him to an increasing alienation from his fellow men outside the process of production. Only through the development of all-sided men will this process be reversed. The alternative is a police state to hold together the men alienated from one another in society.

Thus, all problems of social relations in the crisis of contemporary society, the alienation of the manual and mental workers, the family, the state, race tensions, -- all drive us back to the one essential problem -- how to release the humanity of man in the process of production. It was by keeping his eye on the process of production that Marx was able to develop a truly social philosophy in which all men, of both sexes, of all races and of all occupations, were viewed as all-round human beings. This philosophy he called "humanistic naturalism" or naturalistic humanism. Civilization has never known and could never have known a more human philosophy because civilization has never known a situation where the developed existence of industry is what Marx called "the opened book of human capacities." The bourgeoisie must keep this book closed. The proletarian revolution will force it open and release all those imprisoned within the alienation and fragmentation of bourgeois society.

#### The Idealism of the Bourgeoisie

No ruling class has ever been able to maintain itself for long in the face of contempt from the masses as to its economic powers. The workers today have lost all respect for the bourgeoisie as technical administrators. They do not so much hate the bourgeoisie as despise it. The workers everywhere say: "It is getting so that supervision don't give a damn about anything." The war brought this contempt to a head when the workers found that, despite the propaganda about the boys at the front, they had to loaf on the job because the management had no plan for production. The workers recognize that the bourgeoisie's only respectability remains its right to hire and fire, and in strike after strike in the post-war wave, they have defied this cherished prerogative.

Knowing that its economic logic has carried it to this impasse and terrified by the production revolts of the workers, the bourgeoisie is seeking today to resolve its crisis by teaching the bosses to be social administrators rather than technical administrators. Listen to Elton Mayo:

"We do not lack an able administrative elite but the elite of the several civilized powers is at present insufficiently posted in the biological and social facts involved in social organization and control."

"If at all critical posts in communal activity we had intelligent persons capable of analyzing an individual or group attitude in terms of, first

the degree of logical misunderstanding manifest; second, the non-logic of social codes in action, and third, the irrational exasperation symptomatic of conflict and baffled effort; if we had an elite capable of such analysis, many of our difficulties would dwindle to vanishing point."

This is the idealism which if organized into political form would be nothing less than Fascism. The big bourgeoisie of Germany created Hitlerism for precisely these ends.

Organic to bourgeois society is the concept that the masses must be administered. If technical administration does not keep them quiet, then social administration must be introduced. If social administration by private capitalists does not succeed in obtaining the collaboration of the workers, then there must be organized social administration of the masses by the state. Every solution to the discontent of the workers is possible for the bourgeoisie except the one solution which would get at the roots of the discontent, namely, the appropriation by the workers of all the knowledge, science and control which is incorporated in industry.

The bourgeoisie is unable to surrender to the workers the human nature of industry. They must therefore construct a theory that the psychological problems of the workers constitute the human nature of the workers. Compare with this Marx's conception of human psychology as the "opened book of human capacities!" The gap between the psychological problems of the workers and their psychological capacities is not only a theoretical one. It is firmly rooted in the class relations. The bourgeoisie therefore seeks to fill it by creating a mediator. As Marx wrote 100 years ago:

"Every self-alienation of man from himself and from nature appears in the relationship by which he surrenders himself and nature to another man differentiated from him. Thus religious self-alienation necessarily appears in the relationship of the layman to the priest, or also, since it is here a question of the intellectual world, to a mediator. In the practical actual world, self-alienation can only appear through the practical actual relation to another man." (Alienated labor)

The bourgeoisie thinks that by listening sympathetically to the personal troubles of the workers, they will thereby give dignity to labor and personality to the workers. The administrator must be a "good listener", giving the workers a place where they can pour out their personal problems. This is the confessional of the personnel office, Mr. Anthony in the shop. It is the modern version of the priestly confessional.

The Catholic Church was developed to mediate between man and God, who according to the Christian doctrine was only the human nature of man (Christ). In the same way, today, an elite of psychiatrists is to be developed to mediate between the workers and their human nature embodied in industry. The elite is to become man's priestly nature.

But unlike the priests of the Catholic Church, today's mediators between the workers and their human nature must exercise a total control over the workers precisely because of the striving for totality and universality in the workers. If the control of the total situation is not exercised by the workers, then the mediators must exercise total control of all aspects of the workers' lives. If the social productive powers of the workers are not enriched, then the knowledge by the administrators of the physiology, psychology and sociology of the workers must be thoroughly organized. The solution proposed by Mayo can arise only out of the contempt for the working class as organic to the bourgeoisie and its hired prize-fighters. But for precisely

this reason this contempt is not to be dismissed lightly. When challenged, it passes very easily over into fear and desperate counter-revolutionary measures. One year after the defeat of Hitler in Europe, Mayo's book originally written in 1935, was reprinted by Harvard University. It is a warning not only to the workers but also to the petty-bourgeoisie which continues to bury its soul in individual psychiatry when the bourgeoisie is laying a base for mass psychiatry.

The consultants to the bourgeoisie today offer the same solution to the class antagonism as Hegel offered in his time to the Prussian state. What they are calling for are wiser men, better administrators, men who have a consciousness of the new "psychological reality of 1947." As Hegel, viewing the extreme opposition of classes, demanded that a universal class be adapted to the task of mediation (Philosophy of Right), so the bourgeois consultants today seek to embody universal knowledge in the administrative elite. In 1819, Hegel began only with the idealism of the intellectuals and their fear of the masses. He had to end with the concept of the totalitarian state. There was no other alternative. Any attempt to make the masses object rather than subject, any attempt to take the initiative away from them at a time when their objective and subjective need it to assume the complete initiative, can only end by stamping out all their initiative. Fascist Germany has given us living proof that as soon as this occurs, barbarism for the rest of the nation follows immediately.

But if this is the perspective today without the social revolution, it is also a guide to the all-sided development of man which the proletarian revolution must introduce. The only effective struggle against Fascism is the revolutionary struggle for universal man. As the Lutheran revolution destroyed the priest as mediator and permitted man to become his own interpreter of human nature in God, so the proletarian revolution must destroy every barrier which mediates between the workers and the objectively unfolded wealth of their human nature. Thus, as the young Marx discerned: "If Protestantism is not the true solution, it is the true posing of the solution. It is no longer a question of the struggle of the layman with the priest outside him; it is a question of the struggle with his own inner priest, his priestly nature." (Introduction to the Critique of the Hegelian Philosophy of Right.)

#### The Workers' Critique of Politics

The rise of Fascism and the impotence of political democracy as a weapon against it have robbed the petty-bourgeoisie of the illusion that its arguments and ideas were the locomotive of history. Unable to understand their loss, the petty-bourgeoisie today seeks to build its own philosophic community where ideas hold sway and what is important is not what men think but the fact that they think.

But the crisis of the petty-bourgeoisie is the crisis of politics and here, as always, the instinctive attitudes of the working class are our guide. The American worker has always been supremely indifferent to politics. Three hundred and sixty-five days in the year, it mattered little or nothing to him whether a Democrat or a Republican held office. And on the three hundred and sixty-sixth day, he usually cared only if it was a presidential year and if he was interested in the candidate as a personality. This lack of political interest has its roots in the American development. The experience of the workers has been that Democratic or Republican, whatever the differences or lack of difference in the platform, successful candidates acted according to the needs of the American capitalist economy. Jefferson was elected as a representative of the agrarian little man. In office, he had to act in such a way as to develop manufacturing in the United States.

Because different political parties have made so little difference to the actual development of the American economy, politics has been mainly a competition between different interest groups, organized into political machines, to cut for themselves bigger slices of the American pie. The pie was enormous and the politicians were begrudged their cuts only occasionally. Particularly in the cities where the political machines ruled during the invasion of immigrants from Europe, there was complete candor between the machine and the voters as to the code governing elections. Politics was an exchange of votes for the very real if inexpensive favors on the many problems that beset the foreign-born worker in a confusing new environment. However with the integration of the immigrant workers and the passing of the political machine, the machinery of politics was exposed in all its nakedness. The result has been that the American workers are beginning to make their own profound critique of politics as a fraud and a deception making no difference to their actual life.

In this, the American workers express with unerring instinct the same truth which Marx arrived at by his thoughtful study of the French Revolution. Politics, Marx said, was profoundly and essentially bourgeois. Its basis is the domination of one class over another and its consolation is that it provides the individual who is actually alienated in his material life with the illusion that he is participating in a social community. In their striving for complete emancipation, men go through the stage of political emancipation because it represents a progressive step over the domination of men by the opiate of religion. Religion gives men the illusion of democracy only in the heavenly kingdom. Political democracy at least brings the kingdom closer to earth.

But "political emancipation is the reduction of man, on the one side, to the member of bourgeois society, to the egoistic independent individual, on the other side, to the citizen, to the moral person." The more man is alienated from his true humanity in the process of production as a worker, the stronger must be the opiate that he is a social individual in his political relationships as a citizen. Hence, the necessity for the Fascist state. But "not until the real individual man is identical with the citizen and has become a generic being in his empirical life, in his individual work, in his individual relationships, not until man has recognized and organized his own capacities as social capacities, and consequently the social force is no longer divided by the political power, not until then will human emancipation be achieved."

That is what Marx conceived as socialism - the actual appropriation by the workers in their productive material life, of their human capacities. Politics and the state would wither away, because it would no longer be necessary to maintain the illusory political community.

The analysis which Marx made of politics applies not only to bourgeois politics but to all attempts to substitute the political community for the actual community of emancipated man in the labor process. Thus, what dominates the life of the United States today is not the bourgeois parliament in Washington, which is at this moment beginning to appear as little more than an investigations committee, but what has been wisely called the "economic parliaments" of the trade union councils and conventions. It is the trade unions which today form the political community for millions of workers and to which therefore must be applied the Marxist criticism of politics.

The American worker today has transferred his cynicism regarding bourgeois politics to trade union politics. In the trade union hall and at trade union meetings, he sees different caucuses vying for power and for the administration of the union. For the life of him, he cannot understand why the labor leaders whom he has created should behave as they do. The answer to this question must be sought in the actual development of the capitalist mode

of production. Thereby, we can not only explain the labor bureaucracy to the workers but also to itself.

A labor union like the United Steel Workers of America embraces close to a million workers and includes not only steel foundries but ironore mines of the Mesabi, the aluminum rolling mills of Alcoa, Tennessee, the locomotive shops of Schenectady and the can factories of San Francisco. The structure of such a union is an industrial government with branches and divisions, not only paralleling those of the steel monopolies but even rivaling those of the national government. There is a legal department, a research and engineering department, a contract department, an accounting department, and a legislative department. The trade union machinery corresponds department for department, plant for plant, company for company, city for city, state for state to the machinery of the bourgeoisie.

The overall operations of such a union are the means whereby unity and continuity of production is maintained for different industrial units all the way from the mining of ore to the finishing of steam shovels. The United Steel Workers Union has been aptly termed U.S.A. The petty-bourgeoisie rants about the control which such giant unions have over the country. The big bourgeoisie knows that without these unions, it would be absolutely impossible for it to keep production going for more than a few days. Modern society has reached the point where what is decisive is not the interlocking of financial wealth or directorates but the interlocking of production. For this the union or some kind of organization of labor is absolutely essential.

The union contract which is the constitution of this industrial government is the modus operandi of the actual process of production. It contains the analysis, breakdown and codification of the actual labor process of the millions of workers engaged in these industries. The most important features of the union contract are not the wage rates nor even the hours, but rather the enacting rules and regulations regarding classifications of work, conditions of labor, piece-rates, etc.

These classifications and rulings are the classifications and rulings of the alienated, fragmented activity of the workers. They are the modern analogue of the old guild restrictions of feudal society. But whereas the guild restrictions were a barrier to the division of labor necessary to unlock the mysteries of production, today's codifications of alienated labor are a barrier to the reintegration and synthesis necessary to revolutionize the process of production. The revolutionary potentialities inherent in the productive forces, both material and human, have reached the point where the codification of the alienated labor process is a restriction on the economic necessities and actual yearnings of the workers for universality and reintegration.

The union contract governs the life of the worker from morning to night, during every minute of his working hours. The petty-bourgeois concept of the "social contract" was the myth of isolated individuals in which each counted only as one in forming the political community. The union contract is the actual reality of the fragmented individual in the labor process. The workers defend the union contract as a weapon against the bourgeoisie given the present relations of production. Not to defend the contract would intensify their exploitation because it would enable the bourgeoisie to force upon them a quantitative increase in the alienated labor, which would be qualitatively the same as they are doing now. Moreover, and even more important is the fact that the workers have won the contract through class warfare and see it as a symbol of victories won against the bourgeoisie. At the same time, instinctively, the workers feel that the classifications only codify their alienation.

The workers fight hard for better contracts, they demand that the labor leaders get better contracts but at best the reforms remain within the framework of alienated labor and only decrease its quantity.

#### The Dilemma of the Labor Leadership

The labor leader of today has no special privileges or skills to protect as did the organized workers of the old craft unions. More often than not, he has but recently come from the bench, and in actual salary and standard of living does not exceed the workers whom he represents. What corrupts the labor leadership is its role in the process of production itself. The labor leadership is the administrator of the union contract.

Because the labor bureaucracy represents the divisions of labor within the capitalist mode of production, its representation of the ranks must turn into an administration of the ranks. The labor bureaucracy is the agent of the workers but it is the agent of the alienated, i.e. semi-skilled workers. It is not, like the old Social-Democracy, an agent of the capitalists but it is a representative of the capitalist mode of production. The labor bureaucracy sits down with the capitalists and works out time-studies and classifications, not because he is collaborating with them as individuals but because they both represent the capitalist mode of production.

The wildcat strikes which have dotted the American landscape since the middle of the war are an expression of the hostility of groups of workers in isolated departments here and there against an alienated character of their labor. Once begun, they become the signal for other workers in other departments to revolt against the general alienation. The sharp words of a foreman, 90° heat, a new division of labor, any one of those can bring about a wildcat strike which erupts in the midst of the interlocking "socialized production" between the various industrial plants. It is precisely for this reason that the labor bureaucracy is so hostile to the wildcat strikes. The union bureaucracy represents the unification and stabilization of alienated labor. The wildcat strikes represent a revolt against alienated labor. The union bureaucracy pledges union responsibility in exchange for union security, but it cannot deliver because union responsibility depends on the ranks, and the ranks do not regard the stabilization of the status quo in production as their mission. The bureaucracy prefers well-organized national strikes to wildcats. Production is paralyzed as a whole, there is no disruption of the interlocking of production, and with everything shut down, there is no necessity for the mass picket lines which can erupt into conflicts with the state.

But the trade unions are not only a structuralization of the existing mode of production. They are also the fruit of the expanding unity of the workers, a unity expanding along with the cooperative form of the labor process and exploding in the strikes which organize the union in opposition to the bourgeoisie. In this sense, they are schools of communism for the workers and have an intrinsically political character whether or not they take political expression on the parliamentary arena. It is this aspect of the trade union movement, the fact that they represent a political movement of the working class against the bourgeoisie, which the capitalists fear most and which they are always seeking to undermine. Similarly it is this aspect of the trade unions which the workers are most prepared to defend against any attempts of the bourgeois state to destroy their organized strength.

In the same way, the labor leadership is not only the representative of the bourgeois mode of production but also the militant leadership thrown up by the mass movement. In this sense, the labor leadership represents the social movement of the masses against their alienated labor, represents their creative unity in action, and their need to appropriate the instruments of production in the all-sided way which, as we have shown, is only possible with a completely new mode of production.

The trade union leadership therefore has a dual character. It is the administrator for the capitalist mode of production but it maintains its hold on the masses only through the social, political and economic gains which it represents to the masses as a result of past struggles and as a promise of the future.

The Roman Emperors could not develop a mode of production which would give employment to the proletariat which had known free labor. They had therefore to give them bread and circuses and a political empire in which they could serve as overlords. The trade union bureaucracy, prisoner of the alienated labor of capitalist production, cannot satisfy the much more deeply rooted yearnings of the modern proletariat for a mode of production in which they can freely exercise their natural and acquired powers. It must therefore attempt by all forms of social programs, e.g., the health, educational and recreational programs of the ILCNU, the political programs of the CIO-PAO, the program for "wage increases without price increases" of Reuther, the welfare funds of Lewis, to justify its leadership of the workers. All the secondary aspects of the misery of the proletariat, the labor leadership can tackle, all material needs it can seek to satisfy, but the basic human need in the proletariat to appropriate the social productive powers in the labor process itself, that the trade union leadership cannot tackle as long as it functions as an integral part of the trade union machinery built on the existing mode of production.

It is a typical misconception of class society that the real universality of man is not to be found in the labor process but in pursuits outside of it, in religion, art, politics, literature, etc. When the bourgeoisie was revolutionary, this class conception of the division of labor between leisure activities and productive activities was for a brief period subordinated in the common struggle of the bourgeoisie and the workers for "free enterprise" and vigorous industrial development. But inherent in the wage labor on which capitalist production is built is the ideology that productive activity is merely a means to existence rather than the first necessity of human existence. Productive activity, in other words, is considered in bourgeois society to be labor, a means to satisfaction of needs and not a humanhood. The shortening of the working day has been regarded as a means whereby the worker could have more hours to himself outside of production rather than as a means whereby his productive hours could become more human. Yet productive activity is the distinguishing characteristic of the human species, and to unleash such productive activity by developing the all-sided individual in the process of production is the objective of the socialist revolution.

The labor bureaucracy cannot tackle the essential question of the inhuman activity of man in the labor process, because to do that it would have to represent a more human and therefore more productive mode of labor. In other words, it would have to pose the social revolution to the workers, not necessarily or even primarily as insurrection, but rather as the solution of all concrete day-to-day problems in a revolutionary manner. Unless it does this, it must remain confined within the bourgeois ideology of wealth and poverty in material terms.



- 1 - 2 - 4

97

The Struggle for Social Liberation

The trade union leadership of today degenerates into feuding political machines like the capitalist parties of yesterday because the necessary revolutionary development of production, which is now on the order of the day, rests not with it but with the objective needs of the economy rooted in the workers at the bench. Unless one of the competing political machines is of a revolutionary character, it makes no essential difference to the workers in the actual process of production. Essentially, each would have to administer the alien mode of production as did his predecessors since each is the prisoner of this framework.

But there is one big difference between the capitalist politicians and the labor politicians. The workers to which the trade union politicians must appeal are not the immigrants and dispersed artisans, mechanics and laborers of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Rather they are highly concentrated, organized, and disciplined, by production, and they have a deep yearning for social change. Therefore, to capture the allegiance and votes not only of the workers in his own industry but of the nation's workers, and even that of the petty-bourgeoisie, a labor politician like Routhier must put forward a comprehensive program for a New Deal as did the bourgeois politician Roosevelt in an earlier period. Routhier is perfectly aware that the whole movement of industry is in the direction of more extreme centralization of capital and socialization of labor. He is playing his political cards with this in mind. But as Marx pointed out in his analysis of Napoleon III, what appears in one period as tragedy, must appear in its imitation as farce. The American workers have gotten over the shock of the 1929 depression and the relative passivity which made them receptive to Roosevelt's New Deal. Routhier may stop half-way. The American workers will not. Any movement which would place Routhier at the head of the nation would be the result of such a self-mobilization of the nation's workers and such an attempt to rid themselves of the whole alienation of capitalist production that the labor bureaucracy would either be forced into a counter-revolutionary dictatorship against them or such a fumbling and confusion as would make the impotence of Atlee in Britain look like superb statesmanship.

So much does the trade union machinery correspond to the alienation of capitalist production itself, so sharp is the contradiction within the trade union activist between his role as representative of the social movement of the proletariat and his duties as representatives of the capitalist mode of production, that it is not uncommon for the trade union militants who helped form the CIO in 1936-37 to be returning to their benches or to shop stewardships, relinquishing their posts to ex-AFofL leaders, professional labor leaders, lawyers, etc. They are some of the material from which the revolutionary leadership of the next period will come. The theoretical answer to their problems, as it is the answer to the problems of all layers of society, is in the understanding of the social movement which brought them to leadership in the mass strikes of 1936-37.

Every major struggle by the workers is a struggle to leap from the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom. When the struggle is over, and the gains have been crystallized in higher wages, shorter hours and union security, it appears that the essence of the movement was not the creative energies of the masses bursting in the seams of capitalist society but rather the concrete ends achieved. The CIO, however, coming in a period when particularly in the United States, an industrial revolution was taking place, when the whole world was agitated by the barbarisms of capitalism and when new deals and new social orders were part of the mental environment of every worker, still retains its revolutionary content in the memories of the workers who participated in its formation. Their hostility to the labor bureaucracy is

an expression of their determination not to allow the CIO to become a routine appendage to the capitalist mode of production. As the bourgeois analyst Peter Drucker has pointed out, it is this revolutionary content to their unions which makes the workers today press upon their leaders to fight it out rather than to negotiate. In essence, the CIO was a social crusade, an attempt on the part of the American workers to rise to their historic destiny and reconstruct society on new beginnings.

In the battles to defend their unions which the workers today are anticipating, what will emerge is not merely a defense but rather the organic revolutionary tendencies of the working class, united in action, to build a new society. As Lenin once said: "When a worker defends his country, it is the instinct of the oppressed man which speaks." The union today is for many workers their "nation." Their defense of it will be their fight for social liberation from all oppression.

In a backward semi-feudal country like the Russia of 1917 where political power was forced upon the proletariat by the bankruptcy of the tiny bourgeoisie, the proletariat had not had the chance to mature economically and political power was the framework within which it had to supervise the bourgeois technicians, managers, etc. while developing its own capacities for appropriating the means of production in a human way. The revolution degenerated in Russia essentially because the power was taken away from the workers and the predominantly peasant masses did not have sufficient opportunity to develop human productive capacities. In a country like the USA, however, where the bourgeoisie because of the absence of feudal restrictions and its relative strength vis-a-vis the rest of the world, has been able to maintain an imposing political front, the invading socialist society has been eating away at capitalism in the process of production itself. The political revolution may have been delayed but when the proletariat seizes power and in its revolutionary unity rids itself of the muck of ages, it will be revealed in all its capacities as the only force which will found society completely anew on the basis of the universality of man.

August 31, 1947

- Ria Stone

INTERNATIONAL  
BULLETIN

OF THE  
JOHNSON  
FOREST  
TENDENCY

Bulletin #9

September 11, 1947

CONTENTS

Part I

To The Proletariat

Part II

A Concrete Example of Party Building ..... by Irving Marnin

15 CENTS

1126

TO THE PROLETARIAT

Note: We print below a section from the Reconversion Program which the Johnson-Forest tendency submitted to the 1946 Convention of the Workers Party as a supplement to our American Resolution. The extract deals with the use of the program by the party.  
\*\*\*\*\*

The slogan of a four hour day and a five day week should be the central slogan by which the party brings to the masses:

- a. its concrete conceptions of a socialist order
- b. its immediate step-gap for any mass unemployment

That the workers might not immediately accept it is not an argument against the slogan. Its significance is that, not being posed merely as 20 hours a week, it allows the party propagandistically to raise all questions of capitalist relations of production, and consumption (leisure, education, for higher productivity, emancipation and equality of women, etc.) in concrete terms, understandable to the workers.

At the same time, Section II of the Program enables propaganda to revolve around the simplest and most immediate of issues, fighting the high cost of living, the release of American soldiers, etc.

The mere reading of the program must be an education for the workers. The program aims at making concrete the workers' resentment against the bloody chaos of contemporary capitalist society and linking the struggle for immediate demands to the need and the concrete vision of a civilized life for the working class.

The program at the same time must fortify the worker against the specific capitalist propaganda of the age, the incessant hammering into the workers' mind that socialism and planned economy mean totalitarianism. For this, among other reasons, the program emphasizes always the active intervention of the masses themselves, their self-activity, their self-mobilization, as the embryonic form even under capitalism of the full democracy of the working class which will in time unloose their full creative power and safeguard them against totalitarianism of any kind. Part II of the program gives the immediate concrete axis for struggle. It can be changed and supplemented as the concrete situation demands.

The program, by constantly emphasizing the activity of the workers as a social force in the process of solving social problems, makes the workers grasp the conception not only of socialism as plenty for all, tomorrow or in the distance, but of the self-mobilization of the masses today as the need and duty of the working class, leading inevitably to violent social revolution tomorrow. Thus, the working class is made to see social revolution as the inevitable end of its attempt not only to win a decent life but to substitute its own activity for the tyranny of capital and the bureaucratic leading strings of its labor lieutenants.

The program does not hide the idea of revolutionary action or seek to smuggle it in as some discovery to be made by the workers at the last moment. Addressing itself to the militant workers, it guides itself and attempts to teach the workers the truths of communism and the methods of social revolution. Not to do this is to deny our whole analysis of the epoch and to create an imaginary working class which at this stage is unable to produce sufficient workers who are able to understand from the Workers Party the harsh truths of modern society.



A CONCRETE EXAMPLE OF THE PROBLEMS OF PARTY BUILDING

The History of a Branch of the Workers Party, 1940-47

Introduction

The Johnson-Forest tendency has written many resolutions and articles which fully document the political and organizational degeneration of the WP since its establishment in 1940 as a result of the split from the SWP. This article is not an attempt to add to the political arsenal which has been produced and which all can read in such documents as: Balance Sheet: The Workers Party and the Johnson-Forest Tendency; Education, Propaganda and Agitation; our Resolutions on the American Question and on Building the American Bolshevik Party; etc. Our purpose here is to give a detailed history of one branch of the WP, its Philadelphia section, in order to demonstrate what actually happened to the party as a whole during the course of its development and disintegration.

In 1940, the leadership of the WP, and the membership, were primarily concerned with the central problem of our movement since its inception - how to build a mass-revolutionary party in America. For many years after, it remained a concern of the comrades which was never resolved. From convention to convention of the WP, from one Active Workers' Conference to another, from party crisis to party crisis, this was the question which made all others subordinate. The general history of the party has been placed before the movement on more than one occasion during discussions of this and other questions.

Within the WP, national and local programs of action were drawn up and reviewed from time to time, but still the problem remained with them, as it does with us - how to recruit and hold workers in the party, how to penetrate into the mass working class movement with revolutionary ideas and impress upon the workers the necessity of building a revolutionary party as the instrument of their liberation. That is the problem for this generation of revolutionaries, and at the same time it is the most difficult of solution. It cannot be answered simply by taking pen in hand and referring to our masters, but it is essential that we approach the problem with the method of Marx and Trotsky, and not with the method of petty-bourgeois empiricism and impressionism. Above all, it requires patience and firmness and a resistance to all the spokesmen of despair and all the seekers after "new methods." The tools have been supplied by others who came before us. It is left for us to apply them correctly.

This detailed history of one branch of the WP, a study of its development, its problems, its methods of work, and an evaluation of that work, serves to concretize the different theories which various comrades have offered as explanations of our failures and as methods leading to solution. In such a study it is possible to observe how the different theories actually worked out in their practical application. Particularly is this true of the Philadelphia branch, where all stages of the WP's development were sharply delineated and where varied methods of party building were employed.

In the study of this one branch we can see the movement from the propaganda circle to the factories; from the factories to the problem of recruiting workers along the lines of Erber's "small mass party" technique; from the recruitment of workers to the problem of integration and the catastrophic loss of virtually all of them; a consequent recession back, for a time, to the propaganda circle having contact only with petty-bourgeois radicals and then back to the factories in a half-hearted manner. We see here the enthusiasm of the initial effort and the growth of discontent and disillusionment. All that the party

experienced nationally, and more, was also experienced by this one branch. It could almost be called a "case history."

The problems of the party are not primarily those connected with the mechanical functioning of an organization, important as they are, such as the ability of the organizers or the leading committees in the locals, or the smooth functioning in the center, or even the question of forces. Rather, the central problem of party building is the most highly political one, inseparably connected with, and a part of, the vital political questions facing the movement. In fact it is the most important of all political questions. Any criticisms of individuals in the course of this article, which by its very nature must deal with individuals to some extent, must be understood in this context.

The article will contain four main sections - the very titles of which are a summary of the history of the party:

- 1) The Propaganda Circle
- 2) Into The Factories
- 3) The "Small Mass Party"
- 4) The Reckoning (Loss of workers, regression and the later return to the factories.

The membership and activities of the branch will be documented as much as possible so that the movement may study this motion picture of a process of development and disintegration. If we can go forward in any way as a result of this study, the article will have served its purpose.

#### The Propaganda Circle

"In the last analysis the crisis is a search for a way out. The party is seeking a way out of the stagnation of the past 18 months. No one reported any successes or any satisfaction with the previous year and a half's work. The picture was gray, relieved only with black." ("The Roots of the Party Crisis" - J.R. Johnson, 1940)

The Philadelphia section of the SWP was typical of most of the local branches of the then united party. It was engaged in the usual type of propaganda work which characterized our movement at that time. The branch and youth combined had a total of approximately 50 members, of which some 35 left to form the WP after the split. The entire SWP group was composed of petty bourgeois intellectuals which was also characteristic of the party on a national scale. The local was highly political, its educational work was on a very high level, and its activities paralleled those of the national organization. Its only peculiarity was that a better than 2-to-1 majority had taken the position of the minority tendency in the SWP.

The campaigns of the WP and its youth section after the split centered about the anti-war and anti-conscription activity of the party. Its contacts and sympathizers, and its entire periphery was of the same general social composition as the party itself. We were recruiting, at least the youth was, in "our own image." The "stagnation" which was one of the causes of the split was in no way resolved by the establishment of an independent organization. Internally, the party branch was sharply divided by a factional fight led by two of the party veterans. The newcomers could not discover what the issues were and were inclined to blame "personalities." The feud was condemned by the Youth Organization with the brusque statement - "A plague on both your houses." Actually, the very existence of such a fierce organizational division, where no clear issues were present,

was indicative of the unhealthy state of the branch, an expression in a somewhat perverted fashion of the attempt to "seek a way out."

The branch was engaged in some neighborhood work in a Negro section of the city where its anti-war propaganda was warmly received, but no concrete results were obtained in the way of active party sympathizers or recruits. The youth concentrated its efforts in a working class section of the city where its propaganda was more and more hostilely received with the approach of the war, and finally the youth was virtually chased out of the area physically. However, the youth section was far ahead of the party in adopting a proletarian and factory orientation.

This first year of the party's life was characterized by extremely high morale and enthusiasm. The comrades were prepared to make any sacrifice which the party requested of them. The Political Committee of the WP recognized this branch as by far the best in the country and commented favorably on its work more than once. Outside of New York it was the largest branch of the WP.

Another characteristic of this period was the almost total lack of recruiting. The usual party work of distributions of the paper and of some public meetings were carried out, but the party was leading an essentially semi-illegal existence in preparation for the expected harassment when the war broke out. A beginning was made in the turn to industrialization, but only a beginning. Practically the only additions to the branch were 6 comrades "colonized" from New York, all youth. In the first year or two of the party's life, 17 people dropped out, 12 of whom had been members before the split and were the kind whose separation from the party represents no serious loss. Three youth members were lost and two of the recruits to the youth organization. When the next period began, there were actually only 20 comrades in the branch, and this figure was also destined to be cut by severe losses to the army.

Thus began the WP. Its "democratic dynamism" proved to be no substitute for the "bureaucratic conservatism" of the SWP, so the first of the solutions was offered - "Into the Factories."

#### "Into The Factories"

The WP leadership and membership recognized that it was impossible to build a revolutionary working class party when the party itself was physically separated and isolated from the proletariat and its mass organizations. They "turned to" with a will to end that isolation and to begin the work of party building. The party as a whole faced the problem squarely and attacked it head on. The party members had to penetrate the union movement in a physical sense in order to begin the work of political penetration.

In a very brief space of time almost every available comrade got a job in some factory, including some of the 17 who dropped out during this period. From the summer of 1941 to the summer of 1942, while the party was developing speed in the industrialization program some notable recruitment took place. In this second year, the party recruited 4 petty-bourgeois youth, two of whom industrialized themselves. One Negro youth was recruited and 1 working class youth. Two workers joined the party and 2 other people joined. Of these ten, all but one left the movement after less than a year's membership, some of them remaining for only a few months. By the winter of 1943, only one youth was left. We will come back to this "boxscore" of the party membership later in this section.



The Nature of Party Activity: The Work at Factory "B"

By autumn of 1941, the Philadelphia section of the party presented the following picture. It was composed of three branches of about 10 members each. One branch was more or less a "youth" branch which concentrated its work in the Kensington area of the city, which was mentioned in the previous section of the article. Their activity included the holding of public meetings, the sale of the paper from door to door and the anti-war "sticker campaign." The work was performed in a vigorous fashion but furnished little reward. A second branch was primarily concerned with its work in the party concentration point at Factory "B" and with the building of a forum for a few industrial contacts. Here, too, everyone was confident and enthusiastic about the future of the party, and there was no problem of getting people to do work. The third branch was doing work in a Negro neighborhood, but was making little progress. The internal life of the party was relatively peaceful, the discussions of political questions and the general political level of the party was still high. All felt that the party was on the road to real success.

The nature and topics of the internal education were still of the old variety. No real change had taken place in this aspect of the life of the movement. The majority of contacts remained our "twins" from the point of view of their interests and social backgrounds. But some progress could be noted in the general direction of the party's activity and work. Forums and classes were held which were principally for internal consumption, with the exception of those held by the Industrial branch and the occasional forums conducted by the Kensington Branch. A mass distribution of the paper at the "B" plant was carried out regularly, but there were still no subscriptions. More and more comrades were getting into industry. The turn had definitely been made and now the party worked and waited for the turn to bring the results which all confidently expected.

In the "B" plant, both comrades were active on the organizing committee, one was chairman of the Volunteer Organizers - a post which he continued to hold after he had been fired for union activity. The other comrade was a member of the youth with no union experience, which was also the usual thing for our party at that time. The entire party was concerned with the organization of the plant, but no actual party work or contacting was done. We were party members in the trade unions but we were not working for the party in the trade union. We didn't know how to, instead, the union work became all important. The plant came close to a strike in the fall of 1941, and out of our work during this critical period came the first worker recruit. At the meeting on the strike issue he made a speech against the war, calling upon the workers to rally to "the greater war of labor against capital." Both of the party comrades were amazed by the speech and the fact that such a worker had been under our very noses without ever coming to light. He joined the party with little persuasion, but left in a very few months after being fired from the plant. One gained, one lost.

Expansion of Party Work

In December, 1941, a full time party organizer was sent to Philadelphia which was still considered by the party as one of its best sections. Comrade Draper succeeded in pulling the party together into a more smoothly functioning organization, stepping up campaigns, expanding the distribution of the paper, and giving more direction to the industrial work of the party.

The report of the City Committee issued in April, 1942, contained the following summary of the party's activity and progress:

( NOTE: Parenthetical remarks in the following extracts are mine - I.M.)

"The past three months may be summarized as follows: There has been a marked upswing in our most important field; industrial work; BUT one of the most important elements of our work, the work of the branches as such, has seen practically no improvement.

"The first industrial conference was held by the party in March. The discussion at this first one was general and exploratory in character, but it indicated where to go further. The main point for future conferences will be a discussion of HOW (very concretely) to put forward our line in the plants and unions, in conversation and speeches.

"Meetings of the party fractions have been held at least once a month and more frequently in the case of the new concentration point, at "W." The latter is the best organized, but also requires the greatest supervision by the City Industrial Director, consisting of inexperienced comrades (about 6 of the youth had gotten jobs in this plant, not one of them being over 21 years old). The other two groups have not organized themselves in the same manner, this being less necessary in the case of the "B" group and the new shipyard fraction (2 people in a small shipyard, which was designated as yard "P").

"During the last three months, three comrades were added to the number of those in industry, in addition to those who went in previously. But the party has by no means reached its maximum in this respect. There are 9 - 11 others, including women, who are still candidates for war industry jobs, or should be. Of these, 5 - 6 are actively looking for such employment. The next period should see another half-dozen or so placed. (It did.)

"The drive on the "B" plant has been the high point of our industrial work, both from the outside and inside. The following was done: First, the L.A. distribution at the plant was raised to include the entire 2nd shift, 800 papers being used weekly. At the same time we began attaching special leaflets to the papers we then started a special series of articles on the "B" plant in L.A.; each paper for the past 5 - 6 weeks has been distributed with a special leaflet plugger for the series and for subs. The result has been that L.A. has begun to attract far more attention and comment from the workers on a widespread scale. Three subs to L.A. have so far resulted from the distribution. Post-cards are to be attached to the next issue in the expectation that new names will be added to our contact list. (There were absolutely no answers.) This has been a more consistent promotion campaign for capitalizing upon the distribution of the paper than has been done at any other concentration plant in the country. (It was the best planned campaign of the period and led to negligible results for the party.)

"Besides these subscribers, at least two other workers have been brought closer to the party through work in the plant and in the union, and are now good possibilities of recruitment. (This did not materialize.) After 1½ years of work around this plant, we now have more live party contacts than ever before at this place.

"At the "W" plant the work is only in its initial stages, the comrades being mainly engaged in establishing themselves in the plant and in the union. For the proper development of this work, and early start of the projected L.A. distribution is an absolute essential, not only for general propaganda but especially for the securing of party contacts, who can be approached directly. There is only one such now. (A worker who had been fired from "B" and was then a party contact.) In the third concentration, in ship, good work has been done in this small local, but there are no live party contacts.

"On the basis of the work which the city organization has been doing in the whole past period (not only the past three months), and considering the direction in which the work is moving at the present time, the basis is undoubtedly present for very fruitful work in the coming months and for recruiting, which is after all the most definite measuring stick of successful activity."

It is necessary here to interject a few comments on this activity of the party, and the entire "B" situation which was destined to be the subject of a great deal of discussion in both Trotskyist parties and also in the CP, and later at the first Active Workers Conference of the WP. On the question of the failure of the press campaigns which were carried out with such painstaking care and precision I will not bother to make any comment other than to refer the reader to the document by the Johnson Minority on Education, Propaganda, Agitation, and various other articles written by the proponents of our tendency in the course of the last two years. Suffice it to say that many workers at that time confused L.A. with the union papers and literature which was distributed during the organizing campaign. It failed to reach them in an effective manner, as is witnessed by the fact that no more than a half dozen subscriptions were obtained in the course of all the work in this union. The only party contacts made in the course of all the work practically presented themselves to the party. The party members themselves were almost completely concerned only with the actual trade union work and the two older members who were active in the work had visions of taking over the local. There was too much close collaboration with the trade union bureaucracy at various times which did not do the party any good.

In the organizational strike which finally took place in May, 1942, the two party members and the only active contact were prominent in the strike leadership, all three being on the strike committee. Two were placed on the committee immediately and I was put on it after a few days of strike action. In the strike, the men felt the tie between the party and the bureaucracy, at least between Comrade A. and the union functionaries, and were resentful. Their criticisms were that A. "spends too much time in the office and not on the picket line," etc., although they greatly respected his ability and intelligence. The strike itself did not receive the support of the national union, which feared our influence in the local and because it had already given something of a no-strike pledge.

The strike was not organized by the party. In fact the fraction was opposed to it, but it was forced on the local by the company and was unavoidable. The general conduct of the party in the strike, despite the many errors in strategy, was exemplary, with the entire party mobilized for active help in the union. It was the first strike in which WP members actually played a leading role. Comrade Shachtman was in the city to lend invaluable assistance and it was he who insisted on fraction meetings during the strike, which we claimed was impossible because of limited time and because the party didn't deem it wise for me to be

seen in the company of A. (then a known Trotskyist whereas I was not). The paper was not distributed for fear of hurting the strike, which the company had labeled the work of a "small group of radicals." Contrary to the criticisms of the SWP and the CP at that time, the strike was not "adventuristic" on the part of the WP and would have been avoided if we had found it possible to do so. We did not lead the local into the strike because we fully recognized that the time was not opportune and that there was a strong likelihood of defeat. Our mistake was in not knowing how to end it without complete defeat. Not only we did not know how to do this, but the CP and the union bureaucracy were also stumped.

In the course of the strike itself we became friendly with a great many of the militants, influenced them and the conduct of the strike, but proved incapable of capitalizing on it for the advantage of the party. The strike was lost, the strikers failed to get back to work (including the last party person left in the plant, myself) and with it went the work we had put in. Nothing was left.

In a sense the party had "gambled" on the success of the organizational campaign of the union, and had depended on this too heavily at the expense of concentrating any effort at all on party work as such. The union's failure was accompanied by the failure of the party to make any gains other than those of experience.

In the development of any party such experiences as this are bound to occur. The rhythm of the class struggle even in a specific situation affects the party. It is useless to discuss what the policy "might have been" in this union. The development here could have submerged any group as small as ours. Nor is it inadmissible to concentrate the work of party members completely on an organizational drive to the exclusion of primarily political work in a specific situation. But it did provide an excellent illustration of the necessity for the integration of political (party) work with union work as an essential for the building of the party.

The results of the year's work, from the summer of 1941 to the summer of 1942, a year marked by smooth relations and efficient functioning inside the party, was - in the language of the WP, which concerns itself so much with the "concrete" - a big ZERO. We had failed to make any permanent impression where it meant most - in the union movement. In reality, however, the experience gained was absolutely invaluable as a prelude to the next period. The party had begun to get its feet wet in the class struggle, and the partial baptism was an essential initiation.

In the balance of the year the party carried on mass distributions of the paper at "W" and at New York ship, and met with little success in the way of subscriptions or contacts at either place, at most a half-dozen at both places despite the consistent distribution of thousands of papers, week after week. The large fraction of youth at "W" had declined due to the draft and to the fact that some of them left the party. A new point of industrial work was begun with the placement of Comrade A. in the "C" shipyard, but had not yet developed into anything for the party. We had now passed through our "infancy" in the union movement, so to speak, and the party settled down to the long, hard grind of working in new places with the benefit of the experience gained at "B." The comrades were still enthusiastic, still as active as ever, but the strain was beginning to tell and the sloughing off of various elements began to take place. The party core was hardening and some were beginning to think, to question, to wonder when the results would come. "Where were we going?" "How long would it take?" But all felt that the party was on the right road, that it was only the objective circumstances - the war - and the difficulty of working under war conditions, which was

holding us back, as well as the loss of so many of our people to the army. The period of real probing into the problems facing the movement had not yet begun here, as it had not begun elsewhere. Just to be in the union was enough, just to be in contact with the workers was felt to be sufficient progress. Time would bring results. That was the temper of the comrades. "The workers will see us soon..."

#### Intermezzo

The entire preceding period was one of intensive and extensive activity on the part of the party and high morale for the most part. It was a period of mass distributions of the paper, the beginnings of our penetration, in some fashion, into the mass movement through our work in the trade unions. Strange to relate, the concrete results were actually negligible, but the initial enthusiasm had not worn off. Those who remained worked ever harder and bore a terrific load to make up for the losses in "drops" and to the army. Never before had the party worked so hard for so long a time, with morale remaining high despite the lack of lasting results. No doubt some reaction had set in, as expressed in the number of people who dropped out, but it was not deep-grained and the next period saw a revival of trade union work - the first meaningful activity since the "B" fiasco -- and the membership felt that its long period of "grooming" had come to an end and that now the harvest would be reaped.

In January, 1943, Comrade Erber was sent to Philadelphia as organizer. The branch leadership and membership had been decimated by losses, but a good many comrades were in industry and there were some good prospects for growth. We had one comrade in each of the three large shipyards in the area, one in a small UE shop, two in a small shipyard (yard "P") and a few in "W". The prospects were not bleak.

In the winter of 1943, the comrade in "S" yard recruited the third worker to join the party, a real proletarian "rebel" who had been moving toward the Stalinists, was broken from them and joined our party to learn about and fight for socialism. An ex-member of the party, the Negro youth who was mentioned previously, was also working in the yard - which was then being organized - and was still friendly to the party. Through him and our own comrade we managed to organize a series of classes in the principles of socialism which was attended by a half-dozen Negro workers from "S". The class ended with no recruits coming as a result of the work. The workers who had attended simply remained more or less sympathetic to the party. We failed to reach them either as Negroes, as workers, or as Negro workers. The party apparently made no impression on them. The activity during the winter included the continuation of the mass distributions at the various yards and at "W". The number of subscriptions increased slightly, but not to any startling degree. It seemed that the "road" to a mass party had still remained "undiscovered."

During the spring and summer of 1943, the party again tried to break out of its isolation by conducting a series of forums in a decent hall under the auspices of Labor Action. They failed to achieve their objective despite the fact that the party did have some workers attend from among the contacts made in shipyard "P" particularly. Later in the year the comrade involved in the work in this yard, by now a popular leader of the welders, was involved in a struggle with the leadership which exposed him to a red-baiting campaign and the persecution of the company. He folded under the pressure and quit his job. The party found it necessary to discipline him and he was suspended.

Again the concrete results of party activity in the mass movement seemed non-existent. The party was now floundering about, seeking some way of concretizing its work in gains which "meant something," that is to say - recruits

In the fall of the year a class was organized for a number of youth comrades which succeeded in bringing them close to the party. At the same time, or shortly thereafter, a new situation began to look promising - the work in shipyard "G". But this belongs properly to the next section of this article. It is necessary to stop at this point and take stock of the party's progress up to this time. It was by no means very encouraging. The picture was still "gray," but this time it was relieved by white, the physical presence of our comrades in the mass production industries.

Summary and Evaluation of the Party's Progress to January 1944

A box-score of the party membership from May 1940 to January 1944 would have looked somewhat as follows:

	<u>Membership</u>	<u>Remained</u>	<u>Dropped</u>
Original Members (including those added in the first few months)	34	15	19
Worker Recruits	3	1	2
Youth Recruits	6	1	5
Others	2	0	2
Colonizers	6	4	2
Total	<u>51</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>30</u>

Included in the above table under the "dropped" column are those comrades who did not come back to the party after being discharged from the armed forces.

It might be worthwhile to analyze briefly what the above box-score actually represents for the party in terms of the individuals involved. Of the total of 51, at least 27 to 30 had gone into industry at one time or another. (The facts completely contradict the allegations made by Trotsky and the SWP in the course of the 1940 fight that the followers of the minority were "afraid to proletarianize themselves," just as they were completely in error in their view that the WP would capitulate to social patriotism. These people wanted to build a revolutionary party more than anything else in the world. It was their only concern.) Many of those who were dropped also industrialized themselves. We can see here that mere industrialization of the comrades, placing them in factories, was not a solution. Industrialization is by no means the equivalent, but only a pre-condition, for the proletarianization of the party, that is for the complete identification of one's own personal future with the future of the proletariat and the revolution, and the conscious adherence to a revolutionary perspective, without which no party can be built today.

Almost all who were available for such work followed the party's orientation, willingly or otherwise, but most with a great deal of vigor and high hopes. Almost all who dropped out remained friendly to the party and its ideas and did not break on political questions. They left out of a feeling of hopelessness and despair because the party did not consciously endow them with the vision of an actual revolution. Some may have lacked the stamina necessary for the struggle. Some sought a personal escapism of some kind or other. But, primarily they left because they could see no point and could derive no satisfaction from the continual struggle. Here, too, the experience of this section were only a mirror of what was happening throughout the party nationally. The counterparts of our people could be found in every party section, and they acted in the same fashion, responded to the same pressures and were subject to the same skepticism, cynicism and disillusionment. It is precisely here that we can see how essential it is that the party consciously teach dialectical materialism to all its members. Only this can give them logical hope.

I will attempt to sketch briefly what happened to these 30 people, dividing them into groups which form "natural categories" in the party. This is by no means an attempt at a psychological probing of each one, nor is this necessary for the purposes of our study. In some of the groups we will analyze just one or two individuals as representative of the entire group. These are the people who were dropped:

"Old-Timers" - In this group is included all those people who had been in the SWP or its youth section for some time before the split of 1940. There are 7 people in this group, some of whom had been in the party for ten years, and one of whom was the founder of the Trotskyist movement in this city. All were petty-bourgeois, but only one could be considered an actual intellectual, that is one with ambitions to do some writing, etc. Three of them industrialized themselves, but not with a feeling of permanence. All seven of them failed to adjust themselves and their personal lives to the new mode of party life and activity. Some may have succumbed to the pressure of the war and a desire for self-protection, but this is not an important factor since it was only a concomitant of the lack of perspective which the movement had for them. One chose motherhood as a more meaningful and fruitful endeavor, and another got a job in the union apparatus which apparently gave her greater satisfaction than party activity. All of them regard themselves as sympathizers of the party to this day.

"Class of 1940" - This is a group of 12 comrades who joined the movement in late 1939 or early 1940, just about the time of the split. (It is rumored that some joined just to be entertained by listening to the debates on the Russian question. As to this I cannot say.) Of this entire group only two dropped out for ostensibly political reasons. These two were influenced by the "Sherman Group" which arose in the youth of the WP shortly after 1940. (The Sherman Group was openly anti-Bolshevik and claimed to adhere to the philosophy of John Dewey. Some of its members joined the party of the Second International.) Both of these people had also gone into the factories.

Of the others, three went into the factories, one of whom became involved in the situation in shipyard "P" and whose case was described. One worked in a government war plant and in all likelihood withdrew from the party in order to protect himself. The last of these three was one of the "colonizers" sent from New York. He was a devoted and loyal comrade, gave unstintingly of his time and money and worked hard in the factory. While in the army he still retained an active allegiance to the party for some time, but gradually drifted away and did not return to the ranks of the party.

Another group was composed of four women comrades, two of them married to party members, who were in the party only a short time before they became

"bored" and felt that they had no function to perform. Three of them are still more or less active sympathizers of the party, participating in the work of the European relief committee, and one of whom was instrumental in forming a consumers' league in her neighborhood during the 1946 campaign to "hold the line on prices."

The last group is that of two petty-bourgeois intellectuals who never had a chance to sink their roots in the party and the working class movement before the draft caught them up, and did not return to the party at the end of the war.

And finally there was one person, an unusual sort of intellectual for our party, a thoroughgoing Marxist in his analysis of all problems and a professional scientist. When the branch started to move toward the proletariat and his job forced him to be away from home for long periods of time, he approached the party and indicated that he wanted to resign. He said that the only work that he could contribute to the party was to teach others, and his absence made that impossible. In 1947 he was still a Marxist, still sympathetic to the party and an active sympathizer.

For this entire group a similar analysis as was given for the first group also applies.

"Youth of 1940" - This group includes three young people who were recruited shortly after the formation of the WP. Two of them went into industry but were erratic and could not stabilize themselves. All dropped out within one or two years.

Youth Recruits - Three young students were recruited in the winter of 1942, one of whom left school to enter a war plant where he tried hard to remain but he could not hold his jobs. When one member of this group, an extremely intelligent youngster, developed Marlanite ideas and was expelled, the other two left with him in protest against "the bureaucratic action of the party and the suppression of democracy." It only indicated that the party had completely failed to convince them of some of the basic ideas of Marxian theory and party discipline.

Another was a girl who was proletarian by nature of her family background and occupation. She had an active intelligence and learned rapidly, but was deeply offended by a personal incident in connection with her attendance at the Active Workers Conference of 1943 and soon after became completely disillusioned and left. She felt that there was no place for her in the party, becoming an active sympathizer in the last two years. Probably the only factor preventing her from rejoining is that she is now a mother.

The young Negro comrade, E.A., requires more than just a few words. He also was recruited sometime in 1941-1942. He had natural intellectual inclinations, but had never before been "exposed" to Marxism. He read and learned rapidly, and in a few months was reading the philosophical works of Marx and Engels, books which many of the old-timers had never bothered to study. He could easily have been trained by the party and prepared for an active role in the life of the party and the mass Negro organizations. Left to himself for the most part by a party which was by now so much concerned with "proletarianization" that it could not concern itself with the "esoteric" aspects of Marxism, he developed anti-Bolshevik ideas (Souvarinism) in a short time, but remained friendly to the party in the period immediately after he dropped out. He went to work in a shipyard where he took an active part in the organizing drive and was instrumental in getting contacts for the party and subscriptions to the press. However, later on, in a new situation (another shipyard where the party met him again) he actively worked against the party and drove contacts away from us. He told these contacts



that we were the "same as the Stalinists," etc. He was probably the only one, of all those who dropped out of the organization, who became an enemy of the party. What has happened to him, we cannot say. But it was obvious to all of us that we had lost a valuable person and no one could offer an explanation. It is for the comrades to reflect on this one case in relation to the Negro question and the light thrown on that question by Johnson and Forest.

Worker Recruits - In this category are two people, A.Y. and B.G. A.Y. was the first worker ever recruited by the party directly from a factory. It was he who made the anti-war speech noted in the section on the "B" plant. Apparently he was looking for more than the party could offer him, but he was not with us long enough for us to find out much about him. He remained only a few months, and although the party consistently contacted him during and after his actual membership, it was to no avail.

B.G., recruited from shipyard "P" was a fine type of "rebel" worker who was desperately seeking a solution to the problems of the working people on other than a trade union level. Within a month after his recruitment he was drafted. He returned, after seeing the devastation and misery of the European continent and felt that "things were pretty hopeless." He condemned trade unionism as a "useless struggle and a blind alley for the workers." He couldn't understand how a revolutionary party could take responsibility for leading a trade union, as we were doing, and bitterly condemned Labor Action as a paper which could only contribute to the illusions of the workers. He frankly expressed that he was more sympathetic to the SLP than to us, because "they at least tell the workers the truth and openly come out for socialism as the only answer." All through the campaigns in Europe he had carried with him a copy of the "Weekly People," which he had picked up before going abroad. He treasured it as his prize possession all those years, because this issue of the paper was against the war and called for socialism.

The political disorientation of this worker was an expression of precisely what the WP could not teach him because of its retrogressive concepts. He was for socialism, for the revolution, but he could not see it as a reality. The party could not possibly teach him otherwise because it agreed with him. Only a revolutionary perspective which he could see and understand could have convinced him to devote the rest of his life to the party. Only the revolutionary temper of a party with a correct policy and firm confidence could have captured his imagination and loyalty. The WP could not.

"Miscellaneous" - Last of the 30 people was one who was recruited to the party by a sympathizer, but apparently failed to learn what the party was all about. At any rate he must have started looking for "bigger things" and later turned up as a Stalinist in the UE. The last one was a girl recruited from the union apparatus during the work at "B". She was regarded as fine party material and the branch wanted to send her to a "party training school" which was being conducted in New York. She didn't go and gradually lapsed into inactivity, apparently disgusted with the "futile efforts of the party which is supposed to make a revolution."

There is no claim that all these people could have been saved for the revolutionary movement, but it is certainly significant when 60% of a party's membership drops out in the course of three or four years, and a political analysis of this must be made. We have tried.

This was the record of party membership and losses for almost four years. Its contacts were limited. In the entire period at "B", no more than two or three contacts were made. The distributions and the work of Comrade B. at

at "N" shipyard led to no more than one or two contacts. The work at "P" shipyard led to many contacts, one recruit who was lost, and nothing lasting. The work at "W", with the young comrades, failed to develop. The work at "S" shipyard had fallen through and our party member there was fired. The party, except for two places which were starting to develop - the small UE shop and at "C" - was still isolated. It had indeed been a period of floundering, experimentation and little success. The party was ready to hear and accept new ideas and methods of party building.

This period was not entirely wasted. The party had many experiences which would help it in the future. Nor do I say that all the mistakes were avoidable. But it was plain to see that the simple orientation of "industrialization" was not going to solve the problems of the party. It was but a prelude to a solution. It needed more than simply "being in the factory." The experiences had helped, but a great deal of time had been wasted when the party should, we all thought and confidently expected, be making progress. It would serve no purpose to recapitulate here the position of the Johnson Minority on the American question and the Building of the Party. It is only necessary to ask the movement to study the experiences this WP branch went through in the light of the analysis presented by the Minority tendency, particularly in connection with the question of the press, recruitment and integration of new members. We believe that a great deal of progress could have been made for the party in the 3-to-4 year period which we have reviewed if that orientation had been applied then. This "chronicle," however, is not the place for such a political analysis.

Perhaps Comrade Erber best summarized the net results of these years of work in his article on the "Kind of Party We Are Building," written in 1945, where he said: "With the shift of the bulk of our members into industry we have, for the first time, in our history, overcome our organizational isolation from our class. The ending of our organizational isolation has a tremendous significance for us. It has already brought about a considerable transformation of our party. During the period 1940-1942 the entire center of our activity shifted toward a direct participation in the life and problems of the labor movement."

In my opinion this is a correct evaluation not only of the first two years, but of the period up to 1944. It was then that the party seriously set itself to the task of capitalizing on this transformation. With the wealth of experience behind it the party now sought new roads toward growth in membership and influence.

"Our physical isolation from our class was beginning to end." That was true, but the party had still not made the expected progress, and it was this condition which permitted the emergence of new ideas of party building. It was this disturbing factor and under such conditions that the Philadelphia branch entered into its next stage of development - the period of the "Small Mass Party."

The "Small Mass Party"

"The entire history of our organized existence has been part of our struggle to build a party. Since 1942 we have undergone qualitative changes in the nature of our existence and our activities. We act more like a party of the class struggle today than did the united SWP prior to 1940 with twice our membership....Today we recruit industrial workers via our participation in the class struggle, via our agitational press, via their class experiences, and via their belief that the program of the WP is the solution to their problems as workers. A political organization composed of a few hundred such workers based upon our program, must increasingly act in relation to the working class and the class struggle as a party if it hopes to grow in size and influence. It is in the direction of this kind of party that the very logic of our agitational press and class struggle activity has been carrying us. This is the kind of party we are building. What we need to do is to recognize it and consciously plan and coordinate every phase of party life in conformity with it." (Erber - "The Kind of Party We Are Building." April, 1945)

A prelude to this next period of the party's development, where the "small mass party" technique of Comrade Erber was developed and applied, was a necessary weeding out of personnel, including many of those listed in the previous summary. By fall of 1944, the effective branch membership had been reduced to 13 of whom 10 were in industry.

This is what we had to work with after the sloughing off of many people and the losses to the army, which then numbered some 12-to-15. The branch was still carrying on some activity but was by no means in a good condition. Papers were piling up for want of distributors, so few being available for this work. The public activity of the party was virtually non-existent - there were no public meetings, forums, or classes for contacts. In fact there were only a handful of contacts. The comrades were in industry, active in their unions, as active as possible in the life of the party, giving devotedly of their time and money as few parties in the United States have ever done in the past.

After much intensive and painstaking work on the part of Comrade Erber during the fall of 1943 and the winter of 1943-1944, the first real results of the party's work in industry and of a revival of youth work were obtained. A breath of air, a restored hope was blown into the party. "It had come at last. During these months a class was held for a number of young people, three of whom joined the party. Out of this nucleus and the one youth already in the party, a youth group was formed called the Young Labor League. The class was in the history of the Fourth International, actually a review of revolutionary history from the German events of 1923 to the rise of Fascism and then the later developments.

At about the same time our comrade in "C", Comrade A., became involved with a progressive group which had been formed in the yard. The leader of the group was an ex-OLA member, J.K., who had a group in the union which had not formulated a clear policy but was in the process of developing. Comrade Erber met with J.K. and soon met other members of the group, notably J.M., M.G., and O. J. A series of discussions were held and gradually a group of party sympathizers was built. They read the paper, got others to subscribe and were drawing closer to the party. A discussion group was begun which included these four from the yard and one from the UE, A.M. After some months of contacting they were recruited to the party and a separate branch was established for these new workers.

- 15 -

The branch included the original four from the yard, plus one other from the yard, one from UE and one from "G" who had been recruited the year before. It was Erber's contention that these workers would feel more "at home" in a branch of their own than in a branch of "old-timers" composed mostly of young people.

Two other young people were recruited in the same period. Of these recruits, 2 of the workers and 2 of the youth remained in the party less than six months. The box score for the party on new members was considerably improved by now. It was as follows:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Remained</u>	<u>Dropped</u>
Youth Recruits	11	4	7
Worker Recruits	9	5	4

For the entire party at this time, 62 had been members at one time or another, 28 remained in the party (including veterans who returned to the party) and 34 had been lost (including the veterans who did not return to the party).

These welcome additions presaged a new turn for the party and the posing of new problems, the concrete problems of trade union work and integration of workers with no previous political experience.

#### The "Labor Educational Club" - Our First Front Organization

At the Party Convention in February, 1944, Comrade Erber announced that a branch was to be formed in Philadelphia composed of new worker recruits. This was done, as outlined briefly above, and at the same time the IEC was set up as a front organization to which we could invite shopmates and Labor Action readers. The original membership of this organization, and the original list is the only one because the club died before it grew any larger, included all party members (including the new workers), plus 3 new contacts from "G" (one of whom soon joined the party), one from "P" shipyard, and one from "S" shipyard who had been in the movement many years before.

The scheme for the organization was to have a large "Executive Board" which would do most of the work and where people could be brought closer to the party, and a general membership which would meet once a month. The Executive Board was to have classes of its own called "leadership training classes," to which close contacts could be invited. The officers of the Board consisted of two new party members, one contact and one experienced party member.

At the first meeting of the Board, the members decided that a program of activity should be outlined and included the following item as extracted from the minutes:

"The club shall help in every way to organize the progressives in the different unions and shops where we have members or friends, help them to solve their problems and in putting across their program in the locals. This is to be done in relation to problems of discrimination, re-classification, upgrading, lay-offs, the labor party, etc. The Exec Board will arrange meetings with all of our friends in any particular shop where trouble does arise and our help is requested."

It was this ambitious and impossible task that the club set as its objective. In effect we were challenging the established trade union leadership and organizations. There is no doubt in anyone's mind today that it only

succeeded in confusing people and giving them a fantastic conception of our numbers or chances for growth on such an erroneous basis. Many of the new people thought that we were to become a mass organization almost overnight, with no slightest hint of the true character of the sponsors of the organization - revolutionary socialists.

The first forum of the club was addressed by Coolidge who spoke on "The Progressives in the Trade Unions." There was a fairly good attendance (about 30 people) and the speech was well received. Added to the contacts already listed were a few from "W" and some from the small UE shop in which I had worked.

At the next meeting of the Board, it was decided to draw up a statement of purpose. It might be of some interest to quote that statement here:

"The LEO is composed of members of the trade unions and those interested in furthering the cause of labor. It is our aim to carry on educational activities to advance the ideas of progressive trade union policy. We hold that such policy must base itself upon the following principles:

"That capital and labor have no interests in common.

"That since the beginning of modern industry there has been a constant struggle between the working class seeking a better living and the capitalist class seeking greater profits.

"That labor has made gains only when it was prepared to fight for them.

"That the advancement of the working people depends entirely upon their own organized efforts, rather than upon generous employers or so-called friends of labor in government.

"That labor must stand united, regardless of race, creed or color.

"That labor needs trade unions that are industrial in form, progressive in policy, democratic in procedure and based upon an enlightened, well-informed and active membership.

"That labor must organize itself on the political, as well as on the economic field.

"That labor needs a party of its own, independent of all capitalist parties and their candidates - a Labor Party.

"We, the members of the Labor Educational Club, pledge ourselves to faithfully serve our respective trade unions, to abide by all their lawful decisions, and to educate our fellow workers to become better union men in the spirit of the above principles.

It was for this elaborate and rather nebulous goal that the LEO was established in the minds of its adherents. It is true that the party had to find new ways of working during the war and that this was only one of many experiments, but it is also obvious that little could be accomplished by such an organization which was tied to the party and met in the party headquarters and yet did not include as one of the things labor "needed" a good revolution.

The first session of the class in "leadership training" was held on April 16, 1944. The minutes of the LEC summarized this session in the following words: "Brother Coolidge spoke about the history of class rule in different societies, bringing the survey up to date with an analysis of how capitalism operates as a class society. He also spoke about the role of labor and the trade unions in this class society." The socialist revolution as a reality was nowhere to be found in this speech or any of the discussions of the LEC, which were primarily concerned with shop problems, at precisely the point where we could not contest the official labor leadership and organization.

The next, and last, forum of the LEC was held on May 5, 1944, just a little more than a month after the founding of the organization, and the subject was "Labor Political Action in 1944." This meeting was better attended than the previous one, but led nowhere. The Executive Board or the membership of the LEC never met again. The usual summer slump hit this "broad mass organization" a body blow from which it never recovered. Thus ended the LEC.

With the collapse of the LEC the branch had the first "crisis" produced by the "small mass party" technique. It was resolved in the summer of 1944 by the fusion of the two branches (the one composed primarily of new worker elements and the other of youth and "old-timers"). At the time of the fusion, two of the workers dropped out and another from the yard was recruited. He had gotten a copy of Labor Action and had written to the National Office asking where he could find the party, virtually asking to be recruited. One dropped out because he "thought Ernie was a German agent" on the basis of Ernie's opposition to the war. Imagine a worker being recruited to a revolutionary anti-war party and dropping out later because he thought the party leader was a Nazi! And Erber claimed that the program was not watered down. The other dropped because of personal setbacks without ever knowing more about the party than what the LEC could teach him.

The party now had people in only two mass production units - "C" and "W". The ship fraction had a nucleus of six members: A. (a political person with long party experience) and the new recruits consisting of J.K. (ex-CLA member), J.M., M., O., and S. At "W" all that remained were Arnold (leader of the Philadelphia section for many years) and Harnin.

Despite the influx of workers the party membership was not satisfied. Disputes broke out in the executive committee on the nature of the educational program for the branch and the method of union work. Allen and Harnin were the open expression of this discontent, although we felt, for the most part, that it was best to "go along" with Erber and see what happened during the course of the development of his method of work. There is no claim here that we knew precisely what was wrong and were ready to offer an alternative method. It was only an opposition to this or that particular opportunist tactic. It was only with the appearance of the two documents by Johnson - Education, Propaganda, Agitation, and the Building of the Bolshevik Party - that we could see a systematized criticism and alternative.

Throughout this period, and its culmination in the departure of Erber for work in the center, the sensitive Erber could only see a "personal cabal" against himself instead of making an attempt to analyze the opposition to his methods in a political manner. This only exemplified his systematic separation of politics from organization and his concern with questions of "personality" as paramount in party building.

Those who later constituted the Minority in this branch were conscious only of one thing: that the party was not giving the workers the education which

would prepare them for the political activity necessary for the preservation of the party as a revolutionary party and themselves as members of it. We warned that members could not be held on the basis of Labor Party agitation alone.

It is in our trade union work, our mass contact with the proletariat, that we can best see the actual consequences of the party's orientation toward the American working class and the application of the party's line. In the situation in ship in Philadelphia we can see in embryo the methods of the entire party on a national scale.

After a year in the yard, A. made contact with a progressive group which had been started under the inspiration of J.K. and one of his supporters, J.M. The progressive group began to grow with the program of revoking the no-strike pledge, withdrawal from the WLB, and later for the formation of a Labor Party. It was this group which was the soil for party activity and recruitment. After some six months of constant visiting and discussion with a small group of these people (constituted as the LEC mentioned above) 4 joined the party. By this time they were a substantial section of the sub-leadership of the local with a fairly large following.

The progressive group had under its belt the experience of one election contest (for the convention delegation of 1943) and was an established and recognized group in the yard. The "workers branch" (mentioned above) was constituted to help integrate these new people into the party. The branch had about ten members and lasted about six months, during which time it lost two of the original recruits and recruited none. It carried on no party activity outside of the union itself, had little or no political education, and was almost exclusively concerned with its own union problems.

The basis of recruitment had been the three point program of the fraction plus a rather nebulous desire for a better world of socialism as the "ultimate" goal to be reached sometime in the distant future. In fact, the central figure (J.K.) rejected Bolshevism and the program of the party. Once the fraction was constituted, the principal axis of its work became precisely the three point program, instead of using that as a beginning from which one could go forward. Political education was brushed aside as relatively unimportant or too far "advanced" for these workers. They, however, wanted to learn. One of them (the only one who still remains in the party) thought it was now his job to broadcast that he was a socialist and leave behind the world of trade union maneuvers, etc. in which he had been involved most of his conscious life. This was wrong, but shows his good instincts. Unfortunately, his good instincts were improperly corrected and he was thrown back into the "pure" trade union struggle to the virtual exclusion of his education for the job of a revolutionist in the union - a job for which he was admirably suited. It was not to his liking but he accepted it because the party leadership told him that it was the correct manner of working for the party.

The first major step taken by the fraction was the formation of an alliance for the union election in the spring of 1944. The "progressive" ticket and the three point program were victorious. A party member was elected to the official board, another became editor of the paper. It is significant that in this first election, the fraction (with the exception of J.K.) was not inclined to accept the alliance. They knew that their allies were only using the program as a method of gaining office. Particularly, the Negro comrades were incensed because the alliance included Jim Crow sections of the union.

This tendency of the fraction, at least in the early period, to oppose a particular policy and for the party leadership to urge it upon them was

a continual feature of the fraction's development. The workers were right in this instance, as they were in many others; and the party leadership was wrong, and this also happened often.

This same group was elected as convention delegates in the fall of 1944 and made a good fight for their ideas. That is to say, the party members did, whereas their allies attempted to bolt. This faction was decisive in causing a split in the progressive group, forcing a new alignment. By spring of 1945, the group was ready for another election with a new ally who was just as unprincipled as the one they had just thrown overboard. The result was a split decision with the opposition carrying a majority of the executive board, and our candidates winning for President and Executive Secretary (the Ally). (One explanatory remark must be made here about alliances. There is nothing wrong with alliances in the trade unions on the basis of a program, but the fact that all the opportunists rallied around the program which we put forward indicates that the proper revolutionary content was not given to the slogans and program).

We are not saying that the WP had become power crazy. In fact the fraction was under instructions not to have a party member run for President. At that time it was the opinion of the comrade who was forced to run that the party should fight on a clear program, without untrustworthy allies, take a beating if necessary and "go back with their tools" to fight with the men in the yard for correct union policies and do more work for the party. But some of the fraction members who had not been sufficiently well trained in Bolshevik principles of democratic centralism broke discipline and he was forced to run. This comrade and the party were correct, for now we had the "power" and did not know what to do with it. That the comrades broke discipline is an important indication here of what was wrong in the party. They had broken discipline because they did not understand what the function of party members in the union was. They did not understand because the party did not teach them.

The first problem facing the new administration in the yard was to determine a policy on the question of lay-offs. The fraction was almost unanimously in favor of a strike to compel a shortening of the work-week even if it meant closing down the yard for good. They wanted to fight and not take a demoralizing day-by-day licking at the hands of the company. The situation called for us to agitate for another Brewster sit-in. But the party leadership once more decided against it.

The political committee had taken over guidance of the fraction and convinced the comrades that it was better to take a beating than to close the door completely and lose all that we (the party) had in the yard. The preservation of our cadres in a concentration point (oh, how they had howled all during the war against the SWP policy on this question of caution) had become more important than carrying out the correct policy of struggle demanded by the circumstances. That the workers could gain anything by fighting, that we should at least try it out, never crossed the mind of the PC. They could not see that the desire of the fraction rank and file workers was evidence of what the people in the yard were thinking, that we had an obligation to those workers and all the others in the industry to whom we could show the way, that it would be an important political demonstration and bring rich rewards to the party. In reality, their policy was only another aspect of their general inability to see the developing explosions under their very noses which has typified their whole orientation.

We had failed to prepare the men in the yard for the problem of re-conversion under capitalism (other than to pass some paper resolutions calling for a shorter work week,) had failed to pose the problem of what should be done to rally the workers in the face of unemployment, etc. We had not done the work



which it is our duty as a party to do. The PC opposed a militant line against the workers of the fraction and against the branch. Whereas the lay-offs should have been a golden opportunity for making new party members (considering the size of our fraction at the time, and if the proper propaganda had been disseminated in the period leading up to the lay-offs) and for extensive propaganda on the transitional program, the situation turned to our complete disadvantage. The progressives were the first to be laid off. They felt that the union had failed them in not resisting the lay-offs. The militancy of the local began a downward spiral from that day on, at precisely the point when the rest of the union movement was witnessing a rising tide of struggle and advancement. From being the leader of the progressive trade union forces in the city, the local rapidly became one of the most backward in the area (despite its retention of the three point program which now had no meaning).

"Practical" trade union politics had triumphed over what should be our real work in the unions - propaganda for the transitional program, preparation of the masses for the coming struggles, consistent and uncompromising presentation of our views so that at the proper time the union membership would recognize that we were correct and rally to the ideas of the party. We had failed to prepare the party cadres or their friends and sympathizers. Some of us can say, and it cannot be denied, that we opposed this line consistently and that the PC of the WP which guided the work on the spot has been proved wrong.

In contrast with this development, was the work in "W" which made continual progress at a steady pace, despite the lack of recruits. Here, we spearheaded every progressive fight from the question of discrimination to support of a labor party to condemnation of every manifestation of the government's political war against the working class. We organized a 24 hour sit-in to demonstrate against the lay-offs; we were responsible for many aspects of the strike organization of 1946, and have achieved the wholesome respect of the entire group of active unionists. Here we have been the "tribune of the rank and file" and of socialism on every question. The party is respected and its ideas are well received. There is every reason for confidence that the future will bring this ripened fruit to the movement, prepared by years of steady political work. Such a perspective of work is impossible for the WP because it cannot see the development of the working class toward the revolution. It is therefore constantly impatient and seeking "new methods" of "getting rich quick." Their lack of confidence in the proletariat makes them organically incapable of pursuing a correct and principled position for fear of isolating themselves. On all questions their fear of sectarianism leads them to opportunism on the one hand, and their fear of opportunism leads them to sectarianism. Bolshevism cannot be seen, felt or understood.

From opportunism on the question of lay-offs, the party moved to the next problem of the convention policy in ship. Again the PC failed to adopt a correct line. Here the policy of the party on Stalinism was forced upon the fraction by the PC, after a debate between Coolidge and Marnin. Every member of the fraction but two wanted to enter the so-called "progressive caucus" and fight for our program there against the Stalinists in the caucus, and at any rate to ally with them to oust the Green leadership. The opinion of the PC, as expressed by Comrade Coolidge, was: "Green belongs to us. He is part of the American labor movement, whereas the Stalinists are union wreckers outside of the labor movement who would not give us a chance to live in the union." As the fraction members very well put it: "What's the matter here? Everytime we see Stalinists we run the other way, no matter wher. Now we are told to support the leadership which we have opposed so fiercely for three years."

The WP could not see the workers who were rallying to the Stalinist caucus as the only expression they could find for their hatred of the miserable

policy of the union leadership. They refused to engage the Stalinists in struggle for the support of the rank and file and therefore only pushed all the progressives into the struggle on the side of the Stalinists. The fraction expressed its thankfulness that they did not win the election for the convention delegation, which obviated the necessity for defending such a line at the convention. Suffice it to say that the opposition in the yard which beat our slate in the election carried out the party line for the PC.

With the convention over, the defeated "progressive group" attempted to establish a national group to continue the fight against the national leadership. In a perverted fashion they were responding to pressure from the ranks for a militant program of struggle. Again we were told that it was not our task to enter this group and fight for our program. Under the guidance of the PC we abstained from participation in what might have developed into a rank and file insurrection. We were afraid to enter a group and contest the Stalinists for power on the basis of our program for the industry against theirs. Opportunism, conservatism and abstentionism had now become the methods of operation of the party's most influential fraction. (In the UE, on the other hand, they jumped headlong into the reactionary grouping of ACTU people who gathered around Carey and Block on a purely red-baiting program. Any one who is anti-Stalinist is on "their" side.)

All of this stemmed from having a "practical" day-to-day, hand-to-mouth policy, rather than one of trying to advocate a correct policy which filled the objective needs of the workers in the industry. The correct policy might have meant less power, prestige and influence in the immediate period (although I doubt that), but it would have established credit for the party in the minds of many workers who would have come to us when they saw that we were consistently telling the truth and posing the only real solution to their problems.

The incorrect policy forced on the fraction by the WP leadership ended it in an utter rut without perspective, and the people simply waited for the time when they would be laid off and the yard would close. Soon after the national convention, the leader of the fraction made a report in which he stated that the union could do nothing but call for nationalization of the shipyard industry, that a strike was impossible because of the bad conditions of the industry. Thus, as so often happens, he jumped from one extreme to the other. The fraction and the branch disagreed with him and urged a policy of calling for an industry-wide strike plus the idea of nationalization. When this was proposed in the union we were booed off the floor. The proposal of an escalator clause was not listened to. Other locals in the city were voting on the question of a general strike as a protest against police brutality in the Westinghouse-GE strike, yet we could not even propose this step in the ship local. From being a "progressive" local, it finished as the local which was behind all the others in the city, and this while we still had a share in the leadership.

A set-back is understandable. There have been many in the past and there will be more in the future, before the party is built and the revolution is consummated. But when it can be traced back as flowing from a fundamentally erroneous conception of revolutionary work in the trade unions, a conception which stems from their retrogressive concepts in general and in particular as applied to the American question and the building of the party, then the party must study it and take note. We were responsible for the local, we were in the leadership, yet it became totally reactionary. It was the most fruitful ground for party recruitment, yet the recruits failed to remain and the party failed to make known to wide masses in the union either the name or the ideas of the party. The analysis of the reasons for such a development are beyond the ken of those who perpetually concern themselves with Freud and Horney and Reich as explanations for all social phenomena, including the state of the proletariat. That their politics'

line is at fault is something which the WP cannot comprehend. The correct answer is therefore the only one which is completely excluded by these masters of the concrete. It will always remain so until a fundamental revision is made and a return to Marxism.

#### Party Activity, Recruitment and Integration

It is necessary to outline and analyze the nature of the party activity, and the developments inside the party, which paralleled the trade union work which has just been described.

From the summer of 1944 to the winter of 1945, the party continued its work of contacting, distributions and held some open forums which were not too successful. The orientation given to the branch by Comrade Erber was allowed to run its course with little opposition, despite the fact that some of us had serious criticisms which we made known in the proper time and place. In January of 1945 the party organized a school - the Labor Action Institute - which was supposed to teach both new members and contacts the elements of socialism. It was also supposed to be a demonstration of the American approach as used by Erber. Unfortunately the comrades learned little from it, and later, one of the workers who had been a member for some time summarized it by saying "I was gyped," in the sense that he felt that nothing fundamental had been taught.

An interesting incident occurred in one of the classes conducted by Comrade Shachtman. In the course of his remarks he made mention of the fact that we were a revolutionary party. Apparently this had a bad effect on the contacts from ship, who did not know that a revolutionary party sponsored the school, and at the next session Shachtman had to explain what he meant by revolution, and it was assuredly not the meaning given to it by the party in the past. He made a concession to the backward prejudices of the workers and it did no good to the party then or later.

In his explanation, Comrade Shachtman first analyzed the possible meanings of the word "revolution" such as "a complete turn of the wheel," etc., and said that as applied to society it meant the complete change of society from top to bottom. So far, so good. But nowhere in his remarks did he indicate that the workers must prepare for the violent destruction of the old society and the reconstruction of the new. Nowhere did he attack the parliamentary illusions which are still held. The workers left the hall with the impression that this "revolution" could be made by building a labor party and getting a majority of the people to "vote for" socialism. Shachtman did not tell them this, but it was the inevitable impression they got because of his failure to present a fully developed opposing point of view. And this was a class for the training of new members and for recruitment! They had no idea what the actual process of revolutionary change would entail. It could not be otherwise. No one had told them.

At the conclusion of the school, Comrade Erber was needed in the center and was required to move to New York. He did so, and despite the controversies we had had in the past, both he and Comrade Shachtman insisted that Marnin become organizer. The branch concurred with them.

In the previous period there had been strained personal relationships stemming from the political and organizational conflicts and all of us regarded the coming period, insofar as the internal problems were concerned, as one which had to be used to correct this situation. In the course of a few months this was accomplished, although the branch was not functioning too well and there was not a great deal of activity for the bulk of the people. For some months there was no recruitment. The general routine of distributions and meetings was

carried out in a more or less efficient manner and the principal axis of the party's activity remained the situation in the "C" shipyard. For the first time in 27 years, the branch was completely dependent on its own resources for local leadership and initiative.

At the time of the Active Workers Conference of August 1945, the following report was given to that body by the organizer, Marnin.

"The branch has a total of some 200 subscriptions to Labor Action, 100 from ship, where we have 9 people, and 50 from "W" where we have 2 people, with the rest from other sources. In the last two years, about 200 people have subscribed and failed to renew their subs."

(It is necessary to make a brief comment on this question of renewals. The national renewal rate hovered around 10%, which was the rate in Philadelphia too. This only exemplifies what has been said by our tendency on the question of the press. The press failed to fill any need for the working class, failed to supply them with that which they could not get elsewhere. Its low agitational level precluded the presentation of any intelligent propaganda which could explain the revolutionary perspective which lay before us and detail the manifestations of the looming revolution in the actions of the masses. For any further explanation, our theoretical articles can be read on this question.)

The report went on to indicate the nature of recruitment and said:

"The basis of our recruitment is the mass work we do in the trade unions, the ideas we fight for in our 'mass work,' and the face of the party as seen in Labor Action and not our political differences with this or that other revolutionary group. They come to us, at least in 'C', because we have put up a better fight in the unions than the other groups have. We keep them only on the basis of our continued fight for those ideas in the shops and by impressing upon them through conversation and education the necessity for an organized group which can carry on that fight - the Party."

We must understand that the dispute on the American question and the related question of the revolutionary perspective and the building of the party had not broken out in the open. It was therefore necessary to limit one's remarks at that time. However, in the report, Marnin warned the party that "we cannot hope to retain these workers forever on the basis of our trade union program. We will either teach them the essentials of revolutionary socialist politics and activity or they will be lost to us. That is the task before our branch."

It was at that time that the party received orders from the PG to appoint a comrade in the fraction to be in charge of recruiting, (specifying that it be J.K., precisely the person who was consciously anti-Bolshevik and the leader of the fraction) and that we recruit anyone and everyone as fast as possible because of the likelihood of the yard closing down. In the words of Comrade Coolidge, the new policy was: "Get them in any way you can. We'll teach them later."

Personal relationships in the branch at this time were excellent, although many of us were impatient to begin the necessary political education of our worker members. This still could not be done because of the opposition of J.K. and the influence he had among the "C" workers. Rather than cause a conflict it was not pushed. This was probably the greatest error of the comrades

who later constituted themselves the Minority faction in the WP.

This next period, the fall of 1945, witnessed the most rapid recruitment that any branch of the WP had ever accomplished, either before or since. But hardly a sign of it is left today, and certainly this requires a thorough explanation. The typical rantings which the WP offers as an explanation, ranging from "bad atmosphere" in the branch, "too much politics," and example of the "backwardness of the proletariat," etc., are like the pitiful pious and indignant shouts of a defenseless child who has had his candy stolen by a bully. They simply cannot analyze such phenomena politically. An example of their explanation of similar situations elsewhere was the article by Stan Grey in an Internal Bulletin of the WP during the fall of 1946, in which Grey studied the "case history" of each recruit who was lost in Detroit and explained it with the help of psycho-analysis, marital relations and a multitude of other factors - but no politics.

"Get Them In - We'll Teach Them Later"

Comrade Erber, in the various articles he wrote which outlined the kind of party he wanted to build, used the the expression that "the party must be more like Labor Action; it must look and feel like Labor Action." In the last year of his tenure in Philadelphia the party not only was like Labor Action, it was an exact replica of Labor Action in respect to the type of educationals and the type of work it conducted. In reality the party had become the Labor Educational Club which had died e-borning. It performed the functions outlined in the statement of purpose of that organization, and the workers had been convinced that that was what the party should be like. He helped to prejudice their minds against learning the very elements of scientific socialism, and was ably abetted in this task by his key man in the "O" fraction, comrade J.K. The tone of the party could not be changed after he left and the ideas of the "small mass party" still dominated the party many months later. The thick wall of prejudice could not be broken without an intense internal struggle which all wanted to avoid. This was the state of the party when the recruiting directive was issued.

The result was that J.K. would get hold of two or three people before a branch meeting, tell them we were for a "better world," for the "brotherhood of man," and for the creation of a labor party which would bring this about and the party would accept them as members. For the most part that was the last that was seen of these "recruits" who attended one or two meetings and that's all. These meetings always concerned themselves with the problems in the shipyard and the labor party. Never was the party program taught. Never was the concept of social revolution mentioned, let alone analyzed.

It was impossible to build a party by these means; particularly when we were left in a confused state of mind because of a fear of frightening them with the ideas of Marxism. We did not meet our worker contacts with the revolutionary confidence which they deserved. They were ready for more than the WP could give them. The net result was to water down the party, lower the level of understanding, fill them up with all the agitational pap which Labor Action supplied them with, and let it go at that. There was no attempt to raise the workers to the level of what a revolutionary should be. It is significant that for the Active Workers Conference of 1945, this fraction could submit a document which stated that the method of party recruitment was "beer hall schmoozing" and not driving home our political line. Perhaps workers can be recruited to a Labor Educational Club by such means, but when such a technique is used by a party it guarantees a great many defections, particularly when the party refuses to educate them differently after they are recruited. We must advance the program of the party and educate on that basis or we will fail in our primary obligations to the working class and to the workers in the party.

The original nucleus of comrades in the shipyard worked hard and long to help build the party. They recruited on the basis of their activity and prestige in the union as outstanding militants. They worked under the direction of responsible party leaders, for the most part directly supervised by the PC of the WP. The party failed in its responsibilities to them, failed to educate them in the ideas of Marxism, failed to give them a correct orientation and perspective. The press failed to fill in for what they could not say or did not know how to say. They had no literature to read which could explain, in terms familiar to them (the Americanization of Bolshevism), what the ideas of the party were. They worked heroically and persistently with the few tools given to them by the party, yet lost all that they had won in the union and all the recruits to the party. They found that the ideas of the party were not listened to just when the workers all over the country were perking up their ears and listening to propaganda against capitalism. Such was the technique of the WP's mass partyism.

In the course of a few months, J.K. recruited no less than 13 workers from "C", seven of them Negroes and six white. One of these workers never attended a branch meeting and yet was listed as a party "member." He left town and was never seen again. Six of the others attended no more than two branch meetings, but were regarded as "members" for months afterwards. Of the remaining 6, about 4 attended with any degree of regularity for any length of time. That was their record in the party, as a simple check of the branch minutes will testify. (Typical of the WP, when these people were finally given up and dropped, they screamed that the "Johnsonites drove them out," but they could not say what drove out J.K. later on and the workers who were placed in a separate branch where the Johnsonites "could not bother them.")

For J.K. the trade union movement and the progressive groups were everything. For him the primary function of the party, in reality the only function, was to build these progressive groups, lead them and fight for office in the unions. The fundamental ideas of the movement, the principles of Trotskyism, both within and outside the party had no place in his scheme of things. He wanted a party and progressive group which would have "good relations" with all varieties of "progressives." He did not intend to, and never did, contest other parties and union groups too sharply on programmatic issues (other than the three point program) for fear of "isolating us" or "antagonizing them."

J.K. went his merry way unchecked, (except by the present Johnson-Forest tendency whose attitude was considered "antagonistic") building the party in the image of his political ideas, which included support for Henry Wallace. He taught new comrades that the party they had joined was the party as he conceived it. Erber and the PC offered no basic criticism of his ideas at any time, except to others privately. Out of this confusion of the party with the progressive group it was inevitable that opportunism should arise, born of confusion as to the purpose and function of the party. Its reflection in the party was that J.K. recruited workers to a sort of club of "working men of good will," who want to build a Labor Party and take over the Government as they did in England.

He resisted all classes of any kind with the explanation that "it would frighten the workers away," "they are not interested in that," or "they wouldn't understand it," etc. Forums and branch educationals were watered down not only for the consumption of contacts but for members. They were made hostile to theory and discussion by both Erber and J.K. (Indicative of this was Erber's opposition to the calling of a convention instead of a Workers' Conference, because "conventions throw the party backward and a conference takes us forward." This stemmed from his conception that the theory of the movement was "sectarian," that "politics" was beyond the ken of the workers, and that all they needed was "action.")

After two years in our party, ONE OF THE WORKERS (J.K.) gave an educational on the "Meaning of Revolutionary Socialism," in which he proclaimed that the purpose of the party was to build a labor party which would be voted into power and create socialism. It was not his fault. The conception of soviet power was never given to him. He was amazed when, in the course of the discussion various comrades pointed out his error in order to clarify the issue. Another member of the original group had inclinations to join the CP because "it was larger and could get more done." Still another wanted to become a Democratic Committeeman. One of those recruited by J.K., after he left the party, became tied up with the reactionary ACTU and denounced the "reds." The same member who wanted to become a Democratic Committeeman became highly aroused when Murnin visited some delinquent recruits in an attempt to activate them, and in the course of his remarks told these workers that we were "in business to build the WP which stood for a revolution against the existing order and not to build a Labor Party, which was only one little part of our ideas." He thought that this should not be said to party members.

These workers are the kind who must be recruited if the party is to get any place. They are devoted and self-sacrificing. They should have been and were welcomed into the party. The party should have been and was proud to recruit them. But then we had the job of raising their understanding and consciousness. That is the job of a Marxist party. The workers cannot learn scientific socialism by themselves. But the party insisted on staying with them at the level to which J.K. reduced all politics, instead of raising them to the level of Marxism. The party recruited them but did not teach them that which they had to know if they were to become active and capable revolutionaries. Only the vision of a new society and the conviction that it is logically inevitable can induce workers to give their lives to a party.

That these things happened was inevitable, given the nature of party recruitment and education under the direct influence of J.K. and the benevolent guidance of Erber. The party paid dearly for this disorientation with the end result that of all the 30 workers recruited from "C" in the course of the party's work, only two are now members, one active and one inactive. The small mass party finished by being small and without contact with the masses. Such is the way of all opportunist when comrades attempt to apply it to the building of a revolutionary party.

One of the more serious aspects of this matter was the direct responsibility of the PC which was aware from the start of J.K.'s political views and of his basic differences with Bolshevism. It was aware of the more or less temporary nature of his sojourn in the party. Yet it obstinately refused to permit any clarification of the relationship of J.K.'s politics to that of a revolutionary party. It did not check or correct his views, and made no attempt to do so. Nor did it prepare the worker comrades politically for his eventual departure or for their work in the vanguard party. As far as they were permitted to know, there were no political differences between J.K. and the party, i.e., they accepted him as their leader and his approach as the approach of the party.

The party could not warn the comrades about J.K. and his ideas because it had completely capitulated to him. His political and organizational concepts could not be resisted by the leadership of the WP. The mistakes for which the WP eventually paid are the mistakes and responsibility of Erber and the entire WP leadership. The Majority could not attack and defeat the ideas of Erber, they could only capitulate to him as he capitulated to J.K. An unbreakable chain of opportunist deviation was forged by the political line of the WP. Later on the "cadre" of Shaohman could only continue the attempt to build on the quicksilver foundation left by Erber and J.K., to cater to and inculcate backward

prejudices in the workers by deriding political discussions. Such a method could only lead to disintegration.

#### An Attempted Correction

In the fall of 1945, a few of us made a determined effort to rectify the nature of the party's internal educationals, if nothing else. We knew that it would be artificial, that such a change could only be completed by a complete change in the party's orientation and press (along the lines indicated in Johnson's Education, Propaganda, Agitation), but we also knew that a failure to make the attempt would mean a catastrophe in the near future. The Executive Committee, at least formally, agreed with us. In the minutes of September 17, 1945 is the following statement:

"The most important task facing the branch in the coming period is education. We must learn the principles of socialism and the program of the party. All of us must learn why we need a party like ours and become ready and able to speak for and defend the party and its principles. The educationals must become the most important part of the branch meeting. The scheduled topics are:

1. The WP and the Labor Party
2. The American Workers and the Fate of Europe
3. Russia in the War - What it Fought For
4. Problems of the Negro Workers

A series of public forums was also scheduled, to cover the following:

1. Atomic Power and the Future of the Workers
2. How Would Socialism Work
3. Trade Unions and Political Action
4. The Need for a Labor Party

A class in the "Fundamentals of Socialism" was also projected but the workers could not "find time" to attend. It was at least a beginning and we hoped it would be allowed to pick up steam as it rolled along.

The next series of educationals was on the following topics:

1. The Meaning of Revolutionary Socialism
2. The Question of Unity between the SWP and the WP
3. The Veterans and the Party
4. The Communist Party Change in Line

Those reading this article are certain to comment that such topics are not exactly "esoteric" aspects of Marxist theory, but even these represented a tremendous step forward from what had been. It was deemed wise to "make haste slowly" in order not to arouse the bitter animosity of J.K. and his supporters.

In the "Report of the Out-Going Executive Committee" given in November 1945, a review of the work accomplished since Erber had left and Marnin had become organizer, the following statement was made and concurred in by all branch members and leaders: "In the past ten months the branch has increased its membership by 100% with the recruitment of 19 people. But this is not the end of the question - we must keep all these people, educate them, increase their understanding of and loyalty to the party, in brief to make them revolutionary socialists. That is the biggest problem before us. If it is not solved we shall lose half of our recruits, for many of them are members in name only. The only method of integration is education. There is no short cut. Educational work is the most important



- 28 -

task of the branch at the present time, even if it must be done at the expense of other party or union activity. Without that, and regular attendance of all people, no progress can be made."

A month later we attempted to speed up the process and raise the level still more. A plan was devised to break the branch up into several "squads" for the purpose of both education and activity, which would supplement the work of the branch as a unity. A long, and perhaps too ambitious, program was drawn up for both the "squads" (which would actually be small classes) and the branch. For the "squads" the following was the program:

1. 4 Weeks - Elementary Marxian Economics (using as text a bulletin issued by the party and with supplementary readings in "Value, Price and Profit," and "Wage-Labor and Capital")
2. 4 Weeks - Elementary Marxian Politics; the State and the Working Class (using as text a bulletin issued by the party and with supplementary readings in the Communist Manifesto and "State and Revolution")
3. 2 Weeks - Socialism and War - The revolutionary approach to imperialist wars, progressive wars and pacifism (readings in "Socialism and War," "War and the Second International" "The Fourth International and War")
4. 2 Weeks - The Nature of Modern Imperialism (readings in Lenin's "Imperialism")
5. 4 Weeks - "Application of Marxism to Modern History"
  - a) The Spanish Civil War (readings in Morrow)
  - b) France - 1936 to 1945 (readings in Trotsky)
6. 2 Weeks - "The Road to Power" - What is Bolshevism? What is Trotskyism? Why Do We Need a Party? Reform or Revolution? (readings in Lenin - "The April Theses," "What Is To Be Done," and "The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution," Trotsky - "Stalinism and Bolshevism")

The branch educationals called for:

1. An Analysis of the Social Democracy
2. World Revolution vs. Socialism in one Country
3. The Communist Party and the Comintern
4. Lessons of the Paris Commune
5. "Lessons of October"

These were fundamental. It is true that they are not exactly close to the problems of the workers in America, but we must understand that it is necessary to use the tools at hand until the party accomplishes the turn indicated by our tendency on the question of "Americanisation of Bolshevism." From that point the intention was then to move into a discussion of the various points of view in the party on disputed questions (which these workers had never heard) in order to prepare in a non-factional manner for the approaching pre-convention discussion. The entire orientation was resisted by those members who later formed the Majority and supported by those members in the future Minority, members of the Johnson-Forest tendency.

The branch educationals proceeded very slowly. The "squads" were hampered by the non-attendance of all the new people, interrupted by the holiday season and after a short time were abandoned. The attempt to make a necessary

1156

correction could not be considered a success, but a complicating factor was the entrance into the situation of Comrades Fenwick and Brad to bolster the Majority faction with their intense factional activity. The masters of the concrete now became the masters of the very concrete question of convention votes. In February or March of 1946, Comrade Fenwick became the organizer of the branch and the activity of the party was given over to the direction of the Majority caucus.

A Contrast - The Work at "W"

In exact contrast with the work done at "C" was the work of Marnin in "W", where he began to work in late 1943. Except for the impossible combination of sectarianism and opportunism represented by Arnold, a comrade who had been in the plant for years and had not gotten a single subscription for the party press, not a single contact, nor brought a single worker to a party meeting, Marnin had to work completely alone and in a short time Arnold, too, was removed from the scene by a lay-off. The local was absolutely apolitical, it had never heard of our party or what it stood for. It was necessary to begin from scratch and develop some contacts and begin the work of disseminating party propaganda on the Transitional Program and for socialism.

In the course of the first year of activity this comrade obtained over 50 subscriptions to the paper, won the respect of all the active union members, was active on a number of union committees, became a shop steward, and was known throughout the plant as a "red," and to many as a "Trotakvist." In no way did this hamper his work in the union. Here, unlike what was done at "C", we opposed the endorsement of Roosevelt for re-election and fought down the line on this question, even though we were absolutely isolated. At "C" they avoided the question because it "would embarrass them" with their supporters.

We made a conscious effort to politicalize the local, introducing our ideas whenever an opening presented itself and soon won many adherents on individual questions. Without any machine or formal grouping of any kind we soon became a force to be reckoned with in the local because of the strength of our ideas and the principled manner in which we conducted every fight. In a short time all the active unionists understood the differences between socialism and capitalism, between the policy of the CP and the WP, etc. We fought hard on the question of discrimination against Negro workers and won the ardent support of every Negro worker in the plant, and to this day we are the only ones they respect among the union activists. One example of what can result from such a policy is that in one of the committees, the PAC, the workers asked for a debate between the CP and the WP.

In the course of the years over 30 workers from "W" were "exposed" to various party meetings - forums and classes, but only one was recruited. Many of these workers told us that they heard better discussions on the union floor between the proponents of different points of view. The party offered them nothing that they did not already have in the union, and they saw no reason why they should join the party. The spokesmen for "revolutionary socialism" offered them nothing but trade union advice, which they did not particularly want or need. Particularly was this true when, during the course of a four month strike in 1946, they heard Fenwick speak and all he had to say was "stick to your demands." The inimitable Fenwick could not conceive of using this as the most wonderful opportunity for the complete exposure of the labor bureaucracy, the limitations of the trade union struggle and the necessity for a fundamental solution to the problems of society, precisely what they had been told by the party representative in the plant, Marnin.

In the course of the strike, in which Marnin played a conspicuous role in both the organizational and educational aspects of the union's strike machinery, the opportunity was used for a continual exposition of the necessity for a sliding scale of wages, the need for general strike action, the need for a new turn for the workers movement, etc. This was more than the party itself chose to do. Under such conditions, without in any way saying that all that was done at "W" was correct and all that was done at "C" was wrong, it was virtually impossible to recruit. The need for a revolutionary party must be taught by the party in its press before an individual member can hope to convince his circle of sympathizers to join. This the WP was incapable of doing because they could not understand what the role of the party was and what the workers were looking for.

In contrast with the workers at "C", who the Majority claimed were not interested in theory, all the worker contacts at "W" are intensely interested in learning more about the theory of Marxism. Recently, two of them demanded that I explain the theory of dialectical and historical materialism to them, and we discussed for over four hours. When I spoke about the future "history of humanity" in contrast with the past history of exploitation, one of them responded: "You know, all my life I've been fighting, but I think that now I'm beginning to know what I have to fight against and what I have to fight for."

Today, even reactionary workers who are not as yet sympathetic to our revolutionary ideas, often approach me to admit that I was right on this or that question which the union discussed in the past years, such as the exposure of the United Nations, the exposure of the probable attack by the Government on the unions, the exposure of the capitulating role of the labor bureaucracy and the social roots of their behavior, the exposure of the Stalinists and a prediction of how their line would change, etc. It is only such work which can prepare the soil for the future strengthening of the party. But it requires patience, that quality which the WP and its supporters cannot acquire because of their false political line.

All this work was decried by the WP because, "it doesn't mean anything unless there are real results - recruits." But for all of their "concrete accomplishments" it is only in this local that the party's voice can be heard today. It is only here that we have a person in the union movement of this city who is recognized throughout the city as a capable, active unionist and also a Trotskyist. It is here that all progressive ideas are warmly received today, while the poor WP hasn't even got a door to knock on in hope of reaching a worker contact. At any time now or in the future the men in this local can be approached by a representative of the movement and he will get a hearing. All of their contacts in "C" are "dead" as far as the WP is concerned. That is where opportunist politics ends up - in a blind alley - in contrast with the opportunities which can be gained by a consistent course of firm Bolshevik activity in the unions, an expression of confidence in one's political line and in the proletariat. One road and only one can lead to the building of the Bolshevik party in America or elsewhere. Shachtman and Erber could not develop a short cut, they could not discover a new road to the masses, because one does not exist. Their search will never end until they return to the ideas of the movement. That is for them to decide.

"The Reckoning - An Accounting Is Made"

In March 1946, the pre-convention discussion was begun in the Philadelphia section. Comrade Fenwick was now organizer and his plan of action called for the creation of two branches out of the single branch which existed at that time. The members of the Minority opposed it but abstained on the vote in order to allow the Majority to have its way. It was the beginning of the end. In the convention discussion itself the section split squarely down the middle, with 14 voting for each position. Of the worker elements who were still active in the branch, 2 voted with the Minority, and 3 or 4 of the ship workers voted with the Majority, (only one of the latter is still active in the party.)

The yard closed down during this period and it was left to the Majority to "weed out" all those who could not be activated. By the end of the year, of all the 27 workers recruited from all sources in the course of seven years of work there were exactly 4 still in the movement: 2 in the WP and 2 with the Minority. That was all that was left in the ruins of Erber's "small mass party." The party was a complete shambles. Not even Shachtman's cadre could save it.

By the fall of 1946, the party was again the same condition of complete isolation from the working class as it was in 1940. This was so apparent that, under the leadership of Fenwick, the branch prepared a series of forums which could be characteristic only of a petty-bourgeois grouping which could not even make a serious attempt to reach the working class. This series included the following subjects:

1. The Problem of Palestine
2. Literature and Politics
3. Psychoanalysis and Politics
4. Dialectical Materialism and Science

And this was supposed to represent the party which had a "new and dynamic approach to the working class"! A school was organized with classes on the CIO, the Fourth International and the program of the party. Hardly anyone attended. At this writing the WP is engaged in an election campaign, which is probably the only factor which enables them to remain alive with any semblance of an organization. If it were not for this they would in all likelihood "fold their tents like an Arab and silently steal away." There is nothing left for them to do.

Unity is the only perspective for them, but people cannot see that. Of the dozen or so people left, the majority are against unity with the SWP, and one of them openly announced that he preferred unity with the SP to unity with the "Gannonites." They continually rant and rave against the "bureaucratic jungle" of the SWP, and are madly seeking guarantees for a free "ideological life," now that there are no workers around to encumber and hamper them. They have ended where they began - in isolation. Politically too, they have ended where they began - with a profound deviation from Marxism which was extended and deepened in the course of the years and was reflected in the organizational development and degeneration.

The WP eagerly seeks to find a scapegoat which will obviate the necessity for finding other solutions to this major problem of the loss of 23 workers out of 27 recruited, which in turn is merely a manifestation of organizational degeneration in other spheres of party activity. It is a typically bureaucratic habit, typical of petty-bourgeois politics in general, to seek the answer in the form of a scapegoat, when it is found impossible or too difficult and embarrassing to explain certain phenomena within the context of their political line. Certainly the representatives of the WP leadership in Philadelphia, such as Fenwick, Brad and Arnold, made no attempt to explain what happened in a political manner. We, for our part, believe that the answer lies in the ideas which we have presented to the movement for its consideration.

Many of the workers who were recruited were Negroes, and here the party failed miserably. Instead of emphasizing the role of the Negro in the coming American revolution and the necessary and progressive role which Negro organizations could play, they completely denigrated the struggle of the Negro masses, ignored their revolutionary instincts and failed to make them feel at home in the party. Eventually even the more articulate Negro comrades adopted the attitude of the Majority that their struggle was "the same as that of the white worker." None of them was ever actually integrated into the party, socially or politically. Part of the answer, if not all of it, lies in the theoretical contributions which our tendency has presented on the Negro question.

It is time now, that we make an accounting of the seven years of the party in Philadelphia, draw up the final balance sheet, and attempt to learn something from it and go forward from there. Here it is:

<u>Membership</u>	<u>Remained</u>	<u>Left the Movement</u>
Old-Timers (before 1939)	10	8 (80%)
1940 Group	22	13 (59%)
Youth Recruits	14	10 (72%)
Miscellaneous	7	3 (43%)
Workers	27	23 (85%)
<b>Total:</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>57 (71%)</b>

The balance sheet is drawn. It represents our appraisal of the WP and points the way forward to those who want to understand.

\*\*\*\*\*

- Irving Marnin

OFF THE PRESS  
NEXT WEEK

# THE INVADING SOCIALIST SOCIETY

J. R. JOHNSON  
F. FOREST  
RIA STONE

6 1/2 printed pages

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Chapter I. World War II and Social Revolution
- A. Trotsky 1940, Germain 1947
  - B. The Historical Role of the Fourth International
  - C. The Mass Movement Today
  - D. The Communist Parties in Western Europe
    - i. The Proletarian and Revolutionary Character of the Stalinist Parties
    - ii. The Bourgeois and Counter-Revolutionary Character of the Stalinist Parties
  - E. The Nature of the Party 1947
- Chapter II. State Capitalism
- A. The Revolution Thirty Years After
  - B. The State Thirty Years After
  - C. The Communist Parties in Russia and Eastern Europe
- Chapter III. Imperialism Thirty Years After
- A. "Vast State-Capitalist and Military Trusts and Syndicates"
  - B. American Imperialism
  - C. The Interweaving of Imperialist, Civil and National Wars
- Chapter IV. Poland - Where All Roads Meet
- Chapter V. Parties, Tendencies and Programs in the Fourth International
- Sectarianism - Menshevism - Economism
  - The Transitional Program Today

50¢

Order From: MARTIN HARVEY \* 101 W. 46th Street \* New York 19

1 1 6 2

I N T E R N A L  
B U L L E T I N

OF THE  
JOHNSON  
FOREST  
TENDENCY

Number 10

September 18, 1947

C O N T E N T S

PART I.

Professional Democrats. By J. R. Johnson. . . . . Page 1

Report On China. By Gene. . . . . Page 3

PART II.

Trade Unions and the Revolution. . . . . By Irving Marnin.

15 CENTS

1162

PROFESSIONAL DEMOCRATS.

There are times when the spectacle of human hypocrisy is more than nauseating - particularly when it appears in our own movement. I refer to the leaders of the Workers Party - and I mean the leaders and the leaders only.

These comrades have split the ear-drums and blinded the sight of all within range by their lamentations and publications about honesty, virtue, sincerity in politics, and above all, democracy. We want free and honest discussion. Every thing of importance must be published. Everyone must know everything. Shachtman distinguishes himself by his knowledge of the distinction between what politicians say and what they really mean as discovered by himself, not by analysis but by their secret correspondence.

Now, however, the W.P. leadership gets a chance to practice some true democracy. The Johnson-Forest tendency announced months ago that it would publish a Balance-Sheet of its differences with the W.P. It wrote this not once but many times. The knowledge of this has gone over the world.

Now the Balance Sheet has appeared. Thirty-two pages consisting of nearly 40,000 words. It places the Balance Sheet in an international frame-work. The Balance Sheet has gone to every tendency and organization connected with or sympathetic with the Fourth International. It will certainly play a role at the EPC. People are discussing it. The S.W.P. membership is reading it by the hundreds.

Who cannot get copies to read? Yes, you are correct. The members of the W.P. And why? Because their leaders, the super-democrats, the purveyors of secret information, the publicity-experts, now that they are faced with a serious, informed analysis exposing their politics and their organizational hypocrisy, suddenly lose their taste for free discussion.

We wrote to them offering them copies of the Balance Sheet at a reasonable price. No answer. Some W.P. members met us on the street and asked us for our literature. "We have not been able to get hold of it." They don't know that we did our best to get it to them in an organized manner.

A political leadership is not in duty bound to bring to its members everything its opponents publish about it. We subscribe to no such ridiculous doctrine. But in these circumstances, for the W.P. leaders to refuse to place copies of the Balance Sheet at the disposal of their members is a crime.

The Balance Sheet is not an internal document. It has gone far and wide. Not only does it concern the W.P. membership more than all others. It is their leaders who have made a cult of publication. This is Shachtman concluding his "Two lines on Unity."

"Right and duty coincide here. But this duty cannot be discharged as it should be if there is double-dealing, duplicity, concealment, super-diplomacy, self-suppression or suppression by others. It can only be done by the method we have scrupulously followed - open, honest and full development of political positions, presentation of political positions, confrontation of political positions. It is a method to be recommended not only to Johnson but to the movement all over the world."



Now where is it possible to find a more "open, honest and full development of a political position" on unity than in our Balance Sheet. Here is a chance for presentation of a political position and a confrontation of a political position. The W.P. leaders, the moment they are on the receiving end, forget all about these high-sounding principles. Their members have to get the Balance Sheet as they can.

This is nothing new. The W.P. leaders have never published one single political document of the Fourth International. When we were there, we tried in vain to get them to publish the international resolution of the CIC. That bureaucratic tyrant of tyrants, Cannon, at least published Morrow's letter to the I. S. and the I. S. reply. Shachtman, the democrat, did not think it necessary to publish the views of the International on anything.

This is not new. For two years the W.P. leaders dodged themselves out of publishing Trotsky's conversations on the Negro question. Resolution after resolution was passed agreeing to its publication. They would not publish. Because it would have torn their own position to shreds.

The W.P. decided more than once to publish some of Trotsky's discussions on the American question. None has been published to this day.

The Johnson-Forest tendency tried to get the W.P. to publish some translations from Marx. The editorial board of The New Internationalist refused. One of them, "Private Property and Communism," is one of the greatest philosophical essays ever written on the origin and destiny of man. No. There were things in it which would strengthen the political positions of the Johnson-Forest tendency. They found excuses.

So that when the W.P. keeps away from its membership our Balance Sheet - that and our literature - that is no surprise to us. We know them. We don't make any particular fuss about these things. All attempts to suppress anybody or any documents in the Fourth International will fail. Shachtman believes that by this we are referring to him or to Cannon or to the I.S.C. He has lost the capacity to think politically about organizational questions. Suppression must fail because of the violent world we live in and the aims and principles of our organization. So that we are not disturbed about our Balance Sheet being kept from the W.P. They will read it.

But we have sworn to stop the mouths of these hypocrites who live by professing "democracy." We shall expose them until the "democratic" racket is stamped out.

J.R. Johnson

(Next week we shall deal with the unity question and the suppression of documents by Shachtman in order to deceive his members about unity.)

A REPORT OF THE SITUATION IN CHINA

(This description of the situation in China has been written by a Chinese comrade who has recently returned to the United States. While, for the most part, he lived in the Kuomintang territory, he also visited the Communist-held areas. For some years, since 1944, Comrade Gene has agreed with the Johnson-Forest analysis of the nature of the Russian state and of the present epoch, but has been unable to participate actively in the organization.)

During the Chinese-Japanese war, Chiang-kai-Shek's regime was fighting a baby game war. By that I mean that the best of Chiang's armies were stationed surrounding the Stalinist Northwestern territory to blockade the boundary. Chinese Communists (Stalinists) were fighting guerilla warfare. Their fighters were spread out over all villages under Japanese occupation. The see-saw fighting kept up until the Japanese surrender in 1945.

The main Chinese Stalinist strategy was to organize the peasants for their armies by giving the farmer a little land (divided from the landlords). That is not a complete land reform. Landlords were satisfied too because under the Communist land reform they still kept some lands and had a chance to put capital enterprise in business. The landlords cooperated. The program won the support of landlords. So the basic Stalinist power in a vast Chinese territory was established in such a manner.

So they mobilized the manpower of the peasant classes. So they won the support of the peasant class. So they did establish the Communist rule over a vast territory.

In wartime China, imperialist Japanese armies were occupying only the big cities. By means of communication lines outside of every city, they were surrendering to the Chinese Communists when the war ended in 1945. When the Japanese moved out from the cities, the Communists moved in from outside the cities. They were ready to accept the surrender of Japanese garrisons. There were quite a number of arms and property turned over to the Communists by the defeated Japanese.

The Chinese Communists were arming every farmer they could. Their armies were growing rapidly. By that they gained more cities and towns. Main cities like Kalgan, Waiguan, Linkai, Tain, Chungchun, Harbin were taken easily by force. They didn't hold the above cities long. They had no chance to defend them. They were captured by the bourgeois armies of Chiang-kai-Shek one after another, except Harbin which is still in hand.

Let us look at the whole picture. Why can't the Stalinists hold big cities? They have arms, they have peasant support. That is most important. They have no support from the working class inside the cities. They were and still are less interested in labor warfare as you can see from Mao-Tse-Tung's "Coalition Government."

"IN ORDER TO ACCOMPLISH THE CHINESE REVOLUTION, WE MUST FORM A COALITION GOVERNMENT. DUE TO THE CHARACTERISTIC OF PRESENT CHINESE SOCIETY, WHICH IS STILL IN THE SEMI-COLONIAL STAGE, WE MUST DEVELOP A SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC CAPITALIST WAY OF INDUSTRY - NATIONAL INDUSTRIALIZATION OF CHINA. WE MUST COOPERATE WITH NATIONALLY MINDED CAPITALISTS. WE MUST SHAKE HANDS WITH DEMOCRATIC INTELLECTUALS. WE MUST LEAD THE PEASANT CLASS TO CONTINUE OUR AIM OF REVOLUTION."

You will see very well. The Chinese Stalinist leaders do not care very much about the city's working class, and in Mao-Tse-Tung's way of thinking, there should be no struggle between the bourgeoisie and proletariat at the present

time, because China needs industrialization and industrialization needs national capitalists.

In the city of Shanghai, the largest city of China, with a population of four million, and let us say, one-fourth of the population are workers, that means there are one million fighters within the city if they are called upon to fight in the class struggle. Like way back in 1925-27, it would be easy to take the city. According to reports, Chinese Communists would still surrender Shanghai any minute, if they could clear out Shanghai's unions.

In Shanghai, unions are in Chiang-kai-Shek's hand. The National Laborer's Association's main office is in Shanghai under the rule of C.C. clique. It controls one to two million workers of various kinds. It used to be under reformer Chu's leadership. Chu was ousted by Chiang in the beginning of 1947, and forced him to escape to Hong Kong, where he met with an accident and nearly got killed. He is now in the United States. Chu is only a unionist reformer, only a little better than the Chiang-kai-Shek reactionary; that is about all.

All Shanghai unions (textile, docks, department store, railroad, seamen) are under the present iron rule of Su-Yun-Taung. He is a C.C. man and used to be Chu's assistant. He is a powerful man with secret service men all over unions, plants, shops. He has already put groups of specially trained secret police into factories. They were called "Production protecting groups," and were used to control the workers' activity in every factory. If they reported any revolutionary union men among the workers, they would immediately shoot or kidnap him. That is an open secret.

The nationalist-minded students have been playing the most important part in the Chinese revolution in 1919. Just after World War I, the Paris Peace Conference refused to accept the Chinese proposal on the return of Dairen and Port Arthur to China. The government was so weak that it could do nothing to protest against the conference. The students of Peiping (Peking), then capital of China did. They got up a demonstration, called upon all countrymen to protest against the foreign imperialist. So the students won. All Chinese classes were awake and standing up to fight. A nation-wide demonstration was taking place.

You would never think it, but the 1919 students' leaders went a different way. Most became Kuomintang officials, ministers, and took jobs in the reactionary government of Chiang-kai-Shek. Minister Wang-Shik-Kit worked for foreign affairs, Minister Chu-Gai-Wah for Education and many others. So the one-time revolutionary student leaders, now are the most reactionary bourgeois rulers. And so did some of the student leaders become Stalinists, like Mao-Tse-tung and General Chu-en-Lai.

Today, the students in China are still playing the important role in national warfare from 1945-47. There have been many demonstrations against the government, namely, "Call off Civil War", "U.S. GI Go Home," etc. When I was in Shanghai, the demonstrations were so terrific that they could easily have broken out into a rebellion. The shop workers sympathized with them too. Even the American soldiers were in sympathy with them too.

America, Britain, France and other nations have set up or financially support some university or college in Shanghai or in other cities. Religious schools expected students to be on their side, but that idea was false due to the political condition being so bad that even the most dumb students stood up for national progress too.

Let us come to the "Democratic League". The "Democratic League" has been playing a great deal in Chinese politics. The League stands more or less on the center to the left. It is composed of professors, liberal intellectuals, and liberal middle class. They want a coalition government. They expect Chiang-kai-Shek to be liberal, to be their friend. More or less a group of reformers on politics and social warfare. They stand with Stalinists against Chiang-kai-Shek. On the other hand, they stood as middlemen on "negotiations" between Kuomintang and Communist.

This liberal "Democratic League" doesn't want a complete revolution. Their idea is to have things better off. Their social background is middle class, intellectuals and little property owners and well-meaning individuals. Their profits have been taken away by Chiang's colonial capitalists (The Four Families of China). Their living standard has been lower since the war and got worse with the civil war. Professors can't live on the terrible inflation prices. They have to work harder by getting a part-time job. The steady beautiful life has passed, so they think of the past and so the property owner loses more property by the slowdown in business. They can't stay that way any longer so they cry - they cry for a better government. The assassination of Professors Min and Li in Kuming in 1946, means the middle class, the semi-colonial petty bourgeoisie is on its way to break up with landlord and capitalist Chiang-kai-Shek openly.

In my opinion, the "Democratic League" in China today is the student center. The students are with them. The "Democratic League" is led by 1) Lo-Lung-Gee, 2) Chang-Lun, 3) Chin-Kun-Yee, 4) Leong-Jo-Maing, 5) Chang-tung-Sun and others. 1, 4, 5 are professors; 3 is an attorney, 2 is an intellectual. Above is a picture of the "Democratic League." They don't pay any attention to the two other minor parties of Chinese politics. The two parties are the National Socialist Party and the Youth Party.

The National Socialist Party is a group of reactionary intellectuals, and "out of office" officials. They only want to get into the Chiang government to make their fortune. After all, that is only a group of hobos who call themselves Socialists.

The Youth Party is more or less like the Fascists, has no effect on Chinese politics.

The above two parties make no progress on Chinese social affairs. Chiang only uses them as co-partners and to fool people by means of government reforms. Chiang-kai-Shek's government now has a couple of Youth Party and National Socialist men in the government.

Last year Chiang called a national assembly. Communists and representatives of Democratic League were not in the Assembly, only Youth Party and the National Socialist Party were with Chiang. It is true. The students keep running to Communist territories day by day. They can't stand any more the pressure of G.C. secret service. They can't see any more Chiang's friendship with the American imperialists which cost the collapse of Chinese industries, the civil war. They are on the farmer's side. They want a new country which they can be proud of.

Soldiers keep deserting too. As you know, capitalist Chiang's armies get its men from the vast land, the farmers. The farmers give their sons to fight for the way which they aren't so clear about. Everybody has to go because of mobilization orders. Both sides, Communist or Chiang, soldiers from the two sides probably are brothers or fathers and sons.

The soldiers on the Communist side know more why they have to fight and what they are fighting for. So its power grows.

Kuomintang armies more or less are employed armies, soldiers only fighting for the monthly income or forced to fight. But the Communist soldiers fight willingly. I should say they feel and they do know they are fighting for their freedom.

In Chiang's employed armies, classes are so different. Between officer and man, it is like the boss and servant. In Communist armies, according to my knowledge, they stand equally. The farmer boy feels more at ease than the farmer boys of Chiang's armies, that is the main cause for desertions.

- Gono

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

FEATURED IN THE WEEKLY BULLETINS

- #1 Why We Appear
- #2 Building the Mass Revolutionary Party in the Mine Area by Morgan West
- #3 The Worker in Modern Industry by Phil Romano
- #4 Introduction to the Three Essays of Karl Marx by J.R. Johnson, F. Forest, and Ria Stone
- #5 Labor and Society by F. Forest
- #6 Strata in the Working Class by Martin Harvey
- #7 The Economist Tendency in the Fourth International by Ria Stone
- #8 The American Worker by Ria Stone
- #9 A Concrete Example of Party Building by Irving Marnin
- #10 The Trade Unions and Revolutionary Politics by Irving Marnin

15¢ each

\*\*\*\*\*  
Address all communications to Martin Harvey - 101 West 46 St., New York, 19, N.Y.  
\*\*\*\*\*

~~OFF THE PRESS  
NEXT WEEK~~

NOW AVAILABLE

THE INVADING SOCIALIST  
SOCIETY  
J. R. JOHNSON  
F. FOREST  
RIA STONE

64 printed pages

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter I. World War II and Social Revolution

- A. Trotsky 1940, Germain 1947
- B. The Historical Role of the Fourth International
- C. The Mass Movement Today
- D. The Communist Parties in Western Europe
  - i. The Proletarian and Revolutionary Character of the Stalinist Parties
  - ii. The Bourgeois and Counter-Revolutionary Character of the Stalinist Parties
- E. The Nature of the Party 1947

Chapter II. State Capitalism

- A. The Revolution Thirty Years After
- B. The State Thirty Years After
- C. The Communist Parties in Russia and Eastern Europe

Chapter III. Imperialism Thirty Years After

- A. "Vast State-Capitalist and Military Trusts and Syndicates"
- B. American Imperialism
- C. The Intervsaying of Imperialist, Civil and National Wars

Chapter IV. Poland - Where All Roads Meet

Chapter V. Parties, Tendencies and Programs in the Fourth International  
Sectarianism - Menshevism - Economism  
The Transitional Program Today

50

Order From: MARTIN HARVEY \* 101 W. 46th Street \* New York 19

- 1 -

## TRADE UNIONS AND THE REVOLUTION

Note: (Speech delivered to a meeting of the New York comrades of the Johnson-Forrest Tendency, September 4, 1947)

The National Conference of the Johnson-Forrest tendency, held on the July 4th week-end, projected as one of its tasks the preparation of a trade union "memorandum", which would state some tentative views of those members of the tendency who are active in trade union work. This speech is a contribution to that task. It must, by no means, be considered a "finished" thesis, but rather as an introduction to the discussion and an extension of the views expressed by our session on the unions at the conference. That is all that it is meant to be. There may be many errors in the analysis, but this represents what 6 years of work and our political line have indicated to me is the correct orientation in this field of activity. I hope that this report and discussion which is to follow will be of some help in the preparation of the trade union "memorandum".

The first task is to make a general analysis of the question of the unions and the revolution and the nature of party trade union work in an attempt to establish clearly and precisely what our strategic orientation means for this aspect of our work. It is from this vantage point, and only from that point, that we can select correct tactics in a given union situation in line with that orientation, namely - the tactics which will lead most surely and quickly to the accomplishment of our goal. A mistake in tactics can be made and rectified without consequences of a serious nature, but a mistake in approach, in method, in strategy, can be catastrophic for the party. Once a strategic orientation is established it provides a "table of reference" for the comparison of all union situations. My own local, and national policy in the UE, will be referred to as examples of the problems and methods of solution.

It is necessary, first, that we understand where we are and where we are going. We must know what to expect and what to look for. That is the function of scientific politics, of Marxism. We must establish at the very outset that our approach to the problems of trade union work is not a question simply of "practical activity", that there is no dichotomy between the political tasks of the revolutionary party and its tasks in the unions, but that union activity is simply one arena -- the principal one, to be sure, -- in which we implement our general analysis and bring about the fruition of the objectives of the working class. There is no halo surrounding a union; it is not to be worshipped, but analyzed, probed with the tools of Marxism and exposed to the searchlight of a revolutionary analysis. It is not inviolable and sacrosanct. It is an instrument of our class, subject to all the ideological and social pressure of bourgeois society, just as is everything else. We begin from there. We make our analysis of the nature of the epoch, the perspective for the party and its tasks today, and then apply that analysis to the trade unions. There is no other way of doing it.

## 1. THE NATURE OF THE EPOCH -- THE REVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVE

In his last article, written just a few days before his death, Trotsky told us what to look for and what to prepare for in the epoch of the death agony of capitalism, "the epoch of wars and revolutions". He established, and our tendency revived and amplified, the strategic approach for the world party of the socialist revolution and its American section. He wrote:

"The American working class is still without a mass labor party even today. But the objective situation and the experience accumulated by the American working class can pose within a very brief period of time on the

order of the day the question of THE CONQUEST OF POWER. THIS PERSPECTIVE MUST BE MADE THE BASIS OF OUR AGITATION. It is not merely a question of a position on capitalist militarism and of renouncing defense of the bourgeois state but of DIRECTLY PREPARING FOR THE CONQUEST OF POWER..."

Our tendency has clearly established before the movement that it bases itself on this perspective, which is the very basis also of the transitional program. We have written a great deal on this question and on the correlative question of the consciousness of the masses in America today. In the same article, Trotsky wrote:

"Ahead lies a favorable perspective, providing all the justification for revolutionary activism. It is necessary to utilize the opportunities which are opening up and build the revolutionary party."

Our concern here is precisely that. To see the opportunities that are offered to us in the unions and to build the party in the unions and in the shops. Our task is to apply this perspective to the field of union activity, where it has been the custom of the revolutionary parties to abandon themselves to sectarianism and opportunism. In fact, more than in any other field of work, we can see in the trade unions exactly what the line of a party is in practice, and it is only in practice that a political line has any meaning for the working class or for the revolution.

## 2. THE REVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVE IN RELATION TO THE UNIONS

"We must work wherever the masses are to be found," was the general dictum of Lenin to all the revolutionary parties of the 3rd International. Above all is this true as applied to the unions in the United States, which constitute the only class organization to which the masses of American workers have been attracted. It is only here that we can find them. But we must understand that the unions, like all other phenomena, are not static, but part of a process; that they change under the impact of historical events and social forces; that they respond to the pressure of the working class which uses them as its primary instruments of struggle today. The craft unions change into industrial unions at a certain stage in the development of the class struggle, and it is not impossible (although it is unlikely) that the form of the unions may change again before the seizure of power by the working class. As to that we cannot say, nor can we do much to create that change. We must take what is and struggle for the masses within the present organizations. The "struggle to win the masses" will see many of the decisive battles fought out within the unions, since the mass of workers are there. If this is understood, and we understand what the term "struggle for the masses" means, we shall know how to work correctly in the unions.

In "Left-Wing Communism", Lenin wrote:

"The struggle against the labor bureaucracy must be waged ruthlessly and must be waged absolutely to the very end until all the incorrigible leaders of opportunism and social chauvinism have been completely discredited and driven out of the unions. It is impossible to capture political power (and the attempt to capture it should not be made) until this struggle has reached a certain stage. This 'certain stage' will be different in different countries and in different circumstances; it can be correctly gauged only by thoughtful and well-informed political leaders of the proletariat in each separate country.

"But we wage the struggle against the 'labor aristocracy' in the name of the masses of the workers and in order to attract them to our side.



we wage the struggle against the opportunist leaders in order to attract the working class to our side.

This conception which Lenin held must be understood dynamically, as he would have us understand it. In Russia, for example, the process of winning the unions took only a few short months between the two revolutions of 1917. It happened with tremendous speed, at a course which could only be foreseen by Trotsky who charted a different road for the revolution than that foreseen by Lenin and the Bolsheviks. This is also the likely development for the 4th International throughout the world, and particularly for the revolutionary party in the United States. Today we cannot permit ourselves to believe that we have many decades ahead of us in which we will educate the masses to the correctness of our ideas and that they will then obligingly "vote us into power" in the unions. The crisis is too deep, the rate of history too rapid, to permit of such a perspective. We must, however, prepare for that "certain stage" which Lenin spoke about.

In order to do that, we must project the present situation into the future, a future of violent class conflict. Two likely developments are mass unemployment and general strike action, either separately or simultaneously. The party must be prepared to seize the opportunities which such situations will open up for us and make tremendous strides forward in a very brief space of time. The party must prepare now to act openly as a party in the unions in such situations, to make the bold attempt to win the broad masses to our program. We must see this today. We must see the time when the party unit in a plant will issue leaflets to the workers, in the name of the party and signed by the worker-comrades in the plant, which calls upon the workers to take a certain action on the union level. All the work today is simply preparation for that kind of activity. The alliances, the progressive groups, the present factional conflicts, etc., are a preliminary and important part of the struggle for the masses.

Although it is not inadmissible or impossible to win cadres for the party on some basis other than forthright propaganda for the social revolution, these cadres must immediately be taught the full implications of our theory or the acquisitions thus gained will surely be lost. We are not such a powerful force in the unions today that we can hold people on the basis of the fact that we can successfully contest the trade union leadership on their own grounds as "better negotiators", etc. "To speak the truth" is the method of Bolshevism. If the perspective of the revolutionary development of the unions is firmly borne in mind, the twin dangers of sectarianism and opportunism can be defeated. But it is only this perspective which can defeat them. To reject that perspective will inevitably mean opportunistic attempts to increase the apparent strength of the party by "get-rich-quick" methods.

a) Muste Understood This

In an article written in the New International, August, 1935, before it became the organ of retrogression, there appeared an article which is worth the attention of every comrade today. It was written by A.J. Muste, and its title was the "Trade Unions and the Revolution". Not an article with such a title, let alone the content which Muste gave it, has ever appeared in the press of the Workers Party. Written in August, 1935, fresh from the experience of the Auto-Lite strike in Toledo in 1934, powerfully aware of the activity of the masses and the potentialities inherent therein, the article is bursting with revolutionary temper and analysis. We have much to learn from it today, and therefore I want to quote extensively from it. (All emphasis are mine.)

"The to-be expected is that the influence of the revolutionists over the mass organizations should grow and presently become preponderant. As the crisis of the capitalist economy becomes deeper and more intense, the

masses are set in motion. Instinctively, we might say, they fight back against the attempts to lower their standards. The struggles become more bitter. The illusion that employers and workers have mutual interests tends to break down. The state comes out more and more openly against the workers, no matter how elementary their demands. The struggle is waged on a constantly broader front. More and more workers are drawn into strike actions. 'General' strikes break out in localities or industries and the strike organizations have to intervene in governmental functions, such as maintenance of supply services, of order in the strike area, etc. All this is elementary and has been observed often enough.

"Such situations open the door wide for the politically developed workers and for the revolutionary party, provided that the latter has not pursued a course in the unions which has discredited it and left it isolated. The developing actions require energy, initiative, the will to struggle, courage, capacity to organize large-scale actions, ability to sway the masses in motion, to arouse mass enthusiasms, interpret the subtle changes in mass psychology, and a political outlook on the part of the leadership. But the conventional trade union leadership is, to put it mildly, not distinguished for these qualities. They will try, but they cannot hold back the masses from the struggle. As the struggle extends and sharpens, they must call for or, with as much grace as they can muster, accept aid from the radical elements or be pushed out of the picture entirely. (Note how the CIO used the CP and SP elements, and how our people come to the fore in strike struggles." (This always happens, I.M.)

Musta then goes on to describe how the Auto-Lite strike developed, and it may very well serve as a model on the functioning of the party in a strike and how a situation develops in time of deep crisis.

"The Auto-Lite strike was on its last legs when it was brought back to life by militants in the Lucas County Unemployed League under the leadership of Workers Party elements.... The revolutionists began to talk up the idea of a general strike of all Toledo workers to compel the Auto-Lite management to settle with the union. They got an instant response from the workers. The Central Labor Union was compelled to take cognizance of the agitation. It appointed a Committee of 23 to take a strike vote. Out of the 100 or so local unions over 95 voted in favor of such a strike and only 1 against. As negotiations dragged out the workers began to press for action.... The spirit of enthusiasm and militancy was running high among the workers. The local union leaders had to bend to it. They scheduled a mass meeting and asked a member of the WP to be one of the speakers. At the meeting the bureaucrats tried to stifle the sentiment for a strike action but they failed and finally walked out on their own meeting, hoping it would break up. That would have happened if there had been no experienced revolutionary mass leaders present who knew what to do in such a situation. They took over the meeting and called for a general strike to start on Monday. It did not take place only because the company settled over the week-end.

"Had the strike occurred, representatives of the Unemployed League, who would have been party members, would have been added to the Committee of 23. Known party leaders would have been drawn in for consultation and would have wielded increasing influence. An enlarged strike committee of which militant rank and filers would have predominated would have been elected in the shop meetings. As the struggle became more intense, the same thing would have happened with the strike that happened in the mass

meeting— leadership would have slipped out of the hands of the bureaucrats, utterly incompetent and unwilling to handle such a situation, and the militants and revolutionists would have taken it up.

"It is suggested, then, that the unions, unemployed leagues, farmers organizations may under the leadership of revolutionary Marxists be transformed into, or directly instrumental in helping to form, the organs of workers power. It must be understood that this will involve the bitterest struggles for control over the mass organizations, for leadership within them, nor does this view imply an underestimation of the violence of the internal struggle. There may, and probably will, be many variations in this process.

"In cases where the union organization is not fully responsive to the developing situation and the moods of the workers, the shop organizations may take the initiative with the mild approval or toleration of or even in opposition to the union bureaucracy. In general, as the struggle nears a climax, the masses will get into motion, take things into their own hands in the establishments. It is to be expected, however, that this rank and file participation will in general reflect itself in the union organization. The reflection is likely to be uneven. The union machinery may in many instances prove too cumbersome, the control of the officialdom too rigid, so that the workers will have to proceed independently of them, as the pace of events quickens. Generally speaking, however, we cannot conceive of an advance of the working class to a point where it can enter upon the struggle for power, without an advancement in the economic organizations in the direction of industrial unionism, a class struggle philosophy, rank and file control, close contact with the shop and the happenings there, etc.

"The alternative to the general conception sketched here is to suppose that the unions are peculiar to an earlier period in capitalist development, that they are no longer able to function in the interests of the workers in the period of capitalist decline and collapse, that, therefore, the workers must abandon them or that they will in fact be wrecked by the capitalist reaction.

"We cannot accept this perspective. In the first place, the workers have demonstrated a remarkable tenacity in clinging to their unions. The workers do not wish to abandon the union movement but to broaden it, increase its militancy, etc. So long as capitalism endures, an organization of some kind on the job to deal with the boss is indispensable. Instinctively the masses fight to defend the unions; the right to strike, etc.

"As the unions broaden and come to accept Marxian leadership, the possibility also presents itself of the unions as a whole becoming the worker's councils, the instruments of workers power, a possibility which cannot be excluded.

"On the other hand, the trade union organizations, as such, while being drawn into the current of revolutionary action and in the main supporting, may not be ready or entirely fitted to conduct the movement, even assuming that the revolutionary party has the dominant influence in it. The union organization is after all primarily economic rather than political and not in the first instance equipped to deal with the larger national and international political issues. Furthermore, it is entirely possible that

the pace of development in various unions may vary. The revolutionary party must give a great deal of study to these questions and be prepared as the actual crisis develops to deal in accordance with the facts of the situation and the actual forces at its disposal.

Finally, Muste concludes with some "practical suggestions":

"First, the slogan 'Deeper into the Unions' must be applied to the party and all its committees and members much more thoroughly and enthusiastically than ever before. Second, in every strike situation the policy of drawing in the broadest forces - all the unions, unemployed organizations, political parties and groups - must be carried out in order to break down trade union provincialism, politicalize the struggle, develop class consciousness, face the workers with the problems of conflict with the capitalist governmental agencies, etc. Third, the greatest emphasis must be placed on drawing the employed and the unemployed together, forming Councils of Action, to prevent the division of the working class into employed and unemployed, to insure the broadening of all struggles and in order to accustom the working masses to confront the employers and the state not as craftsmen, skilled or unskilled, etc. but as workers".

b) The Higher Plane Today

I have quoted so much from Muste's article because he makes use of an actual situation to draw so many lessons for the Marxist of today who is engaged in trade union work. Further, it shows that many of the tasks which Muste listed as necessary to accomplish before that "certain stage" was reached, or even approached, have long since been accomplished by the American workers in the CIO. This only indicates that the developing situation will be on an even higher plane, particularly with the added experience of the war and the training of the worker as producer and soldier which the war brought; that the crisis of tomorrow will be met in an even more forceful and violent manner by the working class, and that the struggle for the masses is now well under way. Capitalism has done much to aid us, but a great deal is still left for us to do.

In the description and analysis given by Muste we can see how the masses themselves break through the inertia and conservatism of the apparatus in an attempt to resolve issues in a revolutionary manner, even without the party. But the party is the indispensable organ for the concretization of their desires; the Marxists give the elemental revolt organizational direction. He is completely aware of the strength of the masses in motion, confident that the bureaucrats cannot stifle their revolutionary instincts. Despite the fact that Muste left the movement, what he wrote in this article demonstrated that Marxism would be invincible as the workers respond to the effects of capitalism; and the shop organizations, be they new or old, would play a decisive role as the masses raise the question of the conquest of power by their conscious or unconscious activity.

This much we should have learned from the experiences of the Marxists in the past. I have attempted to summarize it in the quotations from Lenin and Muste:

1. If we cannot defeat the labor bureaucracy and the Stalinists in the labor movement itself, then we cannot defeat capitalism. The impediments to the revolutionary development of the proletariat must be conquered in the "struggle for the masses".

2. In preparation for the winning of the masses to the program of social revolution, it is absolutely impermissible for the revolutionary to be identified with the union apparatus at any time as we cannot be clearly

distinguished from the rest of the apparatus. If he becomes part of the apparatus, his own position must be crystal clear to the rank and file or his utility to the movement will be negated just when he is needed most - when the masses are set in motion and begin the removal of the bureaucratic apparatus which impeded them in the past.

It is now left for us to analyse where we are today; to find out what we must do today as preparation for "tomorrow".

### 3. SOCIAL ROOTS OF OPPORTUNISM IN THE TRADE UNIONS

The official labor leadership has an essentially petty bourgeois approach to the problems of labor in capitalist society, an ideology they must accept if they reject the proletariat as the bearer of a new society. Since they see no future for the working class, other than the future which capitalism offers them, they can only be and must be reformists. The "good bureaucrats" are men of good will who struggle more "sincerely" and vigorously for ephemeral legislative reforms or better contractual terms with the employers. The "bad bureaucrats" are those fakers and gangster elements who are actually the paid hirelings of capitalism, although they are relatively rare. The American union leaders are in no important sense distinguishable from the social democracy of Europe of a decade past, and which is making a feeble attempt to revive itself again. Both have a similar approach to the central problems of the day, despite the avowed support of socialism by one and of "American free enterprise" by the other. Both depend upon alien class forces for some amelioration of the condition of the working class. Both reject all fundamental revolutionary solutions. Both fear and distrust mass action and are reluctant to call for it at any time, even the most critical.

Our tendency has been made sufficiently aware of all this by all that we have produced in the discussion of the American question. Important for us, however, is the contribution in the "Balance Sheet" which shows the particular roots of opportunism in the revolutionary movement in the United States. We made the observation in that document that the revolutionary movement was influenced to adopt unconsciously a petty bourgeois method of thought by the lack of a mass social democratic movement in the US. It has been this factor which has been so powerful an urge to opportunism in the trade unions since the degeneration of the CP, certainly since the triumph of fascism and the decline in the class struggle which followed. The decade of reaction was a great spur to the further development of that opportunism which is inherent in American society and its labor movement.

In 1895, when DeLeon lost in his attempt to win control of the A F of L, and then left to build his own "pure and revolutionary" industrial unions, the main stream of the labor movement was left completely in the hands of the "labor lieutenants of capitalism". It was a fatal error for the socialist movement at that time and the party of DeLeon degenerated into an isolated sect in a few short years. From that time until the formation of the first party of the 3rd International in America, there was no clear voice of revolution in the labor movement. The IWW never reached the broad masses of the workers despite all of the colorful and courageous efforts of its adherents during the years between. It was a demonstration of what impotence with the working class can do. In this case it led to sectarianism.

#### a) The Early Efforts of the Communist Party

(Note: There may be some errors, even of fact, in this section because my knowledge of this period is limited to the works on it by the Stalinists, and to conversations with older party members. It would be worthwhile for someone to make a real study of the work of the CP in the unions from 1918-1936.)

In 1920 the Communist Party established the Trade Union Education League, an organization designed to give direction to the revolutionary and progressive elements in the old-line reformist trade unions. The orientation of this period was toward winning the masses away from the labor bureaucrats, of being the best militants and fighters in the union. During these years many of the party fractions issued papers to the men in the shops, such as "The Ford Worker". Under the firm guidance of the revolutionary international of Lenin and Trotsky, having complete confidence in the workers and the future of the revolution, which was given to them by the victory in Russia and the obvious world crisis of capitalism, the party directed all its effort toward the "struggle for the masses", toward the rank and file in the shops. It had no concern with the bureaucracy itself or for winning "power" in the unions by disguising its point of view behind "progressive" slogans and by means of cheap maneuvers. This policy was firmly adhered to until 1929, when the "Third Period" line of the Stalinists was implemented in America by a new and sectarian line, characteristic of its policy throughout the world.

From 1929 to 1933 the policy of the CP was, in reality, to abandon the workers in the official labor movement to the corrupt "labor fakers". They organized the "Trade Union Unity League", and despite all their words to the contrary it was a dual union movement. The policy was supposed to be one of organizing the unorganized in "revolutionary industrial unions", while at the same time contesting the leadership in the old unions. But the CP actually left the old unions completely. The TUUL claimed a membership of 100,000 in 1933, but this is highly unlikely since its presidential candidate received only 100,000 votes in the election of 1932. Almost all of its strikes were broken and the unions could not establish themselves permanently in any field. The same period also saw their active participation in the organization of the unemployed, a field which was wide open to all revolutionary elements and completely ignored by the AF of L.

With the coming of the New Deal in America and the turn toward the "Popular Front" line of the Stalinists, the CP abandoned the TUUL in 1934 to concentrate its energies on "uniting all workers in the AF of L and building the old unions into powerful instruments of the class struggle." A year later they also revived the slogan of the Labor Party, which had been abandoned between 1929-1935. With the full flowering of the Popular Front line, and the formation of the CIO which gave them a new entry into a "legitimate" labor movement, the CP rapidly moved over to a policy of rank opportunism in the unions. In these three stages of its development we have had a live demonstration of three different methods of work -- Bureaucratic, sectarianism and opportunism.

b) The Opportunist Policy of the CP

From 1936 to the present the CP policy in the unions has been completely opportunist. Their line here corresponded to their general political line, as it had in the other two periods of the party's activity in the United States. The entire policy of the party was dominated by a complete lack of faith in the revolutionary potential of the masses (a condition which allowed for the victory of Stalinism inside of the CP in the first place), and this despairing of the hopes for a socialist awakening of the American worker drove them to seek "strength" elsewhere. The CP sought to impress itself and the rulers of the Kremlin, as well as the lords of American capital, by the number of votes it "controlled" at various union conventions, the extent to which it could shape policy for mass unions, etc. The CP leaders became "labor leaders", but that is all. The unions were used to help carry out the tasks assigned to them by the Kremlin.

In the unions which were organized by means of violent and militant struggles, such as the NLU, the Communists were hailed as the best of the militants and in

such unions the party could operate more openly for purposes of spreading party propaganda and recruiting workers to the party. In other unions, where they were inhibited by the dominant influence of conservative elements they said only what would not antagonize either the masses or their "fellow leaders". This was the case in the UE. All their work was influenced by subjective factors alone in each particular case. Their "strategy" was to entrench themselves in the unions as best they could, get positions of power and influence by any means possible. Nowhere did they function as revolutionists in the unions, for the social revolution had once and for all disappeared from the party's orientation and the rank and file of the CP was completely corrupted by the 'new theory' of the backwardness of the masses which made it necessary to "disguise our real line temporarily". The CP became a "new branch" of the labor bureaucracy. Its motivation differed from that of the other union leaders, but its policy was essentially the same. The war emphasized this feature of the development of the CP, and they are now finding it increasingly more difficult to carry out even the pseudo "left" line of the party. They are eager to get along with Murray and his coterie in the bureaucracy. As in 1936, they said only those things which would not embarrass them too much, today they can say even less. Opportunism, like sectarianism, carries with it the seeds of destruction for the bearers of false coin.

c) The Trotskyists Before 1940

For many years after the formation of the Left Opposition in America, the party had little if any contact with the mass movement. Its concern was with the other radical parties. The work with the Minneapolis truck drivers union was its first appearance as a real force in the union movement. Later it began to have some influence in the Sailor's Union of the Pacific, where it worked closely with the Lundberg leadership, and gradually the party members began to infiltrate the mass production industries. But this did not happen on a large scale until after 1940 and the rise of war employment.

It is my impression, from what little I have found available in the way of written articles on this subject, and from what can be gleaned from the reminiscences of the older comrades, that our movement has also been lured into the same trap which the labor movement set for other parties in the past. The comrades could not make rapid progress in the recruitment of worker elements to the party. They were eager to make their presence felt in the unions and fell prey to opportunism. They worked closely with the union leaders who would accept their aid and advice, but they did not orient toward winning the rank and file to Trotskyism, to the revolution. Their concern was similar to that of the other groupings in the unions, namely the constant struggles for power and influence, etc. The propaganda for the program of the party became less important than winning office in the unions.

I am hesitant to write this section particularly as a definitive evaluation of a period of work for our movement since I in no way participated in it. I am willing to listen, and hear what others have to say about it, but the two paragraphs above are my present impression of the past. I am willing to have that "impression" removed by the presentation of a different analysis and evaluation. For the present my evaluation is that the party trade unionists functioned more as trade unionists in the party than as party members in the trade unions.

d) Our Turn - To the Masses

Trotsky very well summarized what the orientation of the party should be, in directly political work in the trade unions, in his letter to the American Trotskyists written in 1929. He wrote that:

"The trade union bureaucrats, like the bureaucrats of false communism, live in the atmosphere of aristocratic prejudices of the upper strata of the workers. It will be tragedy if the Oppositionists are infected even in the slightest degree with these qualities. We must not only reject and condemn these prejudices; we must burn them out of our consciousness to the last trace; we must find our road to the most deprived, to the darkest strata of the proletariat, beginning with the Negro, whom capitalist society has converted into a Pariah and who must learn to see in us his revolutionary brothers".

Trotsky meant not only the Negro worker, but all of the bitterly oppressed workers who could find no avenue of escape and no possible means of expression of their frustration and the misery created by the alienation of their labor. Where we find these workers in our shops we must become the spokesmen for their rights in the unions, their most tireless defender against the company and the labor aristocracy which is only too willing to get something for themselves even if it be at the expense of the unskilled. In so far as this strata of the working class is unorganized it becomes a problem for the party as a whole and not its trade union sections primarily. Elsewhere it is the problem of the unionists. I am forced to leave it at that for the time being.

We must make the turn toward becoming the "Tribune of the rank and file", of the inactive mass in the shops, and the voice of socialism.

#### 4. STRATA IN THE TRADE UNIONS

##### a) The Lower or Local Bureaucracy

The bureaucracy of the local union is not completely divorced from the direct pressure of the men in the shops and feel their problems more keenly than the top bureaucrats. They still know where they come from, so to speak, but most of them have contempt for the rank and file and display this on many occasions. Whereas their social consciousness is very often on a higher plane than that of the rest of the workers (with many of them proclaiming, in private, their "belief in socialism"), their direct contact with the company in negotiations, the compulsion they are under to uphold the contract which they helped to negotiate and then "sell" to the membership, frequently makes them a good deal less militant than the men themselves on day to day issues. They want to "get along" with the industrial relations manager of the company and observe the legal formalities which are of absolutely no concern to the ranks.

This, however, is not clear in situations when the national union calls for a strike or other mass action. Very often on such occasions we may find the local leaders "whipping up" the men for a strike vote, and the men going along reluctantly. This is only indicative of the disgust which the men have for the half-hearted attempts of the union which cannot point to a real solution of their problems. Strike action for a wage increase, today, is not at all popular with the ranks, who understand that it is only a method of chasing one's tail. On the other hand, the men will move toward spontaneous strike action in response to provocative acts of the company, and the local leaders will attempt to stymie such action and adhere to the grievance procedure.

The activist strata in the unions regard the organization as the instrument for their emancipation from at least some of the tribulations of life under capitalism, whereas the rank and file are more or less conscious that the union simply protects them from being worse off than they are now, and that's all. The leadership will recite the benefits of unionism on every occasion, describing what conditions were in 1935 as compared to today, and the rank and file quietly accept it as true but rather



meaningless since they are dissatisfied today as they were in 1935, if not more so. The workers support their unions with such tenacity because they realize that they would be worse off without them, and in the hope that eventually the unions may wake up and "do something", but they demonstrate real enthusiasm on rare occasions.

b) The Shop Steward

Whereas the local leaders are wedded to the national leadership by the nature of their position in the union and feel constrained to defend the actions of the national leadership or at least apologize for them, the shop steward is in the same position as regards his local leaders. (Note - the description of the relationship of local to national leaders, and of the shop steward to the local leaders is a general one which holds good in non-factional situations. It does not hold good in every union at every time.) The steward is more closely linked to the ranks in the shop, that inactive mass which never attends union meetings and is continually cursing the leadership on every possible occasion for their failures. The steward feels that the ranks are "backward" and anti-union because of the nature of their gripes, and he also has a "retrogressive" concept of the proletariat. But he is close to them, is aware of their problems, reacts to their pressure and reflects their desires within the context of the union apparatus. Generally the stewards have a wholesome contempt for the national leadership of their union and of the CIO. This has been heightened by the events of the last two years - the big strikes and the failure of the leadership to call for general strike action, and again their repeated failure to call for general strike action against the Taft-Hartley bill. They know that the men were ready for that kind of action, and they regard the Murray leadership as cowardly betrayers.

The election of the shop steward is by direct and complete vote of all the men, with the voting usually conducted in the shop during the working hours. Every worker votes on this occasion, and the steward cannot depend on a "machine" for votes as do the national leaders who line up delegations at conventions. He must "produce" for the men or he will quickly find himself out of office. The men will blame him for every unsettled grievance, unless he can explain it away.

A good general rule for the party member in the unions is to head for stewardship in his department; a "party of shop stewards" would by no means be the worst party of the revolution and might very well be the best. These men, more often than not, are serious and self-sacrificing, giving much energy and time to the union and frequently losing money because of union activities; they reflect the desires of the men and are looked to by the men for leadership and advice on all questions, personal as well as those connected with the shop. It will be so when the men prepare for revolutionary action, too, although the steward may not then be the same one who is settling grievances today. They are the rank and file leaders of the working class who influence the men they serve and work with. They can never become bureaucratized because they are not that far removed from the conditions of working for a living (most of them have to work a good part of the time in the shop), and their tenure in office is not nearly as well guaranteed and protected as is that of the top officers. These are the men the party must reach and convince.

c) The Inactive Mass

In the average union of the CIO perhaps 1 out of 50 members are at all active in union affairs, either as stewards, members of different committees or by attending the meetings of their local. Even on such important occasions as voting on the contract, it is unusual to get even half of the men down to the meeting. Yet this inactive mass is preponderantly pro-union and will resist any attempt to weaken

or break it. The small groups of anti-union men are completely overwhelmed by the others, and "go along" with the union even if only out of fear of reprisal. This is rank and file of the union, these are the men we must speak for and defend and champion on every possible occasion. It is they who are going to provide the impulse to revolutionary action in the coming years, and we must understand them and reach them.

These workers support their union in a negative manner for the most part, despite all their criticisms and griping. These are the men who lined up with such remarkable solidarity in the 1946 strike wave. It is these men who organized the CIO by their own actions, and then sent telegrams to John L. Lewis to "come down here and organize us" in the heroic years of 1936 and 1937. It is only on rare occasions in history that we see the masses in motion, but the greater periods of inactivity by no means denote their backwardness. It simply means that they see nothing to get excited about until the explosion takes place.

To all those who are active in the unions, who condemn the ranks for not attending meetings, who have contempt for them and their "gripes", we must "patiently explain" why the ranks act as they do, that only a bold and dynamic program will call forth their activity again, that we should not fear to rely upon them if we are willing to make real strides forward, that they can be "reached", but only with a new program which can point the way to a real and thorough solution of their problems. We must provide the link between the union and the men, be the conscious connection between the inarticulate mass and their class organization. That is one of our basic functions and duties in the union movement. Here is the second strata which we must reach with our ideas, and they can be reached through the stewards we convince, through programmatic fights of various kinds within the union, and by taking advantage of every mass meeting to say what we can.

## 5. SELF-ACTIVITY, FACTORY COMMITTEES AND THE UNIONS

### a) Their Role in the Russian Revolution

The following quotations are from a speech of A. Lozovsky in 1920, then head of the Russian Labor Unions and later secretary of the Red International of Trade Unions. (All emphasis are mine)

"The overthrow of Czarism was the point of departure for the creative and organizing work of the masses. The Russian workers created simultaneously four organizations:

1. First, everybody came out from the underground secret party organizations, and appeared in the open - the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, who obstinately fought to win influence over the masses.
2. The workers organized the COU'NCILS: the Soviet of workers' deputies as instruments of the political struggle as well as organs embracing all of the workers. From the first days of the Revolution, the Soviets of workers' deputies began a struggle for power.
3. Simultaneously appeared the SHOP AND FACTORY COMMITTEES, which took into their own hands the economic struggle and took the lead of the extraordinary wave of strikes. The shop and factory committees introduced the 8 hour day by a simple declaration; they watched over the labor conditions and in general fulfilled the role of unions. These committees were confronted with many other questions, such as the question of production, workers' control, raw materials, fuel, the sabotage of the contractors and proprietors of the factories, etc., questions which played a decisive

ive role in the October Revolution.

4. From the first days of March commenced the feverish work of creation, organization and consolidation of the unions. With their growth, the unions slowly assumed control over the shop and factory committees in the economic domain, leaving to them only the limited domain of production.

"The months from July to October saw a ferocious economic struggle. The employers closed their enterprises. The workers reopened them. If the employer offered resistance, the workers Red Guard threw him out of the factory. (Slogan of 'Open the Factories')

"When a manufacturer declared that he had no more raw materials or money, a commission of control, elected by the workers, studied his books, verified his treasury, learned from the bank the state of his account, and examined to what extent the closing down of the enterprise was inevitable. (Slogan of "Open the books")

"During this period workers' control was not an empty word, but a question of life and death for the working class. The question was put thus: closing of the enterprise, stopping production, simply meant to kill the revolution; while to prevent this shut-down meant to save the revolution and its conquests. Thus the question of the running of every enterprise became a general question which interested the whole working class. Economic strikes lost all of their force of attack.

"The sharp and intermittent economic conflicts of the strike battle unproductive and without an issue, the offensive tactics of the employers, the organization of the bourgeoisie and the acts of the generals, the utilization of the whole State apparatus against the workers, all this brought forward before the unions the problem of power. Even the logic of the economic struggle led the Russian unions to the October Revolution.

"The unions and shop committees furnished and formed the frame of the workers columns which made the October Revolution. The Russian Communist Party inspired and led them.

" The unions and the shop committees formed the companies of attack; they organized a special guard to watch over the safety of the factories. Thanks to the unions, the conquest of power was accomplished in two directions. On one side, all of the political institutions were occupied and their apparatus was destroyed; on the other side, the unions and factory committees put their hands on the apparatus of production.

"The October Revolution triumphed by inscribing on its banner this watchword: 'Peace, land and workers' control'. During the first days the October Revolution workers' control implied only a limitation of private property and not its abolition. The control of production could not be realized integrally before having decided the most fundamental question: Who is master in the factory? When the workers took power in October, everywhere they felt themselves as the masters of the factory. Since then workers' control had to transform itself and become workers' management or administration.

"The revolutionary experience and the needs of the masses showed that the unions not only are not superfluous after the Social Revolu-

-tion but that they are the pillars of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat."

Finally, Lozovsky concludes his description of the role of the unions and the factory committees in the revolution with these words:

"The Bolsheviks have acquired a preponderant influence in the labor movement because they express plainly and methodically the interests of the class which struggles and labors. The Revolution would have been impossible in Russia if even before the month of October the Bolsheviks did not have an immense majority in all unions, for it is impossible to accomplish a social revolution outside of the unions or against their will.

"Only children can imagine that during the Revolution one can do without the unions or that the Communist influence in the labor movement is an accidental or passing phenomenon. In the beginning of the 1917 Revolution the Bolsheviks were in the minority in the unions; but they did not think of leaving them in order to form others, small, but very proper and very pure ones. The Bolsheviks said: 'We are in the minority, therefore we must double our work in the unions, for if our theory is correct and we must win the toiling masses, we shall conquer the unions as well, which are the organizations of the masses. On the contrary, if we cannot conquer the unions, i.e., the toiling masses, it shows that our theory is not worth a penny, for it evidently is in contradiction with the tendencies of the labor movement'. By long, tenacious and methodical work the Bolsheviks obtained a majority in the labor unions, and that conquest would have been impossible if the interests of the great masses of the workers were opposed to the theory and practice of the Communist Party."

b) A Pattern for Comparison

This long quotation from Lozovsky is given here only to remind the comrades of what our function in the unions is by describing what happened in a successful workers revolution. It does not mean that it will happen in the same manner in every country and in every instance. But it provides a basic pattern for comparison and preparation. It demonstrates that there was no contradiction between the factory committees and the unions, that these organizations assumed different functions at different times in the course of development of the revolution. At times the unions themselves may have their organizational apparatus so altered as the ranks become more active that the shop committees may very well become part of the union set-up. That cannot be disallowed out of hand; it is a strong possibility in a country such as this where the industrial unions and the shop steward system of representation covers so many workers, all of whom are concerned with the protection of that union and regard it as their only instrument of struggle. Since it is possible that the shop committees of tomorrow will serve as the complement of the unions of today, it is necessary to see how they may begin. I want to deal with only one aspect of this question at this time, namely,

c) Self-Activity, Shop Committees and the Stewards

The shop steward movement in England which arose after the last war was a revolt which embraced the broad masses of the workers acting through their delegated representatives- the shop stewards. The shop stewards councils represented the embryo of the workers councils and were the expression, in England, of the shop committees. They arose out of the old union apparatus because this already embraced the majority of workers, unlike the situation in Russia. The stewards, responding

to the demands of the men, were also the leaders of the men in giving organizational form and direction to their revolt. In America today, many of the "spontaneous" stoppages are organized by the shop stewards who know what the men need and want. This does not always happen, but is frequently the case. The self-acting masses, capable of accomplishing the most amazing things in the way of organization, will must have conscious leadership if the activity is not to subside after a brief rebellion which establishes no permanent organizational form. The shop stewards will probably play an important role in that development, though I must repeat- they may not be the same workers who are shop stewards today.

I want to describe two situations which have already occurred in which the stewards might have formed the committees of action which are part of an unfolding revolutionary process, committees which break across the boundaries set up by the different national unions and the two larger federations of unions, the CIO and the AF of L. One was the strike wave of 1946. In all those months of struggle the rank and file was actually pleading for a general strike which would settle the issue in a decisive manner. Particularly was this true where the strikes were long and where violence occurred. The party should boldly have placed before the workers the question of the the general strike, what it is and how it is organized and what problems it presents. The response among the ranks, particularly among the stewards would have been instantaneous. The party members in the strikes could have given this some organizational implementation by calling for the creation of "committees for a General Strike" and attempted to establish these in each local and finally broaden it out into a conference of rank and file members and stewards of the different local and national unions. It may not have developed, and here a great deal depends upon the forces at our command, but it would have pointed a way out and been the source of establishing "good credit" among the masses of workers".

Another situation was that which arose in connection with the Taft-Hartley bill. The ranks wanted general strike action and the leadership offered them nothing. In my own local, the stewards were called to a meeting on the day scheduled for the Senate to vote on overriding the veto. They decided to go to Washington on their own time to protest. When they got there, they discovered that they could not get into the gallery or see a Senator, that they were the only local in the city and that there was nothing for them to do. Their anger and frustration was enormous. A suggestion was made that we march on the CIO National office and give Murray a piece of our mind. Some of the Washington CIO bureaucrats told us that Murray had left town. But, imagine what would have happened if a delegation from ten or fifteen locals had been in Washington on that day and that they had marched on the CIO office only to find that the leadership could only tell them to "go home". A revolutionists in that situation could easily have called for the creation of a permanent organization to be created on the spot which would then go home to organize their own areas into a national council which would take action into their own hands on similar occasions in the future. It would have been the beginning of the formation of national shop stewards councils whose development is now unpredictable. Boldness at the proper time can bring great rewards to the party and the forward march of the working class. It requires that we know what our objective is and see the possibilities for accomplishing it whenever the smallest opportunity presents itself. It will happen again in the future and we must be ready for it.

d) The Shop Steward and the Party

It is often more difficult to recruit the shop steward than an ordinary rank and filer, but it is worth the effort. He adheres more strongly to the union, believes in it as the instrument for his emancipation and clings tenaciously to anything which is good in it. Very often no amount of arguing and discussions will convince him that the party is right, but the unfolding events of the class strug-

21

-gle will. We must be patient and confident. In the course of my own experience many of the stewards who were against our ideas in the past and fought against our viewpoint have since admitted their error and come and say so. When that happens often enough, and as it happens with increasing speed on decisive questions, the party will know that it is on the road to winning the masses. In many places we are already well on that road if we can just manage to see beneath the surface manifestations of events and reactions and understand them for what they really are. The pragmatists are lost here, but the revolutionists are not. It is only they who can understand and be confident in the face of seemingly endless set-backs.

#### 6. FUNCTIONS OF THE REVOLUTIONIST IN THE UNIONS

##### a) To Generalize the Experiences of the Working Class

To generalize the experiences of the working class, make them conscious of their traditions and the tasks before them at all times is the primary function of the revolutionist, and in a way summarizes all his other functions. Trotsky told us this in his own way, when he wrote:

"The backwardness of the American worker is only a relative term. In many important respects it is the most progressive working class in the world; technically and in its standard of living. The American worker is very combative. They have had the most rebellious strikes in the world. What the American worker misses is a spirit of generalization, or analysis, of his class position in society as a whole. This lack of social thinking has its origin in the country's whole history, the perspective of unlimited possibilities, etc. Now all that is gone, but the mind remains in the past. Idealists think the human mentality is progressive, but in reality it is the most conservative element of society. Your technique is progressive but the mentality of the worker lags far behind. Their backwardness consists of their inability to generalize their problem; they consider everything on a personal basis. Now, the war and the economic crisis will teach them social thinking, to think of themselves as a class, which means revolutionary thinking."

One of our functions, then, is to be a conscious help to the unfolding process which is forcing the workers into social thinking. If we teach it now on all possible occasions they will recognize us tomorrow as the ones who told the truth. It might be of some help to give a few examples of how this can be done, and this will be demonstrated when I explain the second function in the unions which is to be:

##### b) The Tribune of the Rank and File and the Voice of Socialism

It is often more possible than one may think to be the open expression of socialism in the unions. We must use the issues of the day as a point of departure for the interjection of our ideas on a plane where they can be understood, if not accepted, and patiently wait for history and the class struggle to demonstrate to the workers that we are right. It requires confidence in our ideas and in the proletariat. Examples:-

In my local union an influential Stalinist attempted to carry out the line of the National CIO in support of Bretton Woods legislation. The CIO position was that "stable currency would mean foreign trade and 5,000,000 jobs for American workers, and would prevent a depression". In the Legislative Committee of the union the issue was debated and my position made clear - that unstable currency was only a reflection of the unstable character of the entire capitalist system, that it was a meaningless piece of legislation for the working class and only the design of American capital to dominate the world. The members of the committee were forced to

admit that I was right, but wanted the local to support the bill "for whatever good it might do". We told them that they were only fooling and misleading the workers. On the union floor the debate was continued, and in later years many of the workers remembered it, long after Bretton Woods was no longer in the news.

On the question of support of the United Nations the same process was repeated. We gave the history of the League of Nations, asked how this new group was different, pointed out that war was a product of the capitalist system, etc. Another interesting development in this connection was the opposition of the CIO and the CP to the seating of Argentina at the San Francisco Conference which established the UN. They introduced a resolution which called for the local to voice its opposition to the seating of Argentina because it "violated the anti-fascist tradition of Roosevelt", etc. Again we arose to expose the UN and the role of the Stalinists (Russia was negotiating with Peron, or did shortly thereafter,) exposed the phony nature of FDR's "anti-fascism" and told the members that they should be condemning this new league as a utopian trap for the working class and its desire to abolish war. We then offered an amendment which stated that we "opposed because it violated the anti-fascist tradition of the working class, etc." We received a considerable amount of support, even though the resolution carried. You can imagine what the workers say today when reviewing that debate in the light of later developments of the UN.

This could be repeated on many occasions and was in the course of the years in my local. The result was that in a short space of time a local which had been absolutely apolitical, whose members never discussed socialism and all the broader aspect of labor problems was rapidly caught up in such discussions both at the meetings of the committees, the local and in the after-meeting discussions. They rapidly grew aware of the differences between the CP and the Trotskyists, between capitalism and socialism, the nature of socialist theory and activity, and soon had healthy respect for our ideas on all questions, even if they did not accept our conclusions on every question and still don't. It is sufficient for the time being that they know we were right on this or that question, time after time, and that they know what we stand for. The class struggle will take care of the rest of the development. Needless to say, we also participate in the discussions of shop conditions and offer our ideas of what should be done to win the demands of the union. That goes without saying, but I want to emphasize the other aspects of our work.

c) Flexibility, Boldness, and Caution

Trotsky, writing on how a revolutionist should behave in the army, gave us a key to how he would direct us to operate in the unions:

"If he is in the army and tells the others about the dangers in the bourgeois institutions and advises them to create a workers program for war, in spite of all the chauvinistic attacks upon him, and even if they turn him away, they will later say, 'Remember, he told us so.' And then he becomes an authority. This is repeated in every war, and not only in wars but in strikes and trade union movements. All they have to remember is: 'This man warned us and we rejected him!' Then he becomes their leader, a hero. If the leaders seek only to preserve themselves, that is what they will become; preserves-dried preserves. It is more important to multiply our cadres than to preserve them, and they can be multiplied by the hundreds."

This attitude of Trotsky's is answer enough to those comrades who think that we must bow to the backward prejudices of the masses, be shy about putting forth our ideas - the ideas of the transitional program and the social revolution.

We cannot always be bold, but the opportunities are many and varied (if we use them correctly) of placing a great many of our ideas before the union members, both on the union floor and in private conversation with individuals and groups of union men.

In one situation, when I was active on the PAC of my local, a long running battle was conducted with the Stalinists and the others on the question of the Labor Party. This was in 1944. In the course of months of discussion, the workers came to understand what the labor party meant to me and why the CP opposed it. Before long the members of the Committee asked for a debate between the CP and the MP, on the question of a program for labor. The Stalinist was stunned and shocked. I realized that such a debate was not wise, that is a debate under union auspices and explained this to the men. The Stalinist was very grateful, to say the least, and was practically forced into silence. It is only one example of how things may develop.

We must not be ashamed to use that superior store of facts and knowledge which the movement and our individual backgrounds have given us, as long as we don't flaunt it before the workers but demonstrate how it may be useful to them. In preparation for the strike and in my work on the local's newspaper I have done some statistical analysis of the company's profits and the status of the working class in general and of our workers in particular. As a result of that the workers respect me as an "authority" and the editor of the paper goes around telling the workers that "we have an expert statistical analyst on our staff", etc.

But our policy must be flexible and we must act in a responsible fashion toward the union. I choose only one example of many to demonstrate what I mean by "responsibility toward the union". In the course of the 1946 strike all the militants came to rely on me for advice and guidance in the conduct of the strike. Finally, it was drawing to a close and the local leadership came back from a conference and disclosed the settlement terms to the militants who were organized into a "Minute Man Corps". As soon as the terms were made known to me I prepared an analysis of the settlement terms for presentation to the Minute Man meeting. When they understood what the terms were, the men were disgusted; they pleaded with me to organize the men for defeat of the proposal. We had a serious discussion and I explained that we could not hold the men out forever, that only our local would oppose the terms whereas the National office would easily "sell" it to other locals in the union. The local leadership was in a panic until they discovered that I had refused the demands of the men, on the condition that no attempt be made to "sell the contract" to the Membership and that they guarantee me the right to speak (The meeting was going to be held in a large hall where it would be easy for the chairman to ignore a raised hand). They agreed. At the mass meeting I used this occasion to expose the national leadership, put forward the idea of the escalator clause and the idea of general strike action. My remarks were cheered, the only speech which drew the support of the men, and then I told them to vote as they saw fit - if they felt that more was to be gained by a continuation of the strike with the present leadership and methods, then vote "No", if not, vote "Yes." Perhaps it was not the best course of action, but after four months on a picket line, the strike was approaching the danger point. To this day, workers whom I never met and never see at meetings of the local often remind me about what I said at that meeting. They understood and agreed. They will still remember when new struggles are fought in the future.

d) The Problem of Leadership

The revolutionist, because of his ability, devotion, self-sacrifice and activity in the union, is often thrown up by the membership into the union leadership or at least the men request that he assume leadership. Very often this is difficult to resist, and at times unwise. When leadership is turned aside too frequently, the men may lose confidence in the party member and therefore in the ideas of the party.



This too can and must be handled with a great deal of flexibility, but this much is clear. The men must be given the opportunity to know what we stand for before we accept office in the union, and that means the broad masses in the union must know. In my own situation, the men often attempted to push me into office but I refused. In one case, the stewards in my division demanded that I accept the office of Chief Steward with 21 out of the 22 stewards voting for me. For three hours we discussed, in the course of which I told them the following:

"All of you know that I am a Trotskyist. For some of you that is why you want me to be chief steward. For the others, you want me to take office despite my ideas. O.K. At least you all know where I stand - but the men in the shop do not, and I want to give them a chance to vote for or against my ideas and not for or against me as an individual. Under the circumstances I cannot accept."

This was repeated again the following year and I would have accepted (by this time my ideas were fairly well known throughout the shop), but other factors prevented me from taking on added duties in the Union. (I was at that time party organizer in the city.) This second refusal under normal conditions would have been wrong and did cause some difficulty, but nothing of a serious nature. Many of the men and stewards still look to me for advice on many questions, including the chief steward. All that I can say is that the men must know us before we take office.

Our functions in the union as revolutionists mean that we must provide the men with such leadership in every aspect of their activity as it is possible for us to offer without sacrifice of the principles for which we stand. Our function is not to be mere revolutionists of the mouth, of the glib phrase, but also of action. We cannot afford to be Monday morning quarterbacks and side-line coaches. We are participants in the union, and as such take our share and more of the burdens and activities of the union. If we fail to do this, we separate ourselves from just those workers whom we want to influence - the activists and militants who will provide the party cadres of tomorrow, as well as those workers who are so terribly disgusted with the union that they fall into inactivity. It is these men who will provide the leadership of the workers tomorrow for the revolution.

Building the party in the shop requires patience and more patience. This is the first requirement, second only to the necessity for a clear and correct program. It may take a long time for the class struggle to demonstrate that our answers are the only ones, or it may be demonstrated with dramatic suddenness, but when it does, the rewards for the party will be great indeed.

#### 7. The Problem of Stalinism

We are not automatically against the Stalinists in every union and in every situation. The Problem of Stalinism cannot be viewed separately from our general analysis, but only as part of it, and Stalinophobia can only disorient the comrades in the shops. Generally speaking, however, the labor bureaucracy is our main enemy in the trade union movement in the United States. It is otherwise in Europe because there the Stalinists are the controlling and dominant force. The dominant force here is the labor bureaucracy. (This will be elaborated to some extent in the next section on the question of factions in the unions).

#### 8. Factions in the Unions

In any factional situation in any of the CIO national unions, we can establish our orientation only by understanding what it is that the workers are supporting in each faction, and not what the faction leaders may stand for. The rank and file is all important for us; it is they whom we want to reach without program.

What motivates the fakers of both caucuses, what is in their heads is of no concern to us in determining the course of action for the party fraction. An analysis of the roots of the factional support in the ranks will determine for us which faction it is best for us to work in.

For example: Two groupings appeared in the pre-convention period of the IUMSWA in 1945. One grouping, the "progressives" was under the leadership of the Stalinists and the other under the leadership of Green and the administration. It was essential for us to understand that those workers who wanted a militant program would rally "against Green" who represented all the crass betrayals of the war period and that the Stalinists were attempting to make a turn in order to win the ranks. In that situation I urged our comrades to enter that grouping and contest the Stalinists by placing our program against theirs. Comrade Coolidge took an absolutely opposite stand, not out of concern for where the rank and file of militants were orienting or what the Stalinist caucus represented to them, but because of his position on Stalinism. The gist of his remarks was that "Green belongs to us. He is part of the labor movement whereas the Stalinists are an outside force. He will let us live in the union and the Stalinists will not", and so on ad nauseum. The peculiar development which followed indicated how false his policy was: Our slate for the convention delegation in the ship local here was defeated, and the opposition carried out the position of Coolidge.

Another example is the factional strife in auto. The workers in the Reuther caucus represent those elements who opposed the war and the no-strike pledge stand by the G.M. program of "wage increases without price increases", and in general all the anti-Stalinist militants whose program for the union is far ahead of the Addes caucus. In such a situation, in my opinion, we must work within the Reuther caucus, give it our support against the Thomas-Addes-Stalinist wing, and put forward our program within the caucus in an attempt to win the militants to our position. At all times it is the rank and file which we must see and understand, and not the present leadership and what they may say or do in order to hold office. Their shenanigans are of no decisive importance. It is the membership and their mobilization behind a program which will decide the issue of where the union is going and what it will do, and not the leadership. The caucuses reflect the desires of the men in one way or another and we must see which one is the most forward and has the best elements.

9) Trade Union Education and Journalism

One of the major problems facing the revolutionist in an inactive union is how to reach the rank and file who never attend meetings. One of the avenues available is the local newspaper which the union may sponsor and the educational programs of the union, if they have any. I want to give just a few examples of what can be said in such papers. These examples are not given for their literary value but for their content. (In my particular situation I have a relatively free hand, including a personal column in the paper. I have not abused this privilege, but attempt to use it for what it is worth. In the articles, it is necessary to substitute in one's mind the words "socialism" and "party" for "organization" and "union", but the content remains the same).

The following is an extract from an article attacking the company's statement on its profits:

"What would happen if we figured our income like a corporation does? How much wages (what they call profit) would we show? Well, after we get our pay we would deduct such things as rent, food, clothing and carfare as 'operating expenses'. We would deduct all insurance items, including a \$3000 a year annuity payable at 60 years of age, as 'depreciation'. We would deduct a little bit that is set aside for a car or new furniture or a new coat for Mama, as 'earned surplus'. If there was anything left to put in the bank, we would deduct that as a 'contingency reserve.' The next day we would say to the foreman: 'Look here, I worked all last week for nothing and I gotta have a raise.' And you would be a lot closer to the truth than is the company with its phony story of 'No Profits.'

"If you told your story to the boss, his answer to you would be: 'You're crazy, you know you got paid last week.' Yes, and that's our answer to the company: 'We know you got paid last year, and the years before that, and very handsomely too, so go peddle your story to some one who might believe it. WE DON'T!'"

The following was written after the press campaign against the miners and the Safety Strike:

"WAGES OF MINING IS DEATH"

On March 25th, the miners in Centralia, Ill. marched from their bleak homes to another day in the pits. It was just another day in which the half million miners in America went to work for the coal barons, to produce fuel for the nation and profits for the steel, railroad and coal companies. But 111 of the miners in Centralia did not come up again to return to their wives and kids. An accident occurred, an accident which was caused by the neglect and bloody profit-coring of the owners.

The article goes on to describe how the government would not have even ordered the closing down of 518 mines had it not been "for the tremendous pressure exerted on the government by the stop-work action of the mine workers." It then goes on to analyze the Supreme Court injunction:

"The Supreme Court's decision against John L. Lewis and the UMW fell on the 90th anniversary of another infamous case - The Dred Scott decision. It was on March 6, 1857 that Chief Justice Taney ruled that Dred Scott, a slave who had fled Missouri and then returned, had no standing as a citizen and therefore none in the courts....Dred Scott, a free man, was made again the property of another man. The court had served his master, and theirs - the slaveholders.

"On March 6, 1947, the rights of the common people of the nation were again placed in jeopardy by a decision of the Court. They ruled that the strike of the United Mine Workers was illegal....A new principle of slavery had been established by the highest court in the land to help the employers break the unions of the working people. In the words of Mine Workers President: 'Why shouldn't the coal operators be satisfied? The Government is acting as their muscle man.'

The article goes on to point out that "There is no time for pious wishes for a 'fair trial.'....We must rely only on the united strength and the united action of all the unions of working people to resist this attack and move forward toward labor's objectives.

The following is extracted from an article entitled: Conventions, Theirs and Ours.

"Did you ever see reports of the conventions of the business associations?....They have one program for the solutions of the nation's ills. Destroy the labor unions. The mighty brain laborer and brings forth a big zero as far as a constructive program for the people is concerned.

"As a contrast we want to devote this entire column to a report of what happened at a convention of the United Packinghouse Workers which was held the first week in May....

"One statement of policy adopted by the convention was as follows: 'Repression of any sort which attacks civil liberties is the weapon of reaction:..In this time of crisis we reaffirm our basic conviction that freedom just like peace is indivisible.'

"Here on this one question of civil liberties for all we can see the vast difference between a labor convention and that of the manufacturers. Labor wants to deepen and extend the elementary democratic rights, whereas their employers are always anxious to limit these rights. It is here that we can see what force in society is really for democracy and which is for it only in words, but against it in practice."

The article then goes on to point out how "business has no program to offer to prevent a depression except pious wishes or calm acceptance of the 'inevitable.' It contrasted the program of the UPWA which, while in the opinion of the writer, was not sufficient to stop a depression, was at least "a broad program which carries benefits for all sections of the people."

The following is extracted from an article written after passage of the Taft-Hartley Bill:

#### THE LAW AND THE WORKERS

"Part of the so-called 'American Tradition' is that the government intercedes in the affairs of men as an impartial arbitrator to adjust the differences between capital and labor. Another part of the tradition, which they teach in the schools and in the daily press, is that 'all men are equal under the law' and that everyone must respect 'law and order.' But this 'tradition' is as phony as the authors of the Taft-Hartley Bill in their pretence of impartiality."

The article goes on to point out how "The men of '76 had no respect for the law of the land because they knew that the law was for the protection of their masters and overlords and not themselves." It shows that "Washington, Hamilton, Adams and Madison...were not the spokesmen of the common people" and "organized a government to serve the interests of the rich landlords, merchants and new industrialists." "The first amendments to the constitution - the Bill of Rights...were not written into the constitution by the 'Founding Fathers...' "It took rebellion, determined opposition and defiance of the law to win these basic 'rights.'"

There is a brief review of the struggles of the common people in the intervening period and then the article goes on to say:

"In the middle of the 1930's the people organized the greatest instrument for the destruction of that tyranny (of Big Capital) - the mass unions of the CIO. Under the pressure of the illegal organizational procedures which the workers used at that time - the great sit-down strikes, the mass picket lines, the huge demonstrations of the unemployed, the Government surrendered to the power of the people and passed the Wagner act, which simply legalized what the workers had already done for themselves."

"And now in 1947, the Government felt that the mass action of the people had to be stopped once and for all, and they tried to legalize the attempt of Big Business to crush the unions. But they reckoned without the intervention of the working people themselves, and that is where they, like all the tyrants of the past, will meet their downfall. Our fight will continue and we are going to break their stranglehold on the forward march of the common people toward a better world. No law in any land can stop that fight. Our ancestors proved that with the fights which they put up, and we proved it with the organization of our unions. We are now called upon to prove it again."

Finally, there is an article entitled the "V.P.'s Economic Lesson", written as an editorial in answer to an article in the Company newspaper.

"In the March 18th issue of the "W News", there is an editorial entitled 'Labor Sets the Price.' The editorial quotes an article by the Vice-President of one of the W plants. According to the V.P. 'the price we pay for any commodity is purely dependent upon the wages paid to produce, distribute and market that commodity. The trees in the forest, the coal in the ground, the wool on a sheep's back are useless unless someone exerts physical effort to transform these things into material we can use.' The V.P. concludes by saying: 'To do this requires payment of wages and salaries, so the price depends on the wages paid.'

"The 'News' has the courage to reprint a speech of this kind in the face of all the evidence which points to the contrary. In other articles in this issue of our paper, you will read where prices are rising twice as fast as wages, as established by the economists of Big Business. But the 'News' reprints this kind of hush and expects someone, darned if we know who, to believe it. There is so much to prove that something else (guess what?) enters into the pricing of any commodity, that we almost feel that it is a waste of time to answer such nonsense.

"But there is something much more important in the editorial which we want to deal with. The eminent V.P. hit upon one of the fundamental truths when he noted that all things are worthless unless and until labor is applied to them. And therein lies a lesson in economics which all of us must learn. What Mr. V.P. is saying, without realizing it, is that labor is the source of all wealth and he also goes on to say that all that is bought in the purchase of materials for manufacturing is - labor. Labor also is a commodity to be bought and sold in the market place, just as you buy a yard of linen, some groceries or some pork chops. The question we must ask then is where, oh where, does the profit come in. If labor is paid what it is worth and all goods are sold at the price of all the labor contained in producing them, how in the world does the owner of a billion dollar corporation make his 'share'-or profit.

"This profit must come from somewhere, and it is pretty obvious that it can come from only one place - our labor. We are the only ones who add something to raw materials which makes them useful, according to Mr. V.P. He gets a Gold Star for that one. But he still doesn't pass his test in economics, because he can't see that if this is true, then it is also true that labor must be getting paid less than the total value which it contributes to the commodity, or there would be no profit for the man who buys labor - the capitalist.

"That is the simplest of all economic truths and we'll bet that Mr. V.P. - if he reads this - will be very red in the face to find that he was telling us that we were being cheated of the just fruits of our labor. Of course we had to help him out a bit, but every young student needs some help from his teacher, when he is just starting to learn a new subject. We render this tutoring service absolutely free of charge - we're anxious to teach even Mr. V.P. the truth. And now that he has had his lesson for the day we hope he will do better next time."

10. The UE -- What It is and Where it Came From

In the great mass production unions of the CIO it is the larger units which set the tone for the national union, establish its tradition and policy. In the UE these big units, Westinghouse, GM, and GE were all organized without strike action and usually developed out of winning over company unions. The result is that the leadership is forced to boast that "the UE is not a striking union." There is no tradition of militant struggle and sacrifice to build the union and win for it. There were many bitter strikes at Philco, RCA and in other shops, but until 1946, the big units were never involved in strike action.

a) The Stalinists:

Because of the nature of the union and the methods used to organize it, the Stalinists were never able to adopt a very militant or outstanding program in this union. They were forced to concede to the desires of their conservative allies in the leadership at all times. They pushed those sections of their line which they could without causing themselves too much embarrassment. Until 1941 they had an alliance with Carey and the group around him. Since that time, which corresponded with their change of line on the war, their policy and that of the conservatives, including the Carey-Block faction, were identical, and there was no programmatic factional conflict of any kind. In fact, the Carey-Block group kept very quiet throughout the war. Under the cry of "Unity" and "We are the union builders", and because of the irresponsible activities of the Carey-Block faction, the administration grouping now has the best elements in the union supporting it. In my district not a single militant or progressive worker has chosen to support the opposition.

b) The Carey-Block Faction

This grouping in the union is completely dominated by the reactionaries in the AOTU. It is possible that the revolutionists might have influenced its development if they had entered it in the early stages. This is only a question of second-guessing, and in my opinion they could not have done much with it because it did not attract militant workers. From the very outset its only program was that of red-baiting and support of American imperialism as against the support of Russia on the part of the Stalinists. Others may have had different experiences in the UE, but in my local and in my district the policy, as I see it, is hands off both groups as far as an alliance is concerned, and work any place for the beginning of a third group. The policy I advocated in my local was to make a programmatic fight at the convention which clearly distinguished us from both groups. In the actual voting, which is not too important at this stage of developments in the union, I indicated that we should support the administration. The following resolution was offered for presentation to the convention:

RESOLUTION ON FACTIONS WITHIN THE U.E.R.M.W.A.

"Whereas both factional groups in the UE (the Carey-Block caucus known as the 'UE Members for Democratic Action', and the administration group of Fitzgerald-Empak-Matles whose policy is dominated by the Communist Party) have done a disservice to the cause of organized labor by the scandalous methods used by both in their unprincipled fight for power and prestige in the union, and

Where, there is no principled difference between these two groups in the matter of a program to advance the interests of labor, as is demonstrated by the cowardly defense of the No-Strike Pledge and the War Labor Board during the war years, and their failure to urge general strike action to defeat the Taft-Hartley Bill, and their common opposition to a sliding scale of wages and the formation of an Independent Labor Party, and

Whereas, the responsibility for the present dissension on the U.E. must be laid at the door of both groups, both of whose policies lead in a reactionary direction! One serves the interests of the Communist Party and the foreign policy of the Soviet Union and the other has objectively surrendered to the interests of American Big Business in its preparations for a Third World War, while neither is concerned solely with the interests of the American workers,

Therefore Be It Resolved, that this convention go on record to:

1. Condemn both groups for their betrayal of labor in supporting the No-Strike Pledge and their failure to support a militant policy during the war years and their failure to support general strike action to defeat the Taft-Hartley Bill.

2. Condemn the U.E.M.D.A. for its unprincipled red-baiting campaign which was part of its fight to bar members of the Communist Party from holding office and for its statements in the public press and before Congressional Committees which took the fight outside the union, where it does not belong and can only do harm.

3. Condemn the administration for its arrogant usurpation of democratic rights in the denial for proper means of discussion of relevant issues on a national scale, its fear to face the issues squarely by naming names, and exposing the support of U.E.M.D.A. by Phil Murray and for its demagogic stifling of discussion by the false cry of "unity", and

Be It Further Resolved, that this convention:

1. Instruct the incoming National Officers to open the pages of the U.E. for free discussion on all questions of labor policy, in which all points of view are permitted expression.

2. Reaffirms the right of any individual to hold and express his point of view in the union and the right of any union member to hold office, regardless of race, creed, color or political belief.

3. Requests both groups to condemn splitters from the U.E. and instructs the incoming G.A.B. to carry on an intensive fight for complete organic unity of all unions into one National Federation which retains the principle of industrial unionism.

4. Declares that only such a policy as is outlined in this resolution can unite our union and the whole labor movement for the advancement of Labor's interests.

11. The "g" Local of the U.E.

Briefly indicated here is some of the work we have done in my local.

a) Fight for Negro upgrading

We soon became the champions of the Negroes in our plant, where there were some 800 Negro workers out of a plant of 10,000 and not a single one on a machine. In the course of our fight, which we never stopped, we won the support of every Negro in the plant despite the fact that we could not actually produce any real results. Today we are the only ones who are respected among those active in the union. We would have the support of the Negroes at any time on any issue because they have come to trust us and only us.



b) Jobs Demonstration

We were instrumental in organizing a "Jobs For All Now Committee" as the war approached its end. We began by sending out propaganda to the membership and soon reached a dramatic climax, all in the space of less than a week. Two leaflets were issued, all pointing to a demonstration against the lay-offs and calling for government operation of one section of the plant which was being closed down. One night the company handed out some lay-off notices and we told the stewards to have the men tear them up. We went home thinking that would be the end of it until the next day. We were wrong. A plant-wide sit-in stoppage took place and the leadership of the local did not know what to do. The following morning, when I came to work, all the men were instructed by the night shift stewards to report to the ballfield. When I got there I discovered that none of the officers were present. There was nothing left for me to do but take over the meeting, address the men and organize the day-shift stoppage, which I did. In the course of my remarks I told the men that these "machines belong to you, they are the means by which we earn a living. We don't care who brings us work, the government or the company, but some one must. We'll sit here until we get it, etc." I was amazed at the response which was absolutely overwhelming. The leadership finally revived itself in order to divert the struggle and finally got the men back to work, but it indicated what tremendous potential energy lay inherent in the men for some great action.

c) Strike of 1946

I have already indicated some of the things we did in the strike. I was active in the strike organization, placed on the picket committee by the leadership. Out of that single committee came all of the other strike committees - food, publicity, welfare, education, etc. We actually ran the strike from that committee. The strike committee itself was a mass body containing the members of all the committees, the Minute Men, etc. and actually the doors of the weekly strike committee meetings were open to all the members. During the course of the strike we made intense propaganda for the general strike, sliding scale of wages, the GM program and defense guards. The latter we started after a violent conflict with the police.

These items are only placed here to indicate what has been done in this one local, with a great deal left unsaid. It would be invaluable for the comrades to exchange their experiences on this score.

d) The following are given as samples of the type of resolutions which we have put forward in my local. These two were unanimously endorsed by the membership and sent to the 1946 Convention of the U.E.R.M.W.A. where they died.

RESOLUTION ON STRIKE STRATEGY  
(For U.E. Convention - Endorsed by Local 107)

Whereas, the recent strike struggles were characterized by the great self-sacrifice and heroism which the rank and file of labor can exhibit in class conflict, and

Whereas, many of the strikes lasted for extremely long periods, thus causing unnecessary suffering and hardship to the men on the picket lines and to their families, and

Whereas, all these strikes were for the same demands and against a common enemy, yet no unified strategy was employed by the unions thus leaving some locals at the mercy of the more determined companies who could afford long strikes, and

Whereas, such exhausting efforts on the part of labor will only cause discontent and shattered morale if continued in the future struggles which are bound to come, and therefore do harm to the cause of labor,

Therefore, be it resolved that Local 107 shall endorse the idea of General Strike action on the part of the entire U.E. and of the C.I.O. and of all organized labor if that can be achieved, whenever a general demand is made on the part of all labor against all the companies, and condemns the strategy of hitting one at a time, and be it further

Resolved that Local 107 call upon the convention to return to the time-honored motto of an "Injury to one is an Injury to All" and instruct the national leadership to plan for a General Strike, if at any time a universal demand or campaign is again launched by the Union.

By so doing it will be possible to win decisive victories with the least amount of hardship, thus inspiring the ranks to ever greater loyalty to the cause of organized labor and to ever greater accomplishments.

RESOLUTION ON THE 6-HOUR DAY  
(For 1946 Convention of the U.E. - Endorsed by Local 107)

Whereas, labor is dedicated to the fight for full employment - jobs for all who want to work; men, women, veterans and

Whereas, the first step in the attainment of this objective is the shortening of the workday to provide additional jobs and more leisure time for all workers and

Whereas, the shorter work day is one of the basic goals of the labor movement and we have made no progress in this goal since the establishment of the 8-hour day, despite the tremendous advances in labor productivity in the past two decades.

Therefore be it resolved that Local 107 go on record in favor of the 6-hour day, 30-hour week - with no cut in take-home pay and that we call upon the national convention of the U.E. to instruct the leadership to launch an immediate national propaganda and educational campaign to attain this objective, and be it further

Resolved, that on May 1st, 1947, there shall be a national stoppage of all U.E. members to demonstrate for the 6-hour day, using this day which has historically been Labor's Holiday to launch the new struggle for a reduction in the working day.

12. CONCLUSION

We are not in the unions to play hide and seek with our political line. Nor are we there to isolate ourselves from the ranks or the militants by bending their ears about our point of view without relation to or participation in the current affairs and problems of the unions. The Americanization of Bolshevism, the revolutionary perspective, and patience are the tools of party building in the shops. They are the tools with which we help to prepare the unions for the coming revolutionary developments and to establish ourselves today with sufficiently strong cadres, so that such developments do not find us isolated from our class. That is our function - to gather the cadres together who can appear before the masses at those decisive moments in history when the party is so essential for the future of mankind.

---Irving Marnin

(Note: - The N.Y. comrades will soon hold a discussion of the above report. A stenogram of this discussion and the summary by Comrade Marnin will be published in the next issue of the Bulletin).

# A NEW PAMPHLET

\* \* \* \* \*  
WORLD REVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVES AND THE RUSSIAN QUESTION  
\* \* \* \* \*

Reprints:

Historical Retrogression or Socialist Revolution  
by J. R. Johnson

The Nature of Russian Economy  
by F. Forest

After Ten Years  
by J. R. Johnson

With a new Introduction by J.R. Johnson  
22 pages multigraphed 25¢ a copy

\*\*\*\*\*  
Address all communications to: MARTIN HARVEY, 101 W. 46 St., N.Y. 19, N.Y.  
\*\*\*\*\*

NOW ON SALE

BALANCE SHEET - Trotskyism in the United States, 1940-47	:	Three Essays by
Contents	:	KARL MARX
I. The Unprincipled Split of 1940	:	Selected from
II. Trotsky's Role in the 1940 Split	:	
III. Political Evolution of the W.P.	:	
IV. The Johnson-Forest Tendency	:	
V. The Organizational Question	:	The Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts
VI. Perspectives in the United States	:	Contents
VII. Lessons of the American Experience	:	1. Alienated Labor
Appendix: Conversations with Trotsky on the Transitional Program	:	2. Private Property and Communism
	:	3. Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic
Price: 35¢ a copy	:	Price: 50¢ a copy

# INTERNAL BULLETIN

OF THE  
JOHNSON  
FOREST  
TENDENCY

No. 11 September 25, 1947

## CONTENTS

Part I	Lenin on Unity and Regroupments	P. 1
	The Differences in the Chinese Movement	P. 3
	Work During the War and After	P. 6
Part II	The Revolution and the Army	by I. Blako

15 CENTS

1199

NOTES OF A PUBLICIST ON UNITY AND REGROUPMENTS OF TENDENCIES

We reprint the following passage on unity by Lenin. It was written in 1910 and appears in Volume IV of the Selected Works.

We recommend it to all comrades as a model of the manner in which a Marxist approaches what can appear to be the work of "given persons, groups and institutions."

"There is another view on this unity, namely, that a number of profound objective causes, long ago, independently of the manner in which the 'given persons, groups and institutions' (submitted to the plenum and at the plenum) were constituted, began to bring about and are steadily continuing to bring about changes in the two old and principal Russian factions among the Social-Democrats, changes that create - sometimes in spite of the will and even consciousness of some one of the 'given persons, groups and institutions' - ideological and organizational bases for unity. These objective causes are rooted in the peculiarities of the present period of bourgeois development in Russia, the period of bourgeois counter-revolution and attempts by the autocracy to reorganize itself on the model of a bourgeois monarchy. These objective conditions simultaneously cause changes that are indissolubly linked up with one another, changes in the character of the labor movement, in the composition, type and features of the proletarian Social-Democratic vanguard, as well as changes in the ideological and political tasks of the Social-Democratic movement. Therefore, that bourgeois influence over the proletariat which creates liquidationism (= semi-liberalism which likes to be regarded as a part of Social-Democracy) and otzovism (= semi-anarchism, which likes to be regarded as a part of Social-Democracy) is not an accident, nor evil intention, stupidity or error on the part of some individual, but the inevitable result of the action of those objective causes, and the superstructure of the entire labor movement of present-day Russia, which is inseparable from the 'basis.' The realization of the danger of the un-Social-Democratic nature and the harmfulness to the labor movement of both these deviations brings about a rapprochement between the elements of various factions and paves the way to Party unity 'in spite of all obstacles.'

"From this point of view the unification of the Party may proceed slowly, with difficulties, vacillations, waverings, relapses, but it cannot but proceed. From this point of view the process of unification does not necessarily take place among the 'given persons, groups and institutions,' but irrespective of the given persons, subordinating them to itself, rejecting those of the 'given' persons who do not understand or who do not want to understand the requirements of objective development, putting forward and attracting new persons, who do not belong to the 'given' set, effecting changes, reshufflings and regroupment within the old factions, tendencies, divisions. From this point of view, unity is inseparable from its ideological foundation, it can grow only on the basis of an ideological rapprochement, it is connected with the appearance, development and growth of such deviations as liquidationism and otzovism, not by the casual ties of this or that controversy or this or that literary struggle, but by an internal, indissoluble tie such as that which binds cause and effect." (pp.43-44.)

# A NEW PAMPHLET

\* \* \* \* \*  
WORLD REVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVES AND THE RUSSIAN QUESTION  
\* \* \* \* \*

Reprints:

Historical Retrogression or Socialist Revolution  
by J. R. Johnson

The Nature of Russian Economy  
by F. Forest

After Ten Years  
by J. R. Johnson

With a new Introduction by J.R. Johnson

22 pages multigraphed

25¢ a copy

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*  
Address all communications to: MARTIN HARVEY, 101 W. 46 St., N.Y. 19, N.Y.  
\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

NOT ON SALE

BALANCE SHEET - Trotskyism in the United States, 1940-47	:	Three Essays by
Contents	:	KARL MARX
I. The Unprincipled Split of 1940	:	Selected from
II. Trotsky's Role in the 1940 Split	:	
III. Political Evolution of the U.P.	:	
IV. The Johnson-Forest Tendency	:	The Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts
V. The Organizational Question	:	Contents
VI. Perspectives in the United States	:	1. Alienated Labor
VII. Lessons of the American Experience	:	2. Private Property and Communism
Appendix: Conversations with Trotsky on the Transitional Program	:	3. Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic
Price: 35¢ a copy	:	Price: 50¢ a copy

THE DIFFERENCES IN THE CHINESE MOVEMENT.

(Note: The following has been written by a Chinese comrade who left China about a year ago to return to the United States. While in China, he was not able to make contact with the Chinese Trotskyists. He has been in agreement with the Johnson-Forest positions on state-capitalism and world revolutionary developments for some years and is a member of the Johnson-Forest tendency.)

Most comrades know that the Communist League in China split into two groups, after the outburst of the Pacific War in 1942. These two organizations are known as the "Militant," the Majority; and the "Internationalist," the Minority. During the war, these two organizations were completely isolated. Every local unit was isolated from the others with no news and no communications could be exchanged. Each unit had to rely on its own initiative and courage to meet this emergency.

Under all kinds of obstacles as well as the high pressure of the bourgeois regime, the movement was not able to develop fully. Even at this present time, they have to meet the same fate and suffer no less persecution under the brutal rule of Chiang's regime.

It is doubtless that this split was costly to the revolutionary movement because if two Trotskyist organizations work in the same field, both will have to explain to the masses the reason why they split and cannot pose a united International program to the masses.

Today, since there are only a handful of Trotskyists in China, it is necessary and correct for the unification between these two groups. But according to the report of the Majority, the political differences still exist and even deepen today and the question of unity has slackened. Therefore it is our duty to study both views of this matter which may bring us to understand the Trotskyist movement in China more clearly.

There are two main political questions which actually caused the split in 1942. The questions are as follows:

One. What is the character of the Chinese war against Japan in the midst of an imperialist war and what is our attitude towards it?

On this question the Minority took the opposition. Their view is that the Chinese War against Japan is part of World War. To support this course means the serving of one imperialist camp against the other. The future of the struggles for national independence and colony freedom is utterly hopeless in the midst of a World War. They present the idea that the war against Japan is not the course toward independence, but rather imposes more imperialist slavery upon the colonial people. Therefore it is reactionary to support the war. They themselves advocated that instead they should summon the people to struggle not only against the leadership of the Kuomintang in war, but also against the war itself. The attitude they took toward the war is the position of "defeatism." They present the views that the struggle should aim at leading the national movement out of the camp of imperialism and into the field of struggle against imperialism. In other words, they wanted to launch the struggle all over again which has been strangled and betrayed by the false leader, bourgeoisie, to develop it more broadly and militantly. In order to free themselves from the imperialist domination and exploitation of the national emancipation movement, first of all the class struggle is necessary. This

is the only way to assure the struggle for national independence.

On the same question the Majority took the positive position against the Minority. They present this view. In semi-colonial China the main task to the workers is democratic revolution. Therefore the national question is primary to them. Today, Japan is the main enemy of the colonial country of China. The Chinese war with Japan is the struggle for national independence and is the movement of colonial emancipation. Even if this struggle is led by the bourgeoisie, under such circumstances it is progressive. The position is, in a colonial and semi-colonial country such as China, the people can and are playing an independent role in a limited struggle. Such a struggle is one of the elements that would sharpen the revolutionary crisis and speed the crystallization of the proletarian forces against imperialism. That is the meaning of the permanent revolution in Marxist dialectics. Their attitude toward the war is that we should not only participate in the war and set up united fronts, but also constantly point out to the masses how and where they were betrayed by their false leaders the bourgeoisie. Thus the socialist proletarian force will be consolidated.

The second question of dispute is: The future character of the Chinese revolution.

In this question, the Minority point of view is this: The Chinese revolution must start from the very beginning as a socialist revolution. That is to say, the beginning of the revolution must be with the undermining of private ownership inside the city, and the peasant against the land-owner in the village. The working class must struggle for the proletarian dictatorship. Although the incompleteness of the democratic revolution remains the primary question for the masses, the only possible way to solve this problem is a government under proletarian dictatorship. In other words, the Chinese democratic revolution will be accomplished along side with the struggle for socialism.

The Majority position is: The future of the Chinese revolution must come through the period of democratic revolution. For this reason the proletariat must set up a united front in all mass movements against their main enemies, American imperialism and the Kuomintang. When the proletariat stands on this democratic demand and gains the right to self-determination, then the socialist revolution would be possible.

Both views presented above are in materials translated from the New Banner and the Internal Bulletin which were sent from the comrades in China. I don't wish to express my opinion and hope the readers will render their own judgment on this and other material which they will read.

But I would like to give an analysis on the present situation in China. After the war ended, all conflicts and contradictions accumulated in the process of war were let loose. In the industrial centres, the working class plunged into a rising tide of strikes and the general strike of Kuomintang students inspired the entire nation. The people of the "recovered" areas have seen that American imperialism with its Kuomintang agent are the same as Japan. And even worse, in the continuous civil war, Chiang-kai-shek tried to bathe the Chinese masses in blood and draft the last man from the farms and factories for the war. On the other hand, he betrayed the nation to gain the support from American imperialism. From this result, the people became disappointed and bitterly hostile.



The general uprising of the Formosan people half a year ago and the guerrilla warfare are growing rapidly from the North to the South such as in Hainan Island, Whongung and Fugan province. The Stalinist peasant armies win one position after another. The news lately is that the Stalinists are only fifty miles away from the capital of Nanking. After all, the Chinese bourgeoisie has never been so nervous, helpless and isolated. Its future is completely dark. I believe it is a revolutionary condition. Today what it lacks is only a proletarian revolutionary party to lead them.

- Thomas Young

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

FEATURED IN THE WEEKLY BULLETINS

- #1 Why We Appear
- #2 Building the Mass Revolutionary Party in the Mine Area by Morgan West
- #3 The Worker in Modern Industry by Phil Romano
- #4 Introduction to the Three Essays of Karl Marx by J.R. Johnson,  
F.Forest & R. Stone
- #5 Labor and Society by F. Forest
- #6 Strata in the Working Class by Martin Harvey
- #7 The Economist Tendency in The Fourth International by Ria Stone
- #8 The American Worker by Ria Stone
- #9 A Concrete Example of Party Building by Irving Marnin
- #10 The Trade Unions and Revolutionary Politics by Irving Marnin
- #11 The Revolution & the Army by I. Elcke

15¢ each

\*\*\*\*\*  
Address all communications to Martin Harvey - 101 W. 46 St., New York, 19, N.Y.

Work During the War and After

Every worker realizes how different it was to work during the war. You didn't have to crawl for a job as in the pre-war years. At personnel offices, in applying for a job they addressed you as Miss and not by your first name. They were courteous and described the many advantages in working in that particular shop. (With the war period came a series of new privileges we had never enjoyed before: insurance policies covering illness and death, and milk, coke and even ice-cream machines.) Radioes said that it was your patriotic duty to work and to keep yourself healthy, whereas before the war you were begging them. You chose the job you wanted on the basis of where it was located in relation to travel, wages and how bad a "production" job it was. That is, was it the worst kind of mass production work or something slightly better. At the back of your mind was the thought that perhaps you might be able to learn a new skill so that after the war bubble burst you might have as good a chance and maybe better than the next guy at getting a job.

With the ability to be able to get a job at least as good if not better anywhere-discipline in the job could not be maintained in the same way it had been before the war. You answered the foreman back as you pleased. You weren't taking anything from him. As for as working hard was concerned-the company cared as little as you did. At the beginning of the war, the government was footing the expenses so they didn't rush you. We always wondered how they got all the stuff out that won the war.

Even though it was easier for us when we didn't have to work hard, we would get disgusted with hanging around. We would argue with the foreman as to the best way to do the job, how to do it and why. We felt that the foreman was not better than we were and most of the time knew much less about the job than we did.

Some shops that weren't war babies were better organized. Even these could not impose the old piece work speed up. Some workers got sold on piece work - but they soon learned their lesson. There was no necessity to convince them. It was the same old speed-up with a nicer name--Incentive pay.

Out of the lagging the companies tried to maintain some discipline. The bosses saw us hanging out in the ladies rooms. If we were going to go in, they figured they would solve it by setting aside a specific period during the day when we could leave the floor. This we counteracted by getting together and setting up schedules so that two or three girls at a time would go into the rest room without it being too conspicuous. (This was aside from our rest period.) After a while the foreman would realize what was occurring but they knew they couldn't do a thing about it.

If the treatment we were accorded was unacceptable to us, we always took some form of reprisal. The steward would be called over and the girls would group around the work angrily discussing whatever incident caused the fuss. This would not stop until the settlement was agreeable. If our case was not covered in the union contract we would simply hand in less work at the end of the day reporting that our "morale" had been lowered.

Another new privilege we got during the war was the right to make "suggestions". In this way, we were told we really were the man behind the man behind the gun. At first we were really enthusiastic. Everyone gave new ideas to make the work easier and to speed production. We soon learned just how much our "suggestions" were appreciated. When the ideas were to speed

up they were readily accepted. When they were mainly to make things easier or pleasanter for us, they were impractical we were told. Or we never heard about them at all. Some of the suggestions the workers sent in were really good and for this they got a bonus of five or ten dollars. The company made a fortune out of them but the worker got peanuts. After this went on for a while we used the suggestion box in a different way. We wrote in suggestions for chrome couches, four hour day, getting rid of the foremen and letting us work by ourselves and other things that we knew darn well they would never do. In one shop we used to spend the first hour of the morning figuring out what new nonsense to write in. After a few weeks they took the box down.

One of the forms they used during the war to bolster our morale and get more production of us by impressing us with their benevolence, was to set up basket-ball and baseball teams composed of the guys in the shop. The men participated to the point of even practicing on their own time. When they realized that the uniforms they received and the competitions with the other shops were a good advertisement for the company, they demanded that the company pay for any time lost on practice and all other activities in relation to it.

The same thing with the organization of bands. During the war many shops organized a system of having music during lunch time and sometimes even shows. Everyone felt rather proud of these. They were organized solely by the workers, the talent was solely the people in the shop. These were always a huge success. Suddenly every one in the shop seemed to have something he or she was able to contribute. Only after a big battle did the company pay these guys for practice time, after the orchestra insisted that they couldn't blow horns and eat a sandwich at the same time. With every so-called advantage they gave us there was always some form of taking it back. For this we answered by not recognizing these things as privileges but accepting even unreasonable things (from the company's point of view) as our inalienable rights.

The company tried to set up the same kind of entertainment on their own basis. So once a month a half hour before quitting time we were told to leave our work bench and informed of a hall we were to go to. Once there, there were always a few sailors who told horror stories of Japs eating Americans. Also, there was always an officer of the Army or Navy who gave us a pep talk on how important our work was, what it was used for and sometimes even exhibitions (if it was not too dark a war secret). Some bigshot of the company always made a speech and then we saw some kind of movie. If this meeting lasted too long we got paid overtime. All in all we enjoyed these gatherings, but never in the same spirit as our own shows.

At these meetings we always got a speech telling just how many men would be killed if we didn't get out more of whatever it was we were making. The people in the shops were anxious to make the stuff if it was really that badly needed. They had relatives in the army and if working faster than usual to make these items, would help to save one G. I.'s life, they were willing to do it. What made them sore was they never really knew just how much was the truth and just how much was the same old company rah-rah.

Many women and Negroes who had had all sorts of junk jobs were given the opportunity to do all kinds of work during the war. The machine shops were open to Negroes and women. Lathes, milling machines and a general facility in assembling and handling all things mechanical, became open to what was once "the weaker sex" and "the inferior race."

The War Ends

The war ended and bang - back into making paper flowers, radio belt lines, being elevator operators, domestic service. All the lowest jobs i.e. jobs which require the least amount of experience and knowledge, and as a result the lowest pay; or return to being only a housewife.

During the depression, the bourgeois newspapers talked in terms of women taking away men's jobs. That fear of the depression that the workers knew would come caused a certain hostility to the women who entered the war plants and found themselves at home there. Some felt that the new breakdown of operations was due to the hiring of women and Negroes who had never had the opportunity to work on machines before. This idea could not continue for long as the men saw all operations, regardless of who was working on them being cut to barest motions.

You didn't have to be an engineer or time-study man, to figure out that with war production ended, the company would change its way of living and pull the old rush act. In answer to a worker who said that they would take away our rest period another worker said: "They'll let us keep our rest period. The time study men have it figured that we work more efficiently after our rest period. We'd work even better if they cut our working day in half and let us alone".

I, like a couple of million others, got my "rest period" with the atom-bombing of Hiroshima. The war's end caused us, contrary to expectations of the analysts, not to dash feverishly to our next job but to enjoy our right to our "furlough". We had worked long hours six and seven days a week and we felt we were entitled to it. The USES under the line of the government tried to get us back to work and fast, at the new low pay and conditions the companies were now offering. We refused for our part and those workers who remained employed and went on strike were saying the same thing that we who were unemployed were saying in a different way. We would not go back to work. They would not stay at it.

After our insurance ran out and jobs in civilian industries opened up, many girls returned to work. In one shop which is typical of many, the number of radio sets produced per day went from 250 to 625 with the same number of girls working on them. When I asked one of the workers how they had managed to raise the quota that much in such a short period of time, she replied, "they laid the whole plant off, hired back only a few of the girls who had worked here before, put them all over the shop so that no one knew how many sets a particular line could get out. That way they announced the new quotas to the girls. That and the time-study men is the answer".

There are no secrets in the shop today. The workers know, not by reading Capitol, but from their experience, that the company cannot make a profit unless they continually speed us up.

The big question the workers want to know the answer to is: If the company has to speed us up more and more in order for them to stay in business, what is going to happen to us. The answer of one girl is the answer of all workers, "One day we'll all just stop working".

1 2 7 8

## THE REVOLUTION AND THE ARMY

In the crisis and the confusion of the post-war world, the bourgeoisie ominously points to the atomic bomb and the petty-bourgeoisie is terror-stricken at the threat of the atomic destruction of mankind. Caught in the web of charges and counter-charges spun between the United States and Russia, the rulers of the world move with the uncertainty of frightened men who can answer few questions and who are in terror lest the key which will unlock the world's fetters will also destroy them. Deep within this uneasy peace, the seed of military decisions of a violent nature is being sown. Fearful of war, the rulers nevertheless pose it, today in whispers, tomorrow, perhaps in shouts. They cannot help themselves, it is posed for them as they hurtle to their doom.

In probing the perspectives of humanity, we must squeeze from the recent experience of war its class content so that the proletariat can "take this weapon of death and destruction, [and] not listen to the sentimental whiners who are afraid of war. Much has been left in the world that must be destroyed by fire and iron for the liberation of the working class." (Lenin, The War and the Second International)

We start with that end in mind - the liberation of the working class and therefore of humanity. The destructive "fire and iron" unleashed in this liberation is the "fire and iron" of civil war. This is the first lesson we must learn of violence and force.

In another place, Lenin says:

"The civil war is also a war, and consequently must inevitably put 'force' in the place of right."

But it is the force of the proletariat democratically mobilized and using violence to free itself and humanity from the barbarism of capitalist exploitation. Lenin goes on to say:

"But force... cannot be realized without a democratic organization of the army and the 'rear.' The civil war first of all and at once expropriates banks, factories, railways, large agricultural estates, etc. But it is precisely for this very purpose of expropriation that it is imperative to introduce the election by the people of all the officials and the army officers; to accomplish a complete fusion of the army which wages war against the bourgeoisie, with the masses of the population." (Bolsheviks and the World War, p.227-228)

The fusion of the army with the masses is prepared by capitalism itself. Capitalism requires a standing army in order to impose its class rule. This is the weapon of its state power. In its standing army, it segregates the soldier sharply from the masses. It thereby seeks: 1) to keep a monopoly on militarism; 2) to keep the concept of force from the proletariat; 3) to keep the masses "peaceful".

But as it plunges from crisis to war, capitalism is forced to expand its army by hundreds of thousands and millions. It cannot maintain the segregation. It is forced to teach the soldier the concept of society as a whole, and it is forced to teach the civilian masses the concept of military violence. War transforms the standing army to the expanded army in which the soldier is socialized and the masses are militarized. The transition from the standing army to the expanded army is a stage in the militarization of the masses. It develops the socialization of the military and accelerates the revolutionization of the proletariat.

Nothing in this article implies that the revolution must wait for the outbreak of war. But while revolution does not wait on war, the very drive to war inherent in capitalism pushes toward the revolutionary fusion of the masses.

Trotsky placed this at the heart of his military policy in the Transitional Program. The Transitional Program demanded:

"Military training and arming of workers and farmers under direct control of workers and farmers committees;

"Creation of military schools for the training of commanders among the toilers, chosen by workers' organizations;

"Substitution for the standing army of a people's militia, indissolubly linked up with factories, mines, farms, etc."

Such a program would be possible of realization only with the overthrow or complete breakdown of bourgeois society. But Trotsky posed the policy in order to link in the mind of the masses, their revolutionary development with the military fusion to which capitalism was driving them.

We shall trace this developing fusion from the standing Army through the expanded Army to the socialization of war and the post-war developments. The bourgeois military policy and the war-time state prepare the next stage of development and pose the tasks of the revolutionary party. The analysis we are making is of American developments, particularly those of World War II.

#### I. The Standing Army

Lenin, and Engels before him, spoke of the standing Army as a special body of armed men, separated from the rest of the population and representative of the state power. Inasmuch as the state emerges from society as the organ of class rule, it must necessarily be separated from the broad masses of the population and its armed representatives must be similarly separated. The activity of the professional soldier is by its very nature separated from the activity of the masses and directed against it. This is the source of his dehumanization, and this is the meaning of the undemocratic character of the standing Army: its separation from and its naked function as oppressor of the masses.

The professional soldier is drawn from all strata of society. His class roots must therefore be destroyed in order that he can perform his capitalist function. By voluntarily enlisting in the standing Army, he has already signified his readiness to be separated from his class. As a professional soldier, he accepts his segregation. Having turned his back on the masses, he is compelled therefore to turn inward to the capitalist vacuum of his unit under the absolute domination of the officer, the personification of capitalism within the Army. Functioning as part of a tightly-knit isolated unit, his esprit de corps is based on his objective hostility to the rest of society and on his loyalty to the discipline of his officers and thus his patriotism to the state. He adapts himself to the ideal pattern of the bourgeois Army - the instrument of force governed by unquestioning obedience to the State. He has no activity except what the bourgeoisie orders. He has no energies except what the bourgeoisie commands. The masses, looking at him from the outside, instinctively hostile to his role as representative of the State, call him a "weak mind and a strong back." He is merely a fist. Even this "fist" can be shaken by and won to the revolution, but we are concerned here primarily with the process by which the professional Army itself gives way to the expanded Army.

## II. The Expanded Army

War forces the expansion of the standing Army. That the standing Army differs from the expanded Army is indicated by the differences between the old soldier and the new. What draftee does not remember the old soldier's complaint during the war: "In the old army you yardbirds couldn't get away with the stuff you're pulling now." And the draftee's reply: "The old army was a goldbrick's army. You guys joined up because you didn't want to work."

What lies beneath the barrier is the fact that the professional soldier seeks to impose his discipline upon the new soldiers, but the old discipline cannot be imposed in the old way. The new soldiers have not turned their backs to the masses. They are the masses and they are from the masses.

### a) The Bourgeoisie Prepares the War

Since the close of the first World War, the War Department in its role of watchdog for imperialist capitalism was making its plans in preparation for the war which must inevitably come, though none could say when. These plans were of necessity abstract. They had to take form in the narrow confines of military technology, the exclusive domain of the General Staff. How these plans would materialize could only be learned with the intervention of the masses in the form of their mobilization for war. Such mobilization is possible only when hostilities are imminent. To be sure, the military planners took into consideration the post-World War I developments in Asia and in Europe. But these were largely substitute experiences. Also taken into consideration were the American developments: the 1929 depression, the 1931 bonus march on Washington, the unemployed movement, the eruption of the CIO in 1936. But there was no way for the War Department fully to grasp the significance of these experiences. The planners could not know how to use these experiences nor how concretely to plan around them. They could only bear them in mind with an uncomfortable question mark. The only concrete United States military experiences available were those involving the mobilization of the American masses for World War I. With the outbreak of war in 1939, the American Army, as General Marshall wrote in his report as Chief of Staff, was modern as of the conclusion of World War I. The modernization of the Army, the testing of the abstract plans of the War Department, could not be done except by the mobilization of the masses.

### b) The Preparation of the Masses for War

Involved in the mobilization of the masses was the two-fold question: their pacifism and their patriotism.

From 1919 to 1939 the masses in the United States were predominantly pacifist. But we must see the class duality in the apparent unity of pacifism. Trotsky, in the Founding Conference of the Fourth International, wrote:

"...it is necessary to differentiate strictly between the pacifism of the diplomat, professor, journalist, and the pacifism of the carpenter, agricultural worker and charwoman. In one case, pacifism is a screen for imperialism; in the other, it is the confused expression of distrust in imperialism."

There is more. The pacifism of the worker is one form of expression of his antagonism to the horror and degradation forced upon the masses by capitalist war. The pacifism of the "diplomat, professor, etc." is one form of expression of his antagonism to the revolutionary upsurge of the masses which accompanies capitalist war.

With the development of Nazism, and subsequently, the Blitzkrieg in Europe, the overrunning of Poland and Central Europe, the fall of France, the bourgeoisie raised the cry of anti-fascism and pro-democracy. The masses in the United States, more pertinently aware of the threat of fascism than the bourgeoisie, listened skeptically to them. But they went along. On the one hand they were opposed to fascism, albeit confused. On the other hand the defense program meant jobs and an end to the misery of the depression years. With Pearl Harbor, the threat of fascism appeared to become more direct and appeared to come from abroad. The masses mobilized more actively.

Trotsky said further in the above quotation:

"When the small farmer or worker speaks about the defense of the fatherland, he means defense of his home, his families and other similar families from invasion, bombs and poisonous gas. The capitalist and his journalist understand by the defense of the fatherland the seizure of colonies and markets, the predatory increase of the 'national' share of world income. Bourgeois pacifism and patriotism are shot through with deceit. In the pacifism and even patriotism of the oppressed, there are elements which reflect on the one hand a hatred of destructive war, and on the other a clinging to what they believe to be their own good - elements which we must know how to seize upon in order to draw the requisite conclusions."

From 1939 to 1941, the American masses were being fused nationally in activity and organization. After 1941, this process became accelerated and began to reach out internationally.

c) The Army Expands - The First Steps

At the beginning of 1940 the Army of the United States numbered 227,000 men. This was the Regular Army - the standing Army of the State.

During the Summer of 1940, the National Guard and the Reserve Corps - bodies auxiliary to the Regular Army but composed essentially of civilians and therefore less separate from the rest of the population - were mobilized and incorporated into the Army. By the end of 1940, the Army had been expanded by 217,000 Guardsmen and 40,000 Reserve Officers. Thus, with the mobilization of the Regular Army, the Regular Navy and the various auxiliary bodies, about half-million men, the ranks of the professional and semi-professional arms were exhausted. They provided the basic structure but could not provide the necessary striking power for the wartime armed forces. That had to come from the masses at large. The bourgeoisie held their breath. They were afraid of what expansion might do to their Army but they needed men. General Marshall writes of the contradiction they were in:

"Opposed to plunging into a sudden expansion of personnel in such a manner that our small nucleus of trained troops would be fatally diluted, but yet conscious of the importance of the time factor, the General Staff was equally opposed to the policy of waiting until the last moment and then attempting the impossible."

On October 16, 1940, under the Selective Service Act, seventeen million men between the ages of 21 and 35 had registered for military service. By February 1942, almost two million had already been inducted. The insulation was being ripped from the previously isolated armed forces and the seeds of change were fertilized.

With Selective Service, the mobilization of the masses for warfare



had begun. But already in early and middle 1941, strains appeared in the armed forces which were quickly covered over with later developments and Pearl Harbor but which nevertheless were portents of future events.

d) The Contradictions Develop

By Summer of 1941 the Army had grown to more than one-and-a-half million men. They were sent to camps all over the country. They met men from all over the country. They lived, worked and took recreation together. They suffered the same regimentation and experienced the same learning and discipline and organization. They absorbed from each other the experiences of their respective backgrounds and thereby enriched the common experiences they were undergoing. They met civilian workers and farmers in different locales. The interpenetration of the American masses became a concrete reality.

At the same time that the "Okies" and "Arkies" were beginning to move West into the shipyards and North into the factories, and while share-croppers and farmers were beginning to work on various Army sites as construction workers, and while thousands of unemployed workers were finding industrial employment in centers often far from their homes, other tens of thousands were putting on uniforms and carrying the thread of class contact to all sections and layers of the United States. The fusion of civilian and military was beginning.

And in the Army, at the same time, a Tennessee cotton picker, an Oregon cowboy, a Detroit auto worker, a Pennsylvania miner, a New York elevator operator were training together in the same unit. They learned to rely upon each other for their own functioning and for the functioning of their unit. These social experiences they quickly absorbed. For many, the armed forces were a means of breaking out of their former ruts of frustration. Association with each other and with new sections and layers of the civilian population had opened new vistas of social meaning for their lives. They hungered for more. They sought eagerly to learn.

But if on the one hand they were learning social integration, on the other, new coercions were imposed on them. The armed forces were expanding more quickly than was production. Housing, clothing and equipment were in inadequate supply for the needs of the swelling Army. The men faced the training program seriously. But because of the equipment shortages, their officers made them train with make-believe weapons. They wanted to act as men, instead they were being ordered to "play soldier" like children. They wouldn't have minded the dust and the mud and the toil and the regimentation if it had meant something to them. The sweat and monotony became too much. The inadequacy of the towns around them to provide the outlets the Army failed to provide oppressed them. They wanted to go home, they wanted to get jobs that were opening up for civilians. They waited for their year of service to end. They were patient enough to wait for their eighteen months to end after the extension had been authorized by the government. But when it appeared that their service would be extended indefinitely, their hostility and resentment took organized expression in the spontaneous eruption of the "OHIO" movement. They said openly, if they were not discharged when their eighteen months were up, for many in October 1941, they would desert.

In latrines, on barracks walls, on sidewalks, were scrawled the letters O.H.I.O. Over the Hill in October. They served notice that they were not playing games. They served notice that they had exhausted the social content of the 1940-41 experience. They served notice that they were not the idealized soldier of the standing Army so often described as "strong back and weak mind." They had had enough. This could never have happened in the old Army. The

1 2 1 3

- 0 -

infusion of the working class made it inevitable in the new.

The "OHIO" movement was to break out again on a higher stage in the mass demobilization demonstrations after V-J Day.

The bourgeoisie took immediate note. If they couldn't maintain the isolation of the Army, at least they sought to maintain its structure. Like the old Romans who sponsored circuses to appease the unrest of the masses, the War Department created a military morale branch in the Army and put a general in command.

The pressure of the "OHIO" movement was eased before Pearl Harbor by several things. For one, the discharge of men 28 and over was authorized. More importantly, the expanded production was beginning to show results. More equipment was beginning to roll off the lines. Barracks were being completed. The USO program was beginning to reach into the smaller centers. More workers were going back to work carrying the message of interpenetration further. More men were entering the Army bringing new life and new experiences. As the skeleton structure of the armed forces was being filled with life, modifications were taking place and new forms were being devised. This was the product of the living intervention of men. Old activities took on new meaning and the hostility was being modified.

Then came Pearl Harbor.

e) After Pearl Harbor - The Second Stage

By mid-1942, the expansion of American industry was abundantly evident. In the preceding year it had been comparatively imperceptible, often times much more obvious to the industrial proletariat than to the enlisted men. The workers in the factories and shipyards, the farmers, the merchant marine, the longshoremen, the transportation and communications workers, knew what they produced, where it was shipped and approximately in what quantity. This, combined with the shreds of information which trickled into the press of growing Lend-Lease aid to Britain, to Russia, the shipments for strengthening the garrisons and installations in the Pacific, all added up and they could begin to feel their sinews and their international influence in the war.

The enlisted men in the services, on the other hand, could learn of this phase mainly through their contact with the civilian proletariat. Concretely, they could appreciate the gigantic scope of American production only in terms of the equipment available to them and the tasks to which they were assigned. In 1941 almost the only troops who could see the early results were the primarily professional garrisons in the Pacific. The bulk of the inducted troops knew only that their equipment was largely inadequate.

By mid-1942 all the troops could see that the quantities were virtually boundless. And as they began to leave the continental confines and saw the enormous installations and supply depots established and in process of being established in North Africa, Australia, North Ireland, England, Iceland, the concept of total war was concretely borne home not only as global warfare, but as the interrelation of production, the unity of the civilian and the military. Cerragidor and Bataan and the loss of Wake Island began to be understood not merely as questions of military defeat and the loss of American lives, but as a question of production. The soldiers showed their understanding by calling back from the front for more production from the civilian proletariat. The industrial workers showed their understanding in the long hours they worked, in the messages they scribbled to the front on torpedoes and bombs, in shirt

pockets, on the bodies of trucks and planes, and - of great significance - in the unprecedently heavy volume of mail passing between the soldier and civilian to fortify their closeness.

But this pressure pushing to the fusion of the front and the civilian rear took place within the confines of capitalism. At every hand was the intervention of the bourgeoisie as governmental planners, plant managers, General Staff, officers. Above all, it was the fetter of the capitalist war which inhibited the extension of the fusion. Forced apart by the intervention of capitalism, the various sections of the masses - military and civilian - were compelled to undergo vast social experiences in artificial separation from each other. A separation through which they sought to break at every turn.

The civilian workers expressed their instinctive understanding of the socialization of production and the lessons of violence its war-time manifestation taught, by opposing the no-strike pledge.

The soldiers showed a comparable understanding in a more confused fashion when they opposed strikes. They wanted more production in order to more quickly to finish with their war activity and return to the civilian masses.

f) The Organization of Labor in Modern Society

In a letter to Engels, July 7, 1866, Marx wrote: "Is there anywhere where our theory that the organization of labour is determined by the means of production is more brilliantly confirmed than in the human slaughter industry?"

Marx was no pacifist moralist. He didn't use the phrase "human slaughter industry" in order to coin a horrified metaphor. He meant precisely what he said - industry. Warfare under capitalism plays a unique role in production. For one, it allows for the destruction of obsolescent capital and for value production on a higher level through the expansion of a previous revolution in technology. (See the wartime history of American production.) For another, through imperial conquest it extracts more surplus value by creating new proletarians. More importantly, as Lenin said in 1918, international imperialism's "highly organised military technique... is a real force, a real fortress of international capital...." (Selected Works, Vol. VII, p.288)

The organizational form for this phase of production is the armed forces, wherein we must understand industry and production in its profoundest Marxian sense as man's creative activity. We shall return to this later in the section on "The Socialization of War."

The revolution in production which occurred in American industry around the third decade of this century made semi-automatic machinery the prevalent technology of the United States. It made the American worker basically a semi-skilled worker who could learn his tasks with comparative ease and therefore became essentially mobile and adaptable.

This pre-determined the basic characteristics of the soldier-to-come, because war, for each period in which it occurs, is a summing up of the period preceding. It consolidates all the preceding social developments - the technology, the social organization for production and for politics - it mobilizes them for its own purposes and shapes them according to its needs. As Trotsky said: the Army, particularly the Army at war, "is always a copy of the society it serves with this difference that it gives social relations a concentrated character, carrying their positive and negative features to an extreme."

Foertsch of the German Army, prior to World War II, wrote:

"The life led by the individual today and by the community, has made the men of today, who are the fighters of tomorrow, more critical, mentally more alert, and more independent...What the war of the future will call for is good all-round men, self-confident, and each able to take his place in the community of fighting men standing on his own feet." (The Art Of Modern Warfare, pp. 263-4)

### III. The Socialization of War

The wartime armed forces absorbed an entire generation. Fourteen million men were trained and assigned without regard - except in rare cases - to previous specific experience. But if the specific experiences were ignored, the basic social experience of mobility of labor and adaptability to a variety of tasks was of primary importance. It was this, and this alone, which drew forth the creativity of the men and made possible the vast network of astonishing performance.

A man could be trained and re-trained as often as needed. He could be in turn a combat soldier and a clerk, an M.P. and a medic, a mechanic and a prisoner-of-war guard. He could be sent to service school from two weeks to twenty-two months and come out a supply-man or a pilot. From this inexhaustible source of human creative energy, as General Marshall wrote, "to utilize a rare opportunity for securing outstanding leaders, the War Department has established a series of officers' candidate schools."

All things became possible and much was done. In their multitudinous tasks and assignments, enlisted men transported and used undreamed-of quantities of the most heavy modern equipment. Asphalt roads were laid in a few days where foot-worn dirt paths existed before. Bulldozers cleared virgin jungles. Electric lights and radio appeared where only oil lamps had been. Impenetrable wastes became supply routes. Impregnable fortresses to stagger the imagination were taken, to stagger the imagination still more.

All this and more, the men themselves had done acting together in units. The mysteries of production were unlocked. The man knew positively that it was their labor and their effort which had made the seemingly impossible possible.

#### a) The Humanization of the Soldier

Each man was the embodiment of a tremendous social development. In the process of their activity they learned that communications, logistics, bombardment, attack, retreat, were nothing but human activity. All their senses were developed to an extraordinary degree. They learned the recognition of aircraft, of tanks, of ships, of vehicles. They learned to recognize by sound the various elements of a bombardment. Listen to the battle-accounts of veterans. Listen to what a sailor says standing in the dark at his battle station prior to an attack. He speaks of the silence and the waiting and the sense of power concentrated in the dark. He speaks of the earth-shattering concussion of sound when the bombardment began. He speaks of the "crack-crack" of the ship's five-inchers. He speaks of the "deep, heart-stopping growl" of the "big boys." Listen to an infantryman describing the fearful sibilance of the motors of a tank attack, the double "boom" of a mortar, the "ping" of a rifle. And throughout it all the infantryman has time to give water to another man, or during a ferocious air attack, a pharmacist's mate takes advantage of a momentary break in treating the wounded to make a pitcher of lemonade for the anti-aircraft gunners near his station.

One of the most striking examples of the tremendous social development of the enlisted man is the combat medic. With only a few months of training, he did not only what nurses in civilian hospitals do but also what they are not allowed to do. His was one of the most hazardous and hardworking jobs. He advanced with the infantry, and where the infantryman crawled, he oftentimes had to walk upright in complete disregard for his personal safety because the life of his patient depended on it. He was rarely more than a corporal, yet the lives of wounded men depended on his judgement. The comparatively low death rate of the war and the medical marvels performed behind the lines would not have been possible without him. He was the first man to treat the wounded. He had unhesitatingly to make diagnoses and to administer preliminary vital treatment working at top speed under unbelievably difficult conditions. He had to decide which man to let die and which man to treat first. He had to know when to administer narcotics, when to administer medication internally, how to treat a head wound, a chest wound, an abdominal wound, a spinal wound, a shattered or severed limb. He had to administer plasma, he had to prevent infection, he had to treat shock. His primary concern was to comfort the wounded and to save them if possible. He was no graduate nurse, yet he behaved as one. He was no M.D., yet he behaved as one. Although officially he bore no arms, in the latter stages of the Pacific war he frequently had to double as a rifle man. He was just another G.I.

b) The Cooperative Form Of The Labor-Process

The men learned weapons and tactics and therefore they learned strategy. They knew what types of arms and units were used in various phases of battle. They therefore followed with avid interest the unfolding of the global war. No matter where they were, their training fitted them for a comprehension of the total picture which in previous wars was largely limited to the General Staff. They followed the development of the over-all course of battle not only in terms of their technical military understanding, but also in terms of their fierce interest in the fate of their comrades - personally known or not - which was indissolubly intertwined with their development. Even in the heat of "crap-games", these things were discussed.

Because they knew the totality of their experiences, they knew their social responsibility to each other. Each man knew he depended on other men and they depended on him. Each man knew that what he did in one part of the world affected men in another part of the world. For each man to function as an individual in his routine tasks he had to internalize the social experiences of all and to express them in his individual actions. This is the meaning of his mobility and adaptability. In this sense, the soldier was an "all-round" man.

The "all-roundness" of the enlisted men was most dramatically expressed in battle where their very lives depended on each other. All their comprehensive abilities were called forth and enabled them to perform feats of self-sacrifice and heroism. Yet they resisted being called heroes. They did not consider themselves as heroes but merely as men doing their jobs. But they did their jobs as men with enormous social development. Therefore each man had in him the strength of millions, and the job he did was a "heroic" job.

c) The Fetishism Of Commodities

In the far-reaching flux of modern warfare, where men and materiel were used so lavishly, possession became a meaningless concept. Who owned the planes and tanks and ships and bulldozers? It was fantastic even to think in

terms of ownership. A man might say "my ship" or "my plane" or "my hammer" or "my gun"; he referred not to possession but to the function of the object as part of himself in the performance of his social activity. Even the bulk of personal equipment had this character. Quartermaster regulations artificially imposed the concept of ownership by making a man responsible for specific equipment issued to him. But this was a bookkeeping device. Personal equipment was exchanged, discarded and replaced without much more thought to ownership than "my" pants had to fit, or "my" shoes had to be size 11, or "my" drawers had to be size 34. Enlisted men were freed from the fetishism of commodities. Ownership was profoundly and palpably social. A man's worth was not measured by his possessions but by how he represented the needs and activities of the social totality of which he was a part.

c) Rank and Class

In the same way that capitalism on the one hand disciplines and develops, and on the other hand alienates and degrades, the worker in civilian production, so the enlisted man was on the one hand disciplined and developed and on the other hand alienated and degraded by the capitalist war. Because of the cataclysmic character of war, his development was greater and his degradation and alienation sharper.

The soldier attained a tremendous social development but he could express it only in the narrow confines of the Army. He recognized the overall organization of which he was a fundamental part as the socialization of labor, the collective activity of man working together. He recognized that the importance of this social activity lies not in what man works on - the specific job he does - but in how man work together. Yet he was forced to express his social awareness within the limitations of the job he worked on - the war.

Forcibly separated from the rest of the population by the war which also developed him, the enlisted man sought to transmit his newly unleashed energies back to the home front by taking responsibility for the Army and Navy, thus making it his war which he was fighting for his country. In this he was not accepting the lies and deceptions of bourgeois "patriots" - the exact opposite is true - in this he was seeking to integrate his social activity with that of his civilian class brothers.

At every turn he was repelled. Even the totality of the Army and Navy was denied him. Military regulations prescribe that only officers are responsible. The officers stood as armed guardians of the Army and Navy protecting the war, and therefore the country, against the "irresponsible" enlisted man.

Very soon he knew that the officers, representing the Army and the Navy, were of a class alien and hostile to him - a class which oppressed him. He had a tremendous sense of power and competence, yet his power and competence were confined to an activity over which he had only the most negligible control. The very use of his abilities was controlled by the officers from Supreme Headquarters down to the second lieutenant and the ensign.

The enlisted men united in hostility against their officers. There was no mistaking the class character of this antagonism. The social distinction of the officers was justified only by rank, i.e., and act of Congress, i.e., the direct intervention of the bourgeoisie against the the enlisted men via their state. The men resisted. There were mutinous situations during the war, often accompanied by violence, in which the enlisted men acting together forced concessions from the officers. The enlisted men went unpunished in

most cases because the actions involved entire units. But the concessions offered only a temporary relief. More time off, more privileges, etc., are fine, but they brought the enlisted men no closer to the complete social integration they sought. The isolation remained. On the one hand were the enlisted men, on the other hand were the officers behind whom stood the politicians and the government which was the barrier keeping them from the rest of the population.

d) Esprit de Corps

The enlisted man sought to reach out with his new social awareness to embrace all of society yet he was forced virtually to create a limited society of his own in isolation - the society of enlisted men.

Rebuffed at every side, the enlisted man withdrew into the community of his kind. If the men could take responsibility for nothing else, they could take responsibility for each other. Hence their intense loyalty and comradeship. Here is where their esprit de corps is based - not on patriotism to the state, but patriotism to each other.

In Pershing's Army, there were illusions of glory, of "my country right or wrong." But the millions of soldiers and sailors who performed such herculean tasks during World War II, fought for the most part, not for God and Country, but to get home quick. Let those who would quibble about this take their difficulties to the innumerable bourgeois publicists who during the war barraged the press with complaints that the American soldier did not know what he was fighting for.

All that sustained the men of the armed forces during the war was their intense comradeship and the desire to "get it over with." A young Texan, who was discharged because his heart had become impaired in battle, summed it up admirably: "Brother, there's nothing like a hitch in the Army to put you straight on patriotism. I'm a guy who before the war used to get all goosey-pimples when a flag passed by and they played the Star-Spangled-Banner. They'll have to do a helluva lot better than that to make my heart go pitty-pat again. I got this little white piece of paper, they can keep their flag. But I'll sure miss you guys."

e) The Enlisted Man and the Worker

The esprit de corps of the enlisted man was based upon their integration in the process of their activity and their hostility to rank. But the closer they drew together, the greater also grew their need for fusion with the civilian workers on the home front who similarly were experiencing the socialization of their labor and consequently their heightened antagonism to the bourgeoisie.

The common need of the military to make contact with the home front, expressed itself personally in longing letters home, in the nostalgia which named jungle streets "Broadway," and isolated spots "Brooklyn." If the only way the enlisted men could go home was to work hard to get the war over with, then they would work hard and thus help each other home. Their battle-cry was "Let's get it over with," and they turned their energies to this task. Their burning desire to get home was no personal need but a social need. We shall deal with this again.

This does not in any way imply that the class solidarity of the enlisted man and the worker was automatically conscious. But as events were to

prove, the greater the activity of the enlisted men against the actions of the government separating them from society, the more violent the activity of the working class against the bourgeoisie, the more their solidarity was established in the actions themselves.

The enlisted men were hostile to the actions of the government separating them from the rest of society. To the degree that the civilian worker appeared as part of this government, to that degree the hostility was directed against him too. Here lies the answer to the confused expression of this hostility in terms of antagonism against civilians "who were having an easy time of it;" against "F's;" against strikers.

In similar manner, the civilian proletariat trying to integrate themselves with the active warfare, sought to improve production and thereby intervene in maintaining contact with the front. They sought to take responsibility for production. They were forcibly blocked from this by management behind which stood the government. They therefore drew together in sharpening hostility against the bourgeoisie. They resisted the no-strike pledge. They resented the capitalist war which meant shortages and deprivations and often personal grief. And insofar as the soldier participated in this capitalist activity of war, the resentment was directed against him too.

The enlisted men from one side and the civilian worker from the other pushed against the capitalist block separating them. To the degree that they were not able to remove the block to that degree they pushed against each other. Since their creative activity could not be used under capitalism, it was necessary that their antagonism be fused in order to remove this accumulated muck of capitalism. This is the essence of the revolutionary fusion of the worker and the soldier to enforce by violence their drive for a revolutionary reconstruction of society.

All past revolutionary history has revealed that this fusion is never completely accomplished until the working class demonstrates in action its determination to carry through to the end the overthrow of the ruling class and the establishment of their own power. The proletariat does not wait for war before it can express this determination. It is capitalism's inevitable drive toward war which is pushing the proletariat to this development.

#### 1) "Home" Is the World

The drive to social fusion which was heightened by the total war could not be confined only to a drive for fusion with the national home front. The far reaches of the war make legal myths of the national boundaries of capitalism. Wherever the enlisted man went he fraternized, even when there were restrictions against it. He fraternized with Australians, British, French, Italians, Germans, Japanese, Malaysians, etc. Just as he felt his solidarity with the Allied soldiers, he felt his solidarity with the partisans of the resistance movements. During the liberation of Paris a Negro soldier said of the French Partisans: "I bet there isn't a G.I. here who wouldn't help these people if they wanted to clean up good and take everything over."

But the enlisted man could no more complete his international fusion than he could complete his national fusion. The capitalist war so fettered him that he could meet his counterpart in the Japanese and Axis Armies only across a gun. He had no active compassion - often he had hatred - for the "enemy" soldier. But quite apart from his subjective consciousness, his objective alienation reached its sharpest expression in the fact that his end purpose was to kill or be killed by his "enemy" class brothers. We do not deal here with



any pacifist horrors of killing; we deal with the barbaric intervention of international capitalism and the need for its revolutionary overthrow.

#### IV. The Post-War Period Begins

When V-J Day finally forced the easing of the restraints on the enlisted men, their social desires for fusion with the civilian population broke out of confinement with a world-wide roar. The "OHIO" movement reappeared on a higher stage in the demobilization demonstrations. It was no longer a question of "going over the hill." It was an organized movement of the enlisted men to effect their return to the fullness of society through the intervention of the masses themselves. They by-passed their officers and addressed themselves directly to the American public. They formed their own rank-and-file committees to negotiate directly with the government. It is significant that in seeking to stem this movement, the government sought to compel the men to negotiate via their superior officers.

There were no immediate demands they were fighting for. They said "Let's Go Home!" and they addressed a telegram to R.J. Thomas as head of the UAW to help them, thus calling upon the civilian workers to link arms with them. They proved by this that going home meant much more than just "Ma's apple pie" or "Honey's kiss." They repudiated the bourgeois Army. They linked their demands to go home with an attack upon the officer caste system, and an attack upon the military penal code. They called for the democratization of the Army. They had no democratic illusions about this. They weren't asking for the freedom of speech - they had spoken freely enough during the war. They were striving for control over the officers and thereby for the control of their own activity.

#### a) To the Picket Lines

Returned home, they tore to shreds the anti-worker mantle hopefully prepared for them by the bourgeoisie. They refused to be bribed by the "G.I. Bill of Rights." Wherever they could they plunged into the trade unions and fought militantly on the picket lines of the post-war strikes. They took their wartime experiences into the factory and blended them with the wartime experiences of the civilian proletariat. Each thereby illuminated and expanded the other's understanding. See the veterans' comradeship and loyalty in the shop which they quickly expand to include all the workers. See their ferocious vigilance against bourgeois management which they brand at every turn as identical with the Army.

It was the high development of the socialization of labor during the war that enabled the veteran so easily to fit himself back to civilian life and the broad stream of class struggle.

The role of the German veteran of World War I in the rise of Nazism had created a fear of the veteran as a potential force for fascism. But fascism arises only from the defeat of the working class. If the working class were to suffer defeat, sections of the veterans might well become part of a fascist organization, but so might non-veteran sections of the population.

But we do not look to the defeat of the working class. In this period particularly, we look to its higher radicalization. In that radicalization we can expect the veterans to help push the movement forward to a greater consciousness of its social destiny.

b) The Negro Veteran

Outside of the factory the veterans expressed their hostility to bourgeois rule in other ways. They revolted in Athens, Tennessee and in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. They organized armed guards to escort share-croppers to the polls in Arkansas. They fought in Mink Slide, Tennessee.

See the concentration of social development and hostility in the Negro veterans. Doubly oppressed by the Army they were doubly organized. They underwent an intense hardening process in the Army and were given an enormous courage to fight. Their opposition to bourgeois rule was more overt. In the few instances where Negro outfits were formed for combat, they made neither the outstanding combat record of the Nisei nor a record comparable with that of the bulk of the white combat troops. They were no less able, no less brave. But they were more militantly determined not to "fight like hell" for an Army of existing American society. In their own fights, on the other hand, with absolute disregard for personal safety, they "fought like hell" against the Jim Crow of the Army.

They re-enlisted for occupation duty after the war in such numbers that the Army halted their assignment to Germany. This was a two-fold expression of their rejection of American bourgeois rule and their determination for social integration. On the one hand they rejected their oppression by American bourgeois society in favor of their greater social equality among foreign nationals abroad. On the other hand they rejected American bourgeois society where they have no hope for meaningful employment.

But the bulk of the Negro soldiers went home to fight. They had no illusions about democracy either in the North or in the South. Northern Negro soldiers returned North to fight. Southern Negro soldiers returned South to fight.

Even before his discharge, the Negro soldier had effected a conscious fusion with the civilian Negro. There was an intense reaction of the entire Negro population to Jim Crow in the Army. They made it one of the focal points in the Harlem demonstration of 1943, and in innumerable less dramatic demonstrations from 1941 on. The post-war period has widened and deepened this active fusion. It is a high stage of development and indicates what the basic movement for fusion is pushing to establish for the American masses as a whole.

V. Bourgeois Military Policy

We have shown, in the totality of modern war, how the structure of the standing Army is vastly diluted 1) by the infusion of the world's masses into the armed forces; 2) by the pressure of the expanded military to fuse with the civilian ranks; and 3) by the necessity of the masses to win over the armed forces for the seizure of power.

To the degree that the military fuses with the civilian, to that degree does it move to becoming the revolutionary Army of the masses which is violently hostile to the standing Army. It is for this reason that the capitalists face war with such reluctance today - they cannot know what the outcome will be.

Lenin writes in State and Revolution: "A state is formed, a special power is created in the form of special bodies of armed men, and every revolution, by shattering the state apparatus, demonstrates to us how the ruling

class aims at the restoration of the special bodies of armed men at its service, and how the oppressed class tries to create a new organization of this kind, capable of serving not the exploiters, but the exploited."

During the period of its strength, the bourgeoisie appeared to speak for all of society and could therefore take hold of the revolutionary fusion of the Army with the masses and turn it to its own purposes. But no sooner did the inherent contradictions of capitalism manifest themselves, than the bourgeoisie sought the establishment of a standing Army in order to impose, so far as it could, its structure upon the armed organization of the population. Although capitalism has still retained its hold on society, the contradictions between the population and the structure of the capitalist Army has affected the very structure itself.

a) The Standing Army and the Militia

Traditionally, the United States has had a very small standing Army - just large enough to carry the basic outlines of capitalist structure. In all its wars until 1861 - and there were many, one year of war to every three years of peace in the aggregate - the United States at arms was represented almost exclusively by militias. The population took its rifles off the walls, shouldered them, formed into militias, and went off to fight and win the war. Although many men fought throughout the war, they were committed only to short terms of service - thirty days, sixty days, ninety days.

The Civil War was transitional for this country. There were still short terms of service, but there was also for the first time a mass conscription and an official extension of the term of service.

After each war, professional officers and bourgeois military theorists clamored for a larger standing Army. As technology developed, they insisted that militias were not adequate for the task, that professional training was needed. But as technology developed the capitalist contradictions grew sharper. What the militarists were saying - far-sighted bourgeois that they are - was that the degree to which the militias, i.e., the population, could be relied upon was no longer certain and that stronger measure of control were needed. Wars are not a question of military technology but of social mobilization. The acknowledged superior military skill of the South could not withstand the revolutionary mobilization of the Negroes and the Northern workers under the colors of the Union. This very fact hastened the trend towards the strengthening of the standing Army.

b) The Drive To Militarization

Writing in 1944, a military historian like Fletcher Pratt could say that the United States must have a large, highly skilled, professional Army. The frontiersman, he says, could take his rifle from the wall, but who can take a B-29 from the wall. What the bourgeoisie cannot understand - and is in deadly fear of - is that the frontiersman's act was a social act at a certain stage of development. Today, the B-29, as the atomic bomb, is the product of man's social activity. Social man, to carry the metaphor further, can take his social B-29 from his social wall, but he will not do this for capitalism, he will do it only for the revolution. Therefore the government is calling for an Army of well over a million men - which it has trouble raising. It therefore is turning once again to universal military training. By this, the bourgeoisie announces that they are in a hopeless crisis. They cannot help themselves. They must themselves rip away the insulation with which they have sought to shield the Army from the interpenetration of the masses. A million men cannot

be insulated. Against themselves, the bourgeoisie must dilute their Army by expansion and put it in danger at every turn of being engulfed and swept away by the revolutionary Army of the proletariat.

#### VI. The Wartime State

If the Army in general is representative of the State, in total war it dominates the State. This expands the meaning of Clausewitz's oft-repeated phrase that war is politics carried on by other means. To put it more precisely, the wartime State intervenes directly in every activity of the population: production, distribution, labor supply, etc. The statification of production takes place.

The opposite of the socialization of war, in total war, is the militarization of society - the statification of society. Resting its role in production on its tremendous armed might, the capitalist State intrudes its power into every phase of human living.

Nor is actual fighting necessary before the state can become a war State. We are not dealing here with the semantic distinction between "incidents" and war. Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, militarist Japan, were war States with war economies. Roosevelt, as far back as 1937, was accused of introducing a war economy. These did not arise from the sporadic armed conflicts which rippled the world, but from the world crisis of capitalism which resulted in the conflicts which converged in the world conflagration.

A passage from Engel's letter to Marx, January 7, 1858, will illuminate this:

"Among other things I am now reading Clausewitz on war. A strange way of philosophizing but very good on his subject. To the question whether war should be called an art or a science, the answer given is that war is most like trade. Fighting is to war what cash payment is to trade, for however it may be necessary for it actually to occur, everything is directed towards it and eventually it must take place all the same and be decisive."

In its epochal crisis, capitalism leads inevitably to war, in preparation for which the State must intervene to bend all of society's resources to the inevitable violent outburst that seeks to resolve the contradictions. In the permanent crisis of modern capitalism, today in its death agony, the furious pressures of its contradictions cannot be contained. The duality of State and revolution becomes refined to war and revolution. It is thus that war is the key to revolution. It is thus that Marx called war the midwife for the birth of a new society. It is in this drive to war that fusion is prepared.

#### VII. Revolutionary Military Policy

Marxism is a revolutionary mode of thought. It does not need laboratory-pure specimens before it can make its analyses and orient its strategy. Because it bears in mind always the revolutionary goal and the socialist reconstruction of society, it can see the connection between apparent contradictions and the disunity in apparent unity. And it can see the disharmony which must inevitably shatter the apparent harmony with violence.

It was this method that enabled Marx to say that in war and in Armies, advanced take place before they occur in the rest of society. He was dealing with the social energies of man released by war and the drive to war.

and expressed in the armies as part of society. Man's activity, for Marx, was the generative force. Bourgeois military theorists are aware of this phenomenon of advances arising from war, but blinded by their class, war as such - not man's activity - becomes for them the generative force.

Lenin knew that wars are destructive. But he knew also that military decisions of a violent character are important in the transformation of society. He therefore posed war in its revolutionary context as the road to socialist reconstruction. Petty-bourgeois pacifists see only the destruction, they can therefore only weep about its horror.

Lenin could pose war thus because he thought always in terms of the social forces preparing the fusion of the Army with the masses under proletarian control. He watched the socialization of labor at war and he traced the development it engendered in the civilian and military sections of the masses. He saw the objective movement and knew the objective end - revolutionary violence. He therefore posed the "democratic fusion" of the Army with the masses, confident that the social soil had been prepared for the growth of the revolutionary Army. Statification of production, as we have described it in "The Wartime State," carries this process to a high pitch of development.

It was with the revolutionary conception in mind that Trotsky in the Transitional Program of 1938, proposed revolutionary policy with relation to the Army. With profound concreteness he proposed such slogans that the daily experiences of the masses could be linked to the revolutionary perspective of fusion of the workers with the soldiers.

Leader of the Red Army, Trotsky knew as few men could, of the power with which both the factory workers and the soldiers could be endowed by their fusion. He knew of the drive of the masses under capitalism in decay to fuse their energies. He knew that the revolutionary Army grows from the fusion of the military with the civilian. He sought therefore to link them from the very start.

He sought also, with his program, to combat the petty-bourgeois anti-militarism which had seeped into the American party and had devoted much of its anti-war agitation to the "brutalization of the soldier" and the "fascist character of the Army." The class character of the hostility of the American masses to the standing Army could not be elicited on the basis that the Army transformed the soldier into a "dehumanized hulk." It was the process of the transformation of the standing Army itself that he watched, and could therefore pose the revolutionary consequences of capitalism's drive to militarization.

#### VIII. The Revolutionary Party

The accumulation of hostility and human striving cannot be repressed. Everything is under question today. All values are being subjected to class scrutiny. The bourgeoisie can offer no answers. Undisputed leaders are no longer undisputed. Old leaderships are being discredited and new leaderships are being formed. The questioning and skepticism are so strong that change is inevitable. The unleashing of the energies and the violence of all sections of the population is being prepared. Class struggle is becoming class warfare. Look at the competence and power of the sixty thousand Ford workers at River Rouge who lay down their tools and walk off the job confident that their strike has struck a blow at all of capitalist production. Compare this with the confident power of the combat soldier. See in it the combination of military and civilian activity.

The revolutionary party is the General Staff of the revolution. It puts the stamp of the proletariat on the revolutionary fusion of the Army with the masses. It is therefore only on the basis of understanding the process of fusion that the party can make military policy.

The process is still in its embryonic stage, but the forces are moving and the next stage is being prepared. It would be a fundamental mistake to see in the military question only the problems of readjustment of the veterans or the demobilization of the soldiers. We must understand why the soldiers come and how they come to the revolution. The very problems of the state, of power, of the development of the masses are involved.

Trotsky's words bear much repetition:

"It was the October Revolution that was first called upon not only to restore the active-revolutionary attitude toward war questions, but also to turn the spearhead of militarism practically against the ruling class. The world revolution will carry this work to the end."

- I. Blake

INTERNATIONAL  
BULLETIN

OF THE  
JOHNSON  
FOREST  
TENDENCY

No. 12

September 29, 1947

CONTENTS

- Part II: We Join the SWP  
& Youth Visits the Mine Area
- Part III: Report of Discussion of "Trade Unions and Revolutionary Politics"
- Part III: The Civil War and the Labor Party by W. Gorman

151

1226

1-2-2-7

WE JOIN THE SWP

Comrades:

Our interim period is over. Bulletin No. 12 is our last. This week we go into the S.W.P.

We have valued this experience. But with the same eagerness that the comrades have grasped the opportunity to express and develop our political ideas, so the tendency is now eager to enter the S.W.P. and begin a new phase of work.

During these eight weeks, far from losing membership (the inevitable fate of small minorities in our position), we have added to our personnel. We expect to have increased the forces of the S.W.P. by a total of over ninety members, youth, etc. There are close sympathizers who, we are confident, will follow us in due course.

There have been two previous splits in the movement during the last period.

In 1940 what became the W.P. split from the S.W.P. The faction fight lasted for months. There were hundreds of oppositionists. They had a long list of leaders, for years members of National and Political Committees. What did they put out with their perspective of building a party? A few documents. Not one of them remains today, not one, that the W.P. would dare to reprint.

In eight weeks, six dozen of us have produced one comprehensive analysis of the politico-organizational question in the United States, for movement members (the Balance Sheet); a solid analysis of the international situation and the international movement (The Invading Socialist Society) for the party and party periphery. We have on the press a pamphlet on the American workers in production, the larger part of which is written by a worker. This is intended for the workers in accordance with certain ideas we have long held. A series of solid articles by many comrades hitherto unknown have appeared in the bulletin. We have demonstrated that there is a public for the untranslated unpublished works of Marx. We have reprinted a number of our previous publications. We have seen to it that our ideas received adequate representation among our friends abroad. We have maintained an organization, regular meetings, education, discussions, distributions, sales contacts and activities with the S.W.P. We have had no "angels." We have raised the money ourselves. The caucus has discovered in itself theoretical and organizational resources of which it was not itself aware. The solidarity, the devotion, the morale have been beyond all our previous experience. And all through it we have had to do without one of our most capable, most highly developed and experienced comrades, whose absence the caucus felt in every sphere. We have surpassed the 1940 splitters in every sphere.

We have left the W.P. to go to the S.W.P. The caucus of Goldman-Morrow went to the W.P. Look at its members today. They haven't a political idea to their name. For a number of them, the W.P. was a clearing-station for their departure from the movement altogether. They represent nothing. These are the ones who are attracted to the W.P.



Could anyone in his right mind fail to recognize the significance of this? We must bring this to the attention of the comrades in the W.P. The Morrow-Gold caucus has brought them what accretion of forces? They came unwillingly. They have no confidence in the W.P. We, on the other hand, go cheerfully and full of energy into the S.W.P. How not to see where lies the future?

All our enemies and even some sympathetic to us smiled indulgently at what they called the naive enthusiasm of our early bulletins. But as the solid mass of material accumulated, the smile froze on the faces of many and gave way either to latent hostility or bewilderment at the unsuspected theoretical range, the organizational vigor and the seriousness of the caucus.

Where for years they professed to see only Johnson and some of his friends", they had to recognize a consistent method used by many comrades expressing itself through our literature and an organization. Some of our recent colleagues, with that empiricism characteristic of them, have wanted to know how it was possible for us to produce this mass of material. Our reply to them is: "You will find the answer in reading and understanding the theoretical ideas."

Those who began by labeling us as demoralized now console themselves with the view that our revolutionary fervor will soon be burnt out, and that in any case, no experienced Marxist takes us seriously. Vain self-delusion! Our revolutionary fervor will burn out when the revolutionary proletariat burns out. Our fervor is nourished, theoretically and organizationally, at that inexhaustible source. They should go and try a drink at the same spring. Nobody takes us seriously? Already, our ideas, mobilized by the effectiveness of our organization, have had their impact upon the International. This the coming years, months, and even weeks will show. One death blow has already been delivered. The victim will never recover from it unless it follows our advice.

Only slanderers have attempted to spread the view that our emphasis on certain ideas represent our infantile conception of what constitutes the method of building the party. It is their senility that prevents them from recognizing that during these eight weeks we have not attempted to act like a party. We have been concerned only to clarify fully those special ideas which we had worked at for years because we consider them necessary to the development and elaboration of Bolshevism in our time. We have, in the past, urged them in vain in the W.P. as the indispensable preliminary to a practical, concrete agitation and organization, the education of the membership, recruitment of workers, their integration into the party, and the consolidation and extension of Bolshevism as an organized force. We believed those things. We act on our beliefs. Only an organic conservatism can fail to recognize that studies such as Blake's analysis of militarization in modern society, Marnin's conception of work in the trade unions, and Gorman's study on the Civil War, all done in spare time by comrades working many hours a day, are the result of years of serious study and reflection based on experience. We have aimed always at finding some generalized basis drawn from the concrete phenomena of the epoch as a means of penetrating more deeply, more profoundly, more comprehensively into the mass movement, for the purpose of drawing more workers into the party.

Our work has been rooted in the experiences of the workers in the caucus. For years now our young comrades have gone eagerly into the factories all over the country, not as a duty or a task, but seeking to learn, to correct the inevitable deficiencies of a group like ours and to find themselves as rev-

1 2 3 4

olutionaries. The percentage of proletarians and proletarianized in our caucus is between sixty and seventy per cent. In our writings there is not one trace of dilottantism, of servility to the bourgeoisie, of doubt of the proletariat, of disrespect or slander of any aspect of our movement, or of petty gossip. If this is not Bolshevism, what is Bolshevism?

Our leadership has discussed and come to amicable agreement with the S.W.P. upon all matters connected with our entry and integration. I can verify that this is no motivated concession to us in the special circumstances. It characterized the attitude of the leaders of the S.W.P. in the early negotiations with the W.P. after the Unity pact was signed, and no doubt would have continued but for the provocations of the W.P.

We have put forward our positions fully and completely on all questions that concerned us, whether we were in agreement or disagreement with the Fourth International or the S.W.P. The S.W.P. has never, from the beginning to the end, sought to impede us in the slightest degree, has taken steps to facilitate the circulation of our material, opposed or otherwise, to its membership and has invited us to hand over such stocks as we have left to put on its list for general circulation. Abroad our material and representation have received and have been assured of the same Bolshevik welcome in the activities of the next period. No one has attempted or hinted at any curtailment of the privileges which we as Trotskyites confidently expected and exercised. The mouths of the slanderers of our movement will henceforth be silent.

But precisely because we have exercised our privileges, we also recognize our responsibilities. These are to surpass by far in the S.W.P. that devotion and loyalty which characterized us in the W.P. We must support and advocate fully and completely the political line and the organizational steps of the S.W.P., battle for the prestige and representation of the S.W.P. and the Fourth International, and vigorously defend them against the bourgeoisie, the labor-fakers, and all splitters, slanderers and corruptors of the traditions and principles of our movement.

Comrades, we enter upon new tasks, the task of integrating ourselves into the S.W.P. and winning workers as members to our new party. If we have a proper evaluation of our work during the past six years, precisely because of this, we are aware more than any others of our own limitations. Our main business now is not to expound ideas but to ask questions, not to elaborate internal theories but to distinguish ourselves in external practice, to be jealous not for political opinions and the organizational strength of the tendency but for the prestige, reputation and growth of the S.W.P., to devote ourselves to absorbing the procedures, methods and discipline of our new party.

Without any consultations with anyone, the tendency at the July Conference decided to liquidate itself if its application for membership into the S.W.P. was accepted. Every development since that time has indicated the correctness of our decisions. We see no need for a caucus in the S.W.P. In the interest of the Movement, in the interest of the tasks now facing the S.W.P., in the interest of our own development as Trotskyites, we liquidate ourselves.

Down with the slanderers, the ingrown, the sterile.

Long live the S.W.P., the vanguard of the revolution in the United States.

J.R. Johnson

September 29, 1947

1229

\*\*\*\*\*  
 A YOUTH VISITS THE MINE AREA

About a month ago I visited a small town in the mining area. I spoke and rode with a number of miners. The following are ideas, impressions and parts of conversations I think will prove of interest.

In the town are shopkeepers, teachers and university students. The miners live in small isolated communities outside of town. Some miners have neat cottages although they lack plumbing facilities. But I have noticed that most Negroes live in absolutely subhuman shacks. They are completely cut off from any sort of cultural life. Their lives are dreary, monotonous - nothing to look forward to but work.

I visited one old retired miner who has been in the party for a short time. He lives in a small shack for which he pays eight dollars a month out of a twelve dollar monthly pension. He is forced to take numbers on the side to sustain himself. He is quite old and had worked for many years in the mining industry. He asked what people in New York thought of the conditions and struggles of the miners. He said: "Tell them in New York that we'll all be there ready when the time comes." He also said: "Don't bother wasting time on the Communists (Stalinists). We've got to concentrate on the workers and they will take care of them later.

Most of the miners have been in the union anywhere from ten to forty-five years. And some can remember days when there was no union. They joined the party after reading the Militant for a short time.

From the workers I talked to I gathered that the miners had no confidence in the union leadership. They realized that the union can't get the workers what they want, but they still defend the union in crisis, for example, the walkout in protest against the Taft-Hartley Act. One miner, while giving me a lift, said: "John L. Lewis can go to hell. He's lining his own pockets. He's not getting anything for us. But, as bad as the union is, it's still all we've got. It's ours." When I criticized the union, he felt some resentment. He was a miner, he could say what he liked.

The miners were very anxious to know that there were more who thought the way they did, who were oppressed, maybe not in the mines, but also felt community resentment toward the system.

One of our comrades visited a miner, a contact of ours, and while there met a young Negro who had returned from the army to continue in college. He left college completely disgusted with the Jim Crow conditions and decided to return to the mines. He was fed up with what happened at school. He felt lost there.

There was a wonderful spirit among the miners. They all seemed very close to each other. They share each others problems freely. Their common suffering in the mines makes it easy for them to understand each others personal troubles.

I was at the meeting when McKinney visited the area. He told the miners they had no intellectual convictions. He attributed the 300,000 man walk-out to the custom of the miners previous to a holiday rather than a protest against the Taft-Hartley Act. Time and again McKinney tried to drive home the point that the miners were politically backward, and therefore incapable of making a decision to leave the W.P. He said the miners were capable of militant trade union action but had to be led and trained by the party before they could engage in revolutionary political actions. He vigorously opposed the conception that the workers, because of their place in capitalist production could exhibit any sort of instinctive drive toward socialism. He remarked that 99 out of 100 workers were useless for putting forward the ideas of the movement.

When asked from the floor what the W.P. position was on unity and transfer, he was forced to say that he didn't know. From my own experience I have found that the Shachtmanite first made a strategic jump and only later dug up a political thesis to back it up.

The W.P.'s action in this mine area reaffirms my reasons for leaving that organization. Their conception of the backward workers which leads them to recruit on the basis of "intellectual" conviction, instead of their oppression in capitalist society. This has led them to play a destructive role in the building of the mass revolutionary party.

-- Arthur Barrie

The following is a provisional estimate of the membership of the Johnson-Forest tendency during the interim period:

New York	25	Philadelphia	11
Newark	2	San Francisco	7
Cleveland	2	Detroit	10
Chicago	1	Los Angeles area	7
West Virginia	9		
		<u>Total</u>	74

Recruited during interim period:

Philadelphia	2		
San Francisco	3		
Los Angeles	1		
West Virginia	1		
		<u>Total</u>	7

Youth (excluding those in party):

8			8
---	--	--	---

89

1 2 3 2

.....  
**PUBLICATIONS OF THE JOHNSON-FORST TENDENCY**  
 .....

**WORLD REVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVES**

and the  
**RUSSIAN QUESTION**

Reprints:  
 Historical Retrogression or Social-  
 ist Revolution by J.R. Johnson  
 The Nature of Russian Economy  
 by F. Forst  
 The Ten Years - A Critique of  
 The Revolution Retrayed by J.R.  
 Johnson  
 With a New Introduction: "Dialectical  
 Materialism and the Fate of Humanity"  
 by J.R. Johnson

25¢ each

**BALANCE SHEET -Trotskyism in the  
 United States, 1940-7**

- I. The Unprincipled Split of 1940
- II. Trotsky's Role in the 1940 Split
- III. Political Evolution of the W.P.
- IV. The Johnson-Forest Tendency
- V. The Organizational Question
- VI. Perspectives in the U.S.
- VII. Lessons of the American Experience

Appendix: Conversations with  
 Trotsky on the Transitional  
 Program.

35¢ each

**THREE ESSAYS**

by  
**KARL MARX**

Selected from the Economic-Philosophi-  
 cal Manuscripts

- 1. Alienated Labor
- 2. Private Property and Communism
- 3. Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic

50¢ a copy

**REPRINTS:**

- The American Resolution, 1946, of  
 the Johnson-Forest tendency.
- The Negro Resolution of the Johnson  
 Forest tendency
- Education, Agitation and Propaganda

**FEATURED IN THE WEEKLY BULLETINS**

- #1 Why We Are Poor
- #2 Building the Mass Revolutionary Party in the Mine Area by Morgan West
- #3 The Worker in Modern Industry by Phil Romano
- #4 Introduction to the Three Essays of Karl Marx  
 by J.R. Johnson, F. Forst and R. Stone
- #5 Labor and Society by F. Forst
- #6 Strata in the Working Class by Martin Harvey
- #7 The Economist Tendency in the Fourth International by R. Stone
- #8 The American Worker by R. Stone
- #9 A Concrete Example of Party Building by Irving Marnin
- #10 The Trade Unions and Revolutionary Politics by Irving Marnin
- #11 The Revolution and the Army by I. Blake
- #12 We Join the SWP by J.R. Johnson
- #13 The Civil War and the Labor Party by W. Gorman
- #14 Report of Trade Union Discussion

15¢ each

Address all communications to Martin Harvey - 101 W. 46 St., New York, 19, N.Y.

INVASION OF THE AMERICAN WORKER BY THE  
SOCIALIST SOCIETY  
by J.R. Johnson, F. Forest and R. Stone

64 printed pages

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter I. World War II and Social Revolution

- A. The Year 1940, Germany 1947
- B. The Historical Role of the Fourth International
- C. The Mass Movement Today
- D. The Communist Parties in Western Europe
  - i. The Proletarian and Revolutionary Character of the Stalinist Parties
  - ii. The Bourgeois and Counter-Revolutionary Character of the Stalinist Parties
- E. The Nature of the Party

Chapter II. State Capitalism

- A. The Revolution Thirty Years After
- B. The State Thirty Years After
- C. The Communist Parties in Russia and Eastern Europe

Chapter III. Imperialism Thirty Years After

- A. "Vast State-Capitalist and Military Trusts and Syndicates."
- B. American Imperialism
- C. The Interweaving of Imperialist, Civil and National Wars

Chapter IV. Poland - Where All Roads Meet

Chapter V - Parties, Tendencies and Programs in the Fourth International. Sectarianism, Menshevism, Economism. The Transitional Program Today.

50  
MATCH  
FOR THE FORTHCOMING PAMPHLET - NOW ON THE PRESS

The  
*American Worker*

This will include a detailed analysis by a worker of the life of the workers in the productive process and a philosophical study of the American proletariat.

\*\*\*\*\*  
Address all communications to Martin Harvey - 101 W. 46 St, New York, 19, N.Y.  
\*\*\*\*\*

1233

We print below the report of the trade-union discussion at the September 22, 1947 meeting of the Johnson-Forrest tendency in New York. The following report of proceedings are reconstructed from rough notes taken during the meeting. They are not stenographic transcriptions.

Opening remarks by J.R. Johnson:

The basis of the discussion tonight is the speech which Comrade Marnin gave us here last week on Trade Unions and Revolutionary politics and which has been reprinted in the last Bulletin for all the comrades to read.

We have not evolved any trade union policy. We intended you remember, after discussion, to draft a memorandum only. But even that we thought it wiser not to attempt. But from the beginning of our interim period, the experiences of the comrades in factories and unions has been the center of our discussions and educational. The comrades have differences. It would be strange if they had not. The comrades should feel free to speak and not be troubled because we are having a rough record taken.

Discussion

Cooper: (A.F.L. craft union) I want to speak of my relationship to the fraction of the SWP in my union. It is a building-trade craft union subject to a great deal of seasonal unemployment. The competition for jobs among the workers in the industry is among the main forces determining their actions and politics. Three-quarters of the men in the industry are not in the union. Four thousand out of ten thousand in the trade are unemployed. Clubs in the union are formed and revolve around the problem of getting jobs. Factional political struggles are bitter.

The trade is developing from being a craft where each man did everything to an industrial production line where one man does only one task in endless repetition. The more progressive elements are coming to see the need for organizing and incorporating all the related crafts, all the carpenters, painters, maintenance men, elevator operators, service employees, etc. into an industrial union.

It seems to me to be the policy of the SWP members in this union to gain control of the union. As they have told me, "the pre-revolutionary situation requires that our comrades be in a position to lead the rank-and-file in case something happens." They seem to feel that if they can take control of the union, introduce some reforms, improve conditions, it will show that the Trotskyites are militant. In the recent election campaign they made a bloc with "progressives" and right-wingers and out-and-out racketeers. The Stalinist leadership of ten years was defeated by a close vote. But the average rank-and-file sees little difference between the programs of the Stalinists and the "progressives".

The new administration has been in office a number of months. Some steps are being taken along lines like health insurance and a fairer division of work in the trade. But there's the same number of unemployed, the same bad conditions. It is a difficult situation requiring the organization of the rank-and-file against all opportunism and all right-wingers. Political perspectives are easy to forget in the concrete trade union problems. It seems to me correct to give critical support to the present administration only if we mobilize the rank-and-file workers to support us, confident that the events themselves will lead to revolutionary developments and the creation of a revolutionary leadership. Through the pressure of the ranks and the leadership of the comrades, a start is being made to mobilize the membership in an organizational drive.

Visitor: I'm in the same union as the previous speaker. Some time ago the SWP published in their bulletin an article by a mid-western steel worker telling of their tactics in an election. Their "main aim in the election was to win. Programmatic points were put aside." It is an example of their tactics in my union also.

Full support was given to the progressive caucus. The real basis of their caucus was anti-Stalinism. After winning by a narrow margin, the progressives have strengthened their personal positions but the SWP gained nothing. The comrades, expecting to start in selling subscriptions and making political contacts were cautioned. They slackened their political activity. They made no political gains.

It is not too late to make such gains and to recruit. It seems to me that the SWP in this situation tends toward over-caution as a result of its isolation from the mass movement. But this trade is soothing with discontent on the part of the ranks. With radical-thinking workers looking for something to pull them together. The isolation can be broken, not by opportunistic policies, but activity based upon a revolutionary perspective.

Jim: The main thing we should be talking about is what we are in the trade union for. Our main purpose is to recruit. I don't think we'll recruit in the way Irving proposes, but the way I propose. Let me give you a bit of my background: 15 years in machine shops except for a few odd jobs during the depression. Work on all kinds of machines from drill and punch presses to automatics. I've been in several unions and know them and their limitations.

We don't have to be in the leadership of the unions today. Today educational work can be done faster and better around the concrete issues, unemployment, housing, high prices, etc. In thousands of shops we will be in the leadership when things begin to happen. Then our program will give us the leadership.

Our perspective is that the workers will make the revolution. Our emphasis now should be on recruiting on a personal basis. The program that Irving suggests involves too much union work at the expense of recruiting, speaking on the floor, attendance at shop meetings once or twice a month. Out of hundreds or even thousands of workers only 50 or so are at the union meetings. At most, one can contact 5% of the workers in the union hall. Personal recruiting permits picking out the good workers, seeing him not only in the shop, but outside. You can build more influence on him, build up his respect through your work on the machine, in the department and personal contact.

For some time Irving has been in a peculiar situation. His political resolutions have been presented and adopted. But there have been no recruits. This method is too slow. He should show more results. We should not try to educate the whole union but to recruit more members for the revolutionary party.

Phil: (UAW) These remarks will be disjointed. I haven't had a chance to get my ideas together.

Lenin, in criticizing Trotsky's leaflet on the tasks of the trade union in production said, "A political leader must be responsible not only for his politics but for the workers he leads."

When workers begin to express what they really have to say,



1 2 3 6

it indicates a movement towards the revolution. We must get to the problem of what drives workers toward revolution. Because the boss owns the factory, does not mobilize workers. The alienation and distortion of the worker himself in the process of production is the driving force. Private property is the result, not the cause of this process.

In the same article, Lenin said:

"This cannot be achieved by bureaucratic methods and orders from above; every participant in production must understand the need for and expediency of the production tasks he is carrying out; every participant in production must not only take an intelligent part in remedying all technical and organizational defects in the sphere of production.

"The tasks of the trade unions in this sphere are enormous. They must teach their members in every shop, in every factory, to note and take into account all defects in the utilization of labour power that result from the improper utilization of technical resources or from unsatisfactory administration. The sum total of the experience of the individual enterprises and of every industry must be utilised in a determined struggle against red tape, laxity and bureaucracy."

This was posed after the revolution. But we must see the extent of its applicability today. To the extent that we can concretize this among the workers in the plant today, we need not repeat to them that the boss owns the factory. This is the way we propagandize and organize among the workers.

A recent story in the Saturday Evening Post tells of a plant where the workers began checking up on the efficiency of the management. They came to the conclusion that the management was no longer necessary, that if the workers organized production, red tape would be done away with. This is the road to revolution. It is this kind of work we must do in the factory.

There are some good stewards in the unions, listed in the black books of the bureaucracy. But these men are limited by the bureaucracy and the union contract. The revolutionary elements will not come from the stewards but from the rank and file. It is possible that the American workers will pass over the stage of the Labor Party, leap directly into revolutionary action. Soviets, factory committees, councils may spring up all over the country, posing immediate conflict with the union structure, the bureaucracy. We must prepare for and develop this process to the utmost. The rank and file will recognize and respond to this propaganda when they see it.

The recent strikes of the British miners, the wild-cats, unauthorized strikes in this country are signs of the ranks struggling against the union structure. As long as such strikes continue, the trade union bureaucracy is in jeopardy.

I've always thought of the American scene as more dynamic, as more likely to jump over stages. In America there will be a dual movement, almost immediately without time for the in-between developments. Until the ranks see what is needed, they will go along and then will come the explosion at a higher stage. We must pursue our program in the shops, absorb what goes on around us. Incidents occur from day to day where the party member can take certain types of actions which are patterned on those of revolution; When the masses are in motion, a whole series of such actions.

Nettie (U.E.): In the trade union discussion at our July 4th Conference, we dealt very little with caucuses and groups in the union. What we did discuss was the layers in the working class, how they would move as events took place, and how we could recruit. Now we need to discuss this again.

The most militant sections of the working class do not go to union meetings. And yet the rank and file are very receptive to our propaganda if we know how to reach them.

What bothers most of us are two different trends, both within the confines of our revolutionary perspective. In Philadelphia, talk on the self-activity of the masses brought these differences to light. The thing that made this most clear is the statement in Irving's speech that the shop stewards form the layer with the most social thinking. Therefore, if we can win one shop steward and break him of reformist ideas, he will stay in the movement because of his social thinking and his knowledge and experience with organizational necessities and principles. Whereas we can recruit 100 workers and then lose them.

I see the main revolutionary role in the rank and file. Some comrades found themselves more in agreement with Irving. At first I didn't see the differences between us. The example was given of workers calling upon the shop steward to help organize them. I interpret this to mean that the initiative rises from the rank and file and that among them, therefore, was our main place of work. Irving's idea of winning stewards is, in a way, a concept of revolutionary work in stages, first the shop stewards, then the rank and file.

I believe that both inside and outside the union, the ranks will press upon the stewards for a constant change of stewards, themselves become stewards who can organize and lead. We can teach these workers to go back to the unions to exert their pressure there.

It is not clear what Irving means by the stewards. At one point he speaks of the stewards in the lead of revolutionary action, but "perhaps not the same stewards then as we have now." Which ones is he talking about? It is important not to be confused on this. I think none of us are doing this now. The shop stewards now are not the ones who will arise later, pushed up by the workers in motion.

I like the articles Phil has written, although they are slightly on the sensitive side. They follow our theoretical line. They do not flaunt the banner of socialism in the Utopian abstract, nor are they bath-room politics, as some people have called it. They help to explain the worker's life, the social and sex problems, the conflicts of individuals, strata, races and classes. They begin to make clearer the historical connection and revolutionary significance of the workers' thoughts and actions. They put forward the idea of socialism as the expression of the universality of mankind.

In working out a trade union policy, we must think of work in the trade unions not just as union work but as that and shop work fused together. If we work for the party while we are working for the union, we will recruit more workers.

Harvey: The different approaches indicated among the comrades from Philadelphia have also arisen in New York. Actually, the two points of view are not contradictory but should be resolved in one totality. The problem was stated concretely by Scooper and the visiting comrade for their situation. From all I can gather, in that situation, the SWP played an opportunist role. But that is an extreme situation. We will be in the SWP and we accept the discipline of the party. If we join the SWP with an integration of the two points of view, our comrades will understand trade union policy better and not develop an unjustified hostility toward it.

Phil, Nettie, Jim say we have to be with the rank-and-file and fear working in the lower sections of the union leadership (stewards.) Different points of view sometimes arise from the different concrete situations the comrades find themselves in. A steward in the IAW in Detroit is indistinguishable from the rank-and-file except in his greater seriousness and devotion to the union. A steward in a thoroughly Stalinist or old-line AFL local might be the exact opposite.

Phil does not understand the difficulty of applying Lenin's quotation on the unions after the revolution, concretely today. Lenin discusses the role of the unions in managing production in a workers' state. That cannot be applied directly today without one thing: a violent revolution. The workers' role in production today is the reverse of his role after the revolution and the first task is to organize for the revolution. Phil understands this perfectly in practice, as his report of the recent developments in his shop and his admirable role in them demonstrate. But it should be made clearer in theory. The worker reacts against his alienation in contradictory ways. To use the excellent example of job classifications: some try to break out of these classifications, others insist on sticking to them tenaciously. Our understanding of the nature of his actions - they are a revolt against the system that restricts and binds him. Second, we must provide more than explanation, we must provide leadership. That means not merely to explain the worker the meaning of his action but to propose the best and most conscious action. We must say the worker who tries to break out of his job classification by doing other jobs is attempting to break out of the bounds that the system imposes on him but he's doing it individually, anarchistically, incorrectly. The worker who reacts by demanding the strictest adherence to job classifications written into the union contract is reacting in more conscious manner because he is reacting in a disciplined, collective manner and he understands, no matter how well or how poorly, that to give expression to his instinct toward universality under capitalism aids the boss. The worker who appears to accept his fragmentation by sticking to job classifications is the one who in actuality is reacting in the most advanced way against it. This is demonstrated in life by the fact that it is the company men, the "red apple" boys who tend to work any job the foreman asks them to, while the militants, the veterans, the younger workers do the reverse.

On the question of where to work we obviously cannot choose the rank-and-file or the lower ranks of the leadership. We must work in both as the concrete circumstances indicate. But one thing must be remembered. Our role in the unions is that of a party which must recruit. Wide sections of the working class are permeated with revolutionary ideas. The rank-and-file is more revolutionary than the leadership. But revolutionary ideas, while essential, are not the only element that makes workers into party members. There is also required more than ordinary tenacity, organizational loyalty, self-discipline, leadership ability, etc. In the lowest ranks of the trade union leadership can be found those who have these qualities in the highest degree. To take a concrete example, Comrade H. in Detroit, who was a committeeman when he joined the party. He brought to the party an advanced established leadership over the masses of workers, a city-wide reputation in the UAW as a militant, great organizational ability, in short a series of qualities which are usually developed in the new worker recruit over a long period of party membership and training. To ignore the union stewards and committeemen is to ignore just such potential recruits.

A word on recruitment. We have said recruitment should be organized according to the rhythm of the class struggle. Comrades should not be dealt with too severely if over a period they have recruited one or two, or even no, workers. The test is whether their activity in the shops has placed

them in a position where in a critical situation they can recruit in large numbers, that is, have they established themselves as revolutionary leaders in the factory. We have said that embryo soviets may sweep the country in two years. It may be ten or fifteen years- but it may be tomorrow. What does this indicate to us? It means that we cannot operate in a one-sided way in the factory. We develop fully-rounded activity which leads to our de facto leadership over masses of workers - whether they join the party today or not. We must accept organizational responsibility for our ideas and proposals, that is, we must be prepared to accept positions of leadership. A common experience is for someone who is demanding that this or that be done, that the steward or union officer take certain action, to be asked by workers: "You have some good ideas, you seem to be willing to fight, why don't you run for steward, or committeeman?" If we are to be accepted as serious people by the workers we must be prepared to say, "Yes, I will run."

Single comrades, isolated in a factory, with perhaps some personal limitation or other, cannot function in such an all-sided way. But that should not prevent a clear understanding of how the Party works in a factory, represented ideally by the Party fraction which can utilize the talents of different comrades and can operate on the basis of a division of labor.

Tom: It is the activity and desires of the rank-and-file which guide our own activity in the unions. We are all agreed on this. Irving makes this point clear. He also makes clear that, varying in degree with the varying situation in different unions, the shop stewards represent the desires of the rank-and-file. Irving's alleged preoccupation with the shop-stewards is counterposed to the small number of recruits gained from his years of work. It is implied that the failure to recruit flowed from his attitude toward the stewards. This criticism is made without sufficient reference to the particular situation in which he functions.

We have been saying for years that workers were interested and attracted by revolutionary concepts, were moved to action more by the desire to change society than by desire for another nickel in pay. This, Irving represented to the workers under his influence. But not a breath of this appeared in the press or the meetings of the WP. One man cannot substitute for an organization. Some scores of workers came to WP affairs. That party could neither interest them nor hold them. The failure was the failure of the politics of the WP, not the error of Irving's evaluations of the shop-stewards.

Even in the SWP I think echoes of this problem will remain with us for some time. The resolution and the speech of Cannon on "The Coming American Revolution" must still be translated and expressed in the specific articles in the Militant, carried out in action in the concrete, day-to-day activity in the trade unions. The comments of other comrades concerning tactics in the unions, and the bulletin of the SWP previously referred to, are a warning of the patience and understanding required, while the revolutionary perspective is worked out in practice. The number of these we hold in the movement will be the measure of our success in this task.

Johnson: This speech by Irving is one of the most remarkable contributions made to our caucus. It has two special virtues.

1) It is revolutionary. It sees the trade unions as a medium for building a revolutionary party and preparing workers for the overthrow of bourgeois society.

2) It is based on a practical experience. Irving has thought over his experiences. He has studied. He has a policy. The caucus has no policy on the trade union question. Irving is one of the few who can have a view. There are a few things of a general nature I want to say.

The problem here is not new. It is not a caucus problem. Nor is it a matter of alienation. It is a problem of every revolutionary movement from the time our movement began. The Communist Manifesto says that the Communists take part in the day-to-day life of the workers but also represent the general interest of the working-class movement. The problem is and always has been to combine these. This problem we are trying to solve as every socialist movement has to solve it, not once and for all, but continuously. If the general interests alone are served, then you fall into sectarianism. If you capitulate to every day-to-day interest, the result is opportunism. If there are divergent views it is nothing new we have discovered. There are these two aspects and we have to relate them, now and after the revolution, too. So far this is an international and a national problem. But this is a special problem in the U.S. In the U.S. there is no mass social-democratic party though it is a highly-developed capitalist country. The result is that the proletariat feels the weight of capitalist production and is impelled towards socialism. But between the deception of the bourgeoisie and its agents, the trade union leaders, it feels the impulse most in production itself.

In other countries, the revolutionary organization has a milieu in the Social-Democracy and the Communist Party. But in the United States, the struggle for socialism has to be based on the experience of the proletariat in the factories. If you do not understand what a problem this is, you concern yourselves with two things.

- 1) revolutionary manifestoes for holidays, and
- 2) the necessity to build a labor party. The WP lacks revolutionary perspective. Therefore, it emphasizes the second.

It is from these that the caucus has sprung. We did not care about politics in general. We developed through the experience in the U.S. and in the WP, and the need to find socialist propaganda that was concrete to meet the need of the American workers.

The American proletariat, because of the technique of production here, is the most advanced in the world and we have learned many lessons from which are decisive in studying production and politics on a world scale. This is a national peculiarity. It is because of the American proletariat that our concern with what we call alienation, has helped us not only to raise to a new level the study of Marxian political economy but to recognize the higher stage of the struggle for socialism today.

But for the U.S., it remains a special problem. Propaganda for socialism must be revolutionary but concrete and for the U.S. The concrete means the process of production. There the American workers are very advanced and there we must base our socialist and revolutionary propaganda. The W.P. could not find that basis. Hence all it could do was to say, Labor Party, Labor Party, a complete abstract. All that we have explained in our American resolution.

Finally, there is not only a special national situation. The caucus is in a special position.

These eight weeks we have not been a small party. We have consciously not acted that way. The caucus had to develop special ideas associated

with ourselves to make those clear in our own minds and in those of our sympathizers.

If we were a small party, then we would have given a rounded presentation in relation to activities in the trade unions. That was our business and those who try to discredit us by trying to make out that what we have done and written is our conception of trade union politics are merely stupid or malicious.

A heavy emphasis has been placed on certain aspects to the disregard of others. But the special problem remains which must be attempted concretely. This report goes into our bulletins so the comrades everywhere can have an idea of what one of our own people with our ideas and special trade union experience thinks and what the comrades think.

We have no trade union position. But talk to the SWP about these ideas. Discuss them with their experienced proletarians. This is the one thing above all others you should discuss with them not as matters of big policy but seeking experience.

I have a little experience in this question in relation to a strike. We held meetings in relation to the strike and we rarely discussed anything but strike business, origin of unions, winning contacts for strike. But after the meetings we talked all the time about international socialism. Travelling with individuals to different areas, whenever the opportunity offered itself, we discussed politics. I talked my face off about the revolution and they were willing to listen. We don't propose, as the stupid WP tried to smear us with, talking revolution on the union floor although sometimes that too is necessary. We republished in the bulletin the other day our general statement of the relation. The rest is to be learnt by experience.

Irving's contribution, as I said, is remarkable. He puts forward a revolutionary line in the union movement. At the same time Jim says not to concern ourselves so much on the union floor but to devote ourselves to individual person-to-person contacting. I hope the following example will help. Shachtman told it to us. It is the advice of Trotsky to the SWP in Minneapolis.

The SWP controlled a big union in Minneapolis. Now a union leader cannot use his position to advance revolutionary policy. Stalinists can do this because they have a big International organization. But the workers usually have not put leaders in their position because they are revolutionary but because they want union leadership.

Trotsky was told by the SWP leaders, in 1938, that they worked with progressives against Stalinists. "Yes," said Trotsky, "Today you work with progressives. Tomorrow when war comes, the progressives will join with the Stalinists against you. You must prepare."

While leaders do union business, they should train younger comrades to put forward revolutionary politics on the floor. Some old-timers will object. The trade-union leaders will then say, "That young comrade said some good things. Perhaps a little extreme, but he has every right to say them, because others have spoken of Roosevelt. This is a democratic union. Everyone has a right to speak." In this way our union leaders get revolutionary doctrine spread amongst the rank-and-file. I think that this general idea can be useful - a sort of division of labor. Control and authority in a union is not of great value unless it is a means of advancing revolutionary propaganda in general, or in particular, according to the special circumstances and if union

activity prevents you from carrying out propaganda day-to-day, then something is wrong. You have to learn to combine the two. The press plays its role here, too. But the relation between the press, propaganda and trade-union work is not the trade union question. That involves the whole political line, its estimate of the international situation, etc., etc., which is not our subject.

Finally, I want to say a few words about the union of which Comrade Cooper speaks. I have heard a lot of talk for a long time that the SWP is wrong in its policy. I don't know. But individual comrades should remember this. Would the SWP oppose your telling single contacts about the revolution and winning them to the party on that basis? Permit me to say that I doubt it very much.

Let me give you a warning. On the union question we have no position as on the Russian question. Every man is on his own and Irving, for example, or John Hayden can oppose the SWP line like any other SWP member if they think differently. They would be, in fact, wrong not to do so if they wanted. That sort of thing changes from period to period. But I suggest that before you attack a line, make sure of the facts and have your flanks and rear covered.

For my part, I propose to spend as much of my time as I can, learning about the SWP in the unions, what they have, how long they have worked in this place, what policies they tried, how they worked out, who thinks differently and why. If you talk to a worker and he says, "I don't want to listen to your talk about socialism because the policy of your party in the union is no good," then you have cause to be alarmed and to take it up seriously. But until then, you younger ones, in particular, take it easy, learn, find out. I am not particularly concerned about discussing the points we have raised in our bulletins, etc. with the SWP, except this one. As soon as we go in I want to give this bulletin to Dobbs and some of the others and say, "I want to know what you think."

Irving Marnin:

Summary of Discussion on "Trade Unions and the Revolution"

The discussion tonight revealed that there are five distinct aspects of the question of trade union work which are of concern to the comrades. Not one of these five problems can be separated from any of the others; they are all only features of the totality of our work in the shops and unions. The disputes, the seemingly different points of view, are in reality only the expression on the part of the comrades of which, of the five questions, they give the most emphasis in their own trade union work. The question then, is not one of proportions. Only the proper combination of all five will give us the correct method of work in the unions. The five features of the discussion are - 1. The "alienation of labor" and how this influences our union work; 2. Recruitment - how it is done and the role of the party in recruitment; 3. Trade union policy as such, the problems of blocs, leadership and in general, of opportunism and sectarianism in the unions; 4. Strata in the working class movement, with particular reference to the union rank-and-file and the shop stewards; 5. Our relations with the SWP in the immediate future. Let us now attempt to summarize what the discussion has uncovered in each of these five.

1. Alienation

1242 Of the eight comrades who spoke tonight, two emphasized the question of alienation (Phil and Nettie), two emphasized the question of

recruitment (Tom and Jim L.), two the question of the SWP and trade union policy (Cooper and the visitor) and two the unity of all the questions (Comrades Harvey and Johnson). I want to take up, first, the remarks of Nettie and Phil and the attitude they expressed. Phil read a quotation from Lenin dealing with the function of the trade unions under a workers' state, in the post-revolutionary period. The fact that he introduced that quotation into tonight's discussion means that it has meaning for him in the present work of the comrades in the unions. Marty correctly pointed out that this does not apply to the functions of the unions in the struggle to overthrow capitalism or to defend and advance the immediate interests of the workers. To confuse the two periods, or attempt to infuse the one with the content and functions of the other, is an impossible objective. Not only is it impossible, it is utopian and sectarian and can only lead to our isolation from the best sections of the unionists, the most militant of the men in both the ranks and the leadership. I do not think that Phil means that his remarks be taken in this manner, but it is important for us to be absolutely clear on this point.

Marty also correctly stated that we must integrate the seemingly different points of view expressed here tonight. Comrade Johnson also remarked that we have specially emphasized one of our contributions to the understanding of revolutionary politics today (the analysis of the alienation of labor and what it does to the worker.) It represents, for us, a new and important fountainhead of ideas, but it does not negate, nor was it intended to negate, all other forms of activity and propaganda in the unions such as: 1. Political propaganda and activity, political in the sense of contrasting our political line on the day-to-day questions to the line of the Stalinists and the labor fakera; 2. Taking an active part in trade union activity and taking organizational responsibility in a principled manner in the struggle to oust the old-line leaders of all kinds in the unions.

Our orientation on this entire question of the alienation of the labor of the worker, the reduction of the individual worker to the mere "fragment of a man" in the labor process itself, is extremely important for the purpose of (and the understanding) of producing effective socialist propaganda which will reach the rank-and-file factory worker and convince him of the necessity for, and the inevitability of, socialism. As such it is important not only for the trade union and shop work of the individual comrades or fractions, but for the entire orientation of the party towards the workers as expressed in the press, classes, forums, etc. and, in general, the overall approach of the party to the problems of propaganda for the social revolution.

This "fragmentation of the laborer", the "inarticulate striving for the universality of mankind" (Nettie) expresses itself (and here again I only repeat what Marty has to say) in different ways at different times among different groups of workers. We use their reactions, first by understanding them ourselves, and then explaining them to the worker in order to mobilize him and organize him for the social revolution - which is to say, to recruit him to the party. It is only a question of how this is done, and it seems to me (from what I have heard tonight and the impression may be quite mistaken) that Phil makes an error in the application of these ideas.

This is, however, the impression which he gave me. To explain the limitations of the trade union and its struggle to a group of workers who you are trying to bring to the party is one thing, but to antagonize them against the union is a false policy.

We must organize the workers for the union struggle against the boss as well as for the revolutionary party, and the two go hand-in-hand. Comrade Johnson spoke about the "oldest problem of the communist movement is



1 2 4 4

the proper integration of these two aspects of the class struggle which Marx wrote about in the Manifesto - the day-to-day interests as well as the general interests of the working class". The exact quotation is as follows (from the Manifesto): "The Communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement." We demonstrate to the workers that their reaction to the alienation of their labor is in reality an expression of their desire for socialism is to represent the "general interests" - the proletarian revolution. To be active in defense of their "day-to-day interests" (what Marx called their "immediate aims") means a necessary participation in the union struggles, which we try to raise to a higher plane wherever possible. It is a question of emphasis, and Nettie and Phil seem to have gone too far in one direction at the expense of the other. They have not yet made a fusion of the two, which is Bolshevism. Nor have they indicated in any way how their emphasis produces a change in their trade union activity and policy in the unions, as contrasted with that outlined in my article or far that matter with the policy of the SWP. It may be a healthy reaction to the opportunism of the past, but it represents the "other side of the coin" at this stage of the class struggle and the building of the party.

## 2. Recruitment, the Unions and the Party

Comrade Jim L. emphasized the question of recruitment to the party and said that "this must be done on a personal basis." Both he and Nettie pointed out that all the work that I have done in my local, all the prestige and influence which I have been able to establish, has not led to recruitment and that this demonstrates that something is wrong in my method of work. Marty and Tom have already stated in answer to this that no one is recruiting at the present time, and that it proves absolutely nothing. Such a method of judgment is pragmatic and false, and cannot produce a fruitful discussion. To reduce the question of recruiting, as Jim tends to, to one of personal contacting and visiting (important as they are), is to reduce it to Coolidge's formulation of "recruiting means log work" and to let it go at that. It is a false perspective, and forgets a thousand other factors in the question.

Tom has correctly stressed the importance of the party press and other activities in the question of recruitment. If the comrades forget this, they forget all that was written by our tendency in our documents on the American Question, "Education, Agitation and Propaganda", and "Building the Bolshevik Party". In other words, they forget all that we stand for in the re-arming of the party at the present time. Most important of all they forget the role of the press as a recruiting agent. All the subscriptions in my plant, and all the workers who were brought to party forums and were not recruited, pointed to the failure of the party and not of the work in the union.

We must today place ourselves in a position to do rapid and bold recruiting at a certain point in the development of the class struggle, to be ready to move forward "in rhythm with the class struggle", as Marty said, and that means to become known to wide sections of the union membership, which in turn means taking an active part in the life of the union and taking organizational responsibility for it to some extent, and not to divorce oneself from it completely. We must be the best of all the union men, the most self-sacrificing, but it also means that we must distinguish ourselves from all others in the things we do and say in the union. Again, it is only a question of how, and emphasis.

### 3. Trade Union Policy and How We Distinguish Ourselves

One of the comrades spoke about the "historical isolation of our movement from the masses which has produced its present policies in the unions." It is absolutely correct and I tried to indicate that in my article. It is significant that Johnnie of Detroit also spoke about this at our conference and pointed out that the necessary correction could only take place with the influx of thousands of workers into the party, with the ending of that isolation. Our arguments will not convince the SWP, but rather we will represent only a conscious aid in that corrective process. Our political line represents the correction but it requires the catalyst of worker-elements to bring about the necessary reaction. The comrades must remember that in their future work, and that is precisely the reason for our policy of "to the proletariat with the comrades of the SWP, to work with them and learn from and with them."

Cooper raised the question of blocs in the unions and the policy of the SWP in this particular situation. What he has said, and that is all that I know about his union, indicates how much more correct is the orientation of the SWP as compared to that of the WP. He says that "the SWP is eager to gain control because the situation in America is pre-revolutionary and it is necessary to have leaders at the top who can lead the men forward from that position." That is their motivation, and analysis. Their policy flows from a correct orientation, the revolutionary perspective, but the tactics applied in the actual situation and the actual bloc make may be wrong. I would want to know more before passing judgment on that. Comrade Johnson indicated one side of the question when he said that any policy which leads to stifling our voices in propaganda for socialism is obviously incorrect, and then said that he doubted very much if the SWP prevented our comrades or theirs from speaking to workers about socialism. I doubt it too.

In every fraction a division of labor takes place, particularly in the larger fractions. It is necessary and correct in many situations that such a division of labor should take place, with some comrades operating more openly than others for the party, while others involve themselves more closely with the trade union work itself, the blocs, the internal politics, the organization of progressive groups, etc. The only thing that can be said is that where such a division of labor does take place the proper weight must be given to party propaganda and recruitment, to contacting for the party. One more word must be said on the question of blocs and the general question of union leadership. It is just as incorrect, from the other side, to refuse to enter into combinations for union elections as it is to enter them on an unprincipled basis. The union is not an enemy organization, it is the mass organization of our class. The enemy inside in the labor bureaucracy and the Stalinists. But the union is our organization too, in that it belongs to the worker and we attempt to provide and support the best leadership at all times. There are not many situations inside the union in which abstention is the correct policy. Opportunism stems not from the support or non-support of various groupings in a union election, but the way in which the party fraction gives this support, the extent to which we "cover up" for other elements in the bloc. In almost every election we must give critical support to one slate or another, indicating clearly why we support them and also what is wrong with their policy. This is what I meant in my article by "not playing hide-and-seek in the union." It is here, and in the manner in which we distinguish our position in the union on all questions, that we face the problem of sectarianism and of opportunism.

What may be sectarian at one time and one place may be opportunism in another, and vice versa, but in all places and at all times the position of the party (not necessarily of every individual comrade) must be clearly distinguished from that of the other streams in the working class movement.

It is a question of how this is done and to what extent. I gave a few examples of how this can be done in the section on "the functions of the revolutionist in the unions" in my article. The sectarian shouts the message of the social revolutionist all times without reference to the current problems of the working class and the workers soon regard him as a "freak" or "screwball." But if we handle it properly we can make excellent propaganda for many aspects of the transitional program, and for the revolution as well. It is impossible to tell the comrades exactly how this should be done. It requires a great deal of practical experience in the shops and on the union floor. One must have a "feel" for the masses and the situation, which can only come with experience. There can be no "directives" in this matter. One recent example which I can give is this. The union was discussing the question of establishing a cooperative purchasing center, as the UAW did in Detroit, and in the course of my remarks I told them that it was no answer, even though I would support it, and that it would really be much simpler simply to take over the whole works from production to consumption and settle it once and for all. After the meeting it led to another discussion of the need for revolution. In some cases, such as the Taft-Hartley Bill, propaganda for the general strike was correct and propaganda for the labor party was sectarian, at least for a few days or weeks. It is necessary to be flexible in such matters and to know what the workers are thinking. Other aspects of how we determine policy in the unions are covered in my article and there is no need to repeat them here.

#### 4. Strata in the Working Class

Comrade Phil said: "The bulk of the revolutionary leaders of tomorrow are in the ranks and not in the steward body and among the union leaders. It is this strata to which we must direct our revolutionary propaganda." And Nettie remarked that: "Some of the most militant members do not attend union meetings, but are very receptive to our propaganda at this time. We must agitate among the rank-and-file with our ideas, and the stewards will change with pressure from below and from there alone." Well, I am not very particular about where we shall disseminate revolutionary propaganda within the working-class movement, or where we shall look for recruits. The answer is everywhere. But in my article I wanted to demonstrate the relationship of the various strata both to the union and to the revolution. It is obviously true that the stewards change under pressure from below, and that it is the rank-and-file which will provide the impulsion and forces for the revolution. The masses, the rank-and-file workers, wanted the revolution, which the Bolshevik party led, but it was necessary to build the party. We must understand the stage of development of the party at this time, and what must be done to go forward. But these comrades who look at the union leadership and condemn it as one hopelessly reactionary mass are wrong and tend to forget an important stratum in the union, the lower rank leadership. It was against this concept that I gave emphasis to the steward in my article.

The social weight of the present lower rank leaders, the stewards and committeemen (the union activists in general) is enormous as compared to that of the rank-and-file worker. Marty has explained this. The rank-and-file worker who was never active in the union, when recruited to the party, must be taught to begin to learn the thousand and one little things necessary to provide leadership for a group of workers. The lower rank leaders already have that, plus the sense of deep organizational loyalty, responsibility and activity, and also have some influence over other sections of the leadership and the rank-and-file. This gives him a special importance for us, particularly at this stage of the game. He can be an important source of party recruitment and open new fields for the party.

This can be seen in a different way when we compare the activity of the professional revolutionist, (as Lenin defined this in "What Is To Be Done" - a member who was at the complete disposal of the party) and the worker-Bolshevik. The professional revolutionist in Lenin's party worked in different cities or factories as a party assignment, just as most of us do today. There he would establish a nucleus and then leave for the next assignment, but he had to leave behind him in that factory some worker-leaders, men who had roots in the plant and could not move about easily because of family responsibilities and for other reasons. Moreover, they were more valuable to the party in the factory where they were known to the workers. These men had to pick up the work of the professional revolutionist, do the type of work that he was doing, be the political representative of the party in the plant and give sound advice to the fraction. Here again, we see the difference between the shop leaders and the inactive rank-and-filer. The leader becomes the rallying point for the militants at a certain stage in the development of the class struggle, but he must be known to the workers in order to be such a rallying point. New revolutionary leaders will arise in critical times, but it is necessary to have party leaders there from the beginning in order to get the most out of a situation.

This does not mean that we ignore the rank-and-file shop worker. One might say on this point that "each according to his ability" and a division of labor takes place here too. Some of us can get very close to our shopmates on a personal basis and from there win them to the party. Others can work best among the activists. There is no dichotomy between both aspects of our work, but one may be done better or more by one comrade than another. For the party member in the plant, however, there is the problem of how to reach these workers, particularly in the large plants which are miles long and have dozens of buildings. There are only two methods or channels of reaching this mass of workers - trade union channels and the party press which may be distributed at the factory. I dealt with some aspects of this problem in my article, in the section on trade union education and journalism. To reach these workers through the union we must take advantage of every opportunity to let them know who we are and what we stand for, so that the workers will know where to look in order to find us and know that there is something to look for. At every mass meeting we must clear our own ideas and this can best be done if we are active in the union and are known to the union activists. And, by the way, the stewards are excellent advertisers of your point of view, even if they are against you. In shop discussions, they will often say that so and so thinks this way, etc. It has gotten so in my local that when I asked the editor of the paper why the local's leaders couldn't write the sort of thing I was writing, and which they said they accepted, his comment was: "You're an institution in our local now and the men accept your right to say what you think and they know what you think. It's no surprise to them, nor are they antagonized by it." At every meeting that same attitude is expressed; the men want to know what the Trotskyists have to say about any problem or dispute. It is not long before the entire shop, both those who attend and those who do not attend union meetings, know what you stand for, and the sympathetic ones come to you and ask for your opinion on any number of questions. It pays off in good "credit" for the party, if the comrades will learn to be patient. We cannot depend on individual recruitment for the building of the party but must establish ourselves as responsible leaders of the working class so that we can do something in the developments of tomorrow.

**The SWP**

The last point is that we are entering a revolutionary party and will accept the discipline of that party. We are going to work with comrades who have been dealing with the problems of trade union strategy and tactics for a long time, much longer than most of us. Those who abstract themselves from the union, who fail to integrate the two basic points of view presented here tonight are going to have a very difficult time. Those who divorce themselves from the day to day struggles and problems of the union, who see opportunism in every grouping, bloc or intra-union struggle, will not only do harm to themselves and the party, but to the ideas of our tendency. Not only will they have their heads broken against the stone wall of their concrete activity with the comrades of the SWP, they will have them shattered. Trade union policy must be discussed with them in a non-factional manner. We must not lose sight of the political ideas which we have developed, and must relate them to our trade union work and policy, but it must be done intelligently and with care. The mutual exchange of ideas and experiences in the course of our work should be fruitful for all of us, and out of it will come the mass party of the socialist revolution. Of that much we can be confident as we face the future and the building of the SWP.

Dear Comrades:

During the general discussion on the Trade Union question at the September 22 meeting of our caucus, Comrade Marnin made a serious error in stating what he believed was my point of view. Not wishing to interrupt the meeting at the time, I decided to send in this letter which I ask be printed at the same time in the bulletin covering the meeting.

Comrade Marnin has clearly confused my making propaganda for Socialism as making agitation for socialism. I have never advocated that workers destroy their classifications. I have stated that when workers do that, it is a phenomenon to be observed and understood. I believe that such action on the part of workers is against the alienation and fragmentation which he undergoes. This is part of the organic striving to reconstruct society. I do say that such activity should be used as the basis for making our propaganda whenever it occurs, and that the full meaning should be explained to workers. I do not propose to prevent workers from breaking classifications, but instead to use such development, as they occur naturally, to explain concretely man's attempt to break out of atomization.

I want to take the opportunity to say also that, in my opinion, an "advanced worker" is one who has been subjected to the modern factory system to such a degree, that the multitude of contradictions vested in him, prepare him for immediate reception of Socialist propaganda. The conception as I have seen it is one of the "advanced worker" who is politically conscious. My point of departure is always the worker on the machine at the very point of production.

Comradely,

Phil Romano

1 2 5 0

### CIVIL WAR AND THE LABOR PARTY

In 1936 Comrade Trotsky held conversations with the leaders of the American party to clarify the application of the Transitional Program, with its strategic perspective of world revolution to the prosperous wealthy "politically backward" United States. Comrade Trotsky repeatedly warned of the danger of the thick air of conservatism which dominated the political psychology and traditional methods of thinking in the United States. On other occasions he suggested the method to overcome this. Specifically, for a country which had no proletarian revolutionary history distinctly its own, he insisted on the necessity of studying the great American bourgeois revolution from 1861 - 1865 to provide a solid theoretical and political base for the proletarian revolution which he anticipated for the present period.

If ten years ago this was suggested by Trotsky, today the American proletariat compels the clearest formulation of the general course of the developing American Revolution. The existence of the Johnson-Forest Tendency with its firm revolutionary conceptions of the American proletariat; the political line indicated by Comrade Cannon's speech on the coming American Revolution; and conversely the growing doubts, fears, scepticism, timidity of the Schachtmanites - these are but ideological reflections of the tremendous drive of the working class "to lift itself to the tasks imposed upon it by history!" (Trotsky, Transitional Program)

#### The Battleground of American History

The present struggles of the proletariat, beneath the appearance of immediate objectives - wages, trade union organization - are profound historical battles. Correspondingly American history itself becomes a violent battleground. Past and present become identified. The bourgeoisie seeks in history empirical proof of the stability of its rule, the continuity of its leadership of the whole nation. The working class seeks to discover a revolutionary past to confirm and strengthen its yearnings for revolutionary change. The government sponsors a "Freedom Train" carrying the documents associated with this nation's birth which are also symbolic of the leadership, the wisdom and the present ideology of the bourgeoisie. A vault containing some of Lincoln's private papers is opened amid the glare of spotlights, the grinding of movie cameras, and nationwide radio broadcasts. The vault contains nothing of any great historical or political importance. It is the accompanying demonstration which is decisively significant in this case. It is a demonstration seeking to reaffirm in the mind of a nation grappling with a continuous domestic and international crisis, the subjective greatness of the leader of the American republic in its time of greatest trial, the Civil War - a trial which ended in a magnificent triumph for the industrial bourgeoisie.

We need pause only for a moment at the writing of history by intellectuals, before proceeding to the making of history by the broad masses. Charles Beard's historical interpretation is the product of a period of objective economic crisis on the one hand and a proletariat apparently confined to the narrowest craft unionism on the other; reflected in the petty-bourgeois expose of capitalist conspiracies combined with journalistic descriptions of the miseries of the proletariat. He has significantly titled the Civil War as the "Second American Revolution". However, this revolution is limited to a war of economic abstractions - industrialism versus chattel slavery. The intervention and activity of the counter-revolutionary slaveryocracy, the indiscretion of the bourgeois political leadership, rebellious slaves, the free laborers, the free farmers i.e., the revolutionary passions

and activity of the masses are in the main absent. Beard's major ~~successor~~ in petty-bourgeois liberal historiography, A.H. Schlesinger Jr. has not ~~written~~ extensively on the Civil War but provides us with important clues. Schlesinger is a product of a different and more concentrated political period - the activity of the working class in the CIO and its parliamentary reflection in the New Deal. This petty-bourgeois liberal attempts to build historical generalizations upon the New Deal by identifying it with Jacksonian democracy. He writes The Age of Jackson so that "It may help perhaps in building up a conception of the peaceable 'revolution' by which our democracy has, save for the tragic exception, thus far avoided the terror of violent revolution." The "tragic exception" of course is the Civil War which Schlesinger attributes to the deep moral impulse against slavery. Thus, Schlesinger discovers in the Age Of Jackson the activity of the working masses, activity confined to parliamentary government, and then proceeds to attribute the violent revolution not to the activity of the masses but to a moral impulse.

The abstract morality of Schlesinger and the abstract economic determinism of Beard are two sides of the same coin, both meant to obscure from the eyes, the second American revolution as a basis for the third American (Socialist) revolution. As in making of history today, so too in the writing of history, the danger to the proletariat comes not from the open apologists and defenders of chattel slavery or wage slavery, but from the petty-bourgeois reformists and "peaceable revolutionaries" - Beard, Schlesinger, and now the Stalinist fabricators of American history. (Howard Fast, A.B. Magil, and the rest.)

In line with Trotsky, in line with its own revolutionary perspectives for the United States, above all in line with the ideological needs of the proletariat in this period, the vanguard party must use the Civil War as a powerful weapon against the conservatism in its own ranks, against the pernicious and systematically induced reformist illusions of the agents of the bourgeoisie in the labor movement and in order to confront the working class in the most direct, forceful way with the tasks imposed upon it by the pro-revolutionary nature of the objective situation. This contribution is made with that purpose in mind and is therefore limited in other aspects. For the sake of brevity I am excluding the years of Reconstruction, which will be dealt with on another occasion, and many important but detailed aspects of the military and political developments of that period. This, however, must be a definitive beginning in drawing the boldest parallels in the dialectical logic and actual movement of revolution and counter-revolution; the relation of the Republican Party to the second American Revolution and the Labor Party to the third American Revolution.

#### II. The Lords of Cotton

The cotton gin invented in 1793 parallels the growth of the textile industry in England. Cotton became the largest single export commodity, the crops totaling 150,000 bales in 1815, four-and-a-half million bales in 1859. The importation of indentured white servants had accompanied early colonization. But extensive staple crop agriculture remained the distinguishing feature of the plantation South, a small area compared to the varied crop, subsistence farming developed in the West. The commerce and industry of the coastal cities and of New England demanded a mobile labor force separated from the means of production rather than slaves trained to a simple operation and physically unencumbered with the means of production. The "peculiar" i.e. archaic institution of slavery remained associated with the most profitable single crop.



agriculture - cotton. The plantation economy, however, was in its very nature self-destroying, in contrast with industrial capitalism which was self-expanding. The nexus of industrial capitalism was the transformation of living into dead accumulated labor, a transformation which had no absolute natural limits; while the plantation economy exhausted both the slave and the object of his labor - the soil. The growing scarcity of land and slaves placed the South in perpetual crisis. The price of slaves rose as the price of cotton declined. The fruits of national expansion - the newly acquired territories were placed at the disposal of white immigrants and the free system of agriculture.

The economic power of slavery was concentrated not in a section but in a minority class, just as the realization of "free enterprise" today is not a national phenomenon but rather represented by an infinitesimal minority of capitalists, set off against the rest of the nation. In 1860 the year preceding the slaveholders' insurrection, less than seven per cent of the South's white population owned nearly 75% of the Negro slaves. Half of the slave owners were not based on the plantation system but rather on family unit farming with the help of from one to four slaves. This differentiation in the slave-holding class is most apparent geographically. In the deep South, the slaves made up 44% of the total population, in the border states, Kentucky, Maryland, etc., the slaves were only 22% of the population. Here again the traditional historians have allowed the geographical appearances to obscure the class differentiation. As shall be demonstrated very clearly, the role of the border states during the second American revolution parallels the role of the middle class in the coming American revolution.

From Commerce To Industry.

The wars of 1776 and 1812 were fought to free American commercial capitalism from the stranglehold of the British empire. The period from 1812 to 1860 was a transition from commerce to manufacture, and from handicrafts to the workshop and factory. The natural means of internal transportation, rivers and canals, were replaced by the manufactured iron girders of the railroad. The waves of immigration provided a cheap and abundant labor force as well as an internal market. Nevertheless, up to the last years before the Civil War, the bourgeoisie was predominantly commercial in character, organically bound to the Southern economy, with financial investments in the cotton crop and in its shipment and sale to England, and to the growing textile industry in New England. The new industrial bourgeoisie, the smallest but most advanced section of the class as a whole, grew up after 1850, based upon the production of capital goods and heavy industry, coal, iron, railroads.

The Northwest Frontier

Parallel to the transformation from commercial to industrial capitalism in the East, the Northwest was transformed from a source of agricultural supplies to the South to the source of consumption goods for the East. Speculation in land was controlled by Eastern banks. The sale of wheat, increased by five times to the growing market to the East, was only doubled in shipments to the South in the years 1839 to 1852. The Mississippi River declined in importance relative to the growth of the railroads which bound the West to the East, Philadelphia and New York replaced New Orleans as the outlet for the products of the Northwest. Free laborers under the impact of each recurrent depression became free farmers in the West, thus binding the two sections socially and politically.

Thus, industry, with its subversion of the North-East to itself and away from the plantation South, was thus isolating the South from the rest of the country and posing finally the subjection of Southern economy to modern industrial capitalism.

The Political Ideology

Perhaps in no other country in the world has there existed such a profound ruling class mythology that the nation's politics is constitutional politics, and that conflicts are to be decided in the last instance juridically. Jefferson and Hamilton, Jackson and the Whigs, Lincoln and Douglas, Roosevelt and the Supreme Court all tend to confirm the fetishism of constitutionality which is to be maintained above all class conflict; to cover in confusion the revolutionary outbursts of the past, and to prevent revolutionary outbursts in the future.

The existence of the Taft-Hartley Bill today, and the objections of the labor leadership as to its constitutionality, counterposed to the workers' demand that it be by-passed and ignored, make it both possible and necessary to tear out this profound political nonsense, roots and all, before the entire working class.

The continuously shifting class and ideological lines from 1800 to 1860 push into bold relief the decisiveness of the class conflict against the empty shibboleth of maintaining "the constitution." At the opening of the 19th century, the Jeffersonian agrarians, Southern planters, Northern artisans united against the commercial bourgeoisie in defense of state rights. Under Jackson, the struggle was repeated on a higher level in the war on the national bank. But, at the close of Jacksonian democracy and therefore, the struggle for states rights, and the interpretation of the Constitution flowing from it, became the ideological basis for the actual dominance of the slave states over the entire country. The commercial bourgeoisie and the Southern slaveocracy agreed that the Constitution was a slave document. The distinguished scrap of paper originally drafted by the creditor class of the American Revolution to strengthen its exploitation of the debtor class, was now enlisted to add patriotic decorum and political universality to that great abomination, chattel slavery. The proposed lawfulness and constitutionality of the Taft-Hartley Bill is to do the same for wage slavery. The proletariat must be clarified only on how the slaves, and their later allies, the free farmers and free laborers, disposed of the constitutionality of chattel slavery.

III. The Self-Activity of the Negro Slaves

The Civil War known in popular terms as the war between the North and the South was in reality only a climax to two-and-a-half centuries of murderous warfare between the master and his slaves. This is demonstrated most convincingly and dramatically by the Negroes themselves. It was to take hundreds of years before the sharp line dividing the slave and his master was to become the sharp line dividing the entire country. We need only to deduce this conversely from the conscientious oversight with which the historical apologists of the slaveocracy, and the petty-bourgeois moralists of capitalism, together treat the bold and unrelenting revolutionary activity of the Negro slaves. Those too within the revolutionary movement who would deny the vanguard role of the Negro masses in the coming American revolution must consciously or otherwise join in minimizing the role of the Negroes in the American bourgeois revolution. Past history and present politics are identical on this point.

And Trotsky, who emphasized the need to understand the Civil War as a means of understanding the coming American revolution as a whole, insisted with equal emphasis on the need of understanding the Negro in the Civil War as a means of understanding the Negro question as a whole today.

### The Slave Revolts

The Negro slave revolts and their impact upon the whites in the North in the creation of the Abolition movement stand in marked contrast to the shoddy maneuverings of the early American statesmen as to whether the Bill of Rights born in the revolution against British colonialism applied to the Negroes. In his struggle for freedom, the Negro slave demonstrated ingenuity, inventiveness, heroism and "self-mobilization."

Gabriel's revolt in 1800 serves as a model for the insurrectionary developments up to the Civil War. Cotton had by that time become a great staple crop, the slave trade a big business; plantation labor was based upon large scale labor gangs. The hopes for freedom which the slaves had associated with the first American revolution, had materialized only in the North. At the same time, the outbreak of the Negro slaves in San Domingo provided an inspiration and a model to the slaves in the South. If previously there had been merely sporadic rebellions and individual resistance to slavery, after 1800, revolt was to take the nature of large scale and well-planned insurrections. Gabriel's conspiracy mobilized against him six hundred and fifty troops, the Federal armory, and alerted the militia of the entire state of Virginia. The insurrection was betrayed, but as with the other great slave revolts, each defeat was the harbinger of enormous victories.

The leading statesmen of the South were quick to note the meaning of Gabriel's conspiracy. John Randolph declared that the slaves "manifested a sense of their rights and contempt of danger, and a thirst for revenge which portend the most unhappy circumstances." Thomas Jefferson told Monroe that "other states and the world at large will forever condemn us if we indulge a principle of revenge or go one step beyond absolute necessity." Thus it was impossible to be blind to the political impact of the slave revolt upon a country generally indifferent to the question of slavery. "The most unhappy circumstances" which were feared, confirmed the belief of many that there ought to be a gradual emancipation of slaves. However these "gradualists," the products of sentiment mixed with fright in the presence of slaves, could do more than the gradualists of our own time. transform objective reality.

The maintenance of our archaic slave system provoked even a greater thirst of revenge on the part of the white owners than on the part of the slaves. The end of the slave trade, the falling price of cotton demanded a more intensified exploitation of the Negro slaves combined with more extensive crop cultivation. Lashing, cutting off the ears, jailing, and outright murder of slaves became common. But the effect of terrorizing the Negroes could inevitably result only in the terrorized existence of the white slave holders themselves as the wave of Negro insurrections went on unabated. The desperate arrogance of the slave holders in Congress, the magnificent boldness of their demands upon the whole nation, were merely the counterpart of the unrelieved fright of their own social existence; a proud boastful aristocracy besieged by the revolutionary Negro masses.

As revolts increased they began to involve the poor whites as well. The maxim that the existence of Negro slavery degraded the non-slave holding white was proved in revolutionary practice. This phenomenon in the early

slave revolts anticipated the fundamental solidarity of the propertyless slaves and non-possessing whites in the Civil War and Reconstruction as well as our own time. By 1822 the extensive nature of a slave revolt can be seen in the insurrectionary plans of Denmark Vesey, who had purchased freedom for himself in 1800 but who would seize freedom by force for thousands of others years later.

The objective was nothing less than the seizure of Charleston by the Negroes. Vesey was in touch with the Negro republic in San Domingo requesting aid for so large a project. This revolt too was betrayed and suppressed though it required Federal troops to protect Charleston during the execution of the slaveleaders.

The Negroes and Production

These revolts were conclusive manifestations of the irrepressible revolutionary situation in the South later demonstrated in the country as a whole. But far more important for our own period is the recognition that the revolutionary outbursts were in themselves the most apparent and impressive demonstrations of the everyday revolutionary attitudes and activity of the revolutionary Negro slaves. A North Carolina judge attempted to define this indefinite yet powerful revolutionary instinct.

"What acts in a slave towards a whiteperson will amount to insolence, it is manifestly impossible to define - it may consist in a look, the pointing of a finger, a refusal or neglect to step out of the way when a white person is seen to approach. But each of such acts violates the rules of propriety, and if tolerated, would destroy that subordination upon which our social system rests."

Herein too we have one of the most devastating paradoxes of ruling class mythology. The complaints, the stories of the Negro slaves' shiftlessness, the waste of his master's property, the neglect of his animals, the breaking of all his tools, however viciously aimed to denigrate the Negroes are the most severe indictment possible against chattel slavery. How clearly we can see this today when the press and the air waves are filled with complaints of the bourgeoisie that the workers are not producing enough, that they do not display incentive on the job and no longer respect the importance of their occupations. Like the slave masters of old, they are announcing the irrevocable doom of their class society. The apologists of slavery then and now attempt to portray the Negro as a mixture of brutishness and laziness. However we can see that the laziness was a means of resisting the system of production, and brutishness a means of overthrowing it.

The informed Negro looked towards San Domingo, not merely as a large scale revolt, but as a successfully established revolutionary republic. Negroes who through the underground railroad escaped to the North and to Canada often returned to the South. Instinctively in each case was the profound yearning of the Negro slave, not for flight nor even for the destruction of the slave power but for the reconstruction of Southern society with a new mode of production and on a new equalitarian basis. Just as each strike today is in its own way a small rehearsal of the proletarian revolution, so each slave revolt too was a small model of the Negroes during the Civil War and Reconstruction.

Self-Activity and Politics:

The Negro attempted to win his freedom by direct revolt. He had no abolitionists' parliamentary party. Nevertheless the eloquence and logic of his revolutionary politics was first heard in the court rooms of the South. When Vesey declared that he would not go to Africa "because he had not the will, he wanted to stay to see what he could do for his fellow creatures," he was delivering a death blow forty years in advance to that sagacious vacillating republican parliamentarian, Abraham Lincoln, who attached to the famous Emancipation Proclamation a project for the colonization of the Negroes in Africa. When a condemned slave shouted, "Death - death at any time in preference to slavery," he was declaring that Henry Clay's magnificent parliamentary compromises were only the essence of futility. History - the Civil War - confirmed the declaration of a Negro slave, and not the eloquence, ingenuity and maneuvering of the great parliamentarian. George Roxley, a white leader of Negro insurrections in 1816, declared that "the distinction between rich and poor was too great; that offices went to wealth rather than to merit; and advocated a more leveling system of government"; and avowed his "disapprobation of the slavery of the Negroes and wished they were free". He was identifying the struggle against chattel slavery in particular with the struggle against autocracy in general. This was to be echoed by the Abolitionist representatives of the working class thirty years later. When asked for his defense one Negro declared "I have nothing more to offer than what General Washington would have had to offer had he been taken by the British officers and put to trial by them.", thus immediately identifying the Negro revolt with the best traditions of the American revolution. Then as to constitutionalism and legality "I know that you have predetermined to shed my blood, why then all this mockery of a trial?" A simple slave had thus declared that legality or illegality depended upon revolution and counter-revolution. This in embryo the "politics" of the slave was directly connected with his revolutionary activity; the legal court room provided him with the opportunity to declare boldly and clearly the illegality of the entire system; and when the anti-slavery parliamentary organizations were born, the Negroes and those whites who based their abolitionist conceptions upon the direct mass activity of the Negro slaves used the parliamentary opportunities and channels to declare that the destruction of slavery could be accomplished only by revolution and Civil War. Herein is contained the vanguard role of the Negro masses in the second American Revolution, anticipating in general the Negro's specific contribution in the third Socialist Revolution. Herein too, is in general, the Bolshevik attitude towards parliamentarianism. It becomes possible and necessary to explain this to every white and Negro worker - Bolshevism in indigenous American terms.

IV. The Petty-Bourgeoisie - Morality or Revolution

The impact of the Negro slave revolts resounded most apparently, i.e. politically, in the North. The Northern petty bourgeoisie felt the impact of the miseries of the newly created proletariat, of the debtor class, of the inequality of the sexes, of the need of the broad masses for schooling and for political expression. To these needs it responded with Jacksonian democracy, the temperance movement, women suffrage movement and utopianism. The abolition movement began, to all appearances, as the activity of deeply religious, moral individuals for the purpose of lending a helpful hand to the suffering Negro. Here as in the relationship of idealistic intellectual petty bourgeoisie to the proletariat in our own time, the appearance belies the essence. It is possible to see the true nature of the relationship of the petty bourgeois liberal movement to the slaves only in the total and dialectical development of the abolitionist movement itself. In the early development of the American working class the petty bourgeois comes to the proletariat with a general conception of the passivity and suffering of the

proletariat as contrasted with his own material well being, and activity for the proletariat. Thus, not forced by objective reality to consider himself an integral vanguard of the working class, the petty-bourgeois creates for himself an ideological environment wherein his political activity confirms to himself his superior moral nature and an ideology based upon religion. In the 19th century, subjective moral ideology in the 20th century. These become a vanishing breed in ratio with the growing activity of the masses, and the sharp breaks in the objective situation which make it clear that it is the activity of the masses themselves which will resolve the problem. This is true in the developing relation of the American petty bourgeois to the American proletariat as well as in the relation of the New England Puritans and the Pennsylvania Quakers to the masses of Negro slaves. One historical epoch brilliantly illuminates the other.

The primary characteristics of the early abolitionist movement, before 1831 for example, was religious denunciations of the slave institution, purchasing the freedom of slaves and contributions of charity to aid his material well being in the North. Correspondingly, the movement under Wm. Lloyd Garrison the great white abolitionist, almost fell into the trap of colonization, because it opposed the destruction of slavery by violence or by political means. Yet such is the paradox of the history of abolitionism, a paradox resting simply and exclusively upon the self-activity of the Negro and the sympathetic whites who based themselves upon it, that with each slave freed by compensation the day came steadily closer when slavery was to be destroyed without compensation by revolutionary violence on a national scale and with full political expression on a national scale. The impracticality of freeing millions of slaves by private finances was immediately apparent. The result was the underground railroad.

#### V. Revolutionary Activity

##### The Underground Railroad

The flight of slaves from the South began very early from the very day slavery was established in the United States. But, in the first half of the 19th century this exodus became so widespread that it of necessity took on a highly organized form. Thus, rather than a wild flight of a defeated and broken people, the underground railroad, with its high degree of organization, its ignominy, its heroism, is one of the most amazing phenomena of modern history. But all of its distinguishing aspects are understandable when we recognize that it is a genuine product of a revolutionary people and a revolutionary period. We need pause only for one demonstrative example here - Harriet Tubman as she was called by John Brown and others. When the white petty bourgeoisie was limiting the struggle for feminine equality to the objective of suffrage, this diminutive Negro woman defied the whole slavocracy which offered fantastic rewards for her capture. So successful was she in spiriting away hundreds upon hundreds of slaves, that John Brown said that she was, "the most of a man naturally that I ever met with". This opinion of one of the greatest American revolutionary terrorists is definitive. We need only add the political observation today that the struggle for feminine equality in all fields is fulfilled only in revolutionary practice. We will yet find her equal and that of her counterpart, Frederick Douglass, the tribune of the Negro people in those revolutionary times - in the Negro's contribution to the coming American Revolution.

### Revolutionary Action and the Two-Party System

The flight of tens of thousands of Negroes from the South by way of the underground railroad was not mere bodily escape from the existence in the land of slavery. As stated previously, the instinctive desire of the Negro was to revolutionize and reconstruct southern slave society. The effect of the growing stream of free Negroes was to radicalize and transform the abolition movement. Douglass broke with Garrison on the question of political action. But the profound meaning of this break can be appreciated in light of the fact that the Negro slaves had broken much earlier with Garrison on the question of destroying slavery exclusively by moral agitation. Only because the Negro slaves posed the destruction of slavery by social revolution, was it possible for Frederick Douglass in advance, faced with a concrete political task, to post the necessity for confronting the two party system i.e. the political monopoly of the pro slavery parties, with a new genuine anti-slavery party, the Free Soil Party of 1848. For Douglass, the creation of an anti-slavery parliamentary party was organically connected with the direct activity of the Negro slaves and their allies among the free laborers and free farmers culminating in the social revolution. The party was neither to be a deterrent nor substitute for the revolution against chattel slavery, but only its corresponding and appropriate political expression and organization. The parallel with Trotsky's conception of the "revolutionary labor party" in the United States for our own period is clearly evident here, but will be treated in detail later.

### The Nation Becomes Involved

The growing presence and influence of the Negroes in the Abolitionist movement was to become evident in other ways. The religious, moral preachments against slavery took on a new material content which transformed the political appeal of the abolitionist movement to the whole nation. Thus at the first meeting at which Douglass spoke, his simple relating of his experiences under slavery, the display of the marks of the lash on his back, stirred the audience far more deeply than the magnificent agitation of Wm. Lloyd Garrison. On another occasion, faced with the heckling of a police chief as to the innate inferiority of the Negro, Douglass confronted his tormentor with the question, "Am I a man?" and provoked the listeners to a stormy roar of approval. As in the activity of the slaves in the South, so too, in the devotion, energy, and ability of the Negro in the Abolitionist movement in the North, the right of the Negro to equality ceased to be the subject of abstract arguments over biblical interpretations but was asserted in practice by the Negro's self-activity. The abolitionist movement which was begun by church groups, concluded with the condemnation of the organized church as a slave institution. The religious exhortation against slavery which originally was to be a substitute for the self-activity of the slaves, served in the end as an inspiration and a spur to their revolt. It was John Brown, popularly pictured as a religious, prayerful fanatic, who in 1859 sent the audacious message to his friends in the north "We don't need Bibles, send us Guns". Never before in American history, had religion been so thoroughly "materialized", so thoroughly self-negated. Those today who consider the existence of large Negro church institutions as proof of his backwardness will need to be reminded of this again and again.

### The Negroes Transform Abolitionist Ideology

But it is in the change of Abolitionist ideology where the role of the Negro takes on the greatest importance. The early abolitionists of New England chose to agitate upon chattel slavery as a convenient means of overlooking the growth of a cruelly exploitative wage slavery in the textile

factories of their own social system. Many of them were whigs, bitter opponents of the struggle for democratic and economic reforms of Jacksonian democracy. Many were even members of the hated "Church and State" faction. Corresponding with the objective development, the direct conflict of the slave masters against the slaves led to the fundamental conflict of the slave masters against free laborers and free farmers of the whole nation. It was the Negro abolitionists, because of their subjective experiences as chattel slaves, who were in the most compelling position to explain to the white workers and farmers, the vital need for a bold war against the slavocracy. It was the Negro abolitionists who were able, in advance, to develop an insight into the relation of chattel slavery to wage slavery. Wendell Phillips, Gerritt Smith and other radical abolitionists joined them in these conceptions, later. It was also the Negro abolitionists who were able to see the international implications of the anti-slave struggle. It was not accidental that Frederick Douglass in his trip to England should speak at working class meetings, to Chartists leaders, and to the leaders of the movement for Irish independence. The solidarity which this great Negro abolitionist leader displayed, was returned by the European working class and libertarian movements under the leadership of Marx and Engels years later during the most severe trials of the anti-slavery of the north during the Civil War.

#### VI. Labor and Abolition

In the early struggles between the Commercial creditor class against the urban and agrarian debtor class, known in political terms as the struggle between the ideological conceptions of Jefferson and Hamilton; the fiery anti-capitalist agitator John Taylor, had declared that the dividing line of the struggle was between "natural and fictitious property", between agriculture and commercial capitalism. The working class after 1812, faced with the earliest tasks of its formation as a class, found itself in alliance with the southern slavocracy. The main struggles of the workers in New York, Pennsylvania and New England were for the abolition of all property qualifications for suffrage, the abolition of jail sentences for debtors, for the rights of trade union organization and free public education for the workers. With this program and with these demands, the working class formed the radical wing of Jacksonian democracy. Dominated as this movement was by the agrarians of the west and the south, the political expression of the working class was in the ideological and programmatic sense, vague and utopian. But the violent and explosive anti-capitalist agitation that predominated in the working class centers of the country, indicated that Jackson's war against the financial speculators and their institution the national bank, was receiving whole-hearted working class support.

The struggle against slavery was looked upon by the working class as a diversion away from the real struggle against the predatory mercantile ruling class. As previously mentioned, the abolitionist agitators of that period were of the enemy party, the Whigs, and thoroughly tainted with clericalism. In the desperate situation of the workers in the depression years, which was believed to have been brought on by speculators in the national currency, some workers compared their own situation to that of the slaves and found that the slave system perhaps represented greater security for those who labored than did the free labor system. Also there was the dominating fear that freedom for the slaves meant the chopping and unemployment of the white laborers. The extreme exploitative nature of commercial and early industrial capitalism obscured from the workers the historical need for the overthrow of chattel slavery as a necessary pre-requisite for the revolutionary activity of free labor.



### The Whip of the Counter-Revolution

This task was to be imposed upon the consciousness of the working class by the slave masters themselves. The political reform movement in the North based essentially on the working class, provoked growing fears and antagonisms with the southern wing of the Democratic Party. Faced with the prospect of the mass migration of free labor to the north, which would give the non-slave holding section a clear numerical majority, John Calhoun, leading spokesman and ideologist of the South, formulated a conception of government in which the rights of the majority of people could not transcend the rights and stability of property rule. Calhoun declared that slavery formed "the most solid and durable foundation on which to rear free and stable institutions". The emphasis proved to be more on stability than on freedom. The "Dorr rebellion" of Rhode Island which took place in 1842 posed two questions: the right of the majority to suffrage and the right of revolution to obtain democratic suffrage. Calhoun declared "that it would be the death blow of constitutional democracy to admit the right of the numerical majority to alter or abolish constitutions at pleasure". Thus the war of the working class against property rule was to be transformed after 1842 into a war against the slavocracy who, in defense of its "peculiar institution" took on the defense of all exploitative property.

The growing internal crisis of the slave system pushed the slavocracy from passive speeches to counter-revolutionary political and extra-parliamentary practice. In the growing division in the northern wing of the Democratic Party between the conservatives, representative of the commercial ruling class, and their reform wing, representative of the sentiments of the working class, the southern slavocracy allied itself with the conservative "Hunkers" against the radical "Barn Burners", thus pushing the latter into a growing anti-slavery position. The choice of democratic presidential nomination was successfully dictated by the South. That section of the slavocracy which found it increasingly impossible to maintain even the most tenuous alliance with the northern working class, entered the Whig Party. The political monopoly of the slavocracy, in order to overcome the internal crisis of the slave system, concretely expressed by slave revolts, and growing abolitionist agitation, was necessarily complemented by extra-parliamentary violent measures. Abolitionists petitions and newspapers were burned. Slave catchers roamed freely in the north. Under southern inspiration and agitation abolitionists were mobbed, their presses destroyed, their meetings broken up. But the objective developments which were moving towards the total destruction of slavery, found an increasing subjective expression among the northern working class. Unknown to the great majority of southern slaves and northern workers, these two sections of the laboring masses, so diverse in their separate modes of the labor process and so distant in their sectional isolation, were being welded and identified together under the hammer-blows of the counter-revolutionary slaveholding oligarchy. From concern over suffrage and sectional influence in the choice of party candidates, the issue rapidly developed into one of free labor against chattel slavery.

### The Growing Solidarity of Negro and White Labor

This sharp counter-position of two social systems expressed itself in the formation of the "Free Soil party" of 1848, in which the Radical Jacksonians of previous years played a prominent role. It is important to note that this party organized in the northeast, gained five times the votes of the "Liberty Party", the anti-slavery party of 1844 in the agrarian northwest. But decidedly more important than votes, was the revolutionary

ideological challenge coming from the new party, of which the following is typical: "In the slave states now thousands of men... are looking towards us... the Sand-hillars of North Carolina... the Corn-crackers of Tennessee and Alabama - the poor white men, not owners of slaves, but poor mechanics and poor farmers, more trampled upon, if possible, than the very Africans themselves... That is the quintessence of the slave doctrine; labor degraded, the laborer degraded, money exalted, and the owner of property exalted."

But, as in our own time, this took the form of a contradictory movement. The same workers who felt their political expression repressed by the existence of two slave parties, felt at the same time a subjective hostility to the Negroes and the Abolitionists. But the breaks in the rapidly developing objective situation, were decisive regardless of the subjective consciousness of those subject to its impact. Those who in the revolutionary movement today base their political conceptions upon their own subjective estimations of the phenomenal consciousness of the masses, would have been absolutely lost in the pre-revolutionary developments of the Civil War. They run the terrible risk of disorienting, with such a method of politics, the vanguard party in the pre-revolutionary developments of the coming proletarian revolution.

## VII. The Years of Decision

The period of 1851 to 1861 stands without comparison as the most tumultuous, the most intense years of American history, years of preparation for a great upheaval. The characteristics of a pre-revolutionary and revolutionary situation are that the masses find it impossible to continue to live in the old way, that millions of people who had never intervened in the social or political scene, enter upon it with an impact of extraordinary violence. The deep conflict between chattel slavery and free labor exploded now in rapid transformations and violent shifts in the national scene upon which even the most shrewd political leaders are broken because they are rooted in the old traditional peaceful pattern of political development.

At the beginning of this decade anti-slavery agitation seems to have died down. The rebellious Barn-Burners were returning to the Democratic Party. The Missouri Compromise, one more parliamentary victory of the slavocracy, seemed to be the final answer to anti-slavery agitation. By 1852, both Whigs and Democrats wipe out the last vestige of anti-slavery language from their platforms. The willing political servant of the slavocracy, President Fillmore, was succeeded by another of the same kind, in the election of the Democrat, Pierce. But as typical of pre-revolutionary times, politics in the form of vote-getting and vote-counting, was only the shadow and not the substance of things. With the absence of the self-activity of the broad masses, politics in all its varied forms became the most extreme kind of parliamentary cretinism. While the politician held the center of the stage, decisive action was beginning elsewhere.

The counter-revolutionary slavocracy initiated a two-pronged offensive, for the retention of rebellious and fleeing slaves and for the attainment of new slave territories. President Fillmore had declared that Federal troops would be used to enforce the fugitive slave acts. The answer of the anti-slavery forces was spectacular rescues of Negro slaves from the hands of the authorities. Once more the Negro was the center of extra-parliamentary mass activity. The counter-revolutionary slavocracy, at the height of its success, had converted the Federal government into a huge slave-catching institution at its command. Slavery was no longer a sectional issue, a moral issue, an issue relevant only to the oppressed Negro slaves and his Abolitionist sympathizers. It was a battle for the future of the nation.

Bloody Kansas in 1854 and Harpers Ferry in 1859, were to be the battle grounds. Congress had declared the principle of "non-intervention" in deciding whether new territories would be slave or free states. But the non-intervention of a parliamentary body meant the most violent intervention on the part of the living social forces, represented by armed bodies of men. Given the continuous offensive of the slavocracy, the principle of non-intervention was to be only a convenient means of opening Kansas to the invasion of armed pro-slaver forces. Northern Abolitionists, aware of the advantages that the south enjoyed because of its aggressive policies in its attempt to obtain Kansas and Federal protection of slavery, mobilized themselves for a counter-offensive. Northern immigrants arrived in Kansas in large numbers than southern settlers. But with the tacit approval of the Federal government, "southern border ruffians" succeeded in terrorizing the whole population. Kansas was a model for the outbreak of the Civil War. The question of a pro-slave or anti-slave Constitution rested clearly upon class power, in the given circumstances the triumphant power of the Southern slavocracy. The shoddy parliamentary maneuvering to make Kansas slave state exposed the slaveholders' conspiracy and the domination of the entire country.

The violence of Bloody Kansas invaded the chambers of a non-intervening Congress a few years later. In response to a speech on Kansas by the radical Abolitionist Charles Sumner, a Southern representative Preston Brooks, assaulted Sumner with a cane dealing him blows which were to cripple him for three years and weaken him throughout his whole life. Brooks' Southern colleagues had stood by sympathetically during the assault; the whole Southern press gave its un-

-14-

enthusiastic approval to the murderous assault. The day after the attack on Sumner, another abolitionist, Congressman Wade, placed two pistols on his desk before beginning his speech on the Sumner affair. What had been dramatically and conclusively demonstrated outside of Congress, was demonstrated even more dramatically and conclusively in Congress itself. The exalted transcendent nature of parliamentarism, a thin veil for compromise with concessions to the slave power, was falling to the ground.

The reaction of the Kansas affair was quick. The northwest farmers, seeing the principle of popular sovereignty endangered, recognized in Kansas the threat to the hundreds of thousands of immigrants who had moved westward and expanded the system of free agriculture. The new party, organized as an answer to a congress which had given an obviously "pro-state" to the slaveholders, sprang up vigorously, spontaneously and enthusiastically on local and state basis. The Republicans in the northwest swept democrats and Whigs aside and carried all states except Illinois. Yet the northwest and the South seemed unaffected. But there too, a tremendous political storm was brewing.

The "Know-Nothing" or American Party should become a lesson to all Marxists on the metric growth and rapid class transformations of American political movements. The "Know-Nothings" were organized ostensibly as a secret order to fight the new waves of foreign immigration and the intervention of the Catholic Pope in American affairs. But essentially, hundreds of thousands of people, including millions of the working class, had seized upon this bizarre movement as a political weapon to destroy slavery. The "Know-Nothings" represent a mass political reaction to the undeserved victories of the slavocracy in Kansas, a product of the frustration at the slavocracy's monopoly of the two major political parties. By 1850 this enormous movement is broken up on the question of Slavery. In the South the "Know-Nothings" were a sub-stratum of the slavery Whigs. In the North the Whigs became a sub-stratum of the "Know-Nothings" which in a few years was to crystallize in the Republican Party.

Yet in 1856 while the Republicans were making headway, the Democratic candidate, Buchanan, won the election victory. This last president before the Civil War was subjectively a model of indecisiveness, and therefore objectively a shield for the slavocracy. But once more the parliamentary appearance belied the intense revolutionary nature of that period. In 1858, the rights of freed slaves came up before the Supreme Court in the Dred Scott case. The question of slavery was thus to be removed from even the halls of Congress which was, if even within narrow limits, a tribunal of the great masses of people. The issue of Slavery was to be placed in the hands of the crowning institution of parliamentarism, far removed from the daily violent clash of the slaves and their allies against the slavocracy. The decision of this pro-slavery legal institution, in the Dred Scott case, was in effect, that there were no free Negroes in the North, that slavery was not confined to the South but instead was to dominate the political and social life of the entire country. Once more, and this time with greatest clarity and decisiveness, the revolutionary answer to this highest stage in the parliamentary safeguarding of slavery, was to electrify the whole country.

John Brown, who had received his training in the anti-slavery struggle in the guerilla warfare of Kansas, attacked Harper's Ferry, Virginia with a handful of men in 1859. This was to be the beginning of the greatest of all slave insurrections. The plan to deal the slavocracy a deathblow on its home soil was backed by the radical abolitionists Wendell Phillips, Gerrit Smith, and Frederick Douglass. While John Brown's plans for the slave revolt were hasty and impractical, the political logic and revolutionary effects of this move were the very height of practicality. Fifty years of

anti-slavery struggle had convinced the radical abolitionists that if the Presidency, the Judiciary, and the major political parties were willing or vacillating prisoners of the slaveocracy, only the slaves, direct and irreconcilable opponents of the slaveocracy in the very mode of cotton production itself, could smash this reactionary social system. Since the Dred Scott decision was a legal sanction of the invasion of the North by the vast desperate army of Southern slave catchers to once more enshackle free Negroes. John Brown's raid was an invasion of the South by a handful of whites and free Negroes to end this threat by opening the floodgates of revolt in the heart of the South. The outline of the Civil War and the battle for Reconstruction were already apparent.

John Brown's revolt provoked bitter anger in the South and provoked the leadership of the slaveocracy to a recognition of political reality. No parliamentary protection, no strangle-hold on the Federal government, could guarantee the future of the slaveocracy against its own slaves. The moderate abolitionists in the North, the conciliators including Lincoln, withered in the heat of Southern anger against John Brown. But John Brown in turn utilized the forty days between the time of his capture and his hanging, to clarify the nation on the issue of slavery more thoroughly than all the great statesmen, Calhoun, Clay, Webster, and Stephen Douglas; in the court room, through letters, and in his very demeanor in the face of death. If as according to legend doddering old President Buchanan wept on the shoulders of strangers in the White House, in his plea to help find some way to save the Union, old, fierce, iron-willed John Brown had given the answer - the complete destruction of the slaveocracy by its rebellious slaves.

John Brown's conceptions were proven completely true by the violent assaults which the slaveocracy made against the interests of the whole nation in the last years before the Civil War. For example, it opposed the building of a Western railroad, it eyed territories which excluded battles like Bloody Kansas; and Cuba as a beginning of a gigantic slave empire extending down to Brazil. It pressed for a reopening of the abominable slave trade. Finally it aroused the hostility of class-conscious workers and farmers by its hostility to the homestead acts which were to open the territories for the immigration of free laborers and farmers. With a political sharpness arising out of desperation the slaveholders uttered threats and made preparations for open rebellion.

Secession: The Slave Holders' Rebellion

The division between Northern and Southern Democrats in the 1860's presidential elections led to the victory of Republican candidates. In this election defeat the slaveocracy realized that blows such as had been inflicted upon it in Kansas and at Harpers Ferry were now in preparation on a greater scale. In order to cut off the inevitable revolutionary offensive against its system the slaveocracy was quick to seize upon the 1860 election as a signal for counter-revolutionary rebellion.

It is at this point, the sharpest break of the whole epoch, that the Marxian dialectic comes fully into its own. That historical conjuncture, that extraordinary historical moment of the social revolution, brilliantly and forcefully illuminates and clarifies the whole epoch preceding it, and the whole epoch flowing from it. Upon further analysis, as we have outlined previously, it is the attempted physical separation of two different modes of labor, two different social systems. But our analysis must carry us even further. Secession, in all appearances, separation from an antagonistic social system, is in reality a means of domination of a reactionary social order over a more progressive social order. "Thus there would in fact take place not a dissolution of the Union but a reorganization of it, a reorganization on the basis of slavery under the recognized control of the slaveholding oligarchy." (Karl Marx, The Civil War in the United States.) The dialectical

means by which the South imposed secession upon its own population indicated from the side of the slave economy the revolutionary crisis within the Confederacy. As Marx wrote, "It is not only a question of secession from the North, but also a fortifying and sharpening of the oligarchy of 300,000 slave lords in the fight against five million whites."

This is the key. The hundreds of thousands of words of commentators, historians, ideologists, politicians about "maintaining the Union" as a matter of national patriotism, with slavery as a subordinate issue to be bargained away in the process, must be and can be thoroughly destroyed on the basis of Marxist analysis. It is a key to the understanding of the Negroes, Civil War, Reconstruction, the Negroes today, the New Deal, the sit-down strikers - in the analysis of the all-sided, contradictory, dialectical development toward the coming American Revolution. One word of warning is necessary. What we are attempting to prove here is not the mechanical identity of past and present popularly contained in the maxim - "history repeats itself." We are only revealing the general dynamics of the relationships of the classes in production and in politics; and more vitally, the birth of the new society in the very disintegration of the old.

#### VIII. Secession: The Negroes Then and Now.

As we have written previously, in 1831, William Lloyd Garrison was snared by the trap of colonization. The Negroes in revolutionary speech and revolutionary practice thoroughly refuted and rejected such a "solution." In 1862 Abraham Lincoln, not an isolated abolitionist, but the President of a great nation and the leader of its greatest party, attached to his emancipation proclamation a colonization scheme. Given the seeming social and political isolation of the Negro slaves from the other classes in American society in 1831, and the apparent hopelessness of the abolitionist cause, we can well understand Garrison's proposal. But in rejecting it, the Negro was declaring that what he wanted was not merely escape from slavery, nor rebellion against the slave holders, nor mere revenge against the slavocracy in case of the rebellion's triumph. The Negro slave was declaring his deep rooted desire to reconstruct southern society. That many white abolitionists did not appreciate this yearning of the Negro is evidenced by the fact that many of them approved of southern secession as a means of freeing at least the north from the moral and political crimes of chattel slavery. But the Negro, his life distorted by the brutalized labor of the plantation economy, nevertheless like the agricultural serfs in all countries, identified himself and his future with the land - the means of production of that time. This was demonstrated in all kinds of subtle ways during the slave revolts, more openly in the Reconstruction period and in Populism. The Negro's hunger for land knew no bounds. As we shall see Lincoln resisted mightily against the declaration of the Emancipation Proclamation. But, with the actual course of war in the slave states, war which completely unloosed the hold of the slavocracy upon its own slaves and conversely provoked the rebellion of the Negro slaves and their mass flight to the Union armies, Lincoln was forced to acknowledge the historical fact with a paper declaration. But so aware was he of the inherent movement of the Negro from rebellion against slavemaster to the reconstruction of all southern society, that he attempted to save the slavocracy by the colonizing the Negroes. This is only the positive side of the social phenomenon whose negative side is the southern secession, i. e., the inherent necessity for the slaveholders to reorganize the national economy. Thus we proceed from the rebelliousness of the Negro slaves against their masters to the rebellion of the slaveholders against the free labor system, from the reorganization of southern economy by the Negro slave and poor white to the threatened reorganization of the national free labor system by the southern slavemasters. Flight for the Negroes, i. e., their forcible physical separation from the plantation mode of production; secession for

the slavemasters, i. e., their forcible physical separation from the free labor system, are only transitory disguises for the fundamental question posed by both revolution and counter-revolution - the reconstruction of society.

Let us move from the Negroes in the 19th century to the Negro people in the 20th century. The Negro people begin to enter industry both north and south, becoming subject to the process of alienated labor in the factory system. For the Negro this alienation takes on a specially extreme form. Because of discrimination on the job he most often does not participate in the process of production proper but rather in its most menial appendages, manual labor and janitorial work. In addition to this extreme form of alienation in production there exists the extreme alienation in consumption - ghettos, high prices, discrimination in social life. After World War I. the above phenomenon is sharpened and accentuated. The vaunted promises of the "war for democracy" prove hollow. Chicago is the scene of a race riot unprecedented in brutality and in Negro victims. Labor in general has suffered defeats in its strike struggles. The A. F. of L., the predominating and exclusive union of the period, has no relation with the Negro whatsoever. Prosperity reigns in the country, corrupting and stagnating, temporarily, the movement of the masses. The Negro's rebelliousness against capitalist society is isolated to the Negro himself. This is the background for the birth and phenomenal growth of the Garvey movement.

In answer to those philistines in the American revolutionary movement whose only acquaintance with the Garvey movement was Garvey's fakery, Trotsky replied that if we understand why a million Negroes poured into the Garvey movement, we would understand the most important things we have to know about the Negro and the social revolution. It therefore deserves our careful and special attention.

Marcus Garvey ostensibly proposed the return of the Negroes to Africa. But for the Negro millions in the Garvey movement Africa was only a symbol of the Negro's profound aspirations to reconstruct the United States. In the struggle against chattel slavery the Negro fled to the north and with the development of the objective situation found an identity of interest with the industrial bourgeoisie, the free farmer and the free laborer. This was historically confirmed by the whole development of the Abolition movement, the Civil War and Reconstruction. In a country wholly dominated by wage-slavery, where the once revolutionary bourgeoisie had now become thoroughly reactionary, where the domination of the bourgeoisie over the worker and the farmer appeared to be unchallenged, the Negro organized himself into a mass movement whose apparent objective was to return to Africa. But just as the forcible separation of the Negro from chattel slavery by flight prior to the Civil War indicated the deep desire for the reconstruction of the south, so, too, the Negro mass movement for his forcible physical separation from wage slavery indicated his deep desire to reconstruct the whole United States.

This phenomenon, obscured and disguised by the Negro's participation in the Back to Africa movement in the twenties, becomes explicit and apparent in the Negro's whole-hearted support to the CIO and the New Deal in the thirties. The depression of 1929 acted only as the objective cause of this movement of the Negro masses. It is the stage of Negro development in the relation to the development of other classes in society which is involved here. If in the twenties, the Negro was in the vanguard of the whole country in his aspirations for the reconstruction of American society, the organization of the CIO indicated that the same aspirations existed in large sections of the working class. The historic change of the Negro's voting allegiance, from the Republican to the Democratic Party, is evidence not of a mere parliamentary shift, but of the Negro's hopes that the New Deal was a fundamental reconstruction of modern society.

1 2 6 7

Meanwhile the remnants of the Garvey movement succeeded in mobilizing no great masses for the return to Africa, but instead, participated in the fight against discrimination in an extremely militant way in the urban centers of Negro population in the United States. Later we can see that the American Negro suspected, and in large part rejected, the second imperialist war. But the tumultuous military and social upheavals inherent in war, gave birth among the Negro masses to the phrase and conception of "New World & Coming." It is in historical retrospect that we can best recognize the Garvey movement - the Negro's "secession" from the U. S. - not as a perverse chauvinistic organization, but as a preparation for the Negro's contribution to the coming American revolution.

We will discuss the parallel between the slaveholders secession and the recurrent strike waves of the present-day working class after tracing the political, military and international course of the Civil War.

#### IX. The Second American Revolution: Insurrection

The political, military and international aspects of the Civil War are organically inter-related and at critical moments become identical. In this it closely parallels the Russian Revolution and civil war and the Spanish civil war and revolution in this last decade.

After secession had become an accomplished fact in the southern states after another, Lincoln and his whole cabinet were caught in the terrible grip of indecision. From the cabinet emanated all the varieties of plans for new compromises and concessions to the slavocracy. Even when the matter of secession was posed concretely in a military way, the leadership of the north, embodied in Lincoln and his cabinet, was in the majority against taking any action. Major Anderson, a Federal commander, had moved his troops into strategic Fort Sumter, in anticipation of a military offensive by the south against the north. This made him a hero among the northern masses, who while not consciously wanting war, were thoroughly impatient with the failure of their government to take any steps against the slaveholders' rebellion. When the question of reinforcing Fort Sumter was posed before Lincoln's cabinet, Wm. H. Seward, a leading member who was engaged in promising southern leaders the capitulation of the Federal government, fiercely objected. Gideon Wells, Secretary of the Navy, objected on the basis that this might eventually cost millions of dollars and thousands of men. But the pressure of the people of the north and the obvious southern military fortification for the seizure of the Fort, imposed upon the cabinet the necessity for providing support to the Federal troops at Fort Sumter. With the southern assault on this military objective, the Civil War began.

In contrast with the dilatory behavior of the Federal government, in which the Republican, Lincoln, seemed in those decisive months to be imitating the Democrat, Buchanan, we have a magnificent portrayal of the self-mobilization of the masses for decisive direct action to crush the slavocracy at the very time of the deliberation of Lincoln and his cabinet. The free farmers and workers of Missouri speedily and spontaneously organized themselves into a secret people's militia known as the "wide-awakes," to forestall the threatened coup d'etat of the slaveholding minority in that state. Under the sharp whip of the counter-revolution, concretized by the slaveholders' attack on Fort Sumter, the people responded with a spontaneous intervention in a struggle which their Parliamentary leaders seemed only interested in appeasing or forestalling.

"In city, town and hamlet, and at remote crossroads there was a confusion of flags, fifes and drums, banners inscribed with patriotic declarations, bunting-draped platforms shared by Republicans and Democrats, and little groups of excited men suddenly forming to exhort one another to still greater



excitement. Men volunteered, and their neighbors saw for the first time that they were heroes, and more volunteered. County boards and city councils met to appropriate funds for the subsistence of the recruits until state or federal authorities could assume the responsibility, and voted money too for the families of those whose enlistment might cause hardships. Railroads were placed at the disposal of the authorities, bankers offered emergency loans to the state, citizens subscribed funds to equip newly formed companies, and farmers furnished teams and wagons to hastily organized commissariats. Uniforms were made at home according to specifications carried in the newspapers, and there too knapsacks were fitted out—sometimes filled with articles that would have escaped even the nightmares of a regular army sergeant."

These are the words of a contemporary historical writer. In the words of a historian of that period, George Bancroft, "There has never been anything greater than the uprising of the People of April last." This parallels closely the self-activity of the Spanish masses who armed themselves and speedily disarmed the fascist officers at the very outbreak of Franco's rebellion. But those like the Stalinists who identify this magnificent intervention of the masses in the second American Revolution with the high-powered propaganda for enlistment and conscription in the second American imperialist war, are criminally slandering the workers and farmers of that period in order to delude the working masses in our time.

#### The Civil War: Politics

Individualism, i.e., the personification of social movements dominating and obscuring its essential social content, has very deep roots in popular political psychology in the United States. The idealization of Lincoln dominates and obscures the revolutionary nature of the Civil War from the minds of both intellectual historians and masses of workers, with only the Negro people as a possible exception. It is necessary that the revolutionary party break this down patiently but firmly. Not by superficial journalistic debunking, but by counterposing Lincoln to the self-activity of the masses in his time. The idolizers mistake Lincoln's vacillations for sagacity. But essentially Lincoln's narrow sagacity in interparty maneuvers necessarily had to complement his continuous vacillation on the fundamental class questions of the Second American Revolution. Marx wrote, "Lincoln's acts have all the appearance of the petty-fogging stipulated clauses which an attorney presents to his opponent," but Marx added, "...this does not interfere with the historical content." It is the self-activity of the masses first and foremost of the Negro slaves, which filled Lincoln's pronouncements with historical content.

The central political question of the war and in many respects the central military question of the war was the attitude towards Negro emancipation. Around this revolved the continuous maneuvers of Republican leaders and factions. Lincoln subordinated the matter of emancipation to the need of keeping the border states loyal to the North. The role of the border states in the Civil War, as we have already noted, is comparable to that of the petty-bourgeoisie in the civil war between capital and labor. Just as the role of the petty-bourgeoisie depends not on the petty-bourgeoisie but on the proletariat, so too the role of the border states depended upon the Negro slaves. It could hardly be expected that this could be clear to Lincoln, who himself typified the political attitudes prevailing in the border states. But as is typical with the petty-bourgeoisie, the truths about the social revolution are imposed upon it by the proletariat.

With the outbreak of the war the Negroes in the border states flocked to the Union armies by thousands and tens of thousands. Lincoln responded by removing those abolitionist generals who had accepted the Negroes into the army. But every battle fought in the border states could only have the effect of

further loosening the control of the slaveholder and conversely giving the impulse to the Negro slaves to join the Union armies. As Marx was to write at the very beginning of the war, "With real war for the border states in the border states themselves, the question of winning or losing them is withdrawn from the sphere of diplomatic and parliamentary discussions." It was the activity of the Negro slaves which withdrew it from the sphere. And now listen to Lincoln in 1862 echoing Marx in his appeal to the border state congressmen, to accept the Emancipation Proclamation. "If the war continues long, the institution in your states will be extinguished by mere friction and abrasion -- by the mere incidents of war. It will be gone and you have nothing valuable in lieu of it."

This is Lincoln's appeal to the slaveholders in the border states to accept emancipation with monetary compensation by the Federal government.

It is not accidental that General McClellan, Commander-in-Chief of the Union armies who had threatened to meet the fleeing Negro slaves with shackles in hand to return them to their slave masters, was later in 1864 to run against Lincoln for the presidency on a program of complete Northern capitulation to the slavocracy. The Emancipation Proclamation had an immediate and powerful impact on all aspects of the Civil War. As Marx wrote, "So far we have only witnessed the first acts of the Civil War - the constitutional waging of war. The second act, the revolutionary waging of war is at hand."

The Emancipation Proclamation was born out of Northern military defeats. But the freeing of three million Negroes added potentially and actually a great military force to the Union armies, a military force all the more valuable because it was in large sections behind Southern military lines. The slaves in the South carried on strikes and sabotage. They tied down tens of thousands of slave owners and their hirelings who otherwise might have been an additional human and military force for the Southern armies. The revolt of the Negroes caused disaffection among the poor whites as well. All in all a half million Negro slaves fled to the North during the war and a quarter of a million participated in the Union armies as the most heroic fighters and most hard-working laborers. The large scale and decisive participation of the Negro masses in the Civil War fulfilled in a masterful way the historic truths indicated in the first desperate slave revolts - Southern slavery was doomed.

The Emancipation Proclamation marked a new turn in the political leadership of the war. Lincoln's cabinet, being an appointed body, was composed mostly of conciliators and vacillators like himself. Congress on the other hand being an elected body, was in the hands of radical abolitionist congressmen. In the growing conflict between Congress and the cabinet, Congressional abolitionists demanded that Lincoln transform his cabinet from a mere collection of disharmonious individuals into a unified revolutionary directorate, corresponding to the needs of leadership in a profound and difficult and continuous crisis. When Lincoln's inter-party maneuvers forestalled any such action, Congress organized a committee on "the conduct of the War," which superseded the official cabinet in many respects. Once more the extra-parliamentary situation - the relation of classes in violent military conflict - had transformed the nature of American parliamentary institutions.

The Civil War: The Military Struggle

The military problem and campaigns of the Civil War were based essentially on political and social rather than purely military conceptions. This connection between the military struggle and freeing of the slaves has already been noted. But contained in that is even a larger question; the professional army as against an armed nation or, as we know it today, a workers militia. General McClellan, enemy of freedom for the Negro slaves was the advocate and prac-

-titioner of the exclusive professional caste army. As Marx remarked of McClellan, "Among the higher officers of his army he gained supporters through the formation of a general staff of dimension hitherto unheard of in military history."

McClellan's expanded officer caste was to substitute for the arming of the masses, the slaves in particular. But even in a purely military sense this was a betrayal of the Union cause, since the professional officers were more sympathetic to their West Point friends fighting for Lee, than for a decisive military victory for the Union. Paralleling the political turn indicated by the Emancipation Proclamation the military turn was the removal of McClellan and his replacement by a number of Abolitionist generals, and the organization of a people's militia in the Northwest to deal with the secret pro-slavery spies, guerrillas and traitorous political Copperheads.

The fundamental political and social aspects of the revolution took the question of long or short war out of the purely military sphere and dominated the military sphere itself. McClellan's "Anaconda" system of warfare was to surround the rebellious states with immense armies and strangle them slowly by weight of numbers. His static conception of warfare parallels McClellan's political conceptions of a war which would only conclude with the pre-war status-quo, the co-existence of chattel slavery and free labor. The only practical consequence of such a method of warfare would be a long war with the danger of exhausting the people of the North who were banking upon a speedy victory since the numerical and industrial superiority of the North over the South was apparent to everyone. A revolutionary war demanded, as much as was militarily possible, an offensive into the heart of the South. This was finally achieved in 1864 in General Sherman's relentless march to Atlanta on the land and Admiral Farragut's seizure of Mobile by sea. It must strike any observer as extraordinary that Marx and Engels, who, because they understood the essence of the Second American Revolution so thoroughly, clearly anticipated the military moves in which the North would be engaged once the early, constitutional phase of the war was over. But this becomes completely understandable when we realize that these two vanguards of the proletariat only typify the creative energy of the modern proletariat which once placed on the revolutionary stage of history against the reactionary class, will inevitably resolve even the most insurmountable military problems.

This was fulfilled without a shadow of a doubt by Trotsky's Red Army in the six years of civil war after the Russian proletariat had made the social revolution.

#### X. Civil War: An International Struggle

In 1848 the Free Soil Party displayed its anti-slavery agitation and propaganda, the impact of the upheavals in France and Italy of that period. In 1852 when Louis Kossuth, the Hungarian revolutionist arrived in the United States, he was received with outbursts of enthusiasm in the free labor North and with chilling coldness in the slave South. The reception awarded Douglass by the British working class and Irish revolutionists has already been noted. The international, class aspects of the struggle are already apparent here. It is in the years of the Second American Revolution that the fundamental class conflicts in the U. S. engendered serious conflict in the leading countries of Europe, in England, in particular, which fell only short of revolution and civil war.

From the very first the ruling classes of England and France indicated their sympathy for the Confederacy. The material base for this was England's need for Southern cotton which was blockaded by the North. But the ruling classes of both England and France had even greater ambitions; to safeguard Southern slavery and to dismember the rest of the Union by imperialist invasion. It was only the intervention of the British working class - itself unemployed for the lack of cotton - which halted the headlong moves of its ruling class to war in defence of

chattel slavery. At the head of the mobilization of the British workers against slavery were Marx and Engels and the International Workingmen's Association. When the spokesmen and press of the British ruling class insisted that the North was not fighting to abolish slavery but merely to conquer the South, Marx wrote a letter to Lincoln in the name of the First International, asking that Lincoln proclaim emancipation in order to provide the clearest basis for an extended mobilization of the British working class.

It soon became clear to the British ruling class that it could conduct a war in the United States only at the risk of revolution at home. Even in the timid diplomatic statements of Lincoln, the international revolutionary character of the struggle in the U. S. is made amply clear. Lincoln said on British intervention, "if that comes it will be a strife of the younger branch of the British stock - for freedom, against the other - for slavery. It will be dreadful, but the end will be sure and swift." But it was Marx who without ambiguity or timidity clarified the question in his letter of the First International to President Lincoln. The South, he wrote, maintained that slavery was "... the only solution of the great problem of the 'relation of capital to labor' and cynically proclaimed property in man 'the cornerstone of the new edifice' - then the working classes of Europe understood at once, even before the fanatic partisanship of the upper class (of Europe) for the Confederate gentry had given its dismal warning, that the slaveholders' rebellion was to sound a tocsin for a general holy war of property against labor."

The Civil War had threatened to provoke on an international scale the world wide social convulsions in the middle of the 19th century which the Russian Revolution actually stimulated in the beginning of the 20th century.

#### XI. The Working Class During the War

The Republican Party, born in the agrarian Northwest in 1854, oriented its agitation and propaganda to the Northern working class in the election victory of 1856. When Fort Sumter was attacked, entire trade unions dissolved to join the Federal army. The leadership for the mobilization of the proletariat for the Civil War, was in the hands of German emigres, veterans of the German revolution of 1848, co-workers of Marx and Engels and members of the First International. They lent important political weight to the radical wing of the Republican Party.

The material and political contribution of the working class was limited, however, by a contradiction inherent in the developing class relations during the war itself. From 1851 to 1861, there was a steady growth of heavy industry and concurrently a growth of the trade unions. This growth of industry was accelerated one hundred fold in the four years of war. The industrial bourgeoisie entered the war as a baby and emerged from it as a giant. The mode of labor changed from small work-shops to large scale rationalized industry. This achievement was based upon an intensified degradation and alienation of labor, together with the most scandalous corruption and speculation in war materials and civilian goods. To all this the workers replied with strikes which were promptly broken by the government. The discrimination in conscription policies of the government which exempted the rich, provoked anti-draft riots by some sections of the working class. With each successful blow against chattel slavery, to which the working class contributed heavily, it found itself facing ever more openly and directly its mortal enemy, wage slavery. Thus the triumph of the Second American Revolution had laid the material, social basis for the third and final conflict. As Marx wrote to Engels, "After the Civil War phase, the U. S. is only now entering the revolutionary phase...."

"Secession": The Working Class Today

The notion of the backwardness of the American proletariat is based upon the apparent gap between its militant economic struggles and gigantic trade union organizations as contrasted with its support of one or the other capitalist party in lieu of a political class organization of its own. In the revolutionary movement in the United States this notion of the backwardness of the American proletariat manifests itself in the manner in which the slogan for a Labor Party has been presented to the working class; more often as a parliamentary substitute for direct action - or as a parliamentary step in a development by stages - than as the means of mobilizing the proletariat for the social revolution. The present activity and unrest in the proletariat itself, even in the absence of a Labor Party, makes it objectively possible to destroy this conception of backwardness for the first time.

The recurrent strike struggles, transformed in recent years into national strike waves, are to put it generally but accurately, parallel to the flight of Negro slaves from the South on the one hand and to the secession of the South from the Union on the other. The essence of the proletariat's propensity for and devoted participation in a strike struggle is not the material gain for which the strike is ostensibly fought, but to tear himself out physically and forcibly from the process of capitalist production. The strike is a demonstration against the growing alienation of labor which the proletarian feels every day at work. Living labor thus tears itself out from domination by dead labor, labor socialized in production, separates itself from the centralized, rationalized capital and oppressing labor. Given the high degree of alienation of labor exemplified in that model capitalist country, the United States; the response of the proletariat is an unceasing, continuous "secession" - recurrent on ever higher stages during the course of the development of capitalist production and the historic development of the proletariat.

The Industrial Workers of the World is the best place to begin our observation since it is the only genuine native revolutionary movement of any mass proportions thus far created in the U. S. Its revolutionary program to destroy wage slavery was by direct appropriation by the working class of the means of production. The I.W.W. is known for its extremely militant strike struggles but as we have discovered in the Civil War, the task of reconstruction of society is always implicit and, at a certain stage, fully explicit in the very "secession" from a mode of labor. The contribution of the I.W.W. to the American labor movement is climaxed by the general strike in Seattle in 1919, in which the instinctive desire of "seceding," striking workers to reorganize production and to reconstruct society is amply demonstrated. Before we move to the higher stage of this development in the proletariat in this last decade, we need clarify the relation of labor to politics in the period of the I.W.W. The politics of the working class as typified by the Socialist Party at the beginning of this century was petty-bourgeois parliamentary politics in program, perspectives, strategy and tactics. On the other hand the I.W.W. attempted to achieve the social revolution and by-pass the political organization of the working class. This is in harmony with the whole history of the class in the United States. For in Europe the working class had a distinct tradition through its early formation and consolidation as a class in the bourgeois revolution against feudalism. In the U. S. the absence of feudal relations, the constant expansion of national frontiers and the continuous influx of waves of new immigration make the formation of a working class in the European tradition impossible. The task of political class organization is imposed on the American proletariat therefore only by the rapid transformation of production itself into the dominating factor of national politics - monopoly capitalism transferred into statified capitalism, the government not only the political executive committee of the bourgeoisie but the abediment of the total social capital which

dominates completely every aspect of the social and economic life of the working class. This is a phenomenon which distinguishes our own decade in the New Deal and in government financing of the War economy. That is why the I.W.W. is of little influence now and has been overshadowed by a new and higher stage of militant industrial unionism. But 30 to 40 years ago it was the stage of capitalist production which accounted for the growth of an American revolutionary syndicalist movement. This movement was based on direct action of the workers for social revolution, narrowly limited to the factories themselves rather than on the reconstruction of the national economy as a whole through the struggle against its political embodiment, the centralized state power, under the leadership of a centralized working class party.

#### Secession and Reconstruction: The Sit-Down Strike

The AF of L, in contrast to the I.W.W., is conciliatory in its economic struggles and almost totally abstentionist in politics, due to the reactionary conceptions flowing from the position in production of the skilled worker, the "aristocracy of labor", who composed the majority of the AF of L. The experiences of this worker in production are (1) personal identification with the means of production as against alienation of labor (2) individualized labor in the small work shop as against socialized labor of the large scale factory. This explains both the political and economic ideology of the AF of L. With the decline of the I.W.W. the AF of L becomes the dominant national labor organization. In the 30's we see the phenomenal growth, in a few years, of an industrial union movement, a growth which makes the I.W.W., which took a decade to organize, puny in comparison. It is the higher stage of the C.I.O. strike struggles which distinguish the pro-revolutionary character of this period from any preceding period in the history of the American Working class. This is the objective development. Subjectively, it is the instinctive drive of the working class to reconstruct society.

In the West the C.I.O. was born out of the San Francisco General Strike. In the more industrialized east, the predominating phenomenon is the sit-down strike. It is on the basis of the sit-down strikes that Trotsky formulated the Transitional Program for the United States. The sit-down strike demonstrates the "secession" of the workers from the means of production, while simultaneously and immediately by their spontaneous action attempting to reorganize production. The development from traditional strike struggles to the sit-down strike is the development from the merely violent antagonism of living labor to dead labor in the previous period to the domination of dead labor over living labor in this period. The self-discipline of the workers, the organization of a normal, i.e., creative life during his stay in the factory, the tenacity with which the workers maintained the occupation of the factory against all attacks by police, provide us with a dramatic vision of the reconstruction of society on communist beginnings.

The hostility and opposition of the leadership of the newly born C.I.O. to both sit-down strikes and general strikes, is not merely the traditional hostility of the trade union leadership to the militancy of the ranks, but is due to the fact that in this pro-revolutionary period the sit-down strike and the general strike pose before the eyes of the workers who participate in them, before the entire working class and the entire country, the reconstruction of society based upon the reorganization of production in a concrete, simple, dramatic, and irrepressible manner. It is this high or stage of the class struggle within production and not its imperfect corresponding parliamentary expression, i.e., the absence of a Labor Party, which must be the fundamental point of departure for the American revolutionary party.

#### Secession and Reconstruction: Parliamentary Aspects

The parliamentarism of the New Deal took on historical significance because of the class content lent to it by the self-activity of the workers. The New Deal and the birth of the C.I.O. are corresponding phenomenon, but after five years of the New Deal, its essential parliamentary character stood exposed. In the purely

constitutional field the New Deal became a matter of hollow controversy between the President and Congress, between the President and the Supreme court and between the Southern and Northern wings of the Democratic Party.

In the last years before the World War there was a continuous development towards the solution of social problems by extra-parliamentary means. A native American fascist movement, based on the insecurity of the middle classes, was an immediate response to the instinctive drive of the working class to reconstruct society under its leadership. The working class had demonstrated its direction in the sit-down strikes which took place in the factories and in labor's corresponding intervention in the political affairs of the whole nation. With the growth of the C.I.O. and the strike movement, the capitalist government moved from the supposed "protector" of labor's interest to its direct and greatest opponent. A political realignment of the classes seemed inevitable at the conclusion of Roosevelt's second term. It was only the War which interrupted and delayed it. But the War, as Trotsky said, would be the greatest accelerator of social development.

The post-war period has witnessed a polarization between the self-activity of the masses, on the one hand, and extreme parliamentary cronyism on the other, unexceeded since the decade immediately preceding the Civil War. It is not for naught that Allan Novins, one of the best-known contemporary historians, compares the Truman Administration, without mentioning it by name, to that of the "small men," (Fillmore, Pierce, and Buchanan) confronting the great issues of the Second American Revolution. What is at stake is not Truman as compared to Roosevelt, not a Republican Congress as compared with the New Deal Congress. Capitalist parliamentarism is confronted by problems which can be solved only by extra-parliamentary means - an American Bonapartist state or the growth of a mass fascist movement.

The evidence of the growing failure of parliamentarism are becoming apparent everywhere. The altercation between Senator Brewster and Howard Hughes provided the American proletariat with the opportunity to display its contempt of Congress as a whole. This is a marked contrast with the attitude of large sections of workers towards Congressional investigations of Big Business a decade and two ago. The second example is even more indicative. At a Congressional investigation of "labor abuses" in California, Padway, the union attorney, accuses McVann, the Congressional attorney, of acting like a "Gestapo". McVann assaults and beats Padway. Padway later declares that if McVann would step outside, he would be torn apart by the workers. While this is in no way a celebrated affair as Frost's Brooks' attack on Charles Sumner, it too indicates the profound social convulsions outside of the parliamentary bodies, which finally dominate the atmosphere inside them.

#### Secession and Reconstruction: The Labor Party

Trotsky insisted that we will struggle to make the mass labor Party a revolutionary party by basing it on our Transitional Program, i.e., factory committees, defence guards, workers control of production. A Labor Party, not based upon this program, is a reformist party. Conversely, a Labor Party, based upon the self-activity of the masses in production, (the extra-parliamentary sit-down, sit-in to resist unemployment and general strikes which pose the reconstruction of society by the participation of tens of millions of workers in a most irreconcilable manner) is transformed into a revolutionary party. The parliamentary Labor Party becomes therefore, not a step by step movement of the workers from economic to political action, but a transitory expression on the parliamentary arena of the movement of the masses towards proletarian revolution.

Let us proceed from the general to the concrete. Had there been a General Strike at the time of the Supreme Court's action against John L. Lewis: had there been a General Strike the very day the Taft-Hartley passed over Truman's veto: these great mass actions in which the proletariat confronted the class government dir-

ectly would have shattered or gone toward shattering the political ties of the labor leadership to one or the other capitalist parties. Thus, the most apparent, even if not most decisive parliamentary victory of labor in the last six months occurred in the city elections of Oakland, California, where the working class and the city government had confronted each other in a most direct, extra-parliamentary way in the general strike of a few months previous. Thus, for the American proletariat, today, the political struggle transcends the economic struggle, only when the former is rooted ever more deeply, related ever more directly to the latter.

Trotsky warned that the birth and speedy growth of the Labor Party would be a signal for the immediate rise of Fascism. The parliamentary successes of the Republican Party provoked the slaveholders to rebellion. In both cases, the parliamentary developments reveal the the reactionary ruling class that parliamentarism represented in the election victory of the revolutionary class, poses the end of the "Constitutional" class war, the imperative necessity for violent counter-revolutionary blows against the growing forces of the social revolution.

The task of building the Labor Party must be considered first and foremost, within these perspectives, if the vanguard is to fulfill its role in this pre-revolutionary period.

The C.P. and the Americanization of Bolshovism

The C.P. has printed enormous propaganda and research, in its attempts to Americanize its essential petty-bourgeois politics in the United States. Its material on the Civil War was used as a means of mobilizing working class and particularly Negro support for the Second World War. But the Negro had a sharply different attitude towards this war for imperial conquest, to his attitude in regard to the war against chattel slavery.

The Stalinists in their campaign for a new third party must inevitably revert to both the ideology and the dismal experience of Populism, rather than the Republican Party. Yet the Republican Party is the only "successful third party" in American history. Whatever its shortcomings it was the party of the triumph of the Second American Revolution, the destruction of an outmoded social system by a progressive one. All other third parties since then from Populism to its present day counterpart - the new Stalinist creation, are doomed to be mere appendages of one of the two major parties, because they are organically tied to a reactionary and outmoded capitalist system. Henry Wallace, the intended candidate of a possible Stalinist third party, is himself a model of the ideological confusion of Populism. If President Truman is the "Second Missouri Compromise", the counterpart of Buchanan, then Henry Wallace is equally the counterpart of Seward; who made radical speeches about the irreconcilable conflict between chattel slavery and free labor where the actual conflict approached and who attempted to deliver the free-labor system to the slavocracy at the very outburst of the Second American Revolution.

Shachtman's Americanization of Bolshovism

In 1933 Bertrand Wolfe, one of the chief Lovstonites and Trotsky-baiters, wrote a pamphlet entitled, "Marx and America". In this pamphlet Wolfe uses the writings of Marx and Engels about the American working class immediately after the Civil War to substantiate the Lovstonite conception of the Labor Party. Engels had written in 1872 that the main task of the workers is the formation of a Labor Party, since otherwise the proletariat would show no serious signs of its organization. For Wolfe, this remains literally true after 60 years of the organization of the proletariat by the development of capitalist production itself. The Lovstonites have been correct on the specific slogan of the Labor Party as against the Trotskyist "Communist League of America" on this question. But by substituting



the perspective of Labor Party for the perspective of the American Socialist Revolution, by basing himself on the writings of Marx and Engels and , not on the Second American Revolution, but on their writings on a diffuse infantile American working class immediately after the Civil War, he was not Americanizing Bolshevism but merely substantiating his own centrist and reformist conceptions by quoting Marx and Engels out of historical context.

The retrogressionists of the I.K.D. insisted that the European proletariat is thrown back to the time of Marx and Engels of 1848. The Lovestonites, a decade earlier, declare that the American proletariat, generally speaking, has remained where it was in 1872. Shachtman may or may not deny his political relations with the I.K.D. but the W.P. handling of the Labor Party slogan demonstrates that Shachtman in 1947 is generally where Wolfe and Lovestone were on the question in 1933.

These are the roots of the theory of "American Exceptionalism" native American Retrogressionism, in the American radical movement. These roots are very deep precisely because they are based on two centuries of the historical past of the American workers and of the whole nation. To uproot them it is necessary to have the sharpest political and theoretical tools. This essay it is hoped will be a contribution to that arsenal.

William Gorman