

**"THE BASIS OF REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION:
'WORKER LEADERSHIP' OR MARXIST POLITICS?"**

"If it's just ideas then everybody is equal. If you build in the movement, you need a record, if you are going to do any serious recruitment and build in the movement".

Smith, March 10 NC.

This was Smith's response to the insistence at the NC that the faction leaders must -- if they wished to remain in the organisation -- integrate themselves into the leading committees as equals; they could not demand authority as talismanic 'worker leaders' over and above their powers to convince by rational argument.

James P Cannon replied to similar attitudes in 1952 as follows:

"Still less did I expect to see a grouping strutting around in the party demanding special consideration because they are 'trade unionists'. What's exceptional about that? There are fifteen million trade unionists in this country, but not quite so many revolutionists. But the revolutionists are the ones who count with us".

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It is a profound mistake to imagine that a fraction in aircraft or any other industry will build the party in Los Angeles. On the contrary, a strong party nucleus, with a qualified professional staff, will build the necessary fractions in this industry, as well as others, ten times sooner. . . .

Yours fraternally,
J. P. Cannon
National Secretary

UNION WORK OR PARTY WORK

January 3, 1941

Excerpts from a letter to the Los Angeles Local of the SWP. Copies of the letter were sent to members of the National Committee.

New York

Dear Comrades,

. . . We here have been somewhat disquieted by the turn taken by your discussion of the aircraft orientation. We received several letters on one side of this question and had been awaiting a letter from Comrade Curtiss. . . . However, without having a rounded picture of the differences of opinion among you, we got the impression, from the letters we have received and from the decisions you have made, of a one-sided approach to the problem. We refer in particular to the decision that the party organizer must be mobilized for work in an airplane plant.

It is one thing to contrast the industrial and trade union orientation to a bad social composition in the party and an exclusively propagandistic activity. We could count a campaign along these lines as progressive even if, as is usually the case, a certain overemphasis is employed to bend the stick backward. It is something else again to push the shop and union orientation at the expense of the party apparatus. Such a line is false from the point of view of principle as well as practical results. Without the party, trade union work ends in opportunism and futility; and without a strong party apparatus there can be no party in the Bolshevik sense of the word. . . .

JAMES P. CANNON: Letter to the Los Angeles Branch of the Socialist Workers Party, January 1941.

This letter is reproduced here exactly as it is to be found in the book of Cannon's writings from the early '40s, 'The Socialist Workers Party in World War 2'.

It is reprinted here in the hope that it will shock some comrades who have been miseducated by Smith's and Jones's demagogic 'worker leadership' ideology into actually thinking about the issue, and into reading the other items in this bulletin with the care they deserve.

For Smith and Jones the trade union struggle and the industrial struggle generally is placed much higher than the revolutionary party. They see the party as an appendage of the trade union struggle, not the trade union struggle as one front in the class struggle which the party must try to integrate into a coherent strategy and lead.

Note that this letter of Cannon's was guidance from the SWP's secretary as to how the party should implement the ideas Trotsky advocated in 1940 and before about a working class orientation — ideas which the comrades now use as a licence to downgrade the party and all that makes the party higher than the trade union struggle.

Note that Cannon rejects the interpretation of 'an orientation' as meaning that trade union work is more important than the party apparatus. Note that, in keeping with our basic notion that the trade union struggle is relatively spontaneous, while the party has to be consciously constructed, he says in effect that for the revolutionary militant, the party comes first.

INTRODUCTION

Carolyn

IN THE centre of much of the conflict we have had in the organisation for over two years has been the question of the place of workers and industrial militants in the League, and particularly in its leadership.

One section of the organisation — Smith and Jones and their allies — claim to represent the working class in the organisation, and as industrial militants or recent ex-industrial militants to have a special place in the leadership. They denounce much of the organisation as petty bourgeois and not interested in the working class, etc.

Because we refuse to accept that the rest of the organisation's membership and leading committees are obliged to defer to the self-proclaimed 'worker leadership' (Smith and Jones), they spread the ludicrous slander that we are hostile to the working class members in Oxford and elsewhere.

For a start, the facts tell a different tale. On the NC formed in July 1981 there were certainly more industrial workers and trade union militants from the I-CL than from the old WSL. WF and the I-CL had published a sizeable number of industrial newspapers (steel, hospitals, docks...) in the early '70s, and at the time of fusion was publishing a number of regular factory bulletins.

The issue cannot be resolved by an appeal to individuals' 'credentials'. It must be discussed honestly, politically, and without demagoguery.

MARXISM AND THE WORKING CLASS

It is common ground that the working class is at the centre of our historical perspective and our conception of socialism. The industrial working class is at the heart of our everyday concerns. We see the direct-action industrial struggle as the lifeblood of socialist politics. Our central immediate project is the building of a revolutionary party of, in, and by the working class.

But that does not exhaust the question.

It is also central to our conception of

the struggle for socialism that the working class must be armed with Marxism and a Marxist party. The existing labour movement must be rearmed with Marxism. And it is a fact that the ideas of Marxism come from outside the working class and have for many decades now been divorced from the mass of the working class, the property of small, often middle-class groups.

So the question arises of how Marxism is brought to the working class, and how the existing mainly middle-class Marxist groups relate to the working class and integrate workers into membership and into leadership.

Many comrades bandy about Trotsky's 1940 comments on the class composition of the US SWP as if Trotsky were a vulgar 'workerist' who advocated that the party downgrade itself, its aspirations, and its historic role.

Trotsky did write: "The party has only a minority of genuine factory workers... The non-proletarian elements represent a very necessary yeast, and I believe that we can be proud of the good quality of these elements... But... our party can be inundated by non-proletarian elements and can even lose its revolutionary character. The task is naturally not to prevent the influx of intellectuals by artificial methods... but to orientate practically all the organisation towards the factories, the strikes, the unions..."

"... The unbreakable condition should be: not to command the workers but only to help them, to give them suggestions, to arm them with the facts, ideas, factory papers, special leaflets, and so on..."

"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 realise that their duty is not to discuss among themselves, but to penetrate into the fresh milieu of workers. I repeat my proposition: Every petty bourgeois member of the party who, during a certain time, let us say three or six months, does not win a worker for the party, should be demoted to the rank of

candidate and after another three months expelled from the party..." (in *Defence of Marxism*)

But he also wrote:

"The trade unions always create a culture medium for opportunist deviations. Inevitably we will run up against this question in one of the next stages..."

And as a matter of historic fact, the layer of the SWP USA that Trotsky and Cannon based themselves on in 1940 was the layer which deserted Trotskyism for 'Pabloism' in 1953. To put the 1940 discussions into perspective you need also to read how that particular story ended. In 1952 Cannon made a speech — 'Trade Unionists and Revolutionists' — which is of immense value on this point.

The cardinal idea that the revolutionary organisation does not "command the workers but... help them" is central to the work of the League.

As we've seen, the I-CL/WF tried to follow Trotsky's advice, and put out factory papers and bulletins such as Trotsky suggested — starting with a series of duplicated pamphlets on the Manchester docks, during the historic fight against the reorganisation of the ports back in 1967. In practice and not just in words we have always seen it as central to the development of the organisation that it should give such 'help' to its proletarian members, and to its non-proletarian members, to work around the factory.

The idea that 'don't command the workers, help them' means: 'don't vote down Smith and Jones on the leading committees, defer to them', is self-evidently ridiculous. But that's the message you are supposed to accept when Smith and Jones refer to "what Trotsky said in 1940".

Smith and Jones are not raw workers, and, for the internal affairs of the League, the fact that they are an ex-worker and a worker has no weight or importance whatsoever. James P Cannon put it well when the 'Pabloite' trade unionists in the SWP USA demanded a special status in the SWP in 1952/3:

"Still less did I expect to see a group of strutting around in the party demanding special consideration because they are 'trade unionists'. What's exceptional

about that? There are fifteen million trade unionists in this country, but not quite so many revolutionists. But the revolutionists are the ones who count with us".

Cannon was referring to the central core of the SWP's industrial workers — the self-same people whom he together with Trotsky had championed and praised in 1940 against people like Burnham.

When he wrote about how to approach new workers, Trotsky was not talking about Smith and Jones! They are political militants of many years standing (Smith joined the SLL/WRP in 1966, Jones in 1963). The idea that such party members have privileges inside the party has essentially nothing to do with the relationship of the party to the working class, nor even with the idea that special provisions should be made for the education of workers recruited to an organisation composed mainly of petty bourgeois or white collar workers.

If after all these years Smith and Jones have not learnt enough to be able freely to function in the organisation, what reason is there to think that they ever will? No, their 'demand' here, if you think about it, is for themselves to be the measure of all things for the organisation — permanently.

Their demand, supposedly grounded in what Trotsky wrote in 1940, translates in the world of real political relationships into the demand that the League be organised around themselves. That's what it all comes down to.

As a matter of fact and of Smith's and Jones's own experience over the last nine years, this is not the way to recruit and organise workers into a revolutionary organisation. What is most remarkable about Smith's and Jones's record over that time is their failure to recruit workers. Think of the publicity, the central part the comrades played in big struggles and in the union, and the failure to recruit workers is pretty remarkable.

Smith will never understand it, but the sort of workerism he stands for appeals primarily to petty bourgeois leftists and romantics. It has a limited attraction for workers. More, it will repel most self-respecting workers.

The serious militants who come over to us will know — unless they are stupid, or disoriented by the flattery of petty

bourgeois workerists — that they need to develop. The notion of stewing in their own 'workerist' narcissism will repel such workers. For them it will contradict the whole point of giving their time and energy to the party — to transcend the limitations, and outgrow the intellectual mutilation, which capitalist society imposes on workers.

That is done through the organisation, which is the bearer of working class Marxist politics and culture.

Workers will expect and demand that the organisation does not waste their time in endless inconclusive talk; that in the course of educating them it conducts its affairs so as not to make things more difficult for the not-yet-educated; that no effort is spared to involve them in the affairs of the party; and so on.

Smith's notion of how the worker relates to the party will for most serious working class militants contradict the very point of being in the party both from the collective class point of view (building a revolutionary MARXIST party) and from their immediate personal interest in learning and developing.

When you have ideas like Smith's and Jones's dominant in the organisation on this question, it is those workers who do come into the organisation who pay for it. The Cowley group is the proof of it. Many times over the last 2½ years various of us have tried to get these comrades involved in writing for the paper, speaking at meetings, etc. Each time Smith has blocked it: no, he says, that is too difficult for them.

The comrades are left living in the shadow of the superstars. They do not, on the whole, relate directly to the organisation, which could educate them and integrate them. They relate to Smith and Jones — who can do neither. Whose conception of what it's all about cuts against them. Who flatter the Cowley workers, poison them against 'the full-timers, intellectuals and pseudo-intellectuals', and at the same time stand squarely across these comrades' paths of development, blotting out the light of Marxist politics from them.

Smith's and Jones's 'workerism' is for the petty bourgeois. It repels most serious workers, and it has stunted and will stunt the development of those it does not repel.

Privilege and arrogance at the top are inevitably accompanied by subservience and submission at the bottom — as the other side of the regime they demand in which the rest of us should have to defer to the 'worker leadership'.

The notion that someone who spends her or his life working for the organisation at sub-poverty wages, is so morally inferior to the proletarians Smith and Jones that s/he (together with all League petty bourgeois, and with working class professional revolutionaries, like myself) has to defer to them on political questions about which s/he may know more than they do — that is a grotesque, anti-Marxist notion.

With such ideas it is impossible to build a revolutionary party. Trotsky's and Cannon's attacks on intellectuals like James Burnham give no encouragement to such notions. Quite the opposite: Burnham is attacked for his lack of seriousness and his dilettantism towards the organisation. Cannon reproaches Burnham with not committing himself sufficiently to the organisation — not with putting too much into it, or for daring to defend his own opinions against the proletarian Cannon. (Though according to Smith and Jones Cannon was by then no longer a proletarian).

The truth of the matter is that Smith is the nearest thing to James Burnham in the leadership of the organisation. He is not a university teacher, but that does not alter the essence.

Forget the tags and names, and think of the psychology and the actual political and personal relations. Smith relates to the organisation and its leadership as a dilettante. He has been out of the factory nearly 18 months, and instead of party work chooses instead to write his memoirs of Cowley on the promise or half-promise that it would be made into a TV programme. The organisation was not even consulted. Smith demands deference and has an arrogant attitude towards the organisation.

The general educational value of the material reprinted in this bulletin is self-evident. Its relevance to the WSL will also be obvious to the reader. You will see that it upholds the ideas on this question summarised in the document 'Building the WSL' (IB 50) — namely:

- * The League focuses on the working class and on its industrial and political organisations. It tries to regulate itself and all its members by the needs of the working class and the rhythms of working class life, insofar as these are compatible with its central revolutionary objective.

- * The League immerses itself in and aspires to lead the direct action struggles of the class.

- * The strategic goal of the League is to build a mass working class revolutionary party.

- * The League aims to recruit workers but not to pander to working class backwardness.

- * The League aims to recruit workers and to educate them as all-round Marxist cadres who play a full role in the political deliberations of the organisation. It tries to structure its internal life and its education methods to facilitate this.

- * The League is a party in which militants from all class backgrounds are trained as revolutionary cadres.

- * The League is based on an ideological/political selection of its members, and has a minimum level of commitment and active involvement as a condition of membership.

- * Inside the League every member is equal to every other member, and there are no privileges within the League or within its leadership. Though the organisation may well make special provisions to facilitate the involvement of workers; though it may well demand the sort of orientation that Trotsky talked of in 1940 for its middle-class members; the party that takes these decisions is a party of equals.

MISREPRESENTATIONS

Like everything else in the organisation, the question of workers and middle-class people, full-timers and intellectuals, has been badly snarled up and muddled over.

There are, I think, genuine differences. As well as that, Smith and Jones have pre-

tensions to personal status which they try to justify by general ideas about the role of workers in the revolutionary party.

Their pretensions to personal status lead them not only to glorify themselves but also to denounce their 'enemies'. But instead of honestly stating their own ideas, and honestly and openly defending their pretensions and claims for themselves, they cover over the issue and express it in terms of (a) denunciations of intellectuals (and pseudo-intellectuals), and (b) lying misrepresentations of our attitude, position and record.

On the basis of the facts of our quite long independent history, it would seem that there is little room for doubt about the attitude of ex-WF/I-CL people to the working class and to the working class movement, or about our orientation to it, our willingness to build trade union fractions, our keenness to recruit industrial workers into the League (or for that matter to send colonists into industry).

Today we are very prominent in the push in the Labour Party for workplace branches (and Smith denounces us for it). Anyone interested will find that in the late '60s we played a prominent part in IS's efforts to turn the Vietnam solidarity militants and the middle class left in general towards the working class.

None of this is very spectacular, and nobody claims that it is (or was). It is proof, for anybody who cares to bother with the facts, that we are no less interested in the working class than comrades Smith and Jones.

THE DIFFERENCES

So where are the differences, and what are they?

The real difference is about the party and its relation to the working class.

If you read the excerpts from Cannon and Lenin it is perfectly plain that all the measures to orient to workers have as their goal to win workers to the revolutionary organisation **ON ITS OWN TERMS**. It is not to adapt the party's ideas, or its basic structure, so as to accommodate one or many workers who lack the commitment, the political understanding, or for whatever reason the practical possibility, to play a role within it.

None of this is to downgrade the working class or to be hostile to workers in or around the organisation. Quite the opposite. The revolutionary party is the bearer, for now and until the working class itself comes decisively on the scene as a revolutionary class, of the historic mission of the working class. We are the bearer of a conception of the working class which is in such contrast to the everyday reality of the working class under capitalism (and even, frequently of a working class in trade union struggle that cynics and sceptics say that we are just romantics).

To defer to Smith and Jones now when they demand a following for muddled, ill-developed politics on the basis of a claim to represent 'worker leadership', would be to compromise that historic task.

JAMES P CANNON — EXCERPTS FROM 'THE STRUGGLE FOR A PROLETARIAN PARTY' ON THE QUESTION OF PARTY REGIME

The major agitational plank of the Smith faction has been complaints about alleged "bureaucracy" in the organization.

In the following excerpts, Cannon explains why such complaints — even if justified, which the present ones are not — cannot be central defining political issues for Marxists.

The whole approach to the question of the "regime" must be fundamentally different in each case, depending on the position taken on the question of the program. The aim of those who stand by our program can be only to correct the shortcomings of the regime, and to improve its functioning, in order to make it a more effective instrument of the program. The critics from the camp of the opposition, on the other hand, insofar as there is any sense or logic in their position, cannot have any real interest in our regime as such. Their fundamental aim is to substitute the present program by another program. For that they require not an improvement of the present regime, but its removal and replacement by another which will realize the revisionist program.

Thus it is clear that the question stands not organizationally in the first place, but politically. The political line is and must be the determining factor. It is and must be placed in the center of discussion. We held to this method in spite of everything, even at the cost of losing the votes of comrades who are interested primarily in secondary questions, because only in that way is it possible to educate the party and consolidate a reliable base of support for the program.

What is the significance of the organization question as such in a political party? Does it have an independent significance of its own on the same plane with political differences, or even standing above them? Very rarely. And then only transiently, for the political line breaks through and dominates the organization question every time. This is one of the first ABC lessons of party politics, confirmed by all experience.

In his notorious document entitled "Science and Style," Burnham writes: "The second central issue is the question of the regime in the Socialist Workers Party." In reality the opposition tried from the beginning of the dispute to make the question of the "regime" the first issue; the basic cadres of the opposition were recruited precisely on this issue before the fundamental theoretical and political differences were fully revealed and developed.

This method of struggle is not new. The history of the revolutionary labor movement since the days of the First International is an uninterrupted chronicle of the attempts of petty-bourgeois groupings and tendencies of all kinds to recompense themselves for their theoretical and political weakness by furious attacks against the "organizational methods" of the Marxists. And under the heading of organizational methods, they included everything from the concept of revolutionary centralism up to routine matters of administration; and beyond that to the personal manners and methods of their principled opponents, which they invariably describe as "bad," "harsh," "tyrannical," and—of course, of course, of course—"bureaucratic." To this day any little group of anarchists will explain to you how the "authoritarian" Marx mistreated Bakunin.

Our conception of the party is radically different. For us the party must be a combat organization which leads a determined struggle for power. The Bolshevik party which leads the struggle for power needs not only internal democracy. It also requires an imperious centralism and an iron discipline in action. It requires a proletarian composition conforming to its proletarian program. The Bolshevik party cannot be led by dilettantes whose real interests and real lives are in another and alien world. It requires an active professional leadership, composed of individuals democratically selected and democratically controlled, who devote their entire lives to the party, and who find in the party and in its multi-form activities in a proletarian environment, complete personal satisfaction.

For the proletarian revolutionist the party is the concentrated expression of his life purpose, and he is bound to it for life and death. He preaches and practices party patriotism, because he knows that his socialist ideal cannot be realized without the party. In his eyes the crime of crimes is disloyalty or irresponsibility toward the party. The proletarian revolutionist is proud of his party. He defends it before the world on all occasions. The proletarian revolutionist is a disciplined man, since the party cannot exist as a combat organization without discipline. When he finds himself in the minority, he loyally submits to the decision of the party and carries out its decisions, while he awaits new events to verify the disputes or new opportunities to discuss them again.

The petty-bourgeois attitude toward the party, which Burnham represents, is the opposite of all this. The petty-bourgeois character of the opposition is shown in their attitude toward the party, their conception of the party, even in their method of complaining and

whining about the "grievances," as unfailingly as in their light-minded attitude toward our program, our doctrine and our tradition.

The petty-bourgeois intellectual, who wants to teach and guide the labor movement without participating in it, feels only loose ties to the party and is always full of "grievances" against it. The moment his toes are stepped on, or he is rebuffed, he forgets all about the interests of the movement and remembers only that his feelings have been hurt; the revolution may be important, but the wounded vanity of a petty-bourgeois intellectual is more important. He is all for discipline when he is laying down the law to others, but as soon as he finds himself in a minority, he begins to deliver ultimatums and threats of split to the party majority.

After all, what is the "apparatus" of our party? What is this selection of people whom the self-sacrificing Burnham disdainfully calls "a cynical group of small-time bureaucrats" and a "rotten clique"? Let's take up this question, once and for all, and have it out. The "apparatus," that is, the National Committee and the functioning full-time staff of party workers, is not an economically privileged group and has no special interests of its own that are different from the interests of the party members as a whole. The reality is quite different. The full-time functionaries of the party are those comrades who are distinguished either by exceptional ability, which propels them into professional party work by the universal consent and approval of the party membership, or by the capacity for self-sacrifice, or both—those comrades who are willing to undertake functions as party workers for less compensation than even the most poorly paid worker as a rule can secure in private employment.

The rank and file of the party knows this very well and doesn't want to hear any more denigration of the professional party workers, especially from people who shrink from the sacrifices and duties of professional party work. Our party is not a party like the social democracy. We will not permit our movement to be led by spare-time heroes while the coolie work is done by the professional functionaries, who in addition have to stand the abuse of the "lords" who come around to visit the party once a week. The party honors and respects its professional staff. It considers the occupation of a professional revolutionist to be the most honorable of all occupations. The highest aspiration and ambition of every young party member should be to qualify himself for such a profession in life.

Our party "apparatus" is neither a bureaucracy, nor a faction, nor a clique. It is a selection of people who fulfill different functions according to their merits and capacities and experience and their readiness to serve the party at the cost of severe economic penalties. There has been no element of "patronage" in their selection; the very suggestion of such a thing is an intolerable insult, especially when it comes, as it usually does, from well situated dilettantes who never missed a dinner appointment for the revolution. Neither can it be justly maintained that there has been any factional discrimination or favoritism in the selection of party functionaries. The opposition has been represented, and well represented, especially in the editorial and office positions in the center.

The oppositionists themselves testify to this: "It is true that the members of the minority occupy many posts. . . . Cannon has not the least objection to everyone in the party doing as much work, even in prominent posts, as he is capable of handling." Then what are they complaining about? What kind of a bureaucracy is it that "has not the least objection" to anybody having any function he can "handle" even in "prominent posts"? Try to discover such a situation in a real bureaucracy—the Stalinist or Lewis-Green bureaucracies, for example.

We are living in serious times. We stand on the eve of grave events and great tests for our movement. People who can be disoriented and swept off their feet by rumors and gossip and unsupported accusations will not be very reliable soldiers in the hard days coming. The petty bourgeoisie, after all, do everything on a small scale. The gossip and slander campaign of our opposition is not a drop in the bucket compared to the torrents of lies, misinformation and slander that will be poured over the heads of the revolutionary fighters in the coming days of the war crisis through the mighty propaganda mediums of the class enemy. And it is to be expected that for long periods of time we will be gagged and bound hand and foot and have no means of communication with each other. Only those who have thought out their principles and know how to hold to them firmly will be able to sustain themselves in such times. It is not difficult to foresee that those who succumbed already at the feeble anticipation of this campaign inside our own party can be engulfed by the first wave of the real campaign. Such

comrades need not simply a reassurance about this or that fairy tale. They need a re-education in the principles and methods of Marxist politics. Only then will it be possible to rely upon them for the future battles.

LENIN — EXCERPTS FROM "WHAT IS TO BE DONE?"

In these excerpts Lenin is discussing his concept of revolutionary organisation as contrasted with that of the 'Economists', a tendency within the Russian Marxist movement who tended to reduce the role of revolutionaries to that of helping the workers' economic struggle.

Part of Lenin's argument was to do with the necessities imposed on Russian revolutionaries by Tsarist state repression, but many of his ideas are of wider relevance.

It should be remembered that the Russian Marxist movement at the time was by no means the mass workers' movement it later became. The local committees were mostly made up of students and ex-students.

The 'Economists' denounced Lenin's ideas as elitist, and claimed to stand for a bigger role for rank and file workers.

"A committee of students is no good, it is not stable." Quite true. But the conclusion to be drawn from this is that we must have a committee of professional revolutionaries and it does not matter whether a student or a worker is capable of becoming a professional revolutionary. The conclusion you draw, however, is that the working-class movement must not be pushed on from outside! In your political innocence you fail to notice that you are playing into the hands of our Economists and fostering our amateurishness. In what way, may I ask, did our students "push on" our workers? Solely by the student bringing to the worker the scraps of political knowledge he himself possessed, the crumbs of socialist ideas he had managed to acquire (for the principal intellectual diet of the present-day student, "legal Marxism," could furnish only the rudiments, only crumbs of knowledge). There has never been too much of such "pushing on from outside"; on the contrary, so far there

has been too little, all too little of it in our movement, for we have been stewing too assiduously in our own juice; we have bowed far too slavishly to the elementary "economic struggle of the workers against the employers and the government." We professional revolutionaries must and will make it our business to engage in *this kind of "pushing"* a hundred times more forcibly than we have done hitherto. But the very fact that you select so despicable a phrase as "pushing on from outside"—a phrase which cannot but rouse in the workers (at least in the workers who are as unenlightened as you yourselves) a sense of distrust towards *all* who bring them political knowledge and revolutionary experience from outside, and rouse in them an instinctive desire to resist *all* such people—proves that you are *demagogues*, and demagogues are the worst enemies of the working class.

The number of working-class revolutionaries is inadequate, he says. This is perfectly true, and once again we stress that the "valuable communication of a close observer" fully confirms our view of the causes of the present crisis in Social-Democracy, and, consequently, of the means required for overcoming it. Not only are revolutionaries in general lagging behind the spontaneous awakening of the masses, but even working-class revolutionaries are lagging behind the spontaneous awakening of the working-class masses. And this fact most strikingly confirms, even from the "practical" point of view, not only the absurdity but even the political reactionariness of the "pedagogics" to which we are so often treated when discussing our duties to our workers. This fact proves that our very first and most imperative duty is to help to train working-class revolutionaries who will be on the same level in regard to Party activity as the revolutionaries from amongst the intellectuals (we emphasize the words "in regard to Party activity," because although necessary, it is neither so easy nor so imperative to bring the workers up to the level of intellectuals in other respects). Therefore, attention must be devoted principally to raising the workers to the level of revolutionaries; it is not at all our task to descend to the level of the "working masses" as the Economists wish to do, or to the level of the "average

worker," as the *Svoboda* desires to do (which thus ascends to the second grade of Economist "pedagogics"). I am far from denying the necessity for popular literature for the workers, and especially popular (but, of course, not vulgar) literature for the especially backward workers. But what annoys me is this constant confusion of pedagogics with questions of politics and organization. You, gentlemen, who are so much concerned about the "average worker," as a matter of fact, rather insult the workers by your desire to talk down to them when discussing working-class politics and working-class organization. Talk about serious things in a serious manner; leave pedagogics to the pedagogues, and not to politicians, nor to organizers! Are there not advanced people, "average people," and the "mass," among the intelligentsia too? Does not everyone recognize that popular literature is also required for the intelligentsia and is not such literature written? Just imagine someone, in an article on organizing college or high-school students, repeating over and over again, as if he had made a new discovery, that first of all we must have an organization of "average students." The author of such an article would be ridiculed, and rightly so. He would be told: give us your ideas on organization, if you have any, and we ourselves will decide who is "average," who above average, who below average. But if you have no organizational ideas of your own, then all your exertions on behalf of the "masses" and "average" will be simply boring. You must realize that these questions about "politics" and "organization" are so serious in themselves that they cannot be discussed in any other but a very serious way. We can and must educate workers (and university and high-school students) so as to be able to discuss these questions with them; but once you do bring up these questions, you must give real replies to them, do not fall back on the "average," or on the "masses"; do not try to get off by resorting to empty phrasemongering.*

In order to be fully prepared for his task, the worker-revolutionary must also become a professional revolutionary. Hence B—v is wrong when he says that since the worker spends eleven and a half hours in the factory, the brunt of all other revolutionary functions (apart from agitation)

"must necessarily fall mainly upon the shoulders of an extremely small force of intellectuals." But this is not out of sheer "necessity." It is so because we are backward, because we do not recognize our duty to assist every capable worker to become a professional agitator, organizer, propagandist, literature distributor, etc., etc. In this respect, we waste our strength in a positively shameful manner; we lack the ability to husband that which should be tended and reared with special care. Look at the Germans: they have a hundred times more forces than we have. But they understand perfectly well that the "average" does not too frequently promote really capable agitators, etc., from its ranks. That is why they immediately try to place every capable working man in such conditions as will enable him to develop and apply his abilities to the utmost: he is made a professional agitator, he is encouraged to widen the field of his activity, to spread it from one factory to the whole of the industry, from one locality to the whole country. He acquires experience and dexterity in his profession, he broadens his outlook and increases his knowledge, he observes at close quarters the prominent political leaders from other localities and of other parties, he strives to rise to their level and combine within himself the knowledge of working-class environment and freshness of socialist convictions with professional skill, without which the proletariat cannot wage a stubborn struggle against its excellently trained enemies. In this way and in this way alone does the mass of workers produce men like Bebel and Auer. But what in a politically free country takes place very largely automatically must in Russia be done deliberately and systematically by our organizations. A worker-agitator who is at all talented and "promising" must not be left to work eleven hours a day in a factory.

JAMES P CANNON — EXCERPTS FROM 'THE STRUGGLE FOR A PROLETARIAN PARTY' ON 'THE INTELLECTUALS AND THE WORKERS', AND ON 'CELEBRITIES' AND FULL-TIMERS

In this section of his book, Cannon defends an 'outspoken proletarian orientation' against the pretensions of 'intellectuals' and especially of James Burnham, a university professor who was a leading member of the opposition in the SWP at that time.

But Cannon gives little comfort to the conceptions of Smith and Jones.

Cannon's dividing line is not between workers on the one side, and full-time revolutionaries (whether of worker or middle-class origin) on the other. On the contrary, he describes full-time revolutionary activity as "the most honorable of occupations". His dividing line is between those who half-commit themselves and those who fully commit themselves. On the one side stand Burnham, who preferred to keep his university job rather than work full-time for the SWP, and all the other 'celebrities' of the socialist movement. On the other stand the 'Jimmy Higinsses', the revolutionary workers and organisers.

Cannon does not reproach Burnham with being too much of an intellectual. He reproaches him with not committing himself sufficiently to the organisation. He does not complain that the intellectual puts too much into the organisation, but that he puts too little.

Shachtman and Abern, who were certainly 'intellectuals', but were also fully committed revolutionaries, are not put into the same category as Burnham.

The problem which Cannon sees with the intellectuals is "not their 'education'... but their petty-bourgeois spirit, the miserable halfness, their absurd ambition to lead the revolutionary labour movement in their spare time..."

5—THE INTELLECTUALS AND THE WORKERS

The outspoken proletarian orientation of the majority is represented by Burnham as an expression of antagonism to "intellectuals" as such, and as an ignorant backwoods prejudice against education in general. In his major document, "The War and Bureaucratic Conservatism," he writes: "Above all, an 'anti-intellectual' and 'anti-intellectuals' attitude is drummed into the minds of party members. The faction associates are taught, quite literally, to despise and scorn 'intellectuals' and 'intellectualism'." For reasons best known to themselves, Shachtman and Abern sign their names to this pro-

test and take sides in a conflict where they have every right to proclaim neutrality.

The *Workers' Age*, organ of the Lovestoneites, which is following our internal discussion with unconcealed sympathy for the opposition, enters the scuffle as an interested partisan. Commenting on a remark in my published speech, to the effect that worker elements engaged in the class struggle understand the Russian question better than the more educated scholastics, the *Workers' Age* of March 9th says: "This is obviously aimed at Burnham, who has the 'misfortune' of being educated. What is this kind of slur but the old Stalinist demagoguery contrasting the virtuous, clear-sighted 'proletarian' element to the wicked, confused 'intellectual'? It is the same kind of rotten, unprincipled demagoguery, make no mistake about it!"

Let us see. The question at issue is the attitude of proletarian revolutionists to educated members of the petty-bourgeois class who come over to the proletarian movement. This is an important question and deserves clarification. Burnham is indubitably an intellectual, as his academic training, profession and attainments testify. There is nothing wrong in that, as such, and we cannot have the slightest reason to reproach him for it. We are quite well aware, as Marx said, that "ignorance never did anybody any good," and we have nothing in common with vulgar prejudices against "educated people" which are cultivated by rascally demagogues to serve their own ends. Lenin wrote to Gorky on this point: "Of course I was not dreaming of 'persecuting the intelligentsia' as the stupid little Syndicalists do, or deny its necessity for the workers' movement." It is a slander on the Marxist wing of the party to attribute such sentiments to us. On the other hand, we are not unduly impressed by mere "learning" and still less by pretensions to it. We approach this question, as all questions, critically.

Our movement, the movement of scientific socialism, judges things and people from a class point of view. Our aim is the organization of a vanguard party to lead the proletarian struggle for power and the reconstitution of society on socialist foundations. That is our "science." We judge all people coming to us from another class by the extent of their real identification with our class, and the contributions they can make which aid the proletariat in its struggle against the capitalist class. That is the framework within which we objectively consider the problem of the intellectuals in the movement. If at least 99 out of every 100 intellectuals—to speak with the utmost "conservatism"—who approach the revolutionary labor movement turn out to be more of a problem than an asset it is not at all because of our prejudices against them, or because we do not treat them with the proper consideration, but be-

cause they do not comply with the requirements which alone can make them useful to us in our struggle.

In the Communist Manifesto, in which the theory and program of scientific socialism was first formally promulgated, it was already pointed out that the disintegration of the ruling capitalist class precipitates sections of that class into the proletariat; and that others—a smaller section to be sure, and mainly individuals—cut themselves adrift from the decaying capitalist class and supply the proletariat with fresh elements of enlightenment and progress. Marx and Engels themselves, the founders of the movement of scientific socialism, came to the proletariat from another class. The same thing is true of all the other great teachers of our movement, without exception.

Lenin, Trotsky, Plekhanov, Luxemburg—none of them were proletarians in their social origin, but they came over to the proletariat and became the greatest of proletarian leaders. In order to do that, however, they had to desert their own class and join "the revolutionary class, the class that holds the future in its hands." They made this transfer of class allegiance unconditionally and without any reservations. Only so could they become genuine representatives of their adopted class, and merge themselves completely with it, and eliminate every shadow of conflict between them and revolutionists of proletarian origin. There was and could be no "problem" in their case.

The conflict between the proletarian revolutionists and the petty-bourgeois intellectuals in our party, as in the labor movement generally in the whole world for generation after generation, does not at all arise from ignorant prejudices of the workers against them. It arises from the fact that they neither "cut themselves adrift" from the alien classes, as the Communist Manifesto specified, nor do they "join the revolutionary class," in the full sense of the word. Unlike the great leaders mentioned above, who came over to the proletariat unconditionally and all the way, they hesitate half-way between the class alternatives. Their intelligence, and to a certain extent also their knowledge, impels them to revolt against the intellectual and spiritual stagnation of the parasitic ruling class whose system reeks with decay. On the other hand, their petty-bourgeois spirit holds them back from completely identifying themselves with the proletarian class and its vanguard party, and reshaping their entire lives in a new proletarian environment. Herein is the source of the "problem" of the intellectuals.

The revolutionary workers' movement, conscious that it "holds the future in its hands," is self-assured, imperious, exacting in the

highest degree. It repels all flirtations and half-allegiances. It demands from everyone, especially from leaders, "all or nothing." Not their "education," as the Lovestoneite sympathizers of our party opposition maintain, brings the intellectuals into conflict with the proletarian cadres of the party, but their petty-bourgeois spirit, the miserable halfness, their absurd ambition to lead the revolutionary labor movement in their spare time.

It is not true that the advanced militant workers are hostile to education and prejudiced against educated people. Just the contrary. They have an exaggerated respect for every intellectual who approaches the movement and an exaggerated appreciation of every little service he renders. This was never demonstrated more convincingly than in the reception accorded to Burnham when he formally entered our movement, and in the extraordinary consideration that has been given to him all this time. He became a member of the National Committee without having served any apprenticeship in the class struggle. He was appointed one of the editors of our theoretical journal. All the recognition and the "honors" of a prominent leader of the party were freely accorded to him.

His scandalous attitude toward the responsibilities of leadership; his consistent refusal to devote himself to party work as a profession, not as an avocation; his haughty and contemptuous attitude toward his party co-workers; his disrespect for our tradition, and even for our international organization and its leadership—all this and more was passed over in silence by the worker elements in the party, if by no means with approval. It was not until Burnham came out into the open in an attempt to overthrow our program that the worker elements of the party rose up against him and called him to order. His attempt now to represent this revolutionary action as an expression of ignorant prejudice against him because of his "learning" is only another, and most revealing, exhibition of his own petty-bourgeois spirit and petty-bourgeois contempt for the workers.

A proletarian party that is theoretically schooled in the scientific doctrines of Marxism cannot be intimidated by anybody, nor disoriented by a few unfortunate experiences. The fact that the learned Professor Burnham revealed himself as just another petty bourgeois may possibly engender a little more caution in regard to similar types in the future. But it will not change anything in the fundamental attitude of the workers' vanguard toward the intellectuals from the bourgeois world who approach the movement in the future. Instructed by this experience it is possible that the next one who comes along will have to meet stiffer conditions. It is

hardly likely that in the future anyone will be permitted to make pretensions to leadership unless he makes a clean break with his alien class environment and comes over to live in the labor movement. Mere visiting will not be encouraged.

The American movement has had very bad experience with intellectuals. Those who have appeared on its horizon up to date have been a pretty shabby crew. Adventurers, careerists, self-seekers, dilettantes, quitters-under-fire—that is the wretched picture of the parade of intellectuals through the American labor movement as painted by themselves. Daniel De Leon stands out as the great exception. He was not merely an intellectual. He was a man and a fighter, a partisan incapable of any divided allegiance. Once he had decided to come over to the proletarian class, the stale atmosphere of the bourgeois academic world became intolerable for him. He departed from the university, slamming the door behind him, and never once looked back. Thereafter, to the end of his life, he identified himself completely with the socialist movement and the struggle of the workers. Revolutionary workers of the present generation remember him with gratitude for that, without thereby overlooking his political errors. Other, and we hope, greater De Leons, will come to us in the future, and they will receive a whole-hearted welcome from the party of the proletarian vanguard. They will not feel sensitive if we scrutinize their credentials and submit them to a certain apprenticeship. They will not be offended if we insist on an explicit understanding that their task is to interpret and apply the proletarian science of Marxism, not to palm off a bourgeois substitute for it. The new De Leons will readily understand that this preliminary examination is simply a precaution against the infiltration of intellectual phonies and does not signify, in any way whatever, a prejudice against intellectuals who really come to serve the proletarian cause.

The genuine Marxist intellectuals who come to us will understand the cardinal point of our doctrine, that socialism is not simply a "moral ideal," as Burnham tries to instruct us in the year 1940—92 years after the Communist Manifesto—but the necessary outcome of an irreconcilable class struggle conducted by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. It is the workers who must make the revolution and it is workers who must compose the proletarian vanguard party. The function of the Marxist intellectual is to aid the workers in their struggle. He can do it constructively only by turning his back on the bourgeois world and joining the proletarian revolutionary camp, that is, by ceasing to be a petty bourgeois. On that basis the worker Bolsheviks and the Marxist intellectuals will get along very well together.

* * *

Lawyers, doctors, teachers, preachers, writers, professors—people of this kind who lived their real lives in another world and gave an evening, or at most two evenings, a week of their time to the socialist movement for the good of their souls—they were the outstanding leaders of the pre-war Socialist Party.

They decided things. They laid down the law. They were the speakers on ceremonial occasions; they posed for their photographs and gave interviews to the newspapers. Between them and the proletarian Jimmy Higginses in the ranks, there was an enormous gulf. As for the party functionaries, the people who devoted all their time to the daily work and routine of the party, they were simply regarded as flunkys to be loaded with the disagreeable tasks, poorly paid and blamed if anything went wrong. A prejudice was cultivated against the professional party workers. The real honors and the decisive influence went to the leaders who had professional occupations outside the party and who, for the most part, lived typical petty-bourgeois lives which were far removed from the lives of the workers they were presumably "leading."

When we organized the Communist Party in this country in 1919, under the inspiration of the Russian revolution, we put a stop to all this nonsense. We had the opinion that leadership of the revolutionary movement was a serious matter, a profession in itself, and the highest and most honorable of all professions. We deemed it unworthy of the dignity of a revolutionary leader to waste his time on some piddling occupation in the bourgeois world and wrong for the party to permit it. We decreed that no one could be a member of the Central Committee of the party unless he was a full time professional party worker, or willing to become such at the call of the party. I think we had the right idea in 1919. It is all the more right at the present hour of the historic clock when the organization of the proletarian party on the highest possible basis of efficiency is the supreme problem of the revolution.

By and large there is no excuse for any exception to this rule unless the party itself, for reasons of its own, finds it advisable to have a prominent leader in this or that position outside the party to serve party ends. Naturally there are and have been and will be cases where the personal responsibilities of the individual cannot be provided for by the party, and he may have to seek an external occupation for economic reasons. That is the case right now with a great many party comrades who ought by right to be devoting their entire time to the party. But such situations have to be regarded

as temporary expedients, to be cut short when the financial resources of the party improve.

It is only natural that a man of the outstanding talents and equipment of Burnham should play a leading role in the party. This was universally recognized. At the same time, it seems to me, is placed upon Burnham the obligation to put himself completely at the service of the party and make party work his profession. In the early days of our acquaintance with him I took it for granted that he had this end in view. Far from barring this road to him, I personally made numerous attempts to open it. I first broached the question to him in the summer of 1935. Even then he was highly critical of the administrative inefficiency of the Trotskyists; he even propounded the theory that this was an inherent weakness of Trotskyism. He was inclined to the opinion that our "regime"—which was then "embodied" by Shachtman and Cannon—was so preoccupied with political ideas and with the conviction that they would prevail in spite of everything, that the organizational and administrative machinery for realizing the ideas was not given sufficient attention. (That was before Burnham discovered that Cannon has no political ideas and no interest in them.)

I proposed to him at that time, in the most friendly spirit, that he help us remedy the undoubted weakness. I proposed concretely that he make an end of the two-for-a-nickel business of instructing college students who have no intention of connecting themselves with the labor movement, and devote his energies and talents entirely to the party. After "thinking it over" for a day or so he rejected the proposal. The reason he gave was somewhat astounding: he said he was not fully convinced of the wisdom of devoting his life entirely to a cause which might not be victorious in his lifetime! Naturally, I could not give him any guarantees. . . .

JAMES P CANNON — EXCERPT FROM 'TRADE UNIONISTS AND REVOLUTIONISTS', 1952.

In 1952-3 a faction developed in the US Trotskyist movement with a pessimistic outlook on the class struggle and a tendency to downgrade the role of the Trotskyist party. There were strong pressures explaining such a development — the Cold War was in full swing, Trotskyist forces worldwide were dwindling fast, US and West European capitalism were beginning a long boom, and Stalinism had scored triumphs in Eastern Europe and China.

The opposition faction linked up with the grouping in the leadership of the world Trotskyist movement around Michel Pablo, and adopted some of Pablo's ideas about a whole coming historical epoch in which 'the revolutionary process' would be led by Stalinist forces. But it also included the core of the SWP's trade unionists — people who had no special wish to draw closer to the much-reviled and witch-hunted US Communist Party.

In this speech Cannon tried to explain why these experienced worker militants had fallen prey to opportunist politics.

"This apparent contradiction", he declared, "this division of working class forces in party factional struggle — is not new... The proletarian left wing by no means ever had all the workers, and the opportunist petty bourgeois wing was never without some working class support..."

In Germany, for example, before World War 1 and even up to 1933, "the skilled, privileged trade unionists were the solid base of support of the opportunist Social Democratic leaders — while the communist revolutionaries... were the youth, the unemployed, and the unskilled, less privileged workers..."

And in the US, Cannon argued, a whole section of working class militants had changed "their material position and, to a certain extent, their social status" between the '30s and the '50s.

"The pioneer militants of the CIO unions are sixteen years older than they were in 1937. They are better off... and many of them are sixteen times softer and more conservative..." The older SWP worker militants were to some extent influenced by that environment.

In conclusion, Cannon went on to argue some more general points:

Still less did I expect to see such a grouping strutting around in the party demanding special consideration because they are "trade unionists." What's exceptional about that? There are fifteen million trade unionists in this country, but not quite so many revolutionists. But the revolutionists are the ones who count with us.

The revolutionary movement, under the best conditions, is a hard fight, and it wears out a lot of human material. Not for nothing has it been said a thousand times in the past: "The revolution is a devourer of men." The movement in this, the richest and most conservative country in the world, is perhaps the most voracious of all.

It is not easy to persist in the struggle, to hold on, to stay tough and fight it out year after year without victory; and even, in times such as the present, without tangible progress. That requires theoretical conviction and historical perspective as well as character. And, in addition to that, it requires association with others in a common party.

The surest way to lose one's fighting faith is to succumb to one's immediate environment; to see things only

as they are and not as they are changing and must change; to see only what is before one's eyes and imagine that it is permanent. That is the cursed fate of the trade unionist who separates himself from the revolutionary party. In normal times, the trade union, by its very nature, is a culture-broth of opportunism. No trade unionist, overwhelmed by the petty concerns and limited aims of the day, can retain his vision of the larger issues and the will to fight for them without the party.

The revolutionary party can make mistakes, and has made them, but it is never wrong in the fight against grievance-mongers who try to blame the party for their own weaknesses, for their tiredness, their lack of vision, their impulse to quit and to capitulate. The party is not wrong now when it calls this tendency by its right name.

People often act differently as individuals, and give different explanations for their actions, than when they act and speak as groups. When an individual gets tired and wants to quit, he usually says he is tired and he quits; or he just drops out without saying anything at all, and that's all there is to it. That has been happening in our international movement for 100 years.

But when the same kind of people decide as a group to get out of the line of fire by getting out of the party, they need the cover of a faction and a "political" rationalization. Any "political" explanation will do, and in any case it is pretty certain to be a phony explanation. That also has been going on for about 100 years.

The present case of the Cochranite trade unionists is no exception to this rule. Out of the clear sky we hear that some "professional trade unionists" are suddenly against us because we are "Stalinophobes," and they are hellbent for an orientation toward Stalinism. Why, that's the damndest nonsense I ever heard! They never had that idea in their heads until this fight started. And how could they? The Stalinists have gotten themselves isolated in the labor movement, and it's poison to touch them. To go looking for the Stalinists is to cut yourself off from the labor movement, and these party "trade unionists" don't want to do that.

The people in Michigan who are hollering for us to make an orientation toward the Stalinists have no such orientation on their own home grounds. And they're perfectly right about that. I don't deny that people like Clarke, Bartell, and Frankel have heard voices and seen visions of a gold mine hidden in the Stalinist hills—I will discuss this hallucination at another time—but the Cochranite trade unionists haven't the slightest intention of going prospecting there. They are not even looking in that direction. What's amazing is the insincerity of their support of the orientation toward the Stalinists. That's completely artificial, for factional purposes. No, you have to say the orientation toward Stalinism, as far as the Michigan trade unionists are concerned, is a phony.

What is the next thing we hear? That they are full of "grievances" against the party "regime." I always get suspicious when I hear of grievances, especially from people whom you didn't hear it from before. When I see people revolting against the party on the ground that they've been badly treated by this terrible regime in our party—which is actually the fairest, most democratic and easy-going regime in the history of the human race—I always remind myself of the words of J. Pierpont Morgan. He said: "Everybody has at least two reasons for what he does—a good reason and the real reason." They've given a good reason for their opposition. Now I want to know what the hell is the real reason.

It can't be the party's hostility to Stalinism, as they say—because the Cochranite trade unionists wouldn't touch the Stalinists with a ten-foot pole, not even if you stood behind them with bayonets and lighted firecrackers under their coattails.

It can't be the Third World Congress, concerning which they are suddenly working up a lather. These comrades in Michigan have many admirable qualities, as has been shown in the past, but they're by no means the most internationalist-minded section of the party; not by far. They're not that section of the party most interested in theoretical questions. The Detroit branch, sad to say, has been most remiss in the teaching and study of Marxist

theory, and is now paying a terrible price for it. This branch hasn't got a single class going; no class in Marxism, no class in party history, no class on the Third World Congress or anything else. So when they suddenly erupt with the demand that the Third World Congress be nailed to the party's masthead, I say that's another "good" reason, but it's a phony too.

The real reason is that they are in revolt against the party without fully knowing why. For the young militant, the party is a necessity valued above everything else. The party was the very life of these militants when they were young and really militant. They didn't care for jobs; they feared no hazards. Like any other first-class revolutionists, they would quit a job at the drop of a hat if the party wanted them to go to another town, wanted them to do this or that. It was always the party first.

The party is the highest prize to the young trade unionist who becomes a revolutionist, the apple of his eye. But to the revolutionist who becomes transformed into a trade unionist—we have all seen this happen more than once—the party is no prize at all. The mere trade unionist, who thinks in terms of "union politics" and "power blocs" and little caucuses with little fakers to run for some little office, pushing one's personal interest here and there—why should he belong to a revolutionary party? For such a person the party is a millstone around his neck, interfering with his success as a "practical" trade union politician. And in the present political situation in the country, it's a danger—in the union, in the shop, and in life in general.

The great majority of the party trade unionists understand all this as well as we do. The vulgar "trade unionist" appeal of the Cochranites only repels them, for they consider themselves to be revolutionists first and trade unionists second. In other words, they are party people, as all revolutionists are.

I think it's a great tribute to our tradition, to our cadres, to the leadership of our party, that we have succeeded in isolating Cochranism to a narrow section of the party

membership. It's a great satisfaction, in these troubled and heavy times, to see the great majority of the party standing firm against all pressures. In the further course of the discussion, we will strike still heavier blows and chip off a few more here and there. We don't want to see anybody leave the party if we can help it.

But soul-saving is not our main occupation. We are determined to protect the party from demoralization, and we will do that. We are concerned with individuals only within that framework. The rescue of political derelicts can be left to the Salvation Army. For us, the party comes first, and nobody will be allowed to disrupt it.

This fight is of the most decisive importance because the prospect before our party is the prospect of war and all that goes with it. We see the dangers and the difficulties—as well as the great opportunities—which lie ahead of us, and just because of that we want to get the party in shape before the worst blows fall upon us.

The party line and perspectives, and the party leadership, will be settled in this fight for a long time to come. When harder times come, and when new opportunities open up, we don't want to leave any doubt in any comrade's mind as to what the party line is and who the party leaders are. These questions will be settled in this fight.

The Socialist Workers Party has the right, by its program and its record, to aspire to a great future. That's my opinion. That was the opinion of Trotsky. There is a line in the document of the Cochranites that sneers at the 1946 SWP convention and at the "Theses on the American Revolution" adopted there. It says: "We were children of destiny, at least in our own minds." In that derision of the party's aspiration, the whole pessimistic, capitulatory ideology of Cochranism is contained.

In 1929, when Trotsky was deported to Constantinople, the victory of Stalinism was complete, and he was isolated and almost alone. Outside the Soviet Union, there were only about 200 people supporting him in the whole world, and half of them were the forces we had organized in the U. S. Trotsky wrote us a letter at that time in which

he hailed our movement in the United States. He said our work was of world historical significance because, in the last analysis, all of the problems of the epoch will be settled on American soil. He said that he didn't know whether a revolution would come here sooner than in other places, but in any case it was necessary to prepare by organizing the nucleus of the party of the future revolution.

That's the line we have been working on. Our cadres have been raised on that doctrine. When I read in the Cochranite document that cynical dismissal of our revolutionary aspirations, I remembered a speech I made to our young comrades thirteen years ago in Chicago. The occasion was our Active Workers Conference, held just a month or so after the death of the Old Man, 23 when everybody felt bereft; when the question in the minds of all, here and all over the world, was whether the movement could survive without Trotsky.

At the end of the conference, I gave a speech and I said to the young activists there: "You are the real men of destiny, for you alone represent the future." We put the same concept in the 1946 convention theses.

That has been the position of all our militants who are standing together through this long, hard battle. A young comrade in California, one of the leading party activists, pointed the Cochranite sneer out to me and said: "What about that? If I didn't think our party has a great future, why should I be willing to devote my life and everything I have to the party?" Anyone who low-rates the party and crosses off its future ought to ask himself what he is doing in the party. Is he here on a visit?

The party demands a lot, and you can't give a lot and risk everything unless you think the party is worth it. The party is worth it, for it is the party of the future. And this party of the future is now once again getting its share of historical luck. Once again, as in 1939-40, it has the opportunity to settle a fundamental conflict in open discussion before a war, on the eve of a war.

Before World War II the party was confronted with

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a faction which threatened its program and thereby its right to exist. We didn't have to jump immediately into the war before the question was settled. We were working in the open while the rest of our comrades in Europe were underground or in concentration camps. We here in America were privileged to conduct a debate for the whole International over a period of seven months.

The same thing is happening again now. We ought to recognize this historical luck and take advantage of it. The best way to do this is to extend and amplify the discussion. I will repeat what Comrade Dobbs said, that our aim is not to split the party but to break up the split and save the party. We will try to prevent a split by a political fight which hits the opposition so hard that it can have no perspectives in a split. If we can't prevent a split, we will reduce it to the smallest possible size.

Meantime, we will develop the party work on all fronts. No party work is going to be sabotaged. If the attempt is made, we will move our forces in everywhere and take over. We will not permit the party to be disrupted by sabotage or derailed by a split, any more than we did in 1940. We have made a good start, and we won't stop until we have won another complete victory in the struggle for a revolutionary party.