

18,000 words App.

BOLSHEVIK POLITICS VERSUS NEO-ECONOMISM

→

A Programmatic Statement of the Minority

Any tendency in international Trotskyism that does not seriously come to grips with the problem of why world war and a revolutionary upsurge have passed without witnessing an appreciable growth of the Fourth, why the International today is a little more than the isolated organization it was at the beginning, [any tendency that has not come to grapple with this problem has failed in its most important task.] For only blind Utopianism can still maintain, in the face of a half-dozen years of war and revolution that have produced no appreciable change in the status of the Fourth, that all is right and in its place. That the blame for failure lies everywhere but on ourselves. It used to be the custom to blame defeat on the world-wide recession of the revolutionary wave, but this can obviously no longer satisfy anybody. Now, revolutionary developments, much exaggerated, to be sure, by the theoreticians of equanimity but existent nevertheless, have come and gone in half the countries of Europe but as regards the International, all remains as before. Despite this fact, the blame for failure continues to be placed on "objective conditions", and no one understands that the phrase "the crisis of socialism is the crisis of the revolutionary leadership" now applies first and foremost to the Fourth itself.

Who is fooled by all the vain and empty boasting of a Pierre or E.R. Frank? What are we to say about those whose proudest boast for a revolutionary organization that is supposed to lead all of oppressed society to socialist power, is that after twenty years it but exists? Those who grandiosely predicted that the war would be followed by the greatest revolutionary upsurge in history now can find nothing better to do than to chew profoundly over why the upsurge was smaller, slower, weaker or later than they had expected, without once coming to grips with the question: why, whether the wave was small or large, fast or slow, did the party almost universally fail to grow ant inch? Isn't it now time to cut through the web of lies and self-deception, to break away [the] opium dreams of the faint-hearted and make an thorough examination of this question of questions? Let us to avoid getting into position

Such is the purpose of this document, which is two-fold in character. It is a critical summarization and generalization of the minority's struggle over the past three years, delineating the majority and minority both politically and methodologically. And in this process it becomes a programmatic statement of the minority on the fundamental problem of socialism: how to achieve the conquest of political power by means of revolutionary politics.

statements to the contrary, it is within this realm that the differences in the party and the International lie. What is at stake is the meaning, the method and the application of the concept of a "transitional" program. The very heart of what constitutes a "program truly transitional" — how to resolve successfully the "contradiction between the maturity of the objective revolutionary conditions and the immaturity of the proletariat and its vanguard" (Trotsky) — that is what lies in dispute.

This disagreement is a fundamental one, and cannot be resolved by compromise. For [whoever fails to] answer the question of how to intervene in politics correctly perpetuates the crisis of the revolutionary vanguard, contributes to the postponement of a socialist solution and strengthens contemporary tendencies toward a complete decline of civilization and mankind through capitalist barbarism culminated by atomic war. From this fact flows the urgency of our task: [to bear off the mask of false optimism] to conceal the disease. Instead, it is pretended that the attempted diagnosis [is] what it is. That instead, it is the most damning commentary on the present state of affairs. But a diagnosis itself is not enough — it will amount to nothing if the remedy is not also found. And such a remedy must become the program of a Bolshevik tendency in the International.

In analysing the symptoms of the disease, we will restrict ourselves primarily to a consideration of the conduct of the SWP in America, for it is here that the malady is most deeply set and every one will recognize that what we criticize in the SWP is characteristic, to a greater or lesser degree, of all the most important sections of the Fourth. More important, the remedy we prescribe is the one necessary for all concerned. Let no one think we are presumptuous, for the remedy is not new. It has been embedded in some of the most important history and literature of the revolutionary movement, but never stands dusty and unnoticed on the shelves of epigones.

1. The Majority Tendency Defined

Today thinly-masked Egonism parades hand-in-hand with empty ultra-leftist shouting and calls itself Bolshevik. Cannon pretends that by mouthings a few empty platitudes on "centralism" and "discipline" he follows Lenin in organization. In reality he followed Lenin neither in organization nor in politics, which were for the latter inseparably linked — instead he comes much closer to following those against whom Lenin directed his earliest polemics in "What is to be Done?".

In one word, the majority practices what Lenin once characterized as "trade-union politics" and miles away from revolutionary politics. This is not to be construed to mean that it practices politics in the trade unions, for it does not even do that. It transforms the party into little more than an enlarged trade-union fraction which reduces all problems to the factory

level. Instead of raising the workers in the trade unions to the level of the party, it does precisely the opposite -- it reduces the party to the level of the trade unions. In essence the party does little more than offer a program for the unions, and a non-political program at that. Anything that falls outside of this sphere, any struggle that does not fall within its ken (as the national struggle, for example), is not only ignored, but in many cases regarded with the utmost hostility and suspicion. The party does not address itself, as a revolutionary tribunal, to all the struggles of all the oppressed; it confines itself exclusively to addressing the workers in the factories, and here only to their most primitive economic struggles.

To the extent that it notices the problems of other oppressed sections of society at all, it makes it clear that it regards the trade unions, not itself, as the principal organizer of these struggles. A pretty illustration of this is the party's development of the Labor Party slogan into a cure-all for every problem, and a substitute for its own activity. Instead of taking the political struggles onto its own shoulders, it presents a magic formula for their solution in the form of an unfortunately non-existent Labor Party. It thus radically deforms a correct slogan into an excuse for abstentionism.

The SWP, and to a greater or lesser degree, the entire but subordinate aspect of all-sided political activity, into a principal and even exclusive concentration. Lenin's conception of rounded agitation and propaganda directed at all the needs of the workers and other oppressed classes has been completely lost. Truly all-sided activity is scorned at as "petty-bourgeois" "classless" activity. Today's Economists could well pay heed to what Lenin wrote in response to yesterday's. Ridding the democratic and false arguments of those who prated about the "losses" in response to every attempt to transcend the economic struggle of the proletariat, Lenin pointed out that: "It is particularly in regard to the political struggle that the 'class point of view' demands that the proletariat push on every democratic movement....universal political agitation is always a focus in which the immediate interests of political education of the proletariat coincide with the immediate interests of social development as a whole, of the development of the whole of the people", that is to say, of all the democratic elements of the people".

Ignoring this, the Communists and their political associates play the monstrous Economist theme in a hundred different keys -- "into the factory", "Back to the factory", "Workers stick to your factories", etc. Never, however, does one hear of the junction "into politics!" The gaze of the party is focussed on one place and one place only, and that is the same place that the Economists of four decades ago focussed their attention:

2. Mem.
Rev. P.
(15).

T. W. M.
S. M. S.
W. P. M.

The working class is abstracted by the majority from its socio-logical definition into an ideal grouping based solely upon its relation to production. The concept of how to make politics on the part of the majority flows from its myopic view of the proletariat in the factory supposedly only interested in wages and hours.

A transitional program sets as its task the problem of bridging the gap between the present stage of political consciousness of the proletarian and the objectively revolutionary conditions. No one expects the whole proletarian, or even its majority, to arrive at full political consciousness before the revolution. But the problem of how to bridge this gap remains nevertheless the key problem for a revolutionary party attempting to cope seriously with politics. Through what channels do sections of the proletariat arrive at political consciousness before the revolution? The majority thinks only of the trade union channel. Their concept of the "revolutionary proletariat" is schematically transmitted in practice in an unbalanced one-sided orientation on trade union work precisely analogous to what has been characterized in our movement as "Economism".

All the other heterogeneous sides and perils of existing and experiencing life the real Proletariat are ignored or scorned by the majority. This lack of understanding of the heterogeneity and many-sidedness of the class, the element resistance of the majority to all-sided political work, its method of restricting politics to the trade union front (and in this, policies of the "economist type") lead to a "political" abstentionism and sectarianism that has become the number one obstacle to the progress of the Party.

It is true that it is first of all at the machine and in the factory that the Proletarian finds itself tied to the inhuman conditions of capitalism. The utilization of labor power as a commodity tends to transform the worker in the factory into a "thing". The resistance against this tendency of being turned into "things" manifests itself as a struggle of the worker to assert himself in the factory and outside of the factory as a human being. The division of labor and the mode of production itself have an organizing influence upon the worker. His consciousness becomes leveled to the point of realizing that it is necessary for him to join together with his fellow workers and present a solid front of resistance and struggle against the owners of the factories. Insofar as it asserts itself in relation to his lot at the point of production, consciousness (but still for only trade union consciousness) unirrests itself as the endeavor of the Proletariat to alleviate the burgeoning strain of nerves and muscles by refining the conditions under which it labors, by shortening the hours and increasing wages so that it will have more rest, resources and leisure time to engage in "nots of consciousness" which are expressive of the marks of a human being.

However, it is precisely because capitalist suppression of the worker is expressed in innumerable varieties, and not simply as oppression at the point of production that the channels

through which we can relate ourselves to his consciousness become all-sided, multiplex and varied. He is oppressed not only as a "pure" worker, but also as a national or religious minority a veteran, a consumer, etc. It is not directly evident to the worker that in all his other relations outside the factory he is hampered and restricted by the very forces which tend to turn him into a "thing" in the factory. The links between his particular experiences are not connected and generalized to the extent where he realizes that his attempt to lead the life of a human being is constantly being thwarted by the bourgeoisie and its state, who continually try to relegate him to the position of a formless "thing".

The Bolshevik concept of how to make politics flows from a view of the proletariat not only in the narrow sense, of a class at the point of production, but as a class which encounters the dehumanizing effects of capitalism in a many-sided fashion. The historical progressiveness of the proletariat as a class lies precisely in its reaction to this multiplex oppression so that it enters upon an all-sided struggle in which it is forced to lead all of oppressed society, finally arriving at the level of consciousness where its most conscious vanguard realized the necessity of transforming the whole of society by a socialist revolution.

We consider political work in the trade unions of extreme importance because thereby we can connect the worker's condition at the point of production with the all-sided impact of this condition on his attempt to lead the life of a complete human being. Intervening with real political work in the trade unions can transform trade union consciousness to a higher political level. Therefore, even political work in the unions cannot be our main channel of activity, only if it is combined and connected with political work from outside the unions, for the consciousness of different layers, groups and individuals in the proletariat develops with great unevenness. For this reason, among others, channels of political activity outside the trade unions become the most important means of influencing the consciousness of the proletariat.

How do we, in the last analysis, bridge the gap between the consciousness of the workers and the objective conditions? In precisely this way: when we encounter a given problem we must estimate the level at which this problem is grappled with by the workers. From this indication to can learn how to intervene. In building the bridge it is obviously impossible to complete the structure at one stroke. The gap is filled in with the whole range of our activity from now until the proletariat takes power. We link ourselves to the given stage of consciousness by grappling directly with the problem, not by platitudinous generalizations. We can hope to influence the workers only by going through the experience of each struggle with them, and, what is more important, leading them through this experience. In the course of this struggle we advance the consciousness of the workers by politicizing the fight. This politicization takes on many and varied forms, and there can be no blueprint in advance as to how it can be done.

Speaking generally, however, it is done by illustrating through the experience of the struggle that it is the state and the class which

controls it that blocks a real solution to the problem. It is

while going through such experiences with the workers that we can generalize the lessons and thus gain the three-fold advantage of raising the consciousness of the workers, winning their respect and adherence for the party, and, not least, developing the maturity of the vanguard.

The majority's false conception of the nature of the proletariat is only half the error. Equally important is its utter disregard of the importance of the other oppressed classes of capitalist society. Leadership of these classes is regarded as something secondary, of no great importance to the working class itself. Yet, unless the party acquires the leadership of all oppressed classes it demonstrates itself to be their champion; it will never be able to lead the working class successfully. Lenin expressed this thought succinctly: "To bring political knowledge to the workers, the Social-Democrats must go among all classes of the population, must dispatch units of their army in all directions" (Lenin's emphasis). The proletariat can never achieve consciousness of itself until it achieves consciousness of the whole of society. This is precisely why all revolutionary agitation by the party, addressed not only to the proletarian but to all other sectors, must become the method of the party.

To avoid the problem of such an all-sided agitation, for which they do not feel themselves at all fit, the Cannanites have constructed a grotesque caricature of the revolutionary process. They abstract the epoch into an ideal period which exists as a time of convulsive troubles which antipodal arises on transforming the non-political proletariat into a group fully conscious of its historical task. The party today is claimed to be already the ideal vanguard, fully conscious of its historical role. The party will "jump" to the leadership of the proletariat at the time of the crisis and, by transmitting its consciousness to the workers, will in a short time solve the problem of the whole of society. This caricature is most clearly observable in Cannon's "American Theses", in which he teaches the myth of the nine-months rise to power of the Bolshevik Party without reference to its previous history of many-sided activity, leadership and influence. It is this caricature that provides the theoretical basis for the Cannanites' thorough-going failure to engage in that process of revolutionary politics which is necessary to raise the consciousness of all exploited society.

To be sure, the majority theoreticians will be quick to respond that they are "politicizing" the economic struggle. But aside from the fact that this is not true and that the majority degrades even its trade-union work, the reply is beside the point. There is a distinction in quality between trade-union politics and revolutionary politics. The "politics" that stems from the trade-unions clashes with government arbitration boards and police beatings of strikers; the economists of yesterday made their greatest specialty. Lenin, however, was not much impressed by this sort of "politics" and mercilessly destroyed its revolutionary pretensions: "The pompous phrase: 'To give the economic struggle itself a political character,' which sounds so 'terrifically' profound and revolutionary, serves as a screen to conceal what is in fact the traditional striving to degrade Social-Democratic politics to the level of trade-union politics."

In the Bolshevik conception trade-union work, the economic struggle loses its prominence and becomes an important but subordinate part of a rounded political activity which expresses itself in a thousand different ways. Such an activity must concern itself with all victims of official high-handedness and oppression, be they striking workers or condemned authors, victimized minorities or homeless veterans, and must seek to generalize and fructify their struggle for justice. In contradistinction to this, the SWP majority proceeds from a theory of the spontaneous development of trade-union economic struggles into revolutionary political struggles and ignores almost all other fields of political work.

It is this opportunist theory, [not explicitly formulated, to be sure, but implicit in every utterance and action of the leadership], together with empty ultra-leftist shouting about the imminence of revolution, that is responsible for the political helplessness and impotence of the Party before every crucial question, and its practical isolation on the American scene. It is essentially this thread of neo-Economism that runs through all the political disputes of the last years. And at a certain point Economism in theory becomes outright betrayal in practice.

The Evolution of the Minority: A Survey and a Critique

The theoretical emptiness and practical sterility brought about by abstentionist politics produced an inevitable reaction. The qualitative point at which an opposition against this sort of politics was precipitated was the bold refusal of the SWP leadership to recognize any importance whatsoever in the struggle for such trivialities as a Constituent Assembly and a Republic in the various countries of Europe. This was by no means either the first or the most outstanding example of political illiteracy on the part of the Cannonites, but it was the straw that broke the camel's back. In an empirical and inconsistent manner, but on the right road, nevertheless, the minority began to take up the struggle for Bolshevik politics in the developing European situation.

The majority responded with the vilification and slander peculiar to miniature bourgeois [who cannot defend their position with logical arguments]. This only confirmed the suspicion of the minority that there was something wrong with the Party far transcending the immediate importance of democratic demands in Europe. But the complete comprehension of what was wrong was some time by the realization that the European revolution would be neither by the sectarian ultramilitaristic application of the "Socialist United States of Europe," nor under the leadership of Stalin's armies, but had instead to be seriously prepared for by a party that would begin by fighting for the most elementary and pressing needs of the masses, the minority, began wandering into a bypath on the organizational question.

Organizational bureaucracy in every case is the function of political ineptitude or insufficiency. For that cannot be accomplished by open and honest political argument must be accomplished by artificial devices: denagogy, slander and all sorts of underhanded methods. While the oligarchs may be not in the least interested in whether it says black or white in answer to any given political question, witness Cannon's conciliation of military instructions to the Polish guerrillas, and more recently, the English minority's flip-flop on the slogan of withdrawing Russian troops; once the "IEC" came out in favor, it has the deepest vested interest in clinging to the general political method that enables it to maintain its dominant position and conduct routinist politics that will disturb nobody.

Thus false politics tends to produce, sooner or later, to a greater or lesser degree depending upon a host of circumstances, acts and policies of bureaucratism. But fighting against bureaucratism can never be a substitute for the main political struggle. Acts of bureaucratism are always the symptoms of a disease, and one cannot conquer a malady by an exclusive preoccupation with its symptoms; indeed, this cannot even be the principal means of combating it.

Now -

1. and 1 point of view [minority blundered. As a result of its failure to follow up on the good beginnings of its European program, the minority substituted an organizational struggle for the politically necessary one.]

2. In view of the split in the SWP [This essentially organizational struggle became embodied in the struggle for unity with the Workers Party. It is not necessary to repeat that the continued existence of the two Trotskyist organizations in America is unjustified and should be brought to an end. But this unification is in no way the magical key to a solution of the political crisis of the American movement. It is certainly no substitute for a political program designed to alter the traditionally wrong course of the SWP. Indeed a struggle for unification, unaccompanied by the necessary political fight against Cannonism could lead only to barren results. And wth "comrades" p. + workers,]

Once on the wrong course, Goldman and his associates persisted in following it to the bitter end. They raised the organizational question out of all proportion to its importance, in other words they practised it in the deepest sense of the word. All other problems vanished into the background for them until, in the end, Goldman and Benito were bitterly opposing even the idea of the minority adopting a position on any other political question besides unity.

But the continued sterility of the SWP leadership, together with political developments in Europe, that demonstrated the crucial importance of the national question, brought a new development of the minority. Concrete questions which serve as illustrations of the truly Bolshevik methods in politics were quick to appear once a discerning eye was open for them. The wage-price question, the Jewish question and a host of others

large and small are types of questions that have always existed and have been but waiting to be utilized in order to drag the movement from its routine abstentionism and precipitate it into revolutionary politics. There is no better way to demonstrate the difference between the Bolshevik conception and Cannon's neo-Economism than to show how a whole series of political events reveal two fundamentally different political lines.

The Opposition Illustrated

A. "The National Question"

By 1940 at least three-quarters of the advanced countries of Europe were suffering under national oppression. The instinctive reaction of anyone who had an ounce of Leninist blood in his political veins should have been: it is our task to organize immediately the struggle for national independence and democratic rights. Notice: we do not speak of supporting the national struggle (and even this "support" was denied the movement by the miserable policy of the majority of the Fourth) but of organizing it. Merely to support the movement after it has already begun is known as tail-ending. The Cannonites did not commit this sin; they did not tail-end, they simply failed to show up at all.

There was only one question to answer in order to determine revolutionary policy on the national question: Is a mass struggle for national independence justified and progressive? (Did the sectarian-absentationists even bother to ask themselves that question?) Once answered in the affirmative (and what other answer could there be?) the duty of the vanguard was to organize that progressive struggle from the beginning, to become recognized as the foremost fighters for the demand of national freedom because it is a progressive demand of the masses, it is our demand. Those who talk about "our" program should once in their life get down to answering the question: Where does "our" program come from? Is it "ours" because it is sucked out of our thumb or handed down to us in unalterable form? We would like to hear an explanation of how Lenin adopted as "his" agrarian program the platform of the S.R.'s. Not that Lenin in his time escaped the reproaches of Luxemburg and others who accused him of abandoning "our" program. But such accusations never depressed Lenin very much, because he always knew how to apply himself to politics and recognized that a progressive demand made by any section of the oppressed against the ruling order must become our demand and the struggle for it must be organized and supported to the hilt. There is the crucial difference between Bolshevism and all forms of Economism and sectarianism.

It is time to understand that a transitional program is not something to be jammed whole down the throat of the working class. On the contrary, it must consist of demands arising out of the actual processes of the political and class struggle of various sectors of the oppressed population. To be sure, these demands, just as the struggles themselves, arise from certain objective conditions, but this means the particular manifes-

iations of the objective conditions, at a given moment, not just the objective conditions of declining capitalism in general. If the latter were all that had to be taken in to consideration in formulating a transitional program, the task could be accomplished with one word, "Socialism". This indeed is the "transitional program" of the S.L.P. But a program of twenty-five demands can become equally ossified if it is elevated above living reality under the development of the struggle. [It was precisely the "objective" conditions of national oppression that were ignored by the sectarians in all their arrogant dissertations on Europe.] Instead of responding to the situation with a serious program of demands according to the situation, the do-it-first-and-for-mostly-by-the-command-for-national-liberation, they sent out like an army of Don Quixotes, armed with a program of demands that were nothing but "transitional" to nothing but political oblivion.

June 1968, Unfinished
Dem. 69. This sectarian politics had its tragicomic climax in the French section of the Fourth. There, during the height of the Paris insurrection, the Trotskyists ordered all who were listening (which fortunately was no one) to climb off the barricades, not to let themselves be diverted with such "trivialities" as an insurrection, and to... "stick to their factories"! Could anyone hesitate to label this as Economism, pure and simple?... except that, in all fairness to the Economists, it is necessary to point out that while they were for concentrating all their attention upon the struggle within the factory, they never thought of ordering insurrectionary workers off a barricade.

It is necessary to destroy a myth: Revolutionary politics does not primarily even begin in the factory. It most certainly doesn't end there. Bolshevik politics in contrast to "pure" trade-unionism/Chauvinism, is an-sided agitation among all sections of the oppressed population, directed at mobilizing them for a revolutionary assault upon the bastions of political and economic power. [It consists in making the proletariat conscious, not only of its own needs, but of the needs of all those other oppressed sectors and their relation to the revolutionary struggle.] And when such an extraordinarily pregnant development as the national struggle appears, a struggle capable of uniting all the oppressed population behind the proletariat in an armed assault upon the state power, a struggle capable of gathering all the hate and bitterness and resentment engendered among the entire population by imperialist oppression and channelling it into one mighty revolutionary attempt--then such a mighty weapon is there for the asking. It is Bolshevik politics to seize hold of it with both hands and leave to the abstentionists the little game of playing with their sectarian "demands".

Part II
B. Democratic Demands in General

Having rejected the Number One democratic demand for Europe, the sectarians could not have been expected to be particularly enthusiastic about the lesser democratic slogans that followed upon it, despite the fact that those were

LAWRENCE F. STONE JOURNALIST
LAWRENCE F. STONE JOURNALIST

-11-

clearly traditional in the movement. The Cannonite theoreticians indicated their soon tempt for anything so mundane as democratic rights for the European population by failing to mention this crucial problem by so much as a syllable in their 1943 European Resolution. When the unquestioned paternity of such slogans was forcefully called to their attention they grudgingly made a little room for them in the resolution. Not that all of them were admitted either, even then. [As long as E.R.Frank and Co. thought there was a chance of proving the roformist parentage of such a slogan as "the Republic" for "advanced" countries, this particular demand for Italy, Belgium, Greece, etc. was loudly howled down.] But soon it was discovered that the Belgian and Italian sections had inscribed this terrible demand into their program.

The Minority, in its naive period, thought that the differences had been "liquidated" by the majority's adoption of lip-service to democratic demands. Instead, far from being the point at which the struggle ended, this was the point at which it really began. For to talk about democratic demands in a sneering and condescending manner, as "episodic" and "subordinate" in practice meant to ignore them. Revolutionary duty does not consist in inscribing this, that or the other slogan on the mast-head of one's newspaper, but in carrying on a consistent and intensive agitation for it. For the abstentionists, democratic slogans are there just for the record. They do not bother to talk very much about such "episodic" trivialities -- they are for Socialism!

Democratic slogans, like all slogans, are not worth the paper they are printed on if they never get off that paper. It is necessary here, just as in the question of national liberation, to enter onto the scene, not as grudging supporters (much less opponents) of the struggle for the Constituent, for the Republic, etc., but as the champions and leaders of this struggle. This can never be done if it is looked upon as a concession to the "backwardness" of the masses -- it can only be accomplished if one recognizes from the beginning that the struggle to remove all undemocratic impositions is nota departure (whether it is viewed as necessary or not) from the revolutionary battle, but is, on the contrary, the indispensable prerequisite for gaining the leadership of that battle. And in the struggle for consistent democracy there must be no half-heartedness, no sectarian reservations, no lectures on how "this will not solve the problem" no platitudes about the Socialist United States of Europe. The masses of Europe especially have heard all sorts of ^{ideas} ~~demagogues~~ charlatans shouting "Socialism" and "Communism" six days a week and twice on Sunday, while at the same time denying them ^{the world over,} some of the simplest democratic and human rights. They are filled up with words and desire actions, and they are a thousand times right.

C. The Jewish Question

Especially in the United States, which now contains a majority of the world's Jewish population, is a correct attitude

toward the problem of the Jewish masses important. By its opposition to the elementary demand for which the Jewish masses in Europe and Palestine are conducting an heroic struggle, the SWP (and the Fourth in general) removes itself from all possibilities of influencing the course of events.

mentality which is capable of opposing the demand for free immigration to Palestine when it is voiced as the crying need of the oppressed Jews in Europe and when for this aim tens of thousands of Jewish youth hurl themselves into an armed struggle against British imperialism. Pontius Pilate has indeed become the theoretician of the SVP when its leadership can shrug off responsibility for adopting a position in favor of Jewish

immigration by remarking that the Jews must now suffer for the criminal policies of the Zionist leadership. Does not every revolutionary instinct protest that there is something radically wrong with a position that does not enable supposed exponents of Bolshevism to support an armed struggle waged by an oppressed minority in a colonial country against the imperialist overlords?

The SWP leadership makes a mockery of revolutionary politics when it refuses to distinguish between the demand raised by the Zionists in the twenties and early thirties, when only the smallest minority of the Jews had any desire and even less necessity to go to Palestine, when immigration was fostered by British imperialism as a weapon against the Arabs, and today's demand of hundreds of thousands of tortured European Jews when this immigration is opposed by British imperialism with all its armed might. Today the Jewish population of Europe is a doubly and triply oppressed people, deserving of all the special political considerations that we accord the Negroes in the United States. Yet one of the most despicable chapters in the history of Imperialism is being written in Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean without protest from the "revolutionary vanguard". A helpless minority is suffering barbaric oppression; a downtrodden mass is tocked up arms against its oppressors and the "Bolsheviks" are

MP

11 of the Arab nationalists and forfeit all possibility of gaining influence among the Jewish masses. Genuine Bolshevism on the other hand, recognizes that this struggle of the Jews, like all struggles of the oppressed, must be adopted as its own by a revolutionary party worthy of the name. Because only when the party adopts every struggle of the oppressed as its own in deeds and not just in empty words will the oppressed population reciprocate and do what millions of ~~the~~ + ~~soldiers~~ hollow exhortations will never accomplish: regard the party as its own.

D. The GM Program.

We have had an example of how the masters of the "transitional program" apply it right here in the United States. They have been busy in recent months "defending" it from the rude hands of the Minority, the Workers Party and the General Motors workers who have had the temerity to attempt to add a slogan to the sacred list of transitional demands. The slogan of "wage raises without price rises," only originating in '69 is in '69.

Here was a slogan that arose right out of the economic trade-union struggle, so dear to the heart of every SWP ladder.

Here was certainly one case where it was possible to politicize the economic struggle as the majority always boasts it is doing. Starting with the workers' interests in wages, the slogan served to transfer his attention to their relation to prices and from here to the whole functioning of the economic system. This slogan led directly to the "Trotskyist"

demands to "Open the Books" and for once gave this slogan the opportunity to climb off the printed page and take on some flesh and blood. From here to another one of "our" slogan's "Workers Control of Production" was only a small leap.

Above all, the slogan served to rally the middle-classes around the labor movement. All in all, this slogan led to a hundred different avenues of agitation and propaganda. One might think therefore, that it deserved a modicum of consideration, especially from people who are "specialists" in trade union work.

But this demand got nothing but the brush-off in the "Militant" for more than six months. This radical newspaper, so in touch with all developments in the class struggle, scarcely even mentioned its existence! To come out openly against it, of course, would have been unpopular among the most advanced workers and since the last thing that the "Militant" wants to be is unpopular, it just shut up like a clam on the subject. To be sure, when at long last, the Political Committee wrote a resolution about it, it had some nice words to say for the demand. It granted that "the GM strikers made an important contribution...by their big propaganda campaign against rising prices." They conducted "forceful propaganda to prove that huge profits, not high wages, are responsible for rising prices". In fact, they set up new precedent in modern American trade union practices and were "able" to shift the onus for rising prices...onto

the shoulders of the big capitalists. It is to deepen the
real social understanding of the workers. In this, the resolution
also concludes with a propaganda campaign around the slogan of "Wage
increases without price rises". This was essentially very progressive.
Therefore, therefore, the Labour Political Committee went
on to reject the slogan.

The slogan, which they had chosen, was to do with
the workers' understanding of the workers to justify this con-
sideration, deftly all description and bolting in a museum of politi-
cal curiosities. Essentially they had two real reasons for
refusing to support the slogan, which they did not succeed in
camouflaging very well in their resolution. Number one was that
they pressed in the authors' own words in their resolution was that
the slogan "directly links together the struggle for higher
wages with the fight against high prices". One might think
that to a Bolshevik that would be a reason for rejecting it,
but after failing, we not trying to politicize the economy.
struggling to make the workers' attention from mere wages to
other aspects of the economy, like for instance, for joining, for
and Thomas, our theoreticians, claim that the fight for wage
increases and that against price rises "are parallel struggles,
conducted on different grounds and in different ways". We will
write in editorial next month calling for price control commit-
tees, if that will satisfy you - now please leave us to do our
trade union work in peace.

It was not in the "finished program". The second reason as ex-
plained by the authors' own words in their resolution was that
we take up the entire record of the SWP during the strike wave
and the price control fight and show it for what it is - a pi-
tiful combination of ultra-leftism and trade union opportunism.
Here we restrict ourselves to a consideration of the "wage increa-
ses without price rises" demand.

"We will have more to say on this connection further on, when
we take up the entire record of the SWP during the strike wave
and the price control fight and show it for what it is - a pi-
tiful combination of ultra-leftism and trade union opportunism.
Here we restrict ourselves to a consideration of the "wage increa-
ses without price rises" demand.

"We will have more to say on this connection further on, when
we take up the entire record of the SWP during the strike wave
and the price control fight and show it for what it is - a pi-
tiful combination of ultra-leftism and trade union opportunism.
Here we restrict ourselves to a consideration of the "wage increa-
ses without price rises" demand.

Left Wing and Radical Unionists

When a principled dispute (however trite it may seem)
within a union, revolutionists must intervene in support of the
left wing and against the right at the same time attempting to
to push the left wing forward and sharpen the differences. To be
sure, the SWP supported Rauther against Thomas, but its rejection
of the Rauther slogan of "wage raises without price rises", which
was the center of the dispute, made the reason for supporting
Rauther difficult. To "push the militant" offord three points
as its program for the UAW convention - "Against company security,"
"Against fact-finding boards," and "For a Labor Party". This
in itself was foolish and later on, was a pretty miserable

program, but that is not the point right now ---the point is that on each of these points Reuther shared the same position as Thomas. Thus the SWP support of Reuther could not but appear as without motivation and unprincipled.

The SWP leadership and its international conferences propose to discard one of the oldest planks in the revolutionary Marxist (and for that matter, democratic) movement: the right to religious freedom. They make the most wretched error of confusing Marxist opposition to religion with the attitude toward religious freedom. They do not understand that in the same way that national self-determination is necessary in order to destroy the national boundaries, so also is complete religious freedom necessary in order that this opium be finally eliminated. Just as the opposition of nations strengthens nationalist sentiments, so does the repression of religion reinforce religious belief. And this is so whether the repressive agent is the bourgeois or the proletarian state.

All this is ABC Marxism, but Pierre Frank, writing in the March 1946 Fourth International, without any contradiction from the editors (and the editors never let anything they disagree with into the magazine without a reply) has the audacity to write in connection with the slogan "of freedom of religion advanced by the IKD, the German section of the Fourth, in the struggle against fascism," that "such a democratic slogan has nothing in common with us."

In the first place, Frank should be informed that Lenin always and everywhere fought for the right of the religious sects in Russia for freedom of religion against the Czarist state, and considered any other attitude a betrayal, not just of the struggle for democratic rights, but of the struggle for socialism. For he considered the latter impossible without the struggle for democracy. In the second place, Pierre Frank ought to be more wary, for he has burned his fingers once before in connection with this very same question of religious freedom. He was one of those who, in 1934, raised the loudest howl when the IKD proposed to give unconditional support to the struggle of the German Catholic and Protestant churches for religious freedom against the Nazis. The champions of the national question for the past five years were thrown by Frank and his associates in unrestrained fury against the IKD for its "opportunism," "revisionism," and other grievous sins. This orgy of sectarianism continued loud and strong... until Trotsky wrote a letter coming out in full support of the IKD position! (See the New International, September, 1946, for an English translation.)

Trotsky tried to drum some sense into the heads of the Franks, - obviously without much success. He wrote that "it is a question of the right of Catholics and Protestants... to consume their religious opium as Catholics and Protestants without thereby endangering or impairing their existence. It is a question in the first place of freedom of conscience, then of equal rights

What
about
Judaism
Jewry?
Opinion
of part
of prop
Rep."
Eq:

regardless of creed, then the right of forming organizations (the Catholic Youth organizations, etc.). Then Trotsky made it clear that this support of the church struggle must be unconditional (note this well, those who thought it was sacrilege to support unconditionally the armed resistance movement): "...we must fulfill our duty toward the opposition movement, without imposing any kind of conditions on the participation of religious organizations... It is only necessary to find real and effective methods to intervene in the struggle, to stir up the religious-democratic opposition, to broaden it and to assist the young Catholics, especially the workers, in their struggle... Thus in Russia we always defended the struggle of the Armenian church for its autonomy. We did the same in the struggle of the different peasant and petty-bourgeoisie sects against the governmental Orthodox church. And at times, we did it with great success."

"How far away the political orientation expressed in this letter of Trotsky is from the ideology of the Franks!"

Trotsky made it clear that he did not consider such struggles as merely auxiliary, for he added, "It is highly probable that the slumbering powers of the proletariat may receive a saving impetus from this opposition movement against the fascist state, which according to its social basis, is Petty-bourgeois. Once can imagine the division the SWP theoreticians would express at anyone who suggested that a proletarian upsurge might be initiated by a Petty-bourgeois religious movement, if the anyone were not Trotsky. We want to emphasize Trotsky's illustration of Bolshevism in practice: the importance he attached to the party's entering into every struggle of an oppressed grouping, no matter what its nature, and systematically educating the Proletariat itself by these struggles, awakening the sensitivity of the Proletariat to all the different facets of political life, and finally, of fusing all these struggles into one revolutionary struggle for emancipation. But these struggles can only be fused behind the party if the party takes the leadership of each of these struggles, without imposing conditions or ultimatums. Yes, paradoxically, in the struggle of the Catholics for religious freedom, it is we and not the priests who belong at the head! Trotsky and the IKD's position on the church struggle is a model of politics for all to study."

Not only to study, however, but to apply. There is an application of it right here in the United States where a small religious grouping has had to conduct a bitter fight to preserve its right to worship freely as it chooses, and no one, least of all the SWP, has paid the least attention to it. It is the struggle of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

JPC
Pm
Jul 19
Jef JW

This horrid little religious sect had to conduct a drawn-out fight against capitalist reaction and the state in order to maintain its right to refuse to practice patriotic obscenities like saluting the flag, which are in conflict with its religious beliefs. Did the Franks pay the slightest attention to this fight, which contained within itself not only the right to freedom of religion but also the struggle against official chauvinism?

No, these gentlemen were too busy formulating the International Manifesto of the World Conference, which, in the face of worldwide religious persecution, maintains that "Only the spurious freedom of Religion remains, in the hands of the rulers always a pliant tool by means of which to create rancor and strife among the ruled." It is clear that with this philistine assertion the Fourth washes its hands of any concern with freedom of religion and travels the path of Pierre Frank! Why bother to struggle side by side with the Jehovah's wit-
S 100 2018

BIGOTRY, INJUSTICE, INTEGRITY, and so on. It was a case of the most flagrant hypocrisy. The case of the Witnesses presented a great opportunity of illustrating the political conception of Bolshevism and winning considerable support. It was an excellent opportunity to expose the hypocrisy of the Four Freedoms, since the very state that was declaring for freedom of religion all over the world was itself denying it here at home. It was a first-rate case in which efforts to join a struggle against chauvinism, compulsory saluting of the flag, etc. It was an opportunity to win a wide popularity, not just among members of the oppressed sect (and this itself is no small matter), but among all lovers of freedom who saw no one else fighting for this basic democratic right. Just as the church struggled in Germany might have been the force that awakened the Godslumbering powers of the proletariat, so might the struggle in defense of the Witnesses here, together with a fight in defense

for a first opposition to the war hysteria.

Thus, both among the
communist parties all the differences that we have analyzed, far from being
so-called "distant" theoretical questions, are differences as to how to
convert revolutionary principles into practice, how to mobilize the
masses for revolutionary struggle. We have first presented those
theoretical and programmatic questions which have in themselves a principled cha-
racter in order to emphasize that the difference between majority
and minority is a basic, principled one; the difference between
the method of revolutionary Bolshevikism and that of backward
economism. But this difference is manifested also in a whole
range of questions in which there is no difference as to abstract
principle but where, nevertheless, revolutionary practice is
almost always

A. M. BROWN: THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURE ON LANGUAGE

A. THE STRIKE wave and the Price Control Fight
CONTINUE We have already discussed the GM program. But the bank-
ruptcy of the SWP's policy goes far wider and deeper than its
Rejection of the slogan for wage increases without price rises.

"articles dealing with it. You will find there a "program" which would do shame to a group of non-political progressive trade unionists, to speak nothing of a revolutionary party. With the exception of an occasional abstract article for a Labor Party, there was nothing that went beyond the simplest, ordinary, everyday trade union boundary. And this in a period when every basic industry in the country was affected by a concentrated strike wave!

Worse than this, the "vanguard" failed even to criticise on a trade union level. It had not a word of criticism of the disgraceful settlement in meatpacking, or the shameful settlements undercutting the GM strikers made by Murray and Thomas in steel, Ford and Chrysler. (For a detailed analysis see "The Political Committee's Principal Mistake in Trade Union Policy During the Strike Wave" by Felix Morrow, Internal Bulletin, Vol. VIII, No. 7, and "A Criticism of "The Militant" by Jeffries, Vol. VII, No. 5)

Summer rolled around, and the failure of the trade union bureaucracy (and the SWP!) to pay any attention to the price control question during the strike wave came home to roost. With governmental price control dealt crippling blows by Congress, the problem of inflation loomed large on the horizon. The majority, harried by the minority for failing to raise the price control slogan at the same time that rising prices became the Number One problem, suddenly dragged the "sliding scale of wages" out of the mothballs. This suddenly became (with triumphant glances at the minority) "the only way to fight inflation".

There was one small difficulty. This demand, which was loudly trumpeted as the majority's substitute for the GM slogan, had not been raised once during the course of the strike wave when wage negotiations were actually going on. (The sliding scale is only a trade union slogan, but "The Militant" had not even climbed that high in its program for the workers at the time of the strike.) This was seen again at the time of the UAW convention, coming on the heels of the conclusion of the GM strike, and of the strike wave generally. The "Militant's" three-point policy for the progressives at this Convention has already been referred to, and is highly revealing. For this convention, meeting after what the "Militant" proclaimed as "victorious" strike wave, it proposed one slogan that the party has agitated for year in, year out. (The Labor Party) Plus two pure and simple trade union slogans, and defensive ones at that (against company security and government fact-finding). Not a mention of the sliding scale of wages.

Belatedly, the sliding scale was prepared for heavy duty. It popped out from every column of "The Militant", which simultaneously made fun of every attempt to control prices, although it was presumably on record in favor of consumer control of prices. It paid little attention to the price control demonstrations and sneered at the buyers' strikes because the workers couldn't "afford" not to buy (as if they could "afford" to strike, either - here the "Militant" was borrowing one of the oldest philistine arguments of the scissor bills). In other words, the party did everything it could to take the workers attention away from political price control questions

and steer it back into trade union-wage increase channels.

For that is all that the sliding scale of wages is -- a trade union demand, to ameliorate, not to prevent, the ravages of inflation. It keeps the struggle within pure and simple trade union borders and does nothing to win for labor the sympathy and support of the rest of the population. This was the slogan offered as the central one for a revolutionary party!

The majority resolution on wages and prices spoke well of the slogan of consumer committees to control prices, and from time to time The "Militant" mumbled a word or two in this connection, but this half-hearted general propaganda recommendation paled into insignificance beside the glorish calls for the sliding scale that headed every page. In fact, the press and the party did nothing to popularize and spread the idea of price control committees, for its eyes were irrevocably glued solely upon the struggle for wage increases. [The real attitude of the Communists was expressed in the resolution of the San Francisco Local which asserted in connection with the idea of consumer price control committees that "the fight for this step in the union movement will be considered secondary to the fight for a rising scale of wages."]

Consequently the popular fury for price control that followed upon the Congressional abolition of OPA presented the greatest opportunity for a serious revolutionary party. Popular demonstrations against price increases and for price control appeared everywhere, taking the form of mass meetings, picket lines and buyers' strikes. Consumer Councils, potential nuclei of price control committees, made their appearance, organized by unions and other mass organizations. Everybody was concerned with price control — except the SWP "vanguard".

Did the party make any serious attempt to penetrate the Consumer Councils and to transform them into control committees? Of course not, it was in fact opposing these committees because of their championing of buyers' strikes. Buyers' strikes are certainly not the solution to the price control question, but they are a first step, limited to be sure, on the road. They organize masses for a struggle against price increases by direct means, and that is a progressive step. Our duty was to give this idea critical support. But the "Militant" opposes the whole thing and keeps its skirts clean of any involvement. Did the party try to organize any committees itself, since the ones that the unions were organizing were not satisfactory? We have yet to hear of one. Where was the party, which wants to organize neighborhood branches, when the struggle for organizing tenants against rent increases was on the order of the day? In this, as in the other opportunities that were offered by the tremendous mass ferment about price control, the SWP was absent. Here was an important political struggle, broad in scope and with extraordinary implications, and the SWP was doing everything it could to stuff it back into narrow trade union channels. There's a lesson in how to "turn the economic struggle into a political struggle".

"Fearing a agent of ours going out road it reads from
Security Legislative price-freezing, it was impelled to demand state and
Committee to bolster this position all sorts of arguments straight
from the far-sounding & classic nichts-leftism were adduced. It was
strangely different right people that could not vote for government price
controls because we cannot trust the capitalist state to stop in-
flation (but we can presumably trust it to solve the problem) Jim
Crow, because we support the FPC. Finally the Communists were re-
duced to the laughable level of arguing that price control legislation
could not be supported because the NRA was a mechanism for rais-
ing prices - as if the capitalists needed an administration agency
in order to charge what the traffic would bear!

Q. What would a serious Bolshevik program have called for? As a
supplement to direct mass action for controlling prices, we should
have done everything to stir up a mighty nation-wide demand for
price control legislation along the following lines: immediate
freezing of all prices at June 30 levels, with no leave given to
COPA for price increases, the enforcement, and as soon as possible the
end of arbitration of the trade union tops. Such is the program that
would have been presented by a tribune of the people. The SWP, for
its part, has presented the program for a party of trade unions, secre-
taries, and a broad base of working-class organizations, and
of the European Relief Question, European Relief Committee, France
and its sister organizations, again calling for the most radical of
socialism. If it is not seriously developed.

10. Half Europe has been starving for the past two years, and the
other half has been on the merest subsistence rations. The looting
and de-industrialization of the European countries that has been
carried out, especially by Stalin, has aggravated this situation
and threatens to make it permanent. Shipments of relief from UNRRA
have been thoroughly inadequate and subject to political misuse, as in
Greece. The only hope for saving hundreds of thousands from slow
death lies in the building granaries and stockyards of the United
States. Here is a burning problem for a party that regards itself as
internationalist.

Very few SWP respondents act typical fashion. Harrowing tales of their
suffering were related in one issue of "The Militant". And then at
the end, in typical fashion came the injunction: "The labor movement
must itself take control of the gathering and distribution of food
relief." This was repeated on two or three occasions. And indeed
look at how the CPUSA and the CPB are transacting business.
View them starving millions of europe right very well have said: if
"Workers' control of food relief like socialism, is all very fine,
but in the meantime, what immediate steps do you propose in order
that we may procure either this workers control or a little food."

The abstract slogan of worker's control is meaningless unless
it is concretized and prepared for. When a worker reads in "The

Militant" that he should take over "control" of food relief, has he any idea what to do, any conception of where to begin? Would he know what to demand and fight for in his trade union, what things to agitate for in his neighborhood? Of course not! He knows he would become a laughingstock if he went around simply calling for "workers' control" of food relief. Only a "revolutionary" paper out of all touch with reality and completely irresponsible could limit itself to this.

First of all, it was and still is necessary for a genuine revolutionary group to stir up the widest outcry for the simplest democratic and human demand: the right for individuals to send unrestricted aid to friends and relatives in the famine-stricken countries. Tens of thousands of Americans of German, Italian and East European extraction who would like only the privilege of being able to send unlimited help have been prevented from doing so by the callous government regulations which strictly limited the amount of goods that can be sent to many countries and absolutely forbids sending anything to others. What could have gotten greater support for the party than a well-planned campaign of propaganda, protest meetings, union resolutions, etc., demanding the lifting of all restrictions on private packages? If carried out seriously, without any phrase-mongering or "revolutionary" bragging, it could have won tremendous prestige for the party.

This is only a small example of what could be done. In addition it is necessary to raise a hue and cry to make the Combined Food Board which actually controls the allocation of food, publish the figures as to how the world food supply is distributed. This would reveal some scandalous facts, such as the terrible disproportion of food allotted to the United States, and pave the way for serious agitation to place the control of food distribution in other hands. It would also be pertinent to demand that measures be taken to prevent the food distributed by UNRRA from falling into the hands of black marketeers in Europe who sell the food at profiteering prices. Such "simple" demands, for which everybody can understand the reason, are what the situation calls for, and not bombastic pronouncements about "workers' control", which, despite their radical sound, are merely the camouflage for the opportunism of abstention.

Finally, it was inoubtient to elaborate a program for prying loose the huge amounts of food that until recently overflowed the warehouses and pastures, where they waited until profiteering speculators decided that their price on the domestic market had reached its peak. Selling the food to the government for European distribution is not half so profitable as holding it for the inflated domestic market, and so millions go hungry so that a handful may grow fat. Separating this food from its profiteering owners was, and remains, needless to say, not only a measure necessary to alleviate the European and Asiatic situation but also a necessary step in ending the artificial shortage in the United States. It was extremely important to make everybody conscious of the existence of these large stockpiles of food as a first step in the campaign to free them for distribution. It should have been demanded that the government immediately confiscate all such stockpiles at an equitable price and necessary to demand full agricultural production in opposition to the Department of Agriculture's deliberate policy of restricting farm production in order to keep up prices. These are the type of

of good will, like that to "Lorraine" -- who said "I think
demands that an organization which takes itself seriously as the
leader of oppressed society must take." In all, including
his little magazine has done more to expose the scandal of "relief"
measures for Europe than both the Trotskyist organizations put together. A discerning reader of *Politics* can tell in short order
that it is such exposures as this and not the moralistic soul searching
of the Goodmans and Chidrenotes that give it the popularity.
It is that it has. And MacDonald's anti-Bolshevism does not alter the
fact that in this respect he has surpassed the revolutionaries
by far. *Politics* -- *which* only *as* a *newspaper* -- is *revolutionary*
not Spring. The hostile reaction occasioned by the audacity of someone
suggesting that the party actually do something to demonstrate its
internationalism instead of merely talking about it was compressed
into one contemptuous motion passed by their party that Comrade Morrow
be invited to write an article for the *Internal Bulletin* expressing
his views. No objections were raised to the specific proposals of
Morrow, no counter-proposals to solve the food situation were made --
just this one, infinitely cynical motion.

Another such article was *Food Situation in Asia*, written by
John Sennarico. The Greek Civil War and the Colonial Revolutions
and Indo-Chinese people against imperialist rule, the SWP did scarce-
ly a single concrete thing to indicate its support. Again, we are
speaking not of well-wishing editorials but of genuine activity
undertaken to render material and moral aid to the struggling oppre-
ssed. With the exception of one mass meeting called months after
the rebellions had been underway and a speaking appearance before
a meeting of the Indonesia League some time later, we do not know
of a single action undertaken to mobilize support in this country
for the colonial victims. And this despite the fact that there was
a vast and traditionally sympathetic milieu in which to agitate on
this question -- the Negro and other racial minority sections of
the population, always highly sensitive to colonial struggles.

What could have been done? In addition to widespread propaganda,
conducting protest meetings, resolutions, possibly demonstrations
to reach the Indonesian seamen stranded here and conducting their
own little fight? But no, the Stalinists were called this function.
How about propaganda among the seamen who were supposed to build
boatloads of ammunition to the British forces? In other words, how
about an all-sided attempt to deliver real aid to the struggling
colonialists by a persistent campaign and finally potentially sympathetic
sections of the American population? Surely the greatest revolu-
tionary development which followed World War II deserved more than
just passing nod. Just because Red China has organized *Food*
International uprisings was remiss when contrasted to what should have been done. It was a model of Bolshevik audacity in comparison to its reaction to the Civil War in Greece.

In protest against this imperialist bestiality, the party did literally nothing. If part of the reason for this inactivity was the kiss of death that had been planted upon the idea of a protest by the Workers Party's proposal for a joint protest, surely a supplementary reason was pure Trotinist lethargy. In this case, notwithstanding a token mass meeting was held, And yet Americans revolutionists had a clear duty to act, the more so because American arms were being used to shoot down the revolting Greeks!

Internationalism, like every other category in the revolutionary lexicon, means nothing if it never transcends the boundaries of mere verbiage. To abstain from such a practical application is, harsh as the verdict may sound, an abandonment of internationalism.

An occasional editorial putting The Militant on record in favor of free Jewish immigration to the United States will not impress the Jews. They hear the same thing even louder from Mayor O'Dwyer. Only an effort that is obviously serious can hope to win their enthusiastic support.

Comrade Lyons early this year handed in to the Internal Bulletin an article on the Jewish question, the last part of which presented a course of action for the party to follow here in the United States along the lines of a widespread propaganda campaign for unrestricted immigration, directed particularly to the Jewish masses. This article, in accordance with the free and unrestricted democratic discussion now taking place in the SWP, failed to appear for more than 8 months after being presented for publication. But somewhere in its wanderings from desk to desk the editors of the F.I. offered to print it in the magazine (this offer was later withdrawn), but on one condition -- that the section on the U.S. be eliminated! The section of the document that translated theory into concrete politics the editors wanted nothing to do with. The course of action prescribed, however, was never executed, not to the minutest degree whatsoever. Pitiful articles in the paper, moralizing about the illness of the Jews under capitalism were all that the SWP had to contribute to resolution of the problem of Europe's Jews.

And yet the vacuum does not remain empty. As in every other case, if we do not rush to fill it, somebody else appears. As in the national struggle it was the Stalinists, and in the price control fight the union bureaucrats, in this case the Zionists were quick to make capital out of the Jewish people's sympathy for their European kinsmen. Today the Jewish masses in America are more pro-Zionist than ever before. What other alternative can they see? The only other, a revolutionary leadership, has abdicated the struggle in advance. Thus by its policies of abstentionism the party increases and prolongs the influence of precisely those

M.W. + B. Lengnick

Whom it wishes to destroy. Zionism, Stalinism, Social-Democracy -- all live on borrowed time, generously given them by the politicians of the SWP. The "Exception" -- The Fight Against Gerald Smith. Somewhere in the dismal picture presented by the political activity of the SWP in the past years a ray of light shines through and demands to be accounted for. Didn't the SWP play a leading role in the demonstrations and picket lines against the fascist Gerald Smith, in cities from coast to coast? It did, and thereby hangs a tale -- a tale of the "exception" that proves the rule.

When Gerald Smith first made his appearance in Los Angeles in 1945, the SWP took no particular notice of him. All the other labor and mass organizations acted likewise, with one exception -- the local organization of the Workers Party. The latter addressed a communication to the SWP among others, calling for a united demonstration and picket line against Smith. This key fact is frankly admitted by Murray Weiss in his lengthy article in the Internal Bulletin: "The proposal of the Shachtmanites served one purpose. It forced us to seriously consider the whole question of the fight against Smith -- something we had not done previously." This makes the record quite clear: the Vanguard was deep in its habitual slumber until awoken by the petty-bourgeois abstentionists.

How prevent the WP from stealing the limelight with their anti-fascist picket line and at the same time not merely "follow" behind the Workers Party whom it is official SWP policy to ignore? The discerning Murray Weiss was quick to discover a solution. He adopted the "counter-tactic" of calling upon the trade unions to picket Smith, thus enabling the SWP to appear as the "leader" of the anti-fascist campaign while boycotting the WP picket line. In this way bureaucratic, if not anti-fascist, aims were served.

When the organized labor movement failed to appear, Murray Weiss dug up all sorts of "clever" excuses such as the "weakness" of a "small" picket line, "putschism", etc., to justify the failure to lead a picket line in the name of the party. This alibi was blown to bits by the subsequent picket lines and demonstrations against Smith in city after city. Under the pressure of criticisms from the minority and the Workers Party, the local organizations of the SWP demonstrated that they were indeed not abstentionists, but leaders of the anti-Smith struggle. But in doing so, they devastated every argument that Murray Weiss had so painstakingly adduced. Weiss had claimed that the WP picket line of 150, reinforced by at least twice that number that the SWP could have mobilized, would have been ineffective. In city after city the SWP placed picket lines of 100 and 200. Weiss claimed that it was "putchism" for the party to lead a picket line without the participation of the organized labor movement. In city after city in which the SWP organized and participated in picket lines, there was only token representation, if any, from the labor movement. Above all, in the August demonstration against Smith in Minneapolis, the SWP showed the right way to proceed when it forced the mass organizations to picket by refusing to be bound by the discipline of the anti-fascist committee and threatening to picket alone, if no one else would come.

Despite this insulting disregard for Weiss in practice, Weiss in theory presumably still remains the guide for the SWP. And a miserable theory

of tailendism it is! To justify this knavish, treacherous as "putschism" a policy of the party taking the lead in such demonstrations, thereby identifying an attempt of the party alone to overthrow the state (for which a majority of the workers is clearly necessary) with an attempt to throw a picket line against a handful of fascists in the first stages of organization! In the latter case, the workers are clearly sympathetic to the aims of the picket line, even if they do not participate directly at the cells of the party and, as the Minneapolis example clearly proved, the party can force the other organizations to act by taking a clear lead itself. Even were this not so, the experience of the past year, again particularly in Minneapolis, has demonstrated that a picket line of even the couple of hundred that the party itself is able to call out is sufficient to handle the small numbers that Smith is today able to attract.

The party must not wait for the mass organizations to act. It must try to involve them. Yes, it must do everything possible in this direction, and one of the best means is to set the example itself and make the other organizations follow in order not to be left behind. Every political action needs careful preparation. A demonstration of one hundred thousand cannot be held the first day of a political campaign. It needs a preparatory period of meetings, propaganda, agitation, etc., in many cases on a small scale. In this the party can and must take the lead. It can take for its motto: one action is worth a thousand words.

F. The Conduct of Election Campaigns

Election campaigns provide an opportunity for the revolutionary party to bring its program before wide sections of the population. The party does not expect to solve the social problems of the country by being elected to office, but this fact does not provide an excuse for the party not to apply itself seriously to the task of elaborating an election program. Unless the masses see that the party takes the election seriously, they will not take the party seriously.

Concretely, this means that the party apply its program to the problems of the area in which the election is being held. What it does not mean, but what it has been vulgarized and interpreted to mean, is that the party merely transcribes the whole collection of slogans that it has been shouting year-in and year-out onto a leaflet and calls it an election platform. The party should put into an election platform only such demands as it can seriously hope to fight for if it should be elected to the office for which it is running. That is the only way that it will be taken seriously. Ignoring this, the SWP election program for county dogcatcher is certain to be topped by the slogan of "A Socialist World", which "demand" follows a series of others equally irrelevant. The worker who takes the election seriously cannot but be repelled by such glibness and obvious lack of concern with the immediate issues which face him and which he hopes to solve through the election. He knows that there is no way that the party could hope to implement its long series of demands if it should be elected, and he feels a joke is being played upon him.

Glance through the "Program" that The Militant presents on Page Eight as its platform for six state elections. How does the candidate for governor of New York, for example, hope to accomplish Point 10, "For the complete independence of the colonial people?", and "Withdraw all American troops from foreign soil?"? Or how does the aspiring Senator from New Jersey plan to implement Point 8 when he gets to Congress, "For a veterans' organization sponsored by the trade unions?" How is the candidate for Governor of Washington going to achieve Point 11, "For a Workers' and Farmers' Government?" And so we could go down the list indefinitely.

In cases where demands relevant to the local situation are raised, this is done completely episodically and is not followed up. Far from being the axis of the campaign, they are dealt with in a summary fashion without knowledge in the field touched upon. In other words, the election campaign impresses everybody by its lack of seriousness.

The same rule applies here as in all other political situations.

A serious party must set itself the task of carefully and thoroughly investigating and studying the problem at hand, and then elaborate a serious and thought-out program to meet the given situation. Mental laziness is not the least of the vices to be overcome here. In addition to producing a political program for action, such a procedure would serve to educate the party itself about modern social and economic conditions, about which today it knows extraordinary little.

What kind of a program could be elaborated for a New York City election campaign, for example? Plank Number One could be a thoroughly elaborated program to clear out the slums and erect new housing to alleviate the shortage, with detailed figures as to how the taxes to finance this are to be raised. Point Number Two could be the propagation of a series of steps designed to end for once and for all the segregated housing in the city, by criminal prosecutions if necessary. Point Number Three could be an emphatic demand to end the Sales Tax. These are just the barest suggestions for a real election campaign. It is in the process of such an agitation, and not in abstract, sectarian propaganda, that the socialist perspective of the party would appear and take on a real form.

Such a campaign around election time can only be thoroughly effective if the demands embodied in it are related to issues around which the party conducts an agitation all year round. If the party would make a serious attempt to involve itself in the life of the masses in New York, for example, by organizing a struggle against the exorbitant rents in Harlem, it would have no difficulty in finding the issues and getting the widest audience for its election campaigns.

Such a program is not radical enough for the theoreticians of the SWP, evidently, for they continue to look on it with disdain and keep up their ceaseless shouting for "A Socialist Society". But this is a radicalism without content, a radicalism of the empty shell. Real radicalism consists in thoroughgoing immersion in politics, in the elaboration of a program to solve problems along every step of the way to the socialist goal, because only such a program can lead the masses, step by step, along that road.

G. How the SWP Opposed the War: Theory Versus Practice

War is an extension of politics, not only for the imperialist powers that wage it, but also for the revolutionary vanguard that is committed to struggle against it. War is an intensification of the thousand-fold oppression of capitalism upon the masses, and as such, it requires in response an intensification, not a modification, of the revolutionary struggle against it. The fact that such a struggle incurs greater risks and is confronted with greater difficulties than during peacetime, far from being a deterrent, must be a spur, for it is the subjective indication of the seriousness of the crisis and delicacy of the balance with which capitalism is confronted during war. Regardless of all patriotic sentiments that may exist, the war program of the bourgeoisie sooner or later, by imposing hardships, encounters resistance, in one form or another, from the masses, or at least sections of them. The revolutionary task is to be there when such resistance takes place, stir it up, popularize it and call upon everybody to support it.

Viewed in this light, the anti-war record of the SWP is a sorry one. For from beginning to end the party abdicated its role as organizer of the anti-war struggle, "sat out" the war in the privacy of its headquarters, "turned its face inwards" to quote its own expression, and in general effaced itself completely. The fact that it was against the war was something that could be determined only by asking it; its concrete activities gave little indication. The Minneapolis Trial was the government's warning to the SWP. In the light of the evidence we shall present, one must admit that the party took heed of the warning.

1. The Struggle Against Conscription

The first requirement of the capitalist state at war is arms, and the second is men. Hence, revolutionists have always made the struggle against war credits and conscription the first line of their struggle against imperialist conflict. In the second case especially, is the fight likely to bring fruitful results, for despite all patriotic moods, it is natural for large sections of the population to react against the idea of being forcibly separated from their homes and families to fight in a war whose aims are to them at best hazy. The stand of a party on military appropriations and war credits is a touchstone for its entire war policy.

The slogan of military training under trade union control was turned into an excuse for failing to wage a militant and aggressive fight against conscription. Cannon announced to the world that the tasks of defending the country and making the revolution must now "be telescoped and carried out simultaneously." The SWP theoreticians began to deliberate in Congress, as nothing but petty-bourgeois pacifists. In this way [the SWP abandoned the real, existing struggle against conscription in favor of the paper struggle for military training under trade union control.] Not that the latter slogan is in any way in contradiction with the task of mobilizing the population against the war and conservation plans of the government. But the agitation of the SWP proceeded as if there were a contradiction.

(LCP
in WP)

Did the slogan of "military training under trade union control" move a single person into action? The whole experience of the party with the slogan testifies that nobody understood or rallied to the demand. That was because it met neither the understanding nor needs of the masses. At best, it had a subordinate educational value. But a fight against conscription was able to move many into action. Not only in the civilian population, but in the army itself, particularly in the summer of 1941, the sentiment against the draft was very high. This was reflected in the narrow margin (one vote) by which the draft extension passed the House that year. [Had the SWP been guided by the precept of involving itself in the struggles of the masses, it would have been able to strike a genuine blow against the war by giving the anti-conscription battle the clear and consistent character that no one else could contribute.] The Cannonites spoke loudly about their "isolation" during the war. Here was a case where the isolation was self-imposed, by making the main slogan something that no one could see the reason for and failing to take up the battle for which many did see a reason.

2. The Conscientious Objectors

There are two ways for rebelling against war and conscription, once these things become a reality. One is the mass revolutionary method, the struggle to arouse the oppressed layers of the population to combat and unseat the government which is responsible for the horrors of war. This method requires the conscious revolutionaries in those places where the masses are, including the army and industry, in order to stir up this rebellion. The other is the individual, pacifist method, the method of individual resistance to the war plans of the government. This is the road of the conscientious objectors.

The conscientious objectors isolate themselves from the possibility of influencing those wide masses of people who must be won over to the anti-war struggle in order to bring the slaughter to a halt. Fenced off in prisons and compounds, they are impotent. For this reason, because it means practical sterility, revolutionary socialists cannot follow this course. It is a protest against war, but a thoroughly ineffective one.

Nevertheless, there can be no question where the revolutionary party stands in the struggle between the conscientious objectors and the state, any more than there is in any other struggle of the oppressed against official and unofficial tyranny. Many of them are courageous fighters, sincere idealists who, desiring to struggle against war, choose the only method which they know, and often suffer severe repres-sions for their ideas. The duty of a revolutionary party is to set up a hue and cry against the oppression of the conscientious objectors. It is necessary to set up a counter-action against the war-hysteria, which proceeds in the United States under the slogan of "War for Democracy". There is no better way than by invoking the principles of democracy against the war itself.

In the light of this, what can one say about the estimation of the iconoclastic objections made by SWP theoretician Hansen in a 1940 issue of The Militant? In The Militant, Hansen writes:

MB

"Those pacifists who oppose military training must be rejected with the utmost contempt by the class-conscious worker, just as he would reject with scorn and hate a scab who said: 'Unions? No, I will have nothing to do with them. They lead to tear gas!' I choose independence!"

This statement is worthy of a Stalinist at the height of chauvinist intoxication. Nothing less can be said of it. It could not appear in a truly revolutionary, anti-war journal. The conclusions flowing from it are obvious. One must certainly not protest, but applaud when the "scabs" are sent to jail or to work-camps. For what good union man wishes anything but flight-to-a-scab?

Hansen's estimation set the tone for SWP policy in relation to the CO's, if not in crudeness then in ineffect. The party never lifted its voice in defense of the conscientious objectors. During the entire course of the war they labored in slavery or in prison, protested, banded together, down-strikes, hunger strikes and other forms of militant struggle without so much as receiving a passing glance from the SWP. The commercial press created a veil of silence around their cause, seeking to hide this scandal committed in the name of democracy. The SWP, with its own peculiar motives, did likewise.

With the close of the war, governmental treatment of the CO's became even more outrageous. Those who were still work campers were supposedly there on the same basis as others who had joined the army, that is, subjected to dis-charge at the same rate as the soldiers. This is what they were promised. But more than a year has gone by since V-J Day during which the largest part of the armed forces have been released, but only a trickle of conscientious objectors have been permitted to leave the concentration camps, to say nothing of those suffering prison sentences. The objectors have reacted against this with a renewed series of strikes and protests, which have brought renewed repressions. Even a group of liberals has formed a committee to petition for their release and the conservative New York Times has grudgingly admitted that they have a right to be freed, and yet amidst all this The Militant has found time to print but one brief and casual editorial in favor of their release. While travelling a little distance from the venomous "hate" it expressed in 1940, the SWP proceeds in essentially the same way. Of what interest, after all, are the conscientious objectors to us? Do they work in a factory?

War is the intensification of politics for every grouping in society. For the SWP, it was the intensification of abstention.

success of the WP. The trade union tactics conclude that since policy of the WP resulted in failure, therefore the SWP policy of having experienced trade-unionists sleep through the war and thus come out at the end with their jobs was a howling success. But history provides other standards of comparison than the WP.

Factors such as inexperience and lack of seniority aside, it is not too difficult to account for the failure of the WP in its trade-union experience. Essentially in this respect it suffers from the same malady as the SWP -- (a non-political and one-sided approach to trade-union work.) Such an approach can never be fruitful in building a revolutionairy party. In the case of the WP, the party attracted to itself and recruited a goodly number of trade-unionists whom it activated only around specifically union questions, never raising them to a higher level, and giving them the impression that the party's principal reason for existence was to conduct "progressive" trade union work. This work was never politicized nor, what is more important, wasn't conceived as supplementary to political work conducted outside of trade-union channels. Such a course cannot be fruitful and must lead either to opportunism or adventurism. The SWP succumbed to the first; the WP to the second.

Yet, even in the purely economic sense, the American working class did not slumber during the war. Especially after the first effects of the war hysteria that followed Pearl Harbor, the factory workers began a scattered revolt against the war-time economic conditions imposed upon them by the government and the bosses. Wildcat strikes and even one or two sustained struggles, by the mine workers, for instance, were undertaken. To be sure, the militancy and staying-power of the workers were nowhere near the heights reached during the 1945-46 strike wave, but the workers wore nevertheless dimmed, not in a condition of apathy or defeat, but would justify a categorical decision not to give any leadership. The workers went in sporadic revolt, against both the government and the trade-union bureaucracy, and they needed and wore searching for a new leadership. They did not find it in the SWP.

This is not to say that the party could or should have given leadership to every strike that developed. But it was necessary to be on the alert for every opportunity to channelize the resentment of the workers against the union bureaucracy. In this struggle, inside the union, leadership could have been given. For this, however, it was necessary to recognize that the wildcat strikes were unnecessary if dangerous stage without which the workers could not have come to realize the treasonous role of the bureaucracy, and therefore these strikes could not be regarded purely negatively. It was necessary to look for occasions in which the party fractions could undertake direct leadership in this or that sporadic strike in order to be able to end it successfully; directing resentment against the bureaucrats without permitting morale to be lowered as a result of a fiasco. If leadership and participation in struggles within the unions had been conducted in conjunction with political struggles from outside, the party could have won a firm reputation. Instead, the SWP let the trade union struggles go leaderless or else tail-ended miserably. Fear of victimization paralyzed the party -- it did not understand that even a few "victims" here and there would be well compensated for by the increasing popularity and strength that

Grand
In

the party would win as the only force that continued to struggle for the workers' simplest rights. Even the "victims" could in many cases, if the situations were handled correctly, benefit in popularity from the victimizations and turn the weapons hurled against them into boom-boom.

In other words, in the way the party was able to do in the Minneapolis Case.

Aside from all this, "victimization" in most cases means being drafted into the army, which the SWP regarded, despite all venomous polemics against pacifists for "not going with the masses", as equivalent to a removal from political activity. This leads us to the fourth interesting aspect of the SWP's conception of how to struggle against the war.

4. Work in the Army

Certainly the center of anti-war work in a modern imperialist country which drafts the bulk of its youth into the armed forces must be "work in the army." It is the army, after all, which is the instrument for carrying out the policy of imperialism, it is the army which must be infested with revolutionary and even simple democratic ideas if it is not to become the instrument of counter-revolution at home and abroad. Above all, it is the soldiers in the army who learn on their bodies what modern imperialist war means and are, despite all reactionary prejudices, the most receptive to concrete anti-war propaganda. Especially in the United States, the authoritarian character of the army, in sharpest contrast to the democratic ideals which it is supposedly fighting for, provides a great opportunity for fruitful agitation in the armed forces.

Yet despite all this, the SWP never paid the slightest attention to organizing and coordinating party work in the army, and this despite the presence of hundreds of members in the armed forces. A party member who left for the army was regarded as an "absentee", not only formally but literally. He was regarded as having dropped out of political activity for the duration, except insofar as he might win over this or that person for the party strictly on his own. The party did not even keep in systematic contact with him, much less give him directives. When he returned, he was welcomed "back to the party". In other words, [the army was regarded as a political void which swallowed up good party members and "wasted" them for several years.]

This type of activity has nothing in common with the anti-war concept of Lenin: it has a much greater similarity to the "anti-war" conceptions of the I.I.P. Revolutionary defecation does not mean blowing up bridges, but it does mean sustained political work designed to bring about struggle against the imperialist army as an oppressive force and the turning of the soldiers' energy against the "main enemy at home". This can never be done by programme manifestoes denouncing the war as imperialist, but can only be accomplished by sustained political work in the army, in which revolutionists inside the armed forces must play the principal role, bringing to consciousness, developing and organizing the fight for the needs of the soldiers against the military hierarchy. Each Bolshevik soldier should become the nucleus for a cell of opposition to the army and the war, a cell which should itself become the organizer of broader movements of masses of soldiers around given issues. When the opportunities present themselves. The oppression of rank-and-file soldiers by the military caste takes on hundreds of forms; conse-

F. De
Witt

quently, the struggle against this oppression, which is a struggle against the war, finds hundreds of channels. These struggles principally take the form of a fight for the democratic rights of the rank-and-file soldier against the officer caste. The task of organizing and developing these struggles to a higher level, up to the point of such radical demands as the election of officers by the ranks, is the task of the revolutionary in the army.

Needless to say, it is not a question of the activities of this or that individual soldier-comrade, who may have greater or lesser abilities. It is a question of the orientation and direction of the SWP leadership, which is the guilty party in the case. Instead of precise instructions to each member upon his entering the army, instead of systematic contact with him, instead of exchange of information between members in the army through a central channel, instead of national fraction meetings of all available soldiers from time to time, instead of special bodies to direct the military work, instead of press propaganda about the miserable conditions in the army and the way to remedy them, instead of all this, the SWP kissed the departing soldier goodbye and expressed the hope that he would return to political activity when he finished his sojourn in the army.

It is therefore not surprising that political ferment in the army breaking to the surface caught the party surprised, unprepared and without influence. University Place had practically nothing to say and even less to do with [the widespread demands for democratic reforms that swept the army during the early part of 1946.] By this time of course it was too late to do anything. The Political Committee had turned down a proposal made by a number of the minority two years ago, that the party undertake systematic work in the army along essentially the lines outlined above. Better to continue with our task of work in the trade unions, where we are likewise doing nothing, and leave the nonsense about "work in the army" to the adventurists! =?

5. The Soldiers' Demonstrations

A wave of soldiers' demonstrations came in the United States Army in the first weeks of 1946. Fired by the desire to return home with the close of the war, angered by the thousand and one indignities that had been heaped upon them for long years, embittered by the miseries and privations of a soul-scarring war, the American soldiers threw off their inhibitions, rose to their full stature as human beings and demanded that they be heard; they wanted to be discharged immediately and they wanted an end to the authoritarian system in the army.

These demonstrations found a wave of sympathetic response from one end of the country to another. Almost everyone had friends or relatives in the army for whose release he was anxious. The reactionaries in high places dared not openly denounce the movement, so widespread was its popularity. Instead, they hoped to dull its edge by a series of vague promises and excuses. There was no lack of support for the protesting soldiers; it needed only to be organized to be effective.

The SWP responded to its task by hailing this development with a rash of headlines and...nothing more. It did not lift a finger to organize

a meeting, a demonstration, or so much as a trade union resolution in support of the rebellious soldiers. It ignored a written proposal made by three members of the minority that the party go into thorough-going action around the question. It could not send any directives to members in the armed forces because it had established no systematic contact with them, and despite the extremely favorable arena now opened for my work, continued in its failure to establish it. In other words, this most important political development of the war was completely ignored and the great possibilities inherent in it passed up. (A thorough-going analysis of the party's role in this situation has been made in an article "Revolutionary Politics Versus Political Inertia," written for the Internal Bulletin many months ago and not yet printed.)

Of course, an appreciation of the importance of such a development from a political-agitational point of view could only follow from a correct conception of the nature of revolutionary politics in general and of anti-war work in particular. It would have required, first of all, a correct policy in the army, so that party members would have been prepared by their whole experience of political activity to take the leadership of such a movement. It would have been Utopian to expect that the SWP would step out of character in this one instance and become the organizer of a big political struggle, but its dereliction nevertheless looms particularly large when the importance of the occasion is taken into consideration. The Militant featured a screaming headline: "Back to the G.I. Cause" -- and then did not a thing to back it. Never has the nakedness of "socialism of the phrase" been shown up more clearly.

There is the record of the SWP during the war. Abstention raised into a principle. In this field as in every other it became the master of the empty phrase, of the sound and fury that signifies nothing. Its anti-war platform became an empty gesture, an article of faith with nothing but negative content. The test that can be set for the SWP leadership in the war is that it did not support it; to say that they opposed it would betray a misunderstanding of what opposition means. It is not a literary exercise, the recitation of ritual phrase -- in this domain the S.L.P. likewise opposes the war. The recitation of the words is the classic way to save a centrist conscience. Opposition, like support, is an native concept, and it is only an native policy that can aspire to lend socialism from the word across that rocky and precipitous path into the realm of the deed.

What the Party Must Become

By this time what constitutes the difference between serious revolutionairy politics and (paradoxical as it may sound) petty-bourgeois pre-occupation with "pure" trade unionism should be clear to all. This survey of the politics of the SWP is not only a critique but, as we said at the beginning, a programmatic statement. It is designed not merely to inform everyone about what is wrong with the SWP; that is very secondary. It is intended first and foremost to provide a programmatic approach with which he who is willing can open the door to revolutionairy politics.

(1) The difference between a party and a sect is not a difference in size.

It is a difference in its political concept and its relationship to society. The S.L.P. may have 10,000 members and 70,000 votes; it does not cease thereby to be a dead sect, because it has no connection with real problems of society; it lives in a cut-off world of its own. A truly revolutionary grouping, on the other hand, may be a handful in actual numbers, but if it is vital, alive to every new problem, in touch with all oppressed sections of the population and drawing to itself the best elements from all of them, recognized as a force by every one and respected even by its enemies, then it is a party, in the truest sense of the term. The SWP scorns such a relationship with the surrounding world; it designs only to bury itself deeper in the trade unions and cut itself off from the intellectual and political life of the country. That is why it remains an ingrown sect, and a semi-Economist one at that, despite all its pretensions.

We have shown, in the most concrete fashion possible, and operating almost solely with the experience of the last five years, what the party must do to break out of its self-imposed isolation. To generalize once more for the last time: it must become the leader of the oppressed in every field, and this in practice, not in phrase-mongering self-adulation. It must become superior to everyone in all the fields in which it engages, and thus attract the best intellectuals as well as the best workers from the old society. This attraction is a dialectic process; it cannot be begun until the party radically changes its course and begins to pull itself up by its own boot-straps, so to speak, by conscientiously attempting to raise its own political and intellectual level. As soon as there is a sign of this, the best elements of the workers and intelligentsia will begin to gravitate toward the party, effecting a further rise in its level, enabling it to speak with greater knowledge and authority in every field. Thus, a continuing interaction between the party and society will have been begun, which will at last enable the party to grow into the influential force which it must become.

Let no one sneer that this higher political-intellectual level is meant for the intelligentsia alone and thus betrays an attitude of condescension towards the working class. The condescension is all on the other side; it resides in the breasts of those philistines who look down upon the proletariat, have a low opinion of its intellectual potentialities, and desire to condemn it forever to the ignorance in which it is brought up and maintained by the press and activities of the SWP. Workers desire and need to know as much about all fields of knowledge as the intellectuals; they cannot content themselves with the insulting vulgarizations, passed off as popularizations, that appear in The Militant and Fourth International. Lenin forty-five years ago pointed out to today's vulgarizers that:

"...they (the workers) take part (in creating ideology) only to the extent that they are able, more or less, to acquire the knowledge of their age and advance that knowledge. And in order that working men may be able to do this more often (Lenin's emphasis), efforts must be made to raise the level of the consciousness of the workers generally; ears must be taken that the workers do not confine themselves to the artificially restricted limits of literature for workers but that they

The general "Sight" of Mr. G. W. C.
and vast / vast for me audience, 10/10 P.C. of 'prophylaxis'

study general literature, to an increasing degree (Lenin's emphasis). It would be even more true to say "were not confined" instead of "not confine themselves", because the workers themselves wish to read and do read all that is written for the intelligentsia and it is only a few (bad) intellectuals who believe that it is sufficient "for the workers" to tell them a few things about factory conditions, and to repeat over and over again what has been long known." (our emphasis)

A revolutionary party must be primarily proletarian in composition, but this is neither sufficient nor can it be achieved by artificial methods of "proletarianization". The party will attract the necessary proletarian cadres by a correct political method which offers workers a real perspective and raises their level of consciousness. By a correct political orientation the party not only attracts workers but accomplishes what is just as important - it educates them, to the point where they can rival the intellectuals as experts on all sorts of questions. This cannot be done by simple and abstract courses in "Basic Marxism", but only by a continuous investigation into all the problems, political, economic, scientific and philosophical, which confront society and which must be solved by a party that aspires to lead the world to socialism. This investigation is not at all a scholastic and esoteric affair; it is inseparable from that all-sided political activity of which we have spoken. It is an investigation that must be begun firmly from the first moment that he comes in contact with the party. It is pure fantasy to imagine that there is anyone, workers included, who could be educated by the insulting sermons doled forth each week in the columns of The Militant (and Labor Action, for that matter), spiced with the "diaries" of steel workers. Each week the reader is told only the same thing that he was informed of the week before, and the week before that. These journals are the furthest thing from revolutionairy organs; they contain nothing but rehashes of the bourgeois press plus "stock" interpretations and wearisome injunctions. The editors think that they are educating people by unrolling their schematized version of a transitional program each week. Since the program is abstract, since the party itself is abstracted from all contact with reality, the press is inevitably the most miserable and vulgar abstraction of all.

The press (and in this it is only a reflection of the party) must raise the level of everybody, instead of degrading it. The intellectual life of the party must be emancipated from the narrow factory level, to which (not workers, but the worst sort of petty-bourgeois intellectuals, have condemned it). For while the factory may be the economic root of the bourgeoisie's social power, it is in the political superstructure that the decisive struggle takes place. Only when the worker, in addition to the intellectual, attains knowledge of the position, aims and struggles of all classes in society does he become class-conscious in the true sense of the term. This consciousness, to repeat, can only be attained in the course of the active intervention of the revolutionairy party in all the affairs and struggles of all those classes. Bolshevism must adopt Marx's favorite motto: No thing human is alien to me.

M/S open

Such an orientation requires a radical break with the past. If socialism is not just a moral ideal for the comfort of those who hold it, it must be successfully activated. The time for that is not unlimited; capitalist-barbarism, of which the atomic bomb is only (symbolic) is preparing the destruction of civilization, under which socialism is doomed to be buried unless it finds its way out of the blind alley in which it is at present. The first condition for this is a critical examination of its past. This the minority has performed. The second

This is an unambiguous elaboration of the program and concepts necessary to take the movement off its treadmill and set it back on a fruitful path. Such an elaboration is what this document has begun. The staff, third condition, and the most important of all, is to put these concepts, which are activistic to the core, into action. Therein lies the burning problem of our movement.

October 29, 1946.