

# FORUM

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## UNDER THE BANNER OF ZINOVIEV

By H. D. Coleman (St. Louis)

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There was once a time, in the Trotskyist movement, when to raise the question of "tone" was considered naive, if not downright shameful. If there were embedded somewhere in the article or speech in question just one quotation from Lenin, then all the vulgar and malicious abuse that surrounded it was sanctified. It was "scientific," "objective" abuse - nothing personal, mind you! In the split with Cannon, Comrade Shachtman and others discovered rather late in the day that questions of "tone" have considerable political importance. The "tone" of a discussion or polemic tells much about the people and organizations involved - sometimes more than is revealed by the content - and often gives us a glimpse of the future.

The tone and style of Erber's document predispose one to give it serious consideration. The tone and style of Shachtman's reply, from its pompous dedication to its concluding, unintelligible contribution to the science of mechanics, predispose one to toss it aside and forget about it. Shachtman's excellent qualifications as an exponent of orthodox Marxism-Leninism are very largely hidden by his more than usually over-blown style. In the past, his wit and sarcasm were stimulating, though now and then we had a preview of how they might degenerate. The present production is, stylistically speaking, a Shachtmanian nightmare. Since it is almost impossible to avoid sinking to Shachtman's polemical level in considering his production, I will not conceal the fact that I hesitated long about using, as an alternative title to this article, "Under the Banner of the Chamber Pot."

Examples of what I am referring to are, unfortunately, too numerous to list at length. Perhaps the most disgraceful is the parallel with Trotskyist and Zinovievist capitulators to Stalinism, on page 6. This is abuse with a faint aroma of the "Daily Worker." Then there is the reference to "Americanized Quitters," at the bottom of page 13. Shachtman's disgust at this name has a rather ambiguous character, which he must have wanted to be apparent. No one likes to be called a quitter; but, that much abuse being inevitable, it doesn't seem to me that Erber or anyone else need be disturbed about being called an Americanized Quitter. Comrade Shachtman likes this horrid epithet "Americanized;" he uses it elsewhere. It reminds me of accounts I have read of the early years of the American CP; "Americans" weren't very popular then either. Perhaps Comrade Shachtman's use of the term derives from those years - and this is not the only element in his document that does so.

Sometimes Shachtman's figures of speech, in their vapid extravagance, merely remind me of very hard seats and endless harangues at endless conventions and membership meetings. Page 17, for example, where, referring to a proposal of Erber's of several years ago which has no relevance whatsoever to the present discussion, Shachtman remarks: "This proposal, hilarious in conception and formulation, produced an excited yawn in the party, but even that for not more than a full minute." Did you ever

yawn for a full minute, Comrade Shachtman? It's one hell of a yawn - a really spectacular yawn! You are losing your delicate touch with the negative construction; and you forget that almost everyone knows that you always treated Erber's ideas very seriously, regardless of how hilarious they may seem to you now.

Sometimes Comrade Shachtman's analogies are merely stupid: as when, on page 21, he compares the critics of orthodox Marxism-Leninism to people who propose to "get far off the ground" by digging "a great big hole in the earth." Shachtman's sarcasm is often so ponderous that it is merely embarrassing to read, as on pages 46-48, where we have a three-page museum of the choicest antique polemical devices, the fine outline of some of them blurred by the growth of moss - or algae. In his dialogues with himself and various imaginary characters, Shachtman resembles a punch-drunk pugilist.

Why are these criticisms of Shachtman's style and tone of any importance? In the first place, because Shachtman says (somewhat inconsistently) that Erber's document "is not worth a minute's attention so far as settling accounts with him is concerned." The real purpose of the reply is to "re-state our principles, to demonstrate their validity again." Presumably this re-statement is for the benefit, mainly, of those not members of the party. And Shachtman and the leadership of the party must be told again, as they have been told many times in the past (with little effect), that this stubborn adherence to the polemical tradition of the Comintern is alone guaranteed to prevent the "Americanization" (hateful word!) of the party - that is, its transformation into an organization with something approaching a mass base in America, as distinguished from an organization with a fine circulation for its press in Europe and Asia. In the second place, a polemical style gone to seed is probably a symptom, in this case, of a political viewpoint gone to seed.

Comrade Shachtman has painfully hauled after him the whole theoretical and organizational tradition of the Comintern. He is welcome to that malodorous burden, and welcome to the task of defending it as being, in fact, light as a feather and fragrant as a violet. But no member of the party automatically accepts any such burden when he joins; and neither I nor any other member is bound by any party statute that I know of to accept Shachtman's definition of what is indispensable to Marxism. This does not mean at all that Comrade Shachtman has the patent rights, as he seems to assume, on the real achievements of the October Revolution. But the panicky way in which he hugs the October Revolution to his breast, and his fury at the sad state of affairs when "every craven, every deserter, every diletante can now track his dirty boots on to the imperishable page and relax his wretched bowels over it," these symptoms suggest that we will get little additional enlightenment on the subject of the October Revolution from Comrade Shachtman. His "critical re-evaluation" belongs to the past. Do you think, Comrade Shachtman, that when Stalinism reaches, as it has now, a climax of brutality and terror throughout the world, that you are going to

have a monopoly of "critical re-evaluation?" . Why shouldn't even the dilettante speak out against totalitarianism? And is it cause for complaint that political terror is not "respectable" in the United States?

Shachtman's ideas did not, he says, "come into full and hermetically-sealed roundness overnight." "They have developed," he says, presumably into the full and hermetically-sealed roundness just mentioned, over "a hundred years." And the ideas he expresses in his document are just about as likely to "bite smoothly and deeply into the material they are applied to" as one would expect any "full and hermetically-sealed roundness" to bite into anything. The development of a mass socialist movement in America lies in an entirely different direction: in a complete break, so far as Trotskyists are concerned, with the tradition of the CP, and the reduction of Leninism from the rank of sacred scripture to the level of other socialist doctrines and theories. - all subject to re-examination, revision and amplification. Such a mass socialist movement would necessarily be based on a minimum program which would leave most purely theoretical questions entirely open. But this movement might, nevertheless, have a very different character from the social-democracy. A full utilization of specifically American political traditions and methods, which Marxists have always been backward in doing; a more flexible approach to the whole problem of the socialization of industry, with the emphasis on the decentralization of control, these are some of the elements of a socialist program for America.

It is significant that Shachtman begins his discussion of Erber's views on war with an elaborately contrived sneer, in the style of a Japanese actor, at Erber's harmless and to all appearances entirely sincere statement that he leaves the WP "without rancor or bitterness." It is plain that lack of rancor and bitterness under such circumstances is, to Shachtman, a clear indication of political instability.

He recommends Erber for an assistant instructorship in the I-Was-a-Political-Idiot-but-Now-I-Am-Smart School. This attack, built on the damning evidence that Erber changed his mind, and did so, above all, without constant consultation with M. Shachtman, is rather strange. A number of us have been political idiots at various times; I recall a short period in 1934-35 when I thought that my previous low opinion of the Trotskyist movement was perhaps unjustified. Not all of us can claim to be smart even now. Perhaps Shachtman's uncharacteristically gracious admission that Erber has smartened up is due to a desire to maintain the professional reputation of the faculty of the above mentioned school, since my Catalogue lists Comrade Shachtman as a full professor on this same faculty. The degrees he has taken in the academic specialty of the school need not be enumerated. The most notable were conferred, in a back-handed sort of way, by that great educator, L. D. Trotsky.

I do not intend to enter into a discussion at this point of the theoretical questions that Shachtman raises, as I feel that

the problem is to a great extent a practical one which cannot be jammed into the theoretical mold that Shachtman supplies. These rigid categories have no meaning for me, and the day when they had any meaning for the world labor movement is past, never to return - except, in a slightly perverted form, if Stalinism triumphs. (Shachtman's Marxism, of course, as he himself points out, is most brilliantly vindicated precisely when it fails to work: like the Christian Science creed, its truth is proven by the fact that it makes just as good sense backwards as forwards).

I agree with the general approach to the problem represented by Erber's briefly-stated points and by Susan Green's discussion article. For myself, and I am sure for these other comrades as well, these questions are far from settled. One thing I believe to be true: the official party position is an attempt to avoid facing the actual political problem, and represents (as countless contradictory phrases in resolutions, articles and speeches prove), a tendency to place bourgeois democracy and Stalinist totalitarianism on the same level. (And "of all the bourgeois democracies, the American is the most reactionary...", says Shachtman!) The party position has mainly the character of a defiant gesture. In the face of the overwhelming horror of a new war, that spirit of defiance needs to be preserved; but it will have no meaning unless socialists are also prepared to grapple with the concrete problems of socialist policy in the war. I very much doubt, after hearing reports on the recent convention and reading Comrade Shachtman's document, that these problems will ever get the kind of discussion they deserve in our organization. The criticism of Erber for not attempting to initiate such a discussion has its most effective answer in the general character of Shachtman's document, which will probably establish the ideological atmosphere of the movement for the next period. In such an atmosphere, free discussion of basic questions is impossible.

My own views began to take form entirely independent of other comrades. I knew nothing about Erber till I read his document; I knew nothing about Comrade Green till I read her article. My own ideas began to take form a couple of years ago, as I began to reflect on what I had observed of the functioning of the party during World War II. During the war, I had postponed consideration of certain questions that had arisen in my mind. I had seen our members fighting in the armed forces as "loyally" as other citizens, and without any suggestion from any source that they should do otherwise. I saw our members working in war plants and doing as good jobs as anyone else. They were active in their unions and advocated a more militant policy than was generally approved by the union bureaucrats; but they never, with party approval, advocated anything that could be called an adventurist policy or a policy based on purely political considerations. What we proposed was always based on sound trade union practice. Our opposition to the "No Strike Pledge" took a form fully in accord with non-political trade union policy as interpreted by the more "progressive" unionists. Among ourselves, we exaggerated the political significance of this campaign, because we did not want to acknowledge the fact of our complete abandon-

ment of what was once called "defeatism." We were, in theory, politically opposed to the war; but we did nothing about it, though we undeniably had the freedom to try.

In the position we developed on the "national question," primarily the work of Comrade Shachtman, we made perfectly clear that the first job of European socialists was to defeat the Nazis and achieve national independence. In the course of that struggle, we said, the Third Camp will emerge - in the course of a common struggle of various social strata for a national, rather than a class, objective. Shachtman admits that the Third Camp did not take any material form except in the national resistance movements. And what were these movements but defensist movements? We urged that they be given an independent socialist character, we foresaw a point where class differentiation would begin. But we nevertheless accepted the defensist character of these movements and urged that socialists drop all sectarian prejudices and participate loyally in them. We foresaw, with extraordinary accuracy, that the entire post-war period (assuming the defeat of the Nazis), would derive its character from the effectiveness or lack of effectiveness of the independent, anti-Stalinist socialists in the resistance movements. The Third Camp developed to the extent that it did in World War II on the basis of defensism - a critical, socialist defensism, but still defensism. Nothing else was possible. In America, the paralyzing weakness of the socialist movement, dominating all other considerations. In Europe: the paralyzing weight of Nazism, which had to be thrown off before anything else could be done. The result, for all socialists, including ourselves, was a defensist policy, varied by a more or less courageous effort to expose certain popular illusions about the war.

What we had to say about "imperialist war" in the abstract was not very important. Comrade Shachtman appears to believe that our manifestos in this vein made all the difference between capitulation and intransigence. But to the war in the concrete, we adjusted ourselves very successfully; and I do not see how our protestations of not being involved politically altered the fact that by not one single political act did we distinguish ourselves from those socialists who admitted that they were defensists of one kind or another.

In World War III, I am convinced that the situation will be much the same. The weakness of the movement in America is unaltered; and our instinctive resistance to any kind of appeasement of Stalinism is even more marked than in the case of Nazism, since our knowledge is more expert. Leninist consistency will go overboard, as it did in World War II. In Europe, when the Stalinist military machine begins to move, the "national question" will again become dominant. Everywhere, the far closer integration of the civilian population with the military machine that will characterize the new war, will raise new problems for the socialist - problems that cannot be solved by the old slogans. The lives of workers and their families will depend on the organization of the civilian population for protection against atom bombing, biological warfare, etc., and against Stalinist sabotage and

espionage. We may face dreadful choices in this future war; but there is no easy and painless manner of avoiding moral and political responsibility for it; there is no manifesto that will accomplish this. The pacifist may make such a pretense of avoiding moral responsibility, and in his case it may not be merely a pretense. But, given the situation as it is today, if we reject pacifism, we must accept some variety of defensism, critical or uncritical, temporary or permanent, socialist or reactionary. No one can say in advance what will happen in America in the course of the war, although Shachtman insists that Erber settle all this right now, by the simple use of the supernatural gifts that every class-conscious worker possesses. American fascism would hardly be preferable to Russian fascism. But we can only develop policy on the basis of what the situation is today.

However, Comrade Shachtman is immune to all these disturbing speculations. He has the October Revolution (in the original sixty-five volume, Russian edition), all critical re-evaluations are safely in the past, and he has a fascinating new heresy to expunge: American chauvinist aristocratism. It is remarkable how a man's sense of the ridiculous will fail him.

April 15, 1949.

# # #

GENERAL PROBLEM OF DEMOCRACY

By J. Wallis (Los Angeles)

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(Author's note: I have been told by several sympathetic persons that an article such as mine would be read by very few within the League. If this is so, I must blame myself as much as anyone. I know that my style is in no sense lucid. My terminology is admittedly clumsy, and I would gladly welcome any changes that might make it more clarifying. Unfortunately, personality is one of the factors that creates style, and I have not felt like visiting a psychiatrist as preparation for writing this.

In one sense, however, I do not blame myself. If it is true that infelicity of style is a considerable barrier, there is something wrong with those should-be readers who cannot surmount it. It is a sad state of affairs in a revolutionary movement when journalistic and/or oratorical competence become the criteria for the acceptance - or even the consideration - of the ideas of comrades.

The major difficulty is that our journalistic comrades have not been considering - at least not publicly - these most important questions. I don't know if it's a case of "Fools rush in..." or not, but if so, it is at least important to recognize that there are worthwhile fields of enquiry in which our journalistic "angels" have "feared to tread."

At any rate, we've been chewing a theoretical cud long enough - it's time to move on to some new and vitaminous nutriment!)

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Ever since its official description of the Russian state as a bureaucratic-collectivist class state which evolved from a workers' state, the Workers Party was faced with a fundamental task - that of understanding which characteristics of a state facilitate such an evolution. Because of our failure to take this task seriously, our only response to the question "How do we know you'd be any better than the Stalinists?" is the unconvincing "There can be no guarantees!"

The WP, born in a process of conceptual liberation, made one great advance in the revolutionary understanding of the world of today. Thereafter, as far as fundamentals were concerned, it rested on its laurels. Today, as the Independent Socialist League, it assumes the neglected task - the investigation of the problems of workers' democracy. By passing the motion "Directive to Political Committee" the convention gave every comrade the chance to help develop a body of theory which should give the ISL a prestige far greater than that gained by the WP from its earlier contributions.



Our conclusions must be abstract. History, the "great improviser," forbids us the luxury of a "blueprint" of the future. In that regard, our problem is not unique. Most scientific research seeks statements of the sort "If any object has characteristics A, B and C it also has the characteristic D." Experience gives us faith in such scientific statements, even when applied to objects so novel that no one has seen, heard or even conceived of them. It is the purpose of our discussion to devise (or, as the realists would have it, discover) such statements. In our case the statements must describe social structures. We seek justification for saying, as social scientists, "If any social structure has characteristics A, B and C, its tendency will be toward the maintenance and extension (or, on the other hand, 'the limitation') of popular control of that structure." Such statements are not "blueprints," but rather scientific criteria for the judgment of social structures.

One of the deterrents to this investigation has been the feeling that generalizations of the characteristics of a satisfactory workers' state cannot be tested until there exists a state with those characteristics. For this reason the directive was not worded "...for consideration of the problems of workers' power," but rather, "...for consideration of the relation between organizational forms and bureaucratic control." Hundreds of organizations display varying degrees and kinds of bureaucracy. These include not only unions, cooperatives, political parties, industries etc., but also a variety of bourgeois-democratic states. Most display a mixture of bureaucracy-prone and -resistant aspects, each blend being in some way unique. While contemporary generalizations cannot complete the list of criteria by which a workers' state should be judged, they can minimize the degree to which revolutionary forces must "play by ear"!

In a way it is fortunate that our criteria must derive from contemporary organizations. With our decision to emphasize a political approach to recruitment, it becomes important that we be able to use the familiar and immediate as examples of what we mean (or v.v.) in our descriptions of the sort of society we desire. This does not mean that discussion should be a dreary round of specific cases. Fruitful discussion demands emphasis upon abstraction, concrete cases being only illustrative. However, it is important to recognize the objective limits of abstraction, and the favorable aspects of such limits.

Although workers' power can be secure only in proportion to its inclusion of the economic and human resources of the planet, we must consider various nations separately because of their unequal economic and social developments. A bureaucracy-resistant democracy in the United States, for example, would place power in the hands of the working-class; in India, on the other hand, power would probably lie in the hands of the peasants. Because of this difference, our present discussion should be limited to the problem of industrially advanced areas.

This article is not intended to answer questions. Fruitful discussion demands a general contextual framework. Here is

presented such a framework, based upon an analysis of the nature of the problem itself.

## 1. AMBIGUITY OF THE CONCEPT "DEMOCRACY"

A terminological difficulty, based upon the ambiguity of the term "democracy", must be removed. This may be accomplished by use of the terms "horizontal democracy" and "vertical democracy," defined as follows:

- a) By "horizontal democracy" is meant the equality of all members of an organization with respect to selection of representatives, accessibility to office, freedom of speech, press, assemblage, etc.; and,
- b) By "vertical democracy" is meant the degree to which the rank-and-file has power to control the policies and activities of their organization.

History records no nation with a satisfactory degree of either horizontal or vertical democracy, so that any examples must be hypothetical. Suppose the Truman administration were to carry and enforce an effective civil rights program, giving equal political rights and powers to all adults (in their capacity as citizens) within the United States, without transforming the state structure in any other manner; the result would represent horizontal democracy and (as now) vertical oligarchy. If, on the other hand, the state structure were so transformed as to be continuously controlled by the electorate, yet a class of adult members of the organization were excluded from the electorate, the result would represent vertical democracy and horizontal oligarchy.

If either aspect is oligarchical, the organization is oligarchical! To be democratic, an organization must display both horizontal and vertical democracy!

(here is indicated the cleverness of the Northern Democrats. Gaining wide acclaim as truly democratic through their proposals to extend horizontal democracy, they use that acclaim (and the support it attracts) as a basis for streamlining the state bureaucracy, rendering ineffective most use of that horizontal democracy. Vertical oligarchy may feed upon the struggle for horizontal democracy!)

## 2. HOW MUCH DEMOCRACY?

There is a long-standing difference among revolutionists on this point. Some feel that the political dice must be "loaded" in favor of the proletariat, just as they have been heretofore loaded in favor of other ruling classes. Some go much farther, in that they would load the dice in favor of the vanguard, as compared with the broad proletarian masses. This attitude has been observed in the unions, where those who ask for extreme democratic sanctions against "bad" bureaucracies consider that "anything goes" for the continuance in power of a "militant" (i.e., favorable) leadership. What strength (if any) these attitudes repre-

sent in the ISL is at present unknown, but discussion should clarify the point. (The writer believes such an attitude to be dangerous and unworthy of a revolutionist, holding that the optimum condition for the construction of socialism depends upon prompt establishment, by the revolutionary forces, of complete democracy.)

### 3. THE PROBLEM OF PLANNING

The structural conception of a workers' state cannot be separated from the conception of planning, for the form of any nationwide plan is dependent upon the general social structure. As socialism without planning is unthinkable, a general conception of planning must be accepted before judgment of a state structure is meaningful. In an abstract sense, this is one field in which we cannot afford to "play by ear."

The proponents of the "loaded dice" sort of workers' rule are inclined to think of planning as a function of top committees, taking the form of directives handed down to the masses who are to carry them out in a disciplined and trustfully enthusiastic manner. Such planning requires long-term continuity in office of the planners, and therefore cannot rely upon the insecure tenure of democracy.

Those who oppose the loaded dice conception are apt to hold that the major part of socialist planning must be accomplished early, by the establishment of a democratic social structure having tendencies (so-called "laws of motion") in accord with the needs of socialist development.

The differences might be otherwise stated: the first conception depends upon urging, coercing and/or attracting citizens into desired lines of activity; the second upon society being so constructed that the rational consideration of alternatives will attract individuals and organizations toward activities favorable to socialist development - state intervention being limited to emergencies and/or structural changes to modify tendencies that may have been originally misjudged.

Both conceptions are stated here in extreme form. It is unlikely that either extreme will actually occur - unless a loss of democracy should give the first its most malignant, totalitarian, content. The fact that any actual revolution must result in something in between does not eliminate the necessity to choose, if we intend rational consideration of the problem of the structure of workers' power.

### 4. AUTONOMY

Closely allied to, and dependent upon, the conception of planning is the problem of autonomy (both degree and kind) of organizations contained within that being considered. It should be clear that if planning stresses directives from top committees, little autonomy can be granted to such organizations; but if planning stresses a social structure with tendencies toward balanced, increased and finally communist production, considerable autonomy is feasible.

## 5. LEGISLATIVE-EXECUTIVE RELATIONS

The relationship between legislative and constitutional executive functions within organizations must be considered. (The word "executive" must be qualified because of the tendency of executive functions to pass into the hands of bureaucratic machines, within which both legislators and executives find themselves increasingly - though perhaps comfortably - imprisoned. The problem of control and/or elimination of these bureaucratic growths must be considered separately.) This legislative-executive relationship, within democratic organizations, presents itself in three general forms. The traditional Marxist formulation, involving the fusion of legislative and executive functions, is ambiguous. Either (a) or (b) (below) may be interpreted as satisfying it. The general forms are as follows:

- a) executive and legislative bodies are coextensive;
- b) the executive is a legislative committee selected in such a manner that it represents a majority within the legislature, and responsible to that legislature; and
- c) the legislative and executive bodies are separately elected, so that neither is responsible to the other.

## 6. NECESSITY FOR A STRONG, UNIFIED EXECUTIVE

Democracy is not the purpose of social organization, but rather the only effective means by which social organization may be fitted to the needs and purposes of the individuals that compose it. If the democratic forms of any organization are such as to render decision and/or action impossible or dilatory, there will be a tendency within the rank-and-file to revolt against its own peculiar mechanisms of control. Such a revolt might lead to new and more effective democratic forms, but it could as readily lead back to familiar forms of the past - or even, through popularization of the "leadership principle," toward bureaucratic collectivism. In lieu of such revolt, rank-and-file passivity must develop; whereupon the executive will be forced to foster bureaucracy in order to overcome its own weakness! (Note: The word "revolt", as used in this paragraph, does not necessarily signify "insurrection.") We are faced by the problem: how can the maximum of democracy be reconciled with the maximum of executive effectiveness?

## 7. COMPOSITION OF LEGISLATIVE BODIES

The "ideal legislative body" would be such that, no matter what question arose within it, the attitudes of its members would represent proportionately the attitudes that would be displayed by the total electorate were they equally well informed. Such an "ideal legislative body" is manifestly impossible, unless the electorate shares a common monomania. Interests - indeed, very important and basic interests - are so criss-crossed that no matter which of them is proportionately represented in the legislative body some other, almost as important, will thereby be denied such proportional representation. The rational establish-

ment of a legislative body demands prior decision on the relative importance of various conflicts, and the selection of representatives in a manner that will form an "ideal legislative body" to a degree directly proportional to the relative importance of questions under consideration.

By "rational establishment of a legislative body" is meant the initiation of a new sort of legislative body. During times of relative political peace, when society is not split by burning issues, governmental forms are not initiated. In democratic organizations, such peace indicates an absence of widespread dissatisfaction with the stratification of interests implicit in the existing representational forms. However, such a situation cannot be permanent. Sooner or later some question, to the democratic resolution of which the legislative forms are ill-adapted, assumes augmented importance. In direct proportion to the importance and persistence of this question society finds itself polarized by a fundamental and apparently inescapable conflict of interests, which gives birth to movements with programs intended to resolve the conflict. Each such program implies, among other things, a stratification of interests in terms of importance with reference to the current conflict; which in turn implies the constitution of governmental forms that will reflect interests in the manner implicit in that stratification.

The composition of a democratic legislative body depends directly upon the manner in which the rank-and-file is organized for electoral purposes. Therefore every political program entails, at least implicitly, a preference as to the electoral organization of the electorate. This is inescapable. Without it no fundamental political change can be instituted! Yet the very success of such a transformation usually gives rise to new conflicts the solutions of which are incompatible with the new electoral forms.

The fundamental political aim of Marxists has always been the establishment of representational forms adapted to the democratic solution of the problem of capitalist oligarchy. But this is not enough. After such forms have been achieved, the problem of capitalist oligarchy will not only be solved, but will disappear. Unless the founders of the new representational forms considered problems far beyond the final end of capitalism, our descendants are apt to find themselves in a new political straitjacket, demanding another revolution in its turn. And yet it would be just as bad for us to decide which post-capitalist problems will be important, and devise representational forms adapted to them. That would involve the most precarious sort of "kitchen-recipes of the future." We can, however, consider means for making electoral organization flexible, so that the basis of representation may vary as the problems vary. It is toward this end that our thoughts must be directed.

#### 8. CONTINUITY OF PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

There are two traditional answers to this problem: (1) frequent elections; and, (2) recall elections. Both are time- and effort-consuming. A great deal of thought should be given to the problem of removing these drawbacks.

## 9. DIRECT LEGISLATION

The functions performed by the initiative and referendum are essential to any real democracy. As used in bourgeois society, however, they are so hedged about with restrictions and time-consuming mechanisms that their use is feasible only when the electorate is at the boiling-point. Instead of effective political instruments, they serve as safety-valves - which is exactly what they are intended to be. In view of this, it seems necessary to find methods for making them facile rank-and-file instruments, or seek other means that will serve their purpose better.

## 10. PROBLEM OF "POLITICAL CASTE"

There are five important aspects to the prevention of political castes, as follows:

- a) minimum financial benefits accruing to officeholders;
- b) minimum power to reward or penalize, in any manner, sections of the electorate because of political opposition;
- c) minimum secrecy in governmental affairs;
- d) rapid interchange of personnel between rank-and-file and higher political bodies; and,
- e) barrowing of the gap between the education and skills required for office and the average of education and relevant skills within the electorate.

## 11. FORMS OF BUREAUCRACY

Bureaucracy is one of the phenomena that arise from the division of labor that characterizes our society as a whole. Specifically, political bureaucracy is a crystallized form of political division of labor. ("Political" is so used as to apply to the affairs of any organization, not merely to the autonomous areas we call nations, states, cities, etc.) Political bureaucracy is best analyzed in terms of three components, here termed vertical, horizontal and appendical.

VERTICAL BUREAUCRACY, almost invariably present in past and present, democratic organizations, is based upon the "leader-follower" division of labor. In newly formed organizations there may be an "accidental" leadership, composed of persons little better or worse equipped than the average. A period in office, however, gives skills that differentiate one from the rank-and-file; by far the most important of these, for the maintenance of leadership, being literary and oratorical - cajolery being a wonderful adjunct to (or frequently, "substitute for") achievement.

Vertical bureaucracy is dependent upon vertical stratification. If the organization is large there is the top officialdom, various strata of intermediate officialdom, and the lower officialdom. Beneath the lower officialdom there is what may be termed the "bureaucratic periphery;" that part of the rank-and-file with

ties of one sort or other to the bureaucracy, so that they act as the constant "floor support" and "ward heelers" for the incumbents. As a necessary basis for continuity in office this bureaucratic periphery must be maintained and, if possible, extended. This is frequently accomplished through "bureaucratic friendliness," appointment to committees that give the feeling of being "in on things," and by making it clear that it is from among them that vacant posts are apt to be filled.

HORIZONTAL BUREAUCRACY depends upon the fact that only the simplest of organizations have leadership describable solely in terms of the vertical component. Division of labor simply on the basis of "who leads whom" is incomplete. Leadership without purpose is futile and, the world being complex as it is, the purposes of a leadership are apt to be many in number and varied in type. The result is a horizontal division of labor within each stratum of the leadership. Without such a division only the simplest and most localized of organizations could operate with any efficiency.

If the organization is so situated that it cannot maintain a large paid staff, the various divisions of labor are usually assigned to individuals or subcommittees within the elected leadership. This involves a basic change in electoral problems. The electorate must not choose their leaders on the basis of program and general ability alone. For at least a part of the leadership it is desirable that individuals with detailed experience be selected - and whence does such experience usually come? From having served before in the identical post! One or two terms may change an ordinary member into an apparently "irreplaceable expert." To the degree that this tendency operates, the whole (or at least the functionally dominant core) of the leadership tends to become self-perpetuating. It is evident that horizontal bureaucracy strengthens the vertical bureaucracy defined previously.

When a legislative body divides itself into permanent committees for consideration of different types of proposed legislation, etc., the basis is laid for a variant of horizontal bureaucracy which might be termed "legislative-committee bureaucracy."

APPENDICAL BUREAUCRACY represents the next step in bureaucratic development. In organizations facing more complex problems, and enjoying greater resources, we find an even finer division of labor. The mere division of the leadership along functional lines is insufficient to cope with the needs of the organization. Democratic processes, as so far conceived, are poorly adapted to the selection of individuals with the specific knowledge and abilities necessary for handling highly specialized problems. The result is the appointment and/or hiring of skilled individuals or groups of individuals. These, as well as the office staff, etc., form the APPENDICAL BUREAUCRACY - a functional machine composed of specialists inaccessible to the direct control of the rank-and-file.

To a considerable degree, the elected leadership tends itself to become a victim of such a development. What is a legislative body, selected on a basis of campaigning ability, to do

when faced with the considered opinions of specialists? Unless there are principled objections they can only accept and implement such reports. To the degree that such a non-elective staff grows, and its various segments develop mechanisms of communication and cooperation, it becomes an impersonal machine with peculiar interests and "laws of motion" upon which the organization becomes increasingly dependent; so that its peculiarities become the dominant factors in organizational policy.

There is no intention to present these classifications as forming an exhaustive list. Not only is each of them capable of almost infinite subclassification, but there may be bureaucratic forms alien to any one, or any combination, of them. Until someone proposes a better list, however, this will have to serve as a basis for our analysis.

Few democratic organizations display any one of these democratic forms unmixed with the others. The type of mixture to be initially expected is dependent upon the skeletal (i.e., constitutional) structure of the organization. The nature of such dependence may be readily seen by re-reading ~~the~~ list of legislative-executive relations in section 5.

## 12. POLITICAL PARTIES

For the purposes of this section, a "political party" shall be defined as "any group of members of an organization who, agreeing upon a program for that organization, have organized themselves for the purpose of promoting that program." This definition gives caucuses, etc., the status of political parties within their respective organizations.

There are many ways of classifying political parties. From the standpoint of this discussion four of these are important: (a) attitude toward bureaucracy; (b) program of action; (c) group appeal; and, (d) group actually served.

(a) There are five general attitudes toward bureaucracy. First, there is the maintenance of the bureaucratic status quo. Second, there is the strengthening of existing bureaucratic powers. Third, there is the weakening of bureaucratic powers. Fourth, there is the transformation of the bureaucracy. Fifth, there is the elimination of bureaucracy in general.

(b) From the standpoint of this discussion, programs of action may be considered in two lights: First, to what degree will success transform the internal and/or external relations of the organization? Second, how rapidly is the program intended to be put into effect?

(c) Every political party purports to represent the actual interests of some section of the organization, and may be classified in terms of the groups they purport to serve. (As a special case, this includes those parties which purport to serve the actual interests of all members of the organization.)

(d) Political programs may be classified in terms of the



groups whose interests would be actually served. Such a classification is necessarily hypothetical and debatable, depending as it does upon the political convictions of the classifier. (There are two possible special cases - the program which will serve no one, and the program that will, in the long run, serve everybody.)

The consideration of political parties provides a necessary corrective to the previous section, in which bureaucracy was defined in a more or less static manner. From a study of a relatively undisturbed bureaucracy in power, it is expanded to a study of bureaucracy in process. For such a study, involving as it does the structural and/or personnel changes in bureaucracy, party organizations must clearly be regarded as part of the bureaucratic structure of the organization as a whole. (It is well to note that our definition of "political party" would apply to sections of the bureaucracy striving, within the confines of that bureaucracy, for changes in the bureaucratic activities and/or structure.)

The importance of considering parties as part of the bureaucratic structure of organizations becomes evident in the following sections on bureaucracy.

### 13. BUREAUCRATIC CONSERVATISM

Bureaucratic conservatism may be defined as the tendency of any bureaucracy, regarded as an organizational whole, to organizational or programmatic changes from the status quo. For thorough understanding it is necessary to subdivide bureaucratic conservatism into three prior concepts: conservation of bureaucratic personnel, bureaucratic structural conservatism and maintenance of milieu.

#### (a) Conservation of Personnel

With few exceptions, individual bureaucrats seek to maintain themselves as such for as long a time as possible. From this standpoint all bureaucrats have an interest in common. There is a tendency for bureaucrats in power to develop a consciousness of group interests. Such a situation involving the removal of any bureaucrat presents an implicit threat to all bureaucrats, there is a basic tendency within bureaucracies to protect themselves as an organized whole.

This tendency shows itself in two different ways. In the political bureaucracy (vertical or horizontal) its primary expression is political, as described previously in connection with vertical bureaucracy. In the appendical bureaucracy its primary expression is legal, in terms of "tenure" or "civil service" legislation. Neither of these expressions, however, occur unmixed. Just as the appendical bureaucracy seeks to perpetuate the political bureaucracy with which it feels safest, so is there a tendency for the political bureaucracy to seek means for the legalization of political tenure - a tendency toward dictatorship implicit in all bureaucracy-prone democracies.

The tendency described in the two previous paragraphs must be modified, however, when the bureaucracy is divided by basic political differences. Whether or not they represent organized political parties, each faction will strive for its own extension at the expense of the other, as only in that manner can self-perpetuation be assured. In the case of a coalition bureaucracy (i.e., if the contending factions represent political parties) the same tendency operates, excepting that the final goal is to make the general organizational bureaucracy subservient to the party bureaucracy.

It is fallacious to condemn such conservative tendencies on a purely moral basis. It is not necessarily true that bureaucrats are motivated by a selfish desire for "power, prestige and privileges." Consciously, at least, many bureaucrats are motivated by desire to serve society. Among the most dangerous bureaucrats are those who consider themselves irreplaceable on grounds of either ideology or efficiency.

#### (b) Structural Conservatism

Each bureaucracy is based upon a particular division of labor, and has a structure peculiarly adapted to that division of labor. In direct proportion to its duration and the stability of its personnel, there is a tendency to resist any structural change. Among the causes of this tendency we may consider habit-patterns, "channels" and conservation of personnel.

In the case of vertical bureaucracy, the aim is the preservation of the electoral structure (and of the relations between parties) that brought it to power. This is bolstered by tradition in the rank-and-file and by the strengthening of the bureaucratic periphery.

With horizontal (and, even more, appendical) bureaucracy another factor is added - the tendency toward crystallization of relations within the bureaucracy. Originally adapted or adaptable to the complex problems faced by the organization, the demand for efficiency leads toward a fixed formality of relations so that work may be carried out more or less mechanically. Assuming that there are a number of ways to do almost anything, each structure determines a unique group of "most efficient" ways, peculiar to that structure. In accordance with well established laws of habit formation, such "most efficient" ways become, for those habituated to the structure, the "natural" ways to accomplish things. It is a short way around the circle to the original point; the structure, however haphazardly it may originally have taken shape, becomes the "natural" structure, in that it is uniquely determined by the "natural ways" of doing things.

In a changing world, however, it is impossible for a bureaucracy to exist without some internal change. Structural conservatism tends to give such change a piecemeal character. Were complete reorganization to take place at one fell swoop, there would be a temporary loosening (unless extreme repressive measures are

resorted to) of both heirarchical and extra-bureaucratic controls - and the reestablishment of such controls might prove difficult. Thus it might be said that structural conservatism causes any program for bureaucratic self-transformation to tend toward Fabian methods.

Before any structural change is carried out, however, the attempt will be made to obviate it by accretional change. When it is possible to handle a problem by establishing a new bureau, or by expanding an already established one, it will almost invariably be done; permitting the customary internal relations to continue basically undisturbed.

#### (c) Maintenance of Milieu

Insofar as bureaucracy is based upon a division of function required by the complex problems of the organization as a whole, any profound and rapid changes in the internal relations of the organization are apt to demand similar changes in the bureaucratic structure. As such exterior changes are contrary to their interests, bureaucrats strive to prevent their occurrence. Great energy may be displayed by a bureaucracy to enforce a constant milieu, in order that it may remain internally undisturbed.

At times the tendency toward rapid change in the milieu is beyond the control of the bureaucracy. At such times (after a period of emulating the fictitious ostrich by refusing to recognize the change) it finds itself unable to function effectively. If it is unable to transform itself in answer to the new situation, either it is replaced or the organization follows the path described in the previous section entitled "NECESSITY FOR A STRONG, UNIFIED EXECUTIVE."

#### (d) Dynamic Conservatism

If a bureaucracy is established and its structure becomes stable during a period of rapid change of milieu, in which change the bureaucracy must play an important role, the structure will be marked by dynamic relations. The dominant characteristic of such a bureaucracy is the possession of organs which are functionless apart from intervention in the struggles that cause change in the milieu, and whose functions involve control, rather than suppression, of such change.

Here we have a different sort of conservatism, "dynamic conservatism." The internal relations of the bureaucracy are such as to stimulate a controlled change. Like any other bureaucracy, this type seeks to preserve its particular internal relations. As a result, when there is no conflict of the sort to which it is adapted, it must stir them up.

The particular internal relations, however, determine the particular sorts of control of which the bureaucracy is capable. With respect to problems to the solution of which it is not adapted, the dynamic bureaucracy is apt to act as would any other.

Finally, dynamic bureaucracy tends toward totalitarianism,

in that the field into which it intervenes must constantly expand, or it loses its function and must fall by the wayside.

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It must be held in mind that the above are to be regarded as mutually exclusive categories. Every bureaucracy of importance struggles between conservation of personnel and structural conservatism, as well as between dynamic and static aspects.

#### 14. BUREAUCRATIC EXPANSIONISM

There are two fundamental causes for the bureaucratic drive toward expansion of "the apparatus." The first is increased control (whether dynamic or static) of the milieu. The second is the need of a bureaucratic periphery. Such a periphery depends in part upon the ability of the bureaucracy to reward its followers with posts. The more the posts, the more rewards; the more rewards, the more attractive the periphery. Expansionism, therefore, is at least an aim of any bureaucracy that is not completely moribund.

Expansion in terms of posts, however, does not mean wider distribution of power. On the contrary, it tends to accompany, and even accelerate, the concentration of decisive power into fewer and fewer hands.

#### 15. THE TASK WE FACE

Our fundamental task is the determination of possible and plausible social forms for workers' power which will avoid the Scylla of bureaucratism and the Charibdis of counter-revolution. The various sections of this paper are intended merely as indications of problems to be studied.

# # #

MORE ABOUT STALINISM, CAPITALISM AND WAR

By Susan Green (New York)

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On Procedure

At the last Workers Party convention, Comrade Draper, reporter for the National Committee on the international resolution, devolved more than half his time to an attack on my discussion article which appeared in Convention Bulletin No. 6, January 14, 1949. It is, on second thought, more accurate to say that he attacked what he pretended to be my article rather than what I actually wrote. This profuse attention to what was merely a discussion article, not a minority resolution, came clear out of the blue, not because I did not expect my political views to be discussed - on the contrary, I hoped they would. However, I did not expect that they would become the main issue under this part of the agenda without my being informed of this intention and without my being time. As it was, I was completely unprepared, had to ask the convention to grant me at least fifteen or twenty inadequate minutes, and was amazed that the granting of time was far from unanimous.

Comrade Draper and the comrades who made up the convention agenda did not intend to be undemocratic. But the fact that they did not think of the necessity to inform me beforehand of the plan to use my article as the main target, and to ask me if I wanted time to reply, indicated that the instinct for democratic fair play was not functioning.

The above is called to the attention of the membership not to gnaw on a bone but simply that this sort of procedure may not occur again.

What I Wrote and What Was Read Into It

Above I state that Comrade Draper did not attack what I wrote but what he pretended I wrote. This suited his case, though it did not further the discussion one iota. I make a plea for discussion of issues raised instead of what boils down to name-calling.

For instance, without batting an eyelash, Comrade Draper stood up and said that I am FOR war, that I am FOR the subjugation of western Europe to American imperialism - oh, well, if I didn't actually say it, I implied it. But what I actually meant, implied and said in my article was:

"It is asked: Would you support the armament program now? Would you support the subjugation of the western European countries by the United States as part of the military program? These questions are foolish. We Socialists are not advocating war. We are not preparing for war. We do not cease acting as Socialists on a Socialist program. We have a program of domestic demands. We pursue the struggle

for an independent labor party. We call for workers' government with workers' control of industry. We push for the utmost extension of democracy. We fight for full national independence for small nations. We support every independent action of the working class. We condemn the waste of wealth and life in war. We expose both imperialist camps. We propagate the world socialist revolution - the Third Camp - as the alternative for world war. This we continue to do, now as always."

This quoted paragraph refers to the present pre-war period. As to a possible Socialist stand when World War III actually comes, my previous article is equally clear:

"If war breaks out in the immediate future and if we should decide that the interests of the working class, of the revolutionary movement and of humanity, would be served better by a victory of the bourgeois governments over the Stalinist police state, we still do not cease being Socialists. We do not surrender our political integrity. We distinguish ourselves from the western imperialist governments in every possible way. We explain how our position differs from theirs. We fight every effort to subjugate small nations. We oppose every attempt at home to regiment the people and to impose police measures. We ally ourselves with every insurrectionary effort of the peoples on both sides of the iron curtain. Above all, if the alignment of social forces changes during the war, so that a change of position by Socialists becomes the order of the day, we would make that change - even as Marx and Engels did in the Franco-Prussian War when the insurrection of the Paris communards altered the whole picture."

In other words, I said that even if a Socialist should stand for the military victory of the bourgeois democratic west against the Stalinist totalitarian east, the class struggle must not be abandoned, but on the contrary every opportunity to further it must be taken. Now it seems to me that, instead of calling "social patriot," a loyal opponent would have to prove that such a position, namely, maintaining the distinctive Socialist character while giving critical military support to bourgeois democracy, is untenable. Such proof no opponent has given.

There is no denying that such a task is very difficult under war conditions. But so is every alliance with one devil to fight a worse one, difficult. Still, the Bolsheviks united with Kerensky against Korniloff. The revolutionists fought with the Spanish loyalists against Franco. Trotsky stated he would have joined with the devil himself - or with his grandmother - to defeat Hitler. I know, I know, these are internecine and not international imperialist wars - at least this is how we are supposed to evaluate all these struggles, in spite of doubts. To this point I will return later. To be noted here is that there are ways of distinguishing oneself from an enemy with whom there is a temporary and partial alliance against a worse enemy.

As a matter of fact, I cannot see why, supposing the ISL

should favor western victory in World War III, LABOR ACTION could not carry on substantially the same kind of propaganda as during World War II. The issues of no-strike pledge, of wage ceilings, of cost of living, would have to be handled similarly. War profits and war scandals would be exposed. Infringements on civil liberties would be fought. On the matter of strikes, while we would not be in favor of strikes to cripple the government - which is accepted by all of us - we would back up strikers rebelling against the inequities they were suffering in the name of national security. In such strikes we would put the onus of responsibility on the capitalists and on the government. All of this, of course, supposes that we would not be suppressed - always a possibility.

### On My Quoting Marx and Engels

Before going on to make some comments on Comrade Shachtman's arguments on the question of war in his reply to Erber, I want to take up briefly the quotations from Marx and Engels in my former article.

This material was used for no other reason than this: To indicate that consideration of how the victory of one side or the other in an impending war would affect the working class and the revolutionary movement, is not unknown in classical Marxism. I thought calling attention to this fact might forestall the facile epithet "social patriotism" and might lead to arguing the points raised. I was mistaken. I made it as plain as tolerably good English could make it that I was fully aware of the difference in historic era and that I was neither approving nor disapproving the conclusions of these men - in fact, some of their language has a chauvinistic ring to my ears. Still, one comrade after another rose at the convention to prove, assuming that I didn't have the brains I was born with, that Marx and Engels lived in a different era. Consequently, whatever Marx and Engels may have thought about the wars of their period, my views were still an example of classical social patriotism.

I refer to the fate of these quotations I used as a basis for asking for a more honest attempt to understand what a comrade is driving at - at least to read what is written.

### Some Points Comrade Shachtman Missed

Now, in turning my attention to Comrade Shachtman's answer to Erber's position on World War III, I must first definitely disassociate myself from Erber. I have not worked out my position with him, and there are probably major differences between us, which would come out if I had a discussion with him. Also, of course, I refer only to his stand on the war and not to his two other points, namely, the Russian Revolution and the nature of the State.

Furthermore, in using Comrade Shachtman's arguments against Erber's war position, I am taking them as they have general application to the subject - not merely to Erber. I am also divesting Comrade Shachtman's arguments of the over-thick coating of - shall I say mildly - quips in which he saw fit to clothe such a serious

document.

To start, then, with Comrade Shachtman's omissions.

Omission No. 1

Why should not Socialists try to evaluate the effect on the working class and the revolutionary movement of the victory of one side or the other in World War III? It is incontestable that the victory of Stalinism will be followed by the complete suppression and enslavement of the working class all over the world and by the liquidation of the revolutionary movements in true Stalinist fashion. Either our movement has been wrong in its evaluation of Stalinism, or by this evaluation we must all agree to the above stated effect of the victory of Stalinism. To face this ugly fact does not constitute thinking "with their terrified bellies" - nor feeling any "pistol in the back of their neck in the form of ideological corruption."

It is the official policy of the ISL to so interpret infringements of liberties in this country as to make it appear that there will not be much difference between the liberties of the people under a warring and post-war bourgeois democracy and those (which?) under Stalinism. This is a possibility, in the general sense that anything is possible, but it is not a probability. There is a far cry between an organized working class functioning with some restrictions, a Socialist movement operating with some difficulty, and the lack of all independent working class life and the liquidation of all opposition under Stalinism. That's the point.

It seems to me we have to admit the lesser evil, or take the suicidal view of the Stalinists toward a Hitler victory in Germany. Can we afford to indulge in a formalistic righteousness which in effect says: "After Stalinism will come our turn."

The third alternative is the Third Camp, but this can be a realistic alternative only if before the outbreak of the war the Third Camp idea has gained some ground both ideologically and organizationally in the form of definite groupings capable of giving leadership to the masses. Before World War I and before World War II - at least that is the way we estimated the latter situation - there were such groupings. After World War II and now, everyone agrees that these groups have been dissolved, that hardly anything is left of them, that the pull towards one imperialist camp or the other is predominant, that the process of forming revolutionary centers again begins almost from scratch. Our movement has always held that leadership is of pivotal importance; therefore my contention that the determinant of Socialist policy for World War III is success or failure in propagating the idea of the Third Camp and in organizing cadres to carry out this idea.

This is no argument for not spreading the Third Camp idea; on the contrary, it is a call to work at it overtime. The harder we work at it and the longer the pre-war period, the better seem to be the chances for the growth of Third Camp nuclei, upon which would depend the successful fruition of any people's anti-war



eruptions.

But suppose there is no such revival of international socialism, suppose as we evaluate the political tenor and political groupings we do not see sufficient development along the lines we had hoped, to make any impression at all on the war situation, what then? Do we still say that the military outcome is a matter of indifference to us, to the future of the working class and of Socialism?

Therefore, let us propagate the Socialist idea of the Third Camp - but work at it. And as for a position on World War III, that must depend on conditions when the war comes.

Omission No. 2

A source of concern in everybody's mind, expressed or unexpressed, is that there is an iron curtain effectively cutting off the peoples of the Stalinist orbit from the western world - except for the radio programs of the United States, England and other western countries, which have, it is reported, considerable numbers of listeners behind the iron curtain. But I refer not to the weapons of the cold war - though to some extent we Socialists do benefit by this cold war propaganda weapon. I have in mind the inability of the Socialists of the western world to get together or even to communicate with kindred elements in Russia and in eastern Europe. There is no Socialist International, no Socialist groupings to include all nations; while there is, sad to relate, a very effective Stalinist international covering the globe.

The former Socialist policy of revolutionary defeatism was based on the mutuality of this tactic not only against but in both warring camps. The communication and consultation between the vanguards of the workers of the warring countries gave mutual help, courage and plan. However, already during World War II, because of both the Nazi and Stalinist tyranny, there was no international revolutionary movement - neither open nor underground, although the underground included many nationalities. The German people and the Russian people were effectively shut off from revolutionary information and contact.

Today also, in this pre-World-War-III period, there is practically no communication between the revolutionary groups of the west and such dissident groups as may exist behind the iron curtain. One must therefore, face the stark truth that, while propaganda for the Third Camp can go on in the western countries, the means for such propaganda is barred in the Stalinist sphere. It does not follow from this that revolutionists throw their hands up and abandon their efforts to reach beyond the iron curtain - especially since no situation is ever static. But one must recognize that the international continuity of the revolutionary movement has been ruptured and never repaired.

Neither Comrade Shachtman nor any one else gives open recognition to this fact and no one poses the problem.

Omission No. 3

Another question that has never been satisfactorily answered is this:

Why is it good Socialist policy to support bourgeois democracy against totalitarianism in a civil war, as in Spain, and not good Socialist policy to support bourgeois democracy against Stalinist totalitarianism in an international war? What magic is there in the words "imperialist war" to make such a difference? In a civil war, the Socialist forces not being able to take the lead and dominate the situation, unite with the lesser and less immediate enemy against the worse and more immediate. Why? For survival! For the survival of the working class as an independent political entity and for the survival of the Socialist forces as a revolutionary entity. The Socialist forces act so in a civil war without sacrificing their identity. No one will argue that for Socialists to take sides in World War III by giving critical military support will not create great difficulties, difficulties in maintaining their Socialist identity and difficulties in maintaining support of the class struggle. But the difficulties entailed by a policy do not make it wrong. On the contrary, the challenge must be met.

Some of Comrade Shachtman's Points - 1. The Resistance Movements.

Comrade Shachtman explains that we stood for the Third Camp in World War II not because we considered the emergence of the Third Camp a certainty, but a possibility. He points out that the Third Camp did emerge during the war, "in the form of the underground national resistance movements in Europe." "These movements," writes Comrade Shachtman, "which were not imperialists fighting other imperialists, but authentic revolutionary struggles of the people against Fascist and imperialist oppression - we did not hesitate for one moment to give our ardent and enthusiastic support."

Is this, I ask, an accurate picture of the resistance movements? Actually, they were pro-ally. Actually, much of their activity was connected with the military efforts of the allies. Definitely, the resistance movements took sides in the war, the side of the allies against Hitler. And no matter what the leadership, even Trotskyite, this would have had to be so, for a reason that Comrade Shachtman does not deign to mention. There is such a thing as the military factor in a war. There is such a thing as the decisiveness of a military victory. The unwavering bravery of the resistance movements in giving their help to the allied military efforts, proved beyond a doubt that they understood the Hitler heel would be lifted from their necks only if the allies won the military contest.

Would a Trotskyite leadership have agitated in the resistance movement against the practical alliance between them and the allied forces? Certainly not for long! The difference between a Trotskyite leadership and the Social Democratic plus Stalinist leaders would lie elsewhere. A Trotskyite leadership would try,

within these movements, to build strong revolutionary groups; it would direct the eyes of the resistance movements to taking over power once the war was over; it would have to work out its political distinctiveness from both the Social Democrats and the Stalinists, while coordinating all parties in the immediate tasks of the movement. And, of course, a Trotskyite leadership would not have acted as the tools of allied imperialism in disarming the resistance movements after the war, as did the Stalinists in particular. A Trotskyite leadership would have known when the alliance with the allies was over. It would have defended the right of the people to arm themselves - and the right of the people to form their own revolutionary governments.

Therefore, we see in the resistance movements not the actual emergence of the Third Camp, but still only the possibility of the emergence of the Third Camp. Because of the military factor, this could have happened only after the allied victory - with proper leadership.

## 2. On Answering the Worker

Comrade Shachtman knows very well that no one in politics, not even the numbskull he tries to make Erber appear, would be such a moron as to say to a worker the equivalent of: "Go away, don't bother us, we are not required to give a pledge of any kind. It's an open question with us." Whenever it suits him, Comrade Shachtman can place voluntary limits on his understanding of an opponent's position as well as limits on his usually fertile mind.

If I, speaking for myself and not for Erber, should want to make my position clear to a worker, I would say something like this:

"I am and will be opposed to the third world war. It will be an imperialist war on both sides. It will be a contest for the conquest of the world between Russia and the United States, even at the cost of exterminating half of the human race and wrecking all civilized life. The common people must rebel against this war and must organize themselves for action under the banner of the Third Camp against both Moscow and Washington, for peace. This is the task now in this pre-war period, to rally support for the Third Camp, so that the people can give effective opposition to the war.

"If there has been no encouraging response to the appeal for the Third Camp when war actually comes, I do not change my opinion of the war nor my aim for the emergence of the Third Camp to stop the imperialists in their bloody tracks. However, not because I choose it but because history gives me no choice, I will have to favor a victory of the western powers over Stalinism. For the victorious Stalinist police state will abolish workers' unions; will end civil liberties which means the right to speak, to write, to meet; will stop all political activity; will send me and fellow Socialists either to concentration camps or to death; will ruthlessly suppress all Socialist and other independent working class organizations. The Russian people will not be able to do a

thing to check the enslavement of other working people because they are themselves slaves. While in the western countries the capitalist rulers will make every effort to curtail our rights in the name of national security, if their interests require it, we can resist their efforts and prevent the imposition of a police state, because of the democratic rights which we have and which we must struggle to maintain throughout the war. So with a victory of the western powers, if there is such a thing as civilized life left after an atomic war, there may be a chance for the working people to continue their fight for betterment and for emancipation from all ruling classes. There is, of course, always a possibility of the workers trying to end the war exactly by such revolutionary aims; this we encourage and help along.

"We in this country would have to give certain types of support to the military efforts of the United States. Needless to say, we will be drafted into the armed forces and will fight - this everyone does, except the conscientious objectors. But that will not prevent us from trying to get the idea across to the soldiers in the Stalinist armies whenever opportunity presents itself, for the Third Camp forces must come from both warring camps. At home, because we favor the victory of the western powers, we will not oppose the military budgets, but we will have something to say about who should pay for them, as well as about democracy in the armed forces. We will further demand that all war profits be confiscated, that workers' wages be not regimented, that workers' rights of collective bargaining, of strike, of civil liberties, be enforced.

"In other words, while giving critical support to the military efforts of the United States, we carry on, to the best of our ability, as Socialists knowing that in a war the temper of the peoples can change and the Third Camp idea take such hold of the masses as to alter the course of the war and of history."

Such an explanation has nothing "dilletante and flannelmouth" about it. Nor does this explanation give assurance to the "imperialists or their adepts in the labor movement" that "He's one of us already! We can count on him!" No more than Kerensky could count on the Bolsheviks. Still speaking for myself, and not for Erber, the social program I outline is NOT "subordinated to the needs of American imperialism and its military program," for it never abandons the class struggle.

### 3. The Military Budget.

"Do we tell the American workers to fight for improvements in their economic position and against deterioration of it, even though this conflicts with the needs of the war-preparations budget, or do you tell them to make just a little sacrifice for the military budget so that American imperialism is not weakened before Stalinist imperialism?" asks Comrade Shachtman. Again, I don't know about Erber, but if this question were directed at me, I would consider it a gratuitous vulgarization of my position. Of course we tell the workers to fight for improvements and against deterioration of their living conditions. Yes, we "do try to

arouse the workers against the cold-blooded preparations for the atom-bomb slaughter" because we are in this pre-war period hoping to build a Third Camp against the war. Again, it would be a very wanton misconstruction to say that my position is that "it is an imperialist war, but one which I INTEND TO SUPPORT after it breaks out." I do NOT intend to support the war at any point. I only consider the possibility of favoring a western victory if the war breaks out without there having been some measure of success for the Third Camp, so that it may become an anti-war, revolutionary rallying point.

The bourgeoisie would not admonish me, "If you really want to win the war, then quit playing with our preparations for it!" They are astute enough to see that I am thinking in terms of organizing a peoples' force to make war impossible, a peoples' force for peace. They are astute enough to see that my approach is to work for the Third Camp in this crucial time before the actual hot war breaks out.

My interest in the war budget now is to compare its expenditures for war with the lack of expenditure for health, housing and education. My interest in it now is to lift its burden from the shoulders of the working people by propagandizing a tax program opposing the stiff pay-as-you-go income tax, and advocating higher taxes on profits and also certain forms of capital tax; in other words, a let-the-rich-pay-for-their-war tax program. The ISL should, in fact, get busy along this line.

#### 4. On Historic Relationships

In his section on the historic relationship between Stalinism and capitalism, Comrade Shachtman engages in formalistic juxtaposition. But I ask: What if capitalism is not "the product of decay of Stalinism, born out of its womb" - what if capitalism is not called upon to "perform the necessary and indispensable task of ridding man of the fetters of obsolete and dying Stalinism" - as was the historic relation between capitalism and feudalism? Neatly posing the historic relationship between capitalism and Stalinism does not meet the point that today counter-revolutionary Stalinism is a more immediate and more deadly menace to the survival of working class independence and of the Socialist movement than is western capitalism. I am not interested, however, in the survival of working class independence and of the Socialist movement, so that the working class may perform its historic mission of ending capitalism - and also Stalinism.

Comrade Shachtman reiterates - of course correctly - that "Neither the decadent bourgeoisie nor the decadent social democratic parties have a social program, a political program, capable of defeating Stalinism or even weakening it seriously." But who talks about the SOCIAL and POLITICAL programs of capitalists and of their supporters to defeat Stalinism? Indeed, only the revolutionary program of the working class has what it takes to defeat Stalinism as a social and political system. But the fly in the ointment is: What becomes of the revolutionary program of the working class if Stalinism dominates the globe? Comrade Shachtman

disposes of "military programs" with an impatient gesture, but military programs determine many issues not only for the imperialists but also for the peoples - as witness the resistance movements of World War II.

It is beclouding the issues of today to fall back on pure historic relationships. An instance in point is the belated revival of nationalism when it has no historic business to do so. First Nazism and then Stalinism turned back history and made nationalism once more a burning issue, so that our group has seen fit, and properly so, to support the nationalist movements - knowing full-well that INTERNATIONALISM should be the order of the day, historically speaking. The saving grace is that we do not subordinate ourselves to nationalism, but use it as a stepping stone to higher things.

The failure of the working class to overthrow capitalism and found Socialism betimes, has produced some monstrous results. It may be that World War III will come with the international working class still so disoriented from its class interests and goal, so without adequate leadership to guide it, that at least at the beginning of the war it will follow one imperialist camp or the other. In that case, while doing whatever is possible for the building of a Third Camp, it will be necessary to support the victory of the capitalist democracies, as such a victory would offer some chance for the continuing development of the revolutionary potentialities of the working class. Here too the saving grace would be NOT to subordinate oneself to American imperialism, as Comrade Shachtman states Erber does, and as I would NOT do.

#### In Conclusion

The crux of the difference between my position and the official position of the ISL is that the latter holds that opposition to World War III as imperialist on both sides and advocacy of the Third Camp, preclude possible support of the military efforts of the capitalist democracies; whereas I hold that such opposition and such advocacy do not preclude this possibility.

# # #

# INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION

## REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY (GREAT BRITAIN)

(We reprint below two interesting documents on the developments in Great Britain, both coming out of the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP, sometimes referred to as the Haston group), which is an official section of the Fourth International. The first is the proposal by leading members of the RCP in favor of dissolving the "party" and entering the Labour Party. The second is the reply of the Political Bureau of the RCP to a critical letter from the International Secretariat of the Fourth International. (Unfortunately, the comrade who sent us the two documents did not forward the IS letter, which explains its non-appearance in this Bulletin. Its text must therefore be surmised from the reply by the Political Bureau.)

(The proposal that the members of the RCP enter the Labour Party is of all the greater interest because it is sponsored by comrades who, up to recently, vigorously resisted this course, even though it was advocated, in one form or another, by the IS and by a minority group inside the RCP which split off from the latter to enter the Labour Party a little over a year ago. It marks the abandonment of at least one of self-frustrating sectarian conceptions that still plague the so-called Trotskyist movement, which not only calls itself a "party" in a number of countries but tries, with calamitous results, to act like one. The adoption of the new proposal by the RCP would open the possibility of making up for the valuable time lost in waiting so long before taking the clearly indicated step of joining the Labour Party in whose ranks every Marxist and socialist should find his proper place. Unfortunately, there is not yet very sure ground for believing that the possibility will be utilized for the best interests of Marxist internationalism either by those "official Trotskyists" who entered the Labour Party earlier or by those who contemplate entering it now. In fact, the present political indications are that there is no ground at all for believing it.

(The Marxists can play a progressive role in the British labor movement (in its unions and in its political party) only if they work for a Socialist Britain by means of a socialist program which is completely independent from capitalist imperialism (or alliance with American imperialism, or subordination to it), on the one side, and from Stalinist imperialism and Stalinism in general, on the other. By virtue of the position taken by the Fourth International, neither of its two groups in Britain today - the former minority and the present RCP - is capable of doing this work. The former minority, now in the Labour Party, very prudently keeps its lips sealed about its position in favor of "unconditional defense of the Soviet Union"

and its characterization of the Stalinist prison regime as a "Workers' state." This shabby opportunistic silence is, however, utterly worthless because Stalinist imperialism (and therefore American imperialism) cannot be combatted that way. The former majority (i.e., the RCP) which has the doubtful merit of having developed the official position to its logical and therewith its most obviously reactionary conclusions, is capable only of acting as shield for Stalinism, since it holds that Stalinism is a bureaucratic but nevertheless a socialist revolutionary force which not only overturns capitalism but also establishes workers' states (Eastern Europe, China), saluted by the RCP as victories for the working class! To enter the Labour Party with such a theory is, at best, like plunging into a pool with a straitjacket.

(Still, it has proved possible for many of the British comrades to dump overboard some of their obsolete conceptions - about the Labour Party and about their own role in the working-class movement. It is to be hoped that it will not take too long before they rid themselves of their position on Russia and Stalinism as well. -- Ed.)

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STATEMENT ON THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE R.C.P.

Submitted to the Central Committee, Jan. 8, 9, 1949

By J. Haston, H. Atkinson, R. Tearse, V. Charles

In preparation for the forthcoming Conference of the Party, it is necessary to review the prognosis and perspectives we adopted in 1947, and to consider anew our orientation and tactics in the light of the evolution of the organization. After a lapse of nearly 18 months we must sum up our experiences and the practical results of the tasks we set ourselves.

In opposition to the theses of ever deepening economic crisis, we declared in our 1947 theses that despite the grave economic conditions in which the Labour Government took power and the tremendous difficulties which lay before it, given continued aid from American imperialism, it would be capable of expanding production and achieving a high level of employment and stable economic and political relations. This economic prognosis is being amply confirmed by events. Industrial production is higher than at any time in Britain's history and will undoubtedly continue to rise for the next few years. The unstable position of British finance and currency has been so transformed that outside of the dollar zone sterling is now a hard currency.

Confirmed also, is our estimate of the main political trends within the population. The tendency, as reflected in by-elections, for a political move towards the right has increased; but the broad mass of the working class and especially the organized workers, continues to support the traditional mass organization - the Labour Party. No real movement has appeared from within the Labour Party critical of the Government's policy, nor has any development taken place resulting in the beginning of the growth of a mass Labour League of Youth. There is no process of differentiation within the existing youth organizations; they continue to be largely social societies. The rightward trend within the movement, al-



ready visible last year, has deepened. This is indicated by the considerable success which the Labour leaders have had in their anti-communist drive.

On the industrial front, however, our estimate that the policy of the Labour Government would provoke a rising curve of industrial struggle with an increase in the number of strikes thus creating a favourable field of activity for the independent party, has been shown wrong. The working class has been exceptionally quiescent. The situation has been even more stable than in the previous years of Labour's rule.

Wrong, too, was our prognosis that our Party, on the basis of its open work, and despite the generally low level of political activity, would be capable of growing and expanding in influence among the working class. The Party has failed to grow in the past period. On the contrary, the tendency has been one of decline. In certain fields, and in one or two areas we have advanced and made headway in membership as well as in influence, notably Birmingham and Manchester. In our trade union activity we have made some advances and consolidated past work. The N.C.L.C. has offered exceptional opportunities to party lecturers to put our case to wide sections of workers in the Trade Unions. But this success, taken with our other gains, does not off-set the overall picture of decline.

During the past 12 months, the Party has been forced to make a series of retreats. The full time staff has been cut. The press has been cut and the circulation declines. The public activities of the Party have been increasingly restricted. In the more recent period the organization has lost a considerable source of income which cannot be replaced. Members subscriptions alone are not capable of maintaining the existing apparatus. We are thus imminently faced with further restrictions. This means concretely a monthly "Socialist Appeal" at the present reduced size. These restrictions reduce the activities of the RCP to that of a propaganda grouping, since the small monthly paper will not and cannot fulfill the functions of an agitational organ. We must thus say that we have not been able to maintain the organization at its existing level, but have pared down from one Central Committee to the next. On the basis of the economic and political perspectives, we can see no possibility of any change in this process. We can thus offer the organization no perspective for growth and expansion in the coming period. This refutation of our organizational prognosis calls for a serious re-consideration and reanalysis on our part.

In our perspectives of 1947, we clearly recognized that the immediate period of economic expansion, labor reforms, and political stagnation would not be favorable for the transformation of our small independent organization into a large party, or even for a considerable expansion. But we did not fully appreciate the difficulties we would face as a consequence of the transformation which has taken place among the organized workers, on the basis of the reforms which the Government has introduced.

We believed a left turn on the part of the Stalinists was highly possible and argued that such a turn would create a favorable climate in which to win members of the Communist Party to our organization. But events in Czechoslovakia, Eastern Europe, and in China have created a growing confidence on the part of the rank and file members of the CP in their organization and leadership. As a consequence, while we have good relations with the rank and file of the CP, it has not been possible to recruit from the Stalinists to offset the stagnation in and around the Labour Party. It is now evident that recruitment from this source cannot be an important argument for the retention of the open organization.

When we discussed the question of entry with the entrists we based ourselves upon the classical approach of Trotsky and argued that conditions for entry did not exist. These conditions were outlined by us as follows:

- 1) That the country has entered, or is just entering a period of pre-revolutionary political crisis;
- 2) That a process of differentiation has begun in the mass Social Democratic Party and is resulting in the creation of a mass centrist current, especially among the youth.
- 3) That the Revolutionary Party is completely isolated from the real elements of working class political life and incapable of growing or influencing events except through the mass reformist organization.

These conditions do not exist at the present time. There is no evidence that a left wing is developing within the Labour Party or League of Youth of any significance. Our economic thesis of upswing in the economy and relatively stable social conditions, and that an economic and political crisis of great importance adversely affecting the conditions of the working class would be necessary before any real opposition develops within the Labour Party, is still the key to a correct understanding of the present and future evolution of the movement. If we retain our old position regarding classical conditions for entry, the only conditions which exists at present is the stagnation of the Party. It is now our opinion that it is necessary to revise our old conception and to approach the problem from an entirely different angle. Nationally and internationally the experiences of our movement lead to the conclusion that in the next period there is no possibility of creating a third workers' party separate from and in organizational opposition to the Labour and Communist Parties where they exist as mass parties until the workers complete their experiences of these organizations.

The split of the British party was one of the manifestations of this. In the final analysis, the split would never have taken place had the RCP been advancing with the possibility of rapid growth and development. It was the result of the objective situation in which the Trotskyist movement found itself in the post-war period. While the split released members of both tendencies from the ill-effects of a long drawn out factional struggle, at the same time it added extra burdens upon the shoulders of an already overburdened membership of the open party in the effort to make up for what was lost. It undoubtedly had the effect of weakening the independent organization. Had it not taken place, however, it would

have not fundamentally altered the present trend.

The most militant and class conscious workers are still to be found in and around the Communist Party. However, the democratic traditions of the British working class are serious obstacles to the development of Stalinism at the present time. Even within the ranks of the CP the totalitarian activities of the Stalinist leadership have a disturbing effect upon many party members. Were it possible to join the Communist Party and agitate half as freely inside the Labour Party for a revolutionary point of view, a turn towards the Stalinist Party would seriously have to be considered. But this is out of the question in the given situation and could only arise in the form of a capitulation to Stalinism.

The Labour Party, despite limitations which it will impose on revolutionary agitation, is the only field from which a mass Trotskyist tendency can arise in the period that lies ahead. Without illusions, and with the perspective of several years of patient work, we can and must gain the cadres for the creation of the party of socialist revolution. Without accepting the economic and political premises on which the Minority evolved their tactic, we foresee a period of work in the Labour Party extending over several years, given the continuance of the fairly stable conditions now prevailing. In striving to build the Trotskyist movement, we have no choice but to work with the material which is at hand. Recognizing the limitations imposed on us by the mood of the Labour workers, we must as far as we are able, play a role in organizing and creating the left wing, low though its level is at present.

It is our opinion that during the next few years, the energies of our comrades can be better utilized in creating a base for themselves around our programme in the Labour Party locally, and where possible nationally, than in striving to maintain the apparatus of an isolated independent organization.

The problems of the British Party cannot be separated from the problems of the international Parties all over the world. If on the continent of Europe our tendency had arisen in one or more countries as a decisive or even authoritative tendency in the life of the working class, this may have aided in the creation of an independent organization. But this has not taken place. The split in France was in itself an outcome of the situation in which Trotskyism found itself in face of the mass support gained by the Stalinist party after the war.

The post-war period did not result in the exposure and elimination of Stalinism or Social Democracy; nor did it lead to the rise of Trotskyism as a decisive tendency leading masses of workers into action. On the contrary, Social Democracy still plays a leading role in the life of broad sections of the organized workers, especially in the Anglo-Saxon countries or those countries influenced by them. Where Social Democracy has been eliminated in large parts of Europe - it is Stalinism which has replaced Social Democracy as the decisive force among the working class and peasant poor.

In the colonial countries, Stalinism has risen as the mass party

of the toiling masses. In India, our section has entered the Socialist Party. Only in Ceylon has Trotskyism really appeared as a mass leading tendency of the working class in opposition to the Stalinists.

In America where we have our strongest and most influential section, the comrades would welcome the formation of a Labour Party in which they could find a milieu of work.

All the factors on an international scale lead to the conclusion that for the next few years, the sections of the Fourth International have no perspectives of important growth in opposition to Stalinism and Social Democracy. Fresh experiences of a far-reaching character will be necessary before the masses break with these organizations. This does not affect the validity of the programme of the Fourth International, nor the historic mission and need for the World Party of Socialist Revolution - the Fourth International. But it does mean that for the creation of mass parties of Trotskyism, patient and systematic work is necessary for many years, especially in Britain, inside the Social Democratic organization.

We propose therefore, to raise as the key question before the Party, the dissolution of the RCP as an independent organization and the entry of our members into the Labour Party.

We propose that the dissolution should be by public declaration. The supporters of our tendency should be prepared by a series of articles and the leadership of the Party should approach the Labour Party with the object of securing the best results from the public entry of the RCP into the LP. It follows that the IS should be informed of the proposed orientation, and if it is accepted by the majority of the Party, negotiations should be opened with the object of working together with our co-thinkers.

# # #

TO THE I.S. FROM THE POLITICAL BUREAU OF THE RCP

To the IS  
Dear Comrades,

Your letter of February 8 to the Political Bureau and the Central Committee of the RCP and your Open Letter to all members have been received and are in circulation throughout the Party.

The document for entry signed by the four comrades was presented to the CC to initiate the discussion. There had not been a great deal of discussion on the leading committee or in the party and for this reason it was considered unwise to take a vote. Naturally, a vote will be taken, but only after the comrades on both sides have presented a rounded out position, and after the discussion has been held in the Party. The PB supports the position of the four comrades and is preparing a document.

When we sent you the resolution we sincerely hoped that you would participate and assist in the discussion which has been reopened.

in our Party. We had anticipated that you would welcome an expression of a new turn in our party, embodying as it does an acceptance of a position you have fought for for some time, and embodying a recognition that we were wrong on the tactical question of entry.

The nature and tone of your intervention were entirely unexpected by us. You have answered the document by declaring that:

The document is an expression of liquidationist tendencies. It shows a pernicious method in ignoring the fact that the International has a position.

The authors are pessimistic in respect of the working class and have a lack of faith in our class and in the Trotskyist movement.

And finally, it reveals, once again, that the leadership of the RCP is on the path which leads out of the Fourth International.

We must state bluntly that the impression your letter created was that you are doing your best to drive us out of the International and prevent a fusion at all costs.

We gained this impression by your characterization of the comrades as "liquidationist," "pessimist," etc. and your placing them in the same category as Morrow, Demaziere, Shachtman and others who have left the ranks of the Fourth International. It is our opinion that your sole purpose was to pin a label on us, to create an amalgam between us and people who have left our movement. It appears that you begin with the preconceived determination that "nothing good cometh out of Nazareth;" that every idea expressed by us must of necessity be a reflection of potential renegacy to the Fourth International. We therefore feel it necessary to state that the RCP is not analagous to Demaziere, to Morrow, or Shachtman, or to any other tendency which has left the International. We are part of the International and we intend to remain part of it.

Since receiving your letter we have had the opportunity to discuss with one of your representatives. He expressed surprise when we stated that the document of the four comrades proposed fusion. He apparently had the misconception that we were for liquidation in the organizational sphere. Let us assure you that this is not the case. On the contrary, the only principled conclusion which flows from our change of line is fusion on the organizational basis already established. Any ambiguity in this respect as expressed in the last section of the document is the result of matters raised by you through your representatives in discussion a few months ago, which we have borne in mind.

It appears that you were also under the impression that we were advocating "entry everywhere." We hope, in the course of the discussion, to show that you have either misread the document or have drawn wrong conclusions from what may have been ambiguous formulations.

Let us try and put the discussion on its proper footing by

elaborating what is the real position of the four comrades and taking up the real differences which separate us.

You divide our mistakes into "old" and "new." You say:

"We would not have intervened if the authors of the document had only remained faithful to the old mistakes and not added something new which constitutes nothing less than a departure from the programme of the Fourth International..."

So far as our alleged "old" mistakes are concerned, these can be divided into two: differences on the relative economic and political stability in Britain; the role of Stalinism in relation to Eastern Europe and China. We are anxious to continue discussions on the question of Stalinism, as indeed, the whole problem is still in the process of being discussed in the International. We will touch on this briefly later in this letter. However, in the light of your statement above that you would not have intervened had we merely remained faithful to these "old" mistakes, it is evident that you regard them as secondary to the main discussion around our new orientation and perspective. Therefore, let us first take up these "new" mistakes.

We can sum them up under three headings:

- a) The slogan of "entry everywhere."
- b) The method of posing the question of entry which you see as a capitulation.
- c) "Ignoring" the International and past positions.

a) ENTRY EVERYWHERE? - A MISCONCEPTION

Your arguments on this lead us to believe that you did not read carefully what was said. To take an example: you make play on the question of America. You infer that we are for the entry of the SWP into the Norman Thomas Socialist Party. We ask you to re-read what was written in the document.

"In America, where we have our strongest and most influential section, the comrades would welcome the formation of a Labour Party in which they would find a milieu of work."

Something very different, you will agree. It would be absurd to advocate entry into the Thomas Party in the United States; or to advocate entry at all in America. You are quite wrong in saying that we are presenting a new policy "for all sections of the International." We are pointing to a general world trend which exists. Your misconception may have flowed from our statement: "But it does mean that for the creation of mass parties of Trotskyism, patient and systematic work is necessary for many years, especially in Britain, inside the Social Democratic organization." Perhaps the formulation could have been phrased more clearly. However, the fact that they used the singular and referred to the Social Democratic organization, not organizations, should show that they were referring to entry in Britain. The part of the sentence which is operative to

other sections, is that which refers to the necessity of patient and systematic work for many years. What it was intended to convey was that where there were mass Social Democratic organizations with only small isolated Trotskyist groups, the tendency of the Fourth Internationalists was towards entry. We have common agreement with you that entry in America, as in some other countries, is not a practical possibility. This is neither pessimism nor liquidationism. It is facing up to the realities. Indeed you yourselves have no difference of opinion on this point.

In general we agree with your comment that it is impermissible to play about the policies of our sections. We do not support the idea of a world slogan on this question. Each situation must be discussed concretely by the given section.

We hope that this clarifies the problem and that in our future discussions it will be off the agenda, for there exists no basic disagreement.

b) METHOD OF POSING THE QUESTION OF ENTRY -  
IS IT A CAPITULATION?

We pass on to the second "new" mistake. You seek to show that our document represents a capitulation in the method of posing the question of entry, which you claim stems from pessimism and bad method. Let us examine this.

Your previous criticism of us was that we saw entry as a short-term, "raiding" tactic. We now accept the position you counterposed to ours. Our position then was correctly paraphrased by you as follows: that "the Party had much better opportunities of recruiting in the economic struggles and from the Communist (Stalinist) Party, and should therefore turn its attention in that direction." Let us say here and now - (and this has a relation to point c, namely, "ignoring the International) - that experience has shown us that we have not been able to recruit from the Stalinist Party owing to its left turn and victories in other countries; we have likewise not been able to recruit from the very limited number of economic struggles which have taken place.

Our perspective was based on what we thought was the best method of recruiting members to the Trotskyist party in the shortest possible time. We believe now that it is not possible to make great gains in recruitment either inside or outside the Labour Party. ("We think it would be correct to say that the numerical position of both tendencies, in and outside, have not changed a great deal.") We now agree that a period of "patient and systematic work is necessary for many years...inside the Social Democratic organization." If this is pessimism, we plead guilty. But allow us here to enter such a plea for you also. We take the floor with your statement of January 1947:

"Under these conditions, it is obviously bound to be more difficult to recruit members from the Labour Party directly to the revolutionary party, then to organize them inside for Trotskyism. The worker, even the advanced one, is attracted by the idea of trying to see if the Labour Party, which after

such a long time he has finally seen come to power, can be made to work in his interests. That is why your 'experience' does not impress us as a refutation of our proposed orientation.

"But recruiting workers from the Labour Party at present is one thing, and influencing them in the direction of revolutionary action is another. You appear to us to pose the whole question incorrectly. Our task, the task of a Labour Party orientation, even of an eventual entry is not essentially immediate recruitment. It is to bring the transitional programme of Trotskyism to the workers in the course of their development towards struggle, to go through their experiences with them in applying the demands incorporated in this programme according to the needs of a given moment, to convince them in the course of participation in their daily lives that this is the programme which can achieve their goal. In this process it is necessary to immunize them against Stalinism. But to bring the Trotskyist programme to the workers, to combat Stalinism, to go through their experiences with them, to participate in their political life in England today means above all to be in and around the Labour Party, where they indisputably are. That means that the whole work of the party has to revolve on tireless agitation and propaganda around the Labour Government and the attitude of the workers toward it.

"This is not a simple task, nor one of short duration..."

#### "IGNORING" THE INTERNATIONAL

We link our comments on the above with your statement that we "ignore" the International.

In the light of the experience of the past 14 months, we do not think it is possible to forge a revolutionary party outside of the Labour Party. You were correct when you said it was a question of influencing the processes at work there, of building a base for our members, and participating in the main fields where the political issues of the day are raised. If you wish for a special statement that we have learned from you on this score, we give it with pleasure. But surely you are not asking for a "confession" that you were correct on other aspects on which we are not convinced? So far as your immediate economic and political perspective was concerned, we do not believe you were correct. It is our opinion that the facts contradict it. It is not here a question of "ignoring" your opinion, but of not accepting it.

The document of the four comrades said that while accepting the orientation of entry, it did not accept "the economic and political premise on which the Minority evolved their tactic..." What is referred to here?

Insofar as you and the Minority argued that the "disastrous decline in coal production, far from being halted continues unabated," we still say you were wrong. And our opposition, we believe, was correct to your reference that "exports have never surpassed 120% and are slackening from month to month;" or the per-



spective on unemployment expressed by the minority in 1946 as follows: "The comrades (we) talk about the illusion of 'full employment' being maintained and suggested that this will be so until near the end of Labour's term of office, i.e. for about three years. How do the comrades explain that the former 'distressed areas' are once more showing a steady increase in unemployment..." We cannot here refrain from pointing out that the employment figures of that date have been maintained until this day, i.e. "until near the end of Labour's term of office." We do not accept this even today. On the contrary, we believe that our short term economic perspective has stood the test of history. It is this short term economic perspective of decline and unemployment that we do not accept.

We cannot leave this point without declaring that you have not presented our point of view fairly on the perspectives of British economy. You create the impression that we "forget" the decadence of the British Empire, and that we have illusions in the stability of the capitalist system in Britain. We categorically deny, as we have persistently done in the past, that this is our position. We ask you to show us one single article in the "Socialist Appeal" or the "Workers International News" which leads to this reformist illusion.

Likewise, on the short term political perspective of developments within the Labour Party, which flowed from the economic perspective of rapid crisis as against a "relative stability," we still maintain that we were correct. You will recall that you visualized a rapid leftward development against the right wing inside the LP which you argued was already taking place in 1946.

On these two questions, you are entitled to your opinion - we to ours. They are not questions of principle, but merely of prognosis for the short period ahead. They have largely been answered by events. We have no desire to go into this whole discussion again and to reopen the factional feud on these issues. We believe there is no basic disagreement on the whole with the method of presentation in public statements and consider it neither desirable nor necessary to revert to these old discussions.

#### CLASSICAL CONDITIONS FOR ENTRY

You take up the question of what we termed "classical" conditions for entry. We do not believe that the conditions laid down by Trotsky exist today. While it is true that you said in the past, as you do in your latest letter, that no hard and fast rules for entry could be applied, you did argue that these classical conditions for entry as we saw them, were valid for Britain in the present period. For instance, your letter of January 1947:

"But if Trotsky did not set up any hard and fast rules for entry, the conditions described by him in your citation nevertheless deserve comparison with the present situation in Britain, because in our view they are not so totally different as to back your conclusions, even from that point of view. On the contrary..."

In the past we considered entry to be essentially a tactic of short

term duration. It is an undeniable fact that the type of work being conducted is an innovation in our movement and has no precedent.

But in any case, since we have agreement today on the question of a long term perspective of work, it seems to us that further discussion on the term "classical" would prove purely sophistical.

#### STALINISM AND EASTERN EUROPE

Among what you term our "old" mistakes, you include the question of Stalinism. You assert that the "Socialist Appeal" "... takes the Stalinist point of view in the analysis of events in Czechoslovakia and China, which are today the main arguments of the Stalinists..." You inform us that "the Stalinists are not achieving anything near to Socialism but are strangling the revolutionary movement of the masses everywhere - even when they make a left turn or use left words, or proceed to nationalizations or to partition of the land." It is not true that we take the Stalinist position, and you do not have to teach us that Stalinism cannot introduce Socialism. Any objective analysis of our press will demonstrate this. On the one hand we do not blind ourselves to the facts, the indisputable facts, that the Stalinists have been forced to carry through the agrarian overturn and eliminate capitalism in the basic sectors of the economy. We are not alone in the International in this. Your assertion that we place the emphasis only on the "progressive" side of Stalinism is also quite unjustified. We have attacked every reactionary manifestation of Stalinism nationally and internationally. (By the way, your sneer at the material on the "biological issue" is quite misplaced as it has created a wide interest in the British political movement.) We have attacked the Stalinist slave camps, the lack of workers democracy, we have exposed the methods of the GPU, the strike-breaking activities of the Italian, the French and other sections of the Stalinist movement; above all, we have consistently shown the need for a political revolution as the necessary prerequisite for the transition to socialism in any Stalinized country.

We are convinced that events will justify our position on Eastern Europe which we presented in amendment form to the World Congress. You say that the RCP does not put the position of the World Congress. In point of fact, the IS itself has not found it possible to maintain the line of the World Congress. This was shown in the letter to the Yugoslav CP and in Comrade Pablo's subsequent article in the "Fourth International" which makes nonsense of the position that Yugoslavia is a capitalist state.

We have placed our differences on this question before you in the form of a letter to the IEC. We would welcome a reply to the points raised there and a continuance of the discussion on the nature of the Yugoslav state and the other Eastern European states. Around such discussion, the various aspects of the role of Stalinism in the postwar period and its future development can be thrashed out. We do not claim to have the final answers to these complex problems. We think our position is more in line with the facts than that of the IS. But the discussion is still in progress in the International and the final word has not been said on either side.

We are confident that we will eventually evolve to a similar if not identical position.

But before leaving this, we feel it necessary to raise a point. You accuse the RCP leadership of having defended "with assurance" against the IS in the past, the theory that the Eastern European countries were "state capitalist." One comrade, Comrade Haston, expressed this view that Czechoslovakia was state capitalist. As you know he has since gone on record against that position. But the RCP leadership has never taken a position on this question, let alone defended it with or without assurance. There was no question of assurance on our part. Let us quote from our resolution on the Soviet Union, passed at our 1946 Conference.

"The CC notes that our organization, and especially the leading comrades, have failed as have all other sections of the Fourth International, to examine and explain the social transformations taking place in these Eastern countries, to establish the class character of the process, and especially to establish the class nature of the states that have come into being. This is an indication of theoretical hesitation and indecision on the part of our International movement as a whole in the light of the new and amazingly complicated social phenomena."

This was passed at the same conference at which Comrade Haston raised the question of state capitalism in Czechoslovakia. It hardly indicates an attitude of assurance.

#### CONCLUSIONS

We have never sought to conceal our political differences with you. We have always posed all the problems confronting us with the sincere object of obtaining clarity. We do not believe that covering up our misgivings or differences can serve the best interests of our movement. We hope that our discussions will continue and lead to a greater clarity and understanding between us.

But you will realize that to postpone a decision on the question of entry is not always possible, and in the given conditions must be ruled out. The state of flux and indecision about the future of our party is such that a postponement of a decision on entry will benefit no one. The discussion was opened by the CC on January 9. At this meeting were present delegates from most party branches and they considered a 14 weeks period of discussion ample. Your request for a postponement has been circulated to the membership and we will issue any further arguments you may put forward in this connection as soon as they are received. For our part, we are opposed to any postponement of the decision to some distant date, when and if all the disputed questions you have raised have been discussed nationally and internationally with all the sections participating. Of course, if the economic discussion continues long enough, the slump itself may wipe that question off the agenda!

Before closing, we think it necessary to make our attitude clear on the future work in Britain. So far as organizational ap-

proach and method which have been adopted, we find ourselves in general agreement. We have general agreement on the programme of the International, and our agreement on method of work provides a working basis on which to proceed. There is not and never has been any difference on the application of our programme in the form of concrete demands to be raised in the British labour movement or even in relation to the problem of Stalinism here. We have common agreement on the need for some years of systematic and patient work around this programme.

We approach the whole problem with the greatest measure of goodwill. Perhaps you do not realize the great obstacles which stood in the path of the comrades who have changed their course, in view of the prolonged and bitter factional struggle in the past. We earnestly hope that the impression your letter created will be dispelled by your answer to us. For our part, we sincerely trust that any misunderstandings which have arisen caused by perhaps a too hasty intervention on your part, or by the inadequate statement of the position on the part of the four comrades, will be cleared up and the path will be cleared for a speedy and really successful fusion of the forces of our movement in this country.

Political Bureau RCP

Adopted February 21, 1949  
E. Grant abstaining.

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EXCERPTS FROM LETTERS FROM ABROAD

From a British Friend:

... And now - at last! - to answer your letter on the immediate subject matter of support for the LP. Here again I must correct a slight mis-understanding. If it was inferred from my previous letter that there has been a general swing away from Labour ON THE PART OF THE WORKERS, then I must apologize for bad formulation. I certainly did not intend to give such an impression. No one can argue sensibly in face of incontrovertible facts, which show - by the huge number of seats lost in the recent elections - that of the POPULATION GENERALLY, there is a decided swing to the right. I send two recent newspapers (NOT TORY papers! Actually one is the official Labour daily, and the other is a Liberal rag), from which you will draw your own conclusion. My sole comment shall be on the conclusions which the bureaucrats are trying to draw from the results. You will notice that they are saying it was the apathy of the electors plus the over-confidence of the LP workers which resulted in defeat. But this line is only put out for PUBLIC consumption. INSIDE the LP we all know that the poll reflects the growing feelings of dissatisfaction with official policy. There was the example of the latest budget - in which the bosses, after several years of enjoyment of super-profits during the expansion of trade (alongside the wage-freeze) were granted an increased allowance tax-free, for the "renewal of machinery" while at the same time,

subsidies have been lowered or removed from food, which of course is the same as a further wage-reduction, while the "penny a pint" off beer was nothing more than an insult to the workers, for it was clearly designed to help the brewers rather than the workers. You see, wages have been so tight that the consumption of beer has fallen alarmingly (from the brewers' standpoint) and it was hoped that this paltry reduction would help increase sales. (Actually, it has had NO such effect.)

In the nationalized industries there is dissatisfaction both by the general public who use these services, AND by those workers who earn their living operating them. The public sees the inevitable increase in cost, following on nationalization, while the workers, who expected better conditions on working for the State than they suffered under private boss-ship, now find themselves no better off. Witness the innumerable coal-strikes and threatened railway and transport strikes - which the trade union mis-leaders are finding ever-greater difficulty in quelling. Then there is the dire shortage of houses, conscription, the bureaucratic setting-aside of unanimous resolutions on subjects like equal pay for school-teachers, nurses and women in general, ESPECIALLY in all the branches of the Civil Service; the refusal to allow workers' control even in Nationalized industries, the severe hardship suffered by pensioners, the continued rationing at levels only such sufficient to maintain health, the heavy burden of income-tax of the poorer sections, etc., etc., etc.

And yet, despite ALL of those things, the government retains a large measure of support by the workers, but ONLY because for us there is no alternative. We who suffered for so many years under Tory domination cannot easily cast aside "loyalty" to the party which was formed and developed out of our opposition to capitalism. For workers who have ANY sort of political intelligence, there is the "Hobson's choice" of Labour or Tory, with Labour offering them SOME sort of opportunity of expressing their opinions, while the Conservatives (or Tories or Unionists - different label, same bottle of poison - have shown during a whole historical period in Britain, their complete allegiance to the capitalists. Hence, the actual position is that for some months past, the LP rank and file, alongside the Co-Op Parties (affiliated to the LP) AND the Trade Unions, have all become more and more critical of official government policy, while nevertheless giving voting support to it during elections. The "swing" has been mainly by the non-political housewives' votes, and COMPLETELY by the always-fluctuating middle-class. All this despite the obvious lack of an acceptable programme on the part of the Conservatives. They cannot take an official attitude on Nationalization because, although they formally voted against the various Nationalization Bills in Parliament - in order to squeeze greater compensation out of the taxpayer - they could not, if gaining power, denationalize because to do so would not be in the interest of the capitalist class generally. On the National Health Service, they voted against the Bill throughout its various stages of enactment, yet they dare not tell the public that their intention is to dispense with it. On the contrary, they are now plastering up posters claiming that the whole idea was theirs originally, and that the LP "pinched" it from them. They dare not disagree with

foreign policy because it is identical to the policy THEY would pursue if allowed, and to create a fake opposition might arouse the masses to rise up and rebel against it from an internationalist outlook.

What of the future? There, I absolutely refuse to be drawn. Too many factors are involved. I can state the factors, but prefer not to draw conclusions because the factors themselves fluctuate and between now and the general election even MORE vital factors will have appeared on the horizon which will again change the perspective. The factors are: there is a growing disillusionment on the part of the workers, owing to facts already stated. Then, it is the government's intention to "consolidate" if gaining office for a further term, rather than to press forward to further encroachment of individual ownership. In fact, the only outstanding measure is the proposed Nationalization of Insurance. Now, although this involves an enormous amount of finance capital, insurance as an election policy will encourage but lukewarm support by the electorate. The Trade Unions have been pressing for greater industrial Nationalization - ship-building, engineering, chemicals, building, etc. have been recommended, but definitely nationalization of insurance is not a measure which would set fire to any great enthusiasm. In fact, I believe it is true to say that in the Insurance Trade Unions there is general opposition - probably due to fear that Nationalization would result in a general cutting down of staffs and consequent unemployment. This would undoubtedly result, for there are dozens of individual Insurance Cos. in existence, and coordination would mean centralization and more efficient employment of labour.

Another factor is the forthcoming Annual Conference of the LP. In previous years this has resulted in victory for the right-wing. But since the first year or two (the "honeymoon period") there has been a growing opposition, and the recent election results MAY compel the rightwing to grant concessions to the floor of the conference this year. Naturally, this conference will deal mainly with next year's election programme, and so many left-wing resolutions are down for debate that it must be clear to the bureaucrats that unless they "play ball" to some extent, there is grave danger of a cleavage inside the Labour Movement. In Parliament, the pseudo-lefts among the Labour "back-benchers" have become more and more critical - largely due to pressure from their local Wards and Divisions, wherein lies their voting support.

I cannot enumerate the various bills from memory but will mention just a few which come to mind. There was the "blood-sports bill" which was intended to make cruel animal sports such as coursing (dogs against hares) hunting (horses and dogs chasing foxes to death) etc. illegal. These sports being the pleasure solely of the wealthy, it was natural that the back-benchers took a class line, and were disturbed that the Bill was not passed. Then there was the Death Penalty Bill - designed to do away with capital punishment. This failed. Then came the latest "shock" Budget. Then the Ireland Partition rumpus. All these have had a disturbing effect on the ordinary Labour MP yet at the moment he is, generally speaking, still "sitting on the fence." If he can be assured of "backing-up" support from his area, it is pretty certain he will become more vocifer-

ous at Parliamentary LP meetings. But at the same time, he has to be careful not to offend the electorate generally with pronouncements which are so "left" that they are unacceptable to his supporters OUTSIDE the LP.

Of the balance of forces, the LP membership grew stronger after the election, and the rise continued in 1946. But the last year saw a distinct loss of membership - a process which has continued steadily right through THIS year. Also in the Trade Unions. The last two years there has been a steady fall. This is a normal process after wartime, though it has been protracted in England compared with events after 1918 - possibly because of the LP being in office. Of the right wing, the Liberals, after their crushing defeat in 1945, lost members galore - largely to the LP. This setback has never been counteracted. Despite valiant efforts on the part of individual Liberals, there has been a complete failure either to produce a programme which could have any sort of mass support, or to build any sort of a political machine. In fact, the Liberals are defunct. Now the Tories. After the election of 1945, they found themselves with a reasonably big party but with no mass support. At the "inquest" there were many hard words spoken, resulting in a split, with Churchill's gang against an opposition faction almost as strong. This split continued right up to last year, so that their efforts were largely diverted between solving their internal problems and trying to woo the remaining Liberals. Now, so far as one can see, they have succeeded in showing what purports to be a united front (personally, I think it is an uneasy peace). At the same time, however, they have managed to enlist the support of industry into financing a fighting fund of more than a million pounds, and by means of their superior finance, they have enticed many of the P.B. youths to join their party purely on the basis of offering them social activity "on the cheap." They did a certain amount of work during the election last week, but NOT much. In fact, so far as THIS Ward was concerned, there were more of us LP workers out than there were Tories. Yet they won the seat from us. Moreover, it was NOT won on a programmatic basis. They had NO programme. Their whole line of attack consisted of destructive criticism of LP policy, along with a few glib promises about "more houses" without giving the faintest of details as to how more houses could be built, seeing that house-building depends on sanction from the central government. Another factor: if the economic situation deteriorates between now and the general elections - as is quite feasible - resulting in higher unemployment, that again will have an appreciable effect on the voting. You see, of the promises they made in 1945, the one about maintaining a "very high stable rate of employment" was possibly that for which the workers balloted as much as for any other single item. Up to now, the economic recovery has been on a scale greater than we Trotskyists envisaged - owing to our non-appreciation of the enormous material damage to the continental countries.

But now that competition, in engineering particularly, is becoming fiercer between this country and America, industrial prospects here are far from rosy, for in radio, mechanical, motor, electrical and aeronautical engineering Britain could never compete - price for price - with America.

Last week I visited a section of the British Industries Fair. There were more exhibitors there than ever before, and as usual it attracted a large number of influential overseas buyers. Yet generally speaking contracts were far smaller than for years past, and the volume of business transacted generally was much smaller. The over-seas contingent made it pretty plain that prices in many cases were not truly competitive and - as I can vouch for - in many cases the standard of workmanship was far below the best.

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From a German Friend

The present situation within the German labor movement is characterized by the spontaneous appearance of communist oppositional tendencies. I believe that the crisis of Stalinism is nowhere (except in the countries of Eastern Europe) as obvious as it is in Germany. Two parties have already been created: One, the Independent Communist Party in Dortmund (Ruhr District) and a "Free Communist Party" in Berlin. You have surely read of these facts in the press, but probably not of the details involved.

We have been able to get hold of the programmatic statement and a "manifesto" as well as details concerning the person of the founder of the ICP. I am informing you of this so that you do not form an incorrect opinion on the basis of the brief reports in the press. The initiation of the ICP is best described as the adventure of an idiot. The founder of this "party," Klemens Bender, is a former Liberal who, after 1945, contributed to the formation and building up of the "Free Democratic Party" in the Soviet Zone. It seems that he encountered difficulties with the Russian occupying power, and that he went to Western Germany where he devised his curious plan. He has no roots whatever in the labor movement; comrades have inquired in Dortmund about this "party" only to find out that Bender is not even known in the opposition circles of the local CP. These comrades were asked what they wanted "with such an idiot." The manifesto justifies these opinions about the man. It begins: "The ICP considers the freedom of man as inviolable." It continues: "The ICP is a German party and serves German interests only... In this the ICP adheres in principle in its political structure to the theory of Karl Marx while at the same time it rejects Leninism and Stalinism as unworthy of discussion and harmful to the people. It views the Soviet structure as a rule of despotism of unprecedented scale." - "In the economic sphere the ICP demands the expropriation of large scale industries and large estates which contain the seed cells of aggressive imperialism." The bad German of this programmatic statement is made even more unbearable by its pathetic style. The last sentence reads: "Only when the working people step from the shadows of their life into the sun, only then will our labors be crowned by success." One cannot help but be tempted to let the working people "step from the shadows of their life into the sun ... of death"!!! When we read the manifesto in our circle, we were aching with laughter. I just want to indicate to you not to take the ICP seriously.



I still lack reliable information regarding the Free Communist Party in Berlin. I read one report on it in a periodical of doubtful character. It does give some glimpses of the party's program which seem to indicate that there is at least as much confusion. This party rejects the dictatorship of the proletariat, all class privileges, including those of the working class; it is opposed to civil war and armed insurrection. However, it seems that it is composed of old party members of the CP, and therefore may find a fair-zied audience. The founders appear to be one-time members of the RFB (Red Fighters), that's their type, anyway. They demand of the Russians, for example, that they account for the whereabouts of Heinz Neumann, the advocate of individual terror before 1955, and of Willi Leow, the second chairman of the RFB. As soon as I have reliable information about this party, I will transmit it to you...

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#### From Another German Friend

I agree with you entirely on the question that no organization that defends the official viewpoint of the Fourth in the Russian Question has any perspective of growth - not only in Germany but everywhere. I do not know if you are informed about the internal situation of the German organization. I shall answer all your questions about that matter. We are one of the few sections (if not the only) that is not divided into majority and minority (on the Russian Question particularly!). There is no comrade who holds the views of the IS and the theory of "State Capitalism" is undefended too; a real discussion on the Russian Question has not yet taken place, but the leading comrades share, in general, the theory of the WP (of "Shachtman," as is said), i.e., the theory of "bureaucratic collectivism." We have defended this theory in two documents, the one being a criticism of the theses of the second world congress, the other a criticism of the publications on the Yugoslav question. Both will be published, as we are promised, in the Internal Bulletin of the IS. The disagreement between us and you lies in the diverging evaluation of the anti-Stalinist resistance movements in the Russian sphere of influence. Our position was affirmed by the comrade who is known to you as R. Svoboda, whose article on the CSR appeared in the March issue of the NI....

You wrote in your letter: "We believe that the place for all socialists is as members of the German SP, working for their own purposes..." There is something to be said about your views on this point. We have, of course, fully understood that we have not the task to be some kind of "left opposition" at the border of the Stalinist party. The fact that the majority of the Western German workers is now following the Social Democratic Party must determine fundamentally our strategy. Yet I cannot conclude that a total entrism tactic is to be applied. (Of course, most of my comrades are organized in various organizations (SP or CP). The conditions for work are locally different ones. Sometimes the work in the CP is more favorable.) The condition of our organization doesn't allow this. The most essential prerequisite for entering into a mass or-

ganization is that our organization itself is politically and organizationally firm. As a matter of fact, the German section doesn't meet this condition up to now. Properly, it is not an organization at all. That is, it is still on the way of becoming something that can be called an organization. That does not mean that not everything possible is being done for instance to increase the coherence of the local groups and single comrades. But you must understand the difficulties, especially the financial ones. The tariffs on the railway are about one-half higher than in normal times, the payment for mailing amounts to 20 Pfennig for a letter (formerly 12 Pf.). I myself find it sometimes difficult to gather the money for my correspondence. Furthermore, you have no possibility of changing your residence, because it is necessary to get a special allowance which is nearly impossible to get. It would be favorable if three to four comrades could settle on a single place - this would at once create a gravitating center, but it is simply impossible.

You must furthermore consider the condition of consciousness that prevails within the German labor movement. The first task consists in winning over the most advanced part, i.e. the most critical, of the membership and the functionary body of the existing parties. Thereby also the chiefly theoretical character of the paper is determined. Your criticism regarding "die Internationale," that it is "abstract propaganda," is only partially justified. We ourselves know too well our weakness. It lies firstly in the lack of educated cadres. The losses were too high, especially those caused by demoralization among the pre-1933 forces. The first issue of the paper was made exclusively abroad. Nobody had any influence on the selection of the themes etc.... For the second issue we at least contributed with the leading article, the other stuff was taken in, more or less, for embarrassment. The third was made in Germany, after a little clash between us and the IS because of the resolution on Yugoslavia. We demanded to print an article in No. 4 which differentiates itself from that resolution, but we retreated after having got the promise that a discussion article should be published in the Internal Bulletin of the IS. I am ready to admit that the paper is little interesting and that it deals to little with specifically German problems. The latter is our main trouble. But despite this lack the paper is very much asked for. It is still highly superior to the other publications that are licensed by the military authorities, this - and only this! - circumstance may excuse its many weaknesses.

Our political platform will shortly be finished. It is rather long (about 60 typewritten pages) and mainly theoretical. The historical and the international parts take very much space, but this corresponds to the specific weight of these questions in German politics today. The first question you'll be asked by a man who doesn't know of your organization is: What is your position vis-a-vis Russia and USA. Only in the second line come the questions of Western German constitution, etc. There must always be considered that we address our publications not to the masses, but to the critical elements in the existing socialist organizations, who have already got some Marxist education (and tradition) and who understand our "theoretical" language. ....

In my last letter I had forgotten some remarks regarding the periodical of the IKD, "Die Internationale." I had to admit that your complaint (the paper deals not with German problems in a sufficient way) was justified. I should have added that we are running another publication, the so-called "Informationsdienst" which appears every fortnight and deals first with the most topical German problems. In the future I shall send you the ID or see that it is sent. The most important items at the present moment are (1) the running of negotiations between the occupation powers on Germany and (2) the coming into force of the Bonn constitution and the elections to the first legislative body on the basis of this constitution.

As regards the first, we had a discussion recently without a definitive evaluation of the meaning of the abolition of the Berlin Blockade. We are inclining to the opinion that it heralds a period of diplomatic compromise between East and West, because there are several factors that indicate such a direction. The efforts at a reconciliation came from the East and we believe everything depends on the willingness (or rather possibility) of the US-Imperialism. The Soviet bureaucracy seems to be occupied with digesting the crumbs it has devoured in China and (even still more difficult) with embanking the centrifugal tendencies in Eastern Europe. Any aggressive policy on its part seems to me extremely improbable. In our last ID we have uttered this opinion but details cannot be discussed before the conference of the Foreign Ministers. I would be very pleased to hear your opinion regarding the possibility of an East-West compromise.

To the second item: elections to the "Bundesrat." The thing became rather complicated by the combined character of these elections. If it were an ordinary parliamentary election, no difficulty would exist. We were to give critical support to the SP or the local independent parties. But it is not an ordinary parliamentary election because the vote receives simultaneously the meaning of a manifestation of principle by the circumstance that no plebiscite was carried through on the question of the constitution itself. The managers of Bonn and their superiors in Frankfurt have avoided the clearcut question to the people: Are you for or against our Quisling constitution? Thereby the vote for one of the parties responsible for this Quisling constitution becomes identical with a "Yes" for the constitution itself, i.e. a question of principle. A vote for the KPD, the only legal party opposed to Bonn, being out of discussion, we resolved to abstain ourselves in the vote. That doesn't mean that we don't go to the ballot at all, but we cast invalid voting-papers. Do you understand this attitude?

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