

Fight Against Trotskyite Wreckers In the Pacific Northwest District

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(Northwest District)

AS reaction tries to hold back the growing resistance of people to the Wall Street program of war, depression and fascism, it seeks in the first place to smash and destroy the Communist Party in order to behead the working class and the people by destroying its Marxist vanguard.

"Reaction employs not only direct assault, seeking to outlaw the Communist Party and all other progressive organizations, not only attacks by fascist hoodlums, police state repression, etc., also it seeks to destroy the Party from within." (From the Statement of the Northwest District Communist Party on the Expulsion of Edwin Alexander, Jr., from membership in the Communist Party.)

Since the above statement was issued the Northwest District has had occasion to gain a good deal of further experience in dealing with a handful of enemies of the Party and the working class. Some of the more recent developments demonstrate beyond question that there exists at the present time an organized attempt to penetrate and destroy the Party, headed by a clique of Trotskyites. These attempts are fully co-ordinated with the direct assault by the pro-fascists upon the American people. They are intended to smuggle into the Party under disguise the campaign of red-baiting, intimidation and war mongering. It is this connection that is the basic characteristic of the activity of the disruptors and enemies of the Party who have recently been expelled or are at the present being smoked out into the open.

The existence of ideological weaknesses and deviations, factional considerations and gossip-type "criticism" of the Party has provided a recruiting ground for obstructionist cliques within the Party. For some time these wreckers were able to deceive the Party membership as to their real role by masking their destructive activities under a disguise of "honesty" and "good intentions." But the political face of this scum now stands clearly revealed as anti-Party, anti-working class — the agents of fascism seeking to destroy the Vanguard Party of the working class from within.

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THE FIRST PROOF of the nature of this attack lies in its timing. An attack upon the District leadership was launched in our district just at a time when the resistance of the working class and the people was beginning to develop in the form of a new Progressive Party, an effective answer to the onslaughts of reaction. And as it turns out, it was launched just prior to the stubborn attempt of reaction to stifle this resistance of the people by ramming through the fascist Mundt Bill.

This timing was not accident. At the same time the first mailings of the Francis Franklin and Harrison George opportunist splitter began to arrive in the Northwest. They sought to strike the Party at the exact moment when such an attack would be of maximum assistance to fascists and war mongers.

The methods employed are also revealing. The first open move was a series of anonymous telephone calls to the district office seeking to kindle and fan factional differences among the District leadership, slandering the District Organizer, playing up one district leader against another, etc. This method of attack was followed by

a mailing of anonymous poems and "open letters" on the same theme.

Following a district committee meeting at which the district leadership, with the single exception of Alexander, demonstrated its unity, the anonymous calls took the turn of slandering the leadership as a whole, raising questions of financial honesty, etc. Further there began a campaign of calls to individual persons calling them to non-existent meetings with Party leaders, fishing expeditions by the Canwell Un-American committee and so on.

After the expulsion of Alexander, and when by its action the district had demonstrated that the Party was capable of dealing with the anti-Party elements, these calls further degenerated to obscene and filthy name-calling and finally came into the open as calls from known Trotskyites and a letter campaign asking individuals to attend meetings of the Socialist Workers Party (Trotskyite).

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DURING THIS WHOLE PERIOD there was no direct open or challenge to Party policy. Only surreptitious circulation of Francis Franklin and Harrison George material. The concentration was on gossip and slander on personalities and methods. An entirely negative evaluation of the positive work of the Party was put forward, and existing weaknesses, criticized by both the National Committee and district committee, were put forward in greatly exaggerated form as the essential and sole features upon the basis of which the Party leadership was to be judged. Of course this was all alleged to be in the interests of the Party.

At the same time pessimism and defeatism were cultivated as obstacles suitable to throw in the path of the Party and "chronic cold water throwers" developed, creating the "proper" division of labor between those who demanded the impossible and those to whom nothing was possible.

Aside from the Trotskyites, expelled Party members and police agents from the outside, who were the forces mobilized within the Party for this assault? In the first place Edwin Alexander, formerly North King County section organizer and formerly member of the district board. Alexander is a thoroughly opportunist and careerist petty-bourgeois intellectual, who until recently was able to conceal his anti-party position behind fluent speech and a reputation as an "educator."

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FOLLOWING HIS REMOVAL from the district board, Alexander submitted a statement in which he admitted carrying on a campaign to promote himself at the expense of the Party and its leadership and in which he stated: "The reason why I fell into such a position was that at bottom my approach to the Party has been a petty-bourgeois, careerist game."

Alexander employed such methods as the following: He developed extensive discussions on the subject of self-criticism. In these discussions he agitated for so-called "freedom of criticism" as a cover for disruption. He instructed people with tendencies similar to his own on how to make anti-Party criticism "safely" and in "proper form." He aligned himself with opportunist forces who were approaching mass work from the stand-point of working at all costs to maintain their own positions as "leaders," but who avoided like a plague the necessary methods of uniting the masses for serious struggle against reaction. Meanwhile he was agitating for a left sectarian position on the question of Socialism. He admitted that his position was the same as that of Francis Franklin.

In the field of trade union and industrial work, he sought to utilize "criticism" in another way. He sought to develop a campaign around certain weaknesses and opportunist errors in such a manner that instead of working to overcome them, he did everything to lay the basis for a split between a number of leading comrades and the district staff. After he was exposed, he made efforts to throw the responsibility upon others than himself. Alexander was expelled as a careerist, double-dealer, enemy of the Party and of the working class.

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IN ADDITION TO ALEXANDER, up to the present there have been 10 members of the Party expelled and there are several disciplinary cases still being heard. Most of these expulsions have been for direct participation in anti-Party activity of the type described above. In at least two of the cases white chauvinism was also included in the charges. The majority of those expelled are likewise of petty-bourgeois background.

Those few who are of working class origin have a record of strong syndicalist, IWW tendencies. They are people who for a long time have nursed grievances; have been involved in past factional situations at one time or another; have had political differences as in the case of one who has insisted upon clinging to the Francis Franklin position on the question of National Liberation struggles of the Negro People. It was found that most of those expelled still maintain personal relations with previously expelled Party enemies, three of whom are well known and self-admitted paid and volunteer-FBI informers. They are now energetic distributors of the Francis Franklin and Harrison George material. They also have direct personal and political association with the Trotskyite agents of fascism.

Once the Party recognized the existence of these anti-Party forces and undertook a serious struggle against them, the situation changed rapidly. Meetings and discussions were held through-

out the district to help create a full political understanding of the Alexander expulsion. A special committee of the District Board was established which not only instituted disciplinary action where required, but which also held conferences with a number of comrades who had partly fallen victim to the anti-Party forces, or who through confusion and lack of alertness were facilitating the attack upon the Party.

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IN THE COURSE of this fight the chief instigators of disruption and wrecking have been isolated and their expulsion from the Party is under way. Almost without exception the Party clubs and membership have taken up the defense of the Party. The clarification of Party policy, and the struggle against distortions of the Party program have helped to remove a number of obstacles to effective mass work.

The sharp struggle directed not only against direct disruption and the work of enemy agents, but also against both right opportunist and "left" sectarian tendencies, as well as against conciliation and accommodation of these tendencies, deprived the enemies of the Party of room in which to maneuver and neutralize some of the forces upon which they had counted.

This struggle also raised the discipline and activity of the whole Party. Marked improvement has taken place in the work of a considerable number of individual Party members and in several Party branches and sections. This is demonstrated in the mobilization for the fight to defeat the Mundt bill in which our Party achieved a level of organized activity never previously achieved in our District.

Had our Party not acted to clean out this gang of wreckers and defeatists, it would not have been possible to reach the level of disciplined and self sacrificing activity which our membership displayed in the fight against the Mundt bill. Without this fight it would not have been possible to make a turn in the question of the quality of our trade union and industrial work. That this gang could and did obstruct both Party building and mass work is demonstrated by the fact that in a few Party branches where these forces had secured a foothold and where we lagged in taking up the fight, there was no struggle against the Mundt bill, either in mass mobilization or in financial contribution.

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HOW IS IT that such forces could play this game and still remain in the Party and exercise such a negative influence?

1. There was a lack of vigilance on the part of the District leadership, a tendency to rely too much on organizational solutions and pressing for activity and policy without investigating closely the resistance and obstacles which we were encountering. We did not see soon enough that what had been a few opportunist and careerist individuals with grievances, vacillations, etc., were now becoming an organized anti-Party clique; that it had gone over to Trotskyism and was already playing the role of accessories to fascism.

2. The existence of pseudo-democratic "freedom of criticism" theories affected not only comrade in the lower organizations but also members of the District Committee, a tendency to tolerate and conciliate attacks upon the leadership and the Party and confuse anti-Party attacks with legit-

imate criticism. In the case of some comrades this took the form of playing a "centrist" role attempting to mediate between the "critics" and the leadership instead of fighting for the Party and its policy. Naturally such a position leads not only to failure to recognize anti-Party wreckers but to tolerate them and their activities and even to making excuses and covering up for them.

3. Concealment of these Trotskyites behind a mask of professions of loyalty—everything for the Party, etc. In this respect the water was further muddied by the involvement of a number of loyal and honest comrades (without quotation marks) by the device of drawing them in by not only professions of loyalty but by placing the emphasis on the criticism of real existing weaknesses.

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THE EXPERIENCES of the Northwest District, taken together with recent developments on a national scale, demonstrate that the present attack on the Party and its leadership has nothing whatsoever to do with correcting any real or fancied weaknesses of the Party. It is an attempt to infiltrate and soften up the Party for destruction by the reactionary monopolists and their agents. This work is being carried on by a handful of political traitors who have gone fully over to Trotskyism and who are willing to use whoever is so weak or foolish to play their game.

At the same time we recognize that certain weaknesses on our part have made easier this attack. Therefore we call attention to the following conclusions:

1. While properly concentrating the main efforts on the mass tasks before the Party, we can not afford to go to sleep and assume that no serious attempt will be made to attack the Party in the rear, that is from within. We must immediately and sharply rebuff and expel the enemy agents and disrupters. We must fortify the Party against them by a constant struggle against bourgeois ideology and opportunist tendencies whether of the right or "left" variety.

2. We must more fully draw our club leadership and membership into the fight to overcome our weaknesses and shortcomings both in activity and in Marxist understanding as a further guarantee that our Party will, in the process of mass activity, more readily detect and reject the influence of anti-Party elements.

3. The purpose of the fight to cannot fulfill its vanguard role. It is to guard its effectiveness and unity in giving leadership to the masses. It is for the purpose of maintaining the necessary Marxist understanding and fighting capacity which alone wins the respect and support of the working class without which the Party cannot fulfill its vanguard role.

The fight against bourgeois influences cannot be won by purely inner Party measures. In the midst of the violently reactionary surroundings of U. S. monopoly capitalism, the Party will succeed to the extent that by its mass activity and leadership it extends its influence amongst workers, builds and strengthens the Party and its leading cadres of working class origin. Therefore we must pay more attention to the principle that the first consideration in assignment and promotion of Party leaders is that they be tested in struggle and accepted by the masses. We must increase both the number and the composition of the leadership of our Party from forces of basic working class origin.

More Effective Leadership

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tions must know the needs of their cities and states, the kind of taxes levied, the schools needed, the type of transportation offered, and must be prepared to give leadership in the fight against the ever-growing trend to put the burdens of taxation and transportation on the backs of the workers.

We must take advantage of all legislative forums—public hear-

ings, etc. At the same time, we must learn how to develop better mass form of activity in the committee and shops.

In conclusion, therefore, while I welcome the program offered in the Resolution and the emphasis quoted above, I feel that the Resolution must sharpen up on the need for our Party to dig in among the people, and to indicate more concretely how this is to be done.