

A

Programmatic

Basis

Regroupment

for

Discussion

of Socialist Unity

PIONEER PUBLISHERS

10¢

Published for the
SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

by
PIONEER PUBLISHERS

116 University Place New York 3, N. Y.

FEBRUARY, 1957

Printed in the United States of America



The Regroupment Discussion

(Editorial From *THE MILITANT*, Feb. 18, 1957)

Throughout the country during the past year, well attended symposiums, debates and forums have been the arena for a new and welcome exchange of views among virtually all the radical tendencies in the United States. By presenting a series of concrete programmatic points for consideration, we feel that the statement of the Socialist Workers Party will help considerably to advance the discussion.

Such a discussion, we believe is the prerequisite for unifying the revolutionary socialist forces in the United States.

In addition to a clear posing of programmatic issues involved, what is essential to a fruitful discussion is elimination of any effort to restrict it or to try to ban anyone's participation in it.

DESIRE FOR JOINT ACTION

The discussions of the past year have revealed a profound sentiment in the ranks of all tendencies for maximum unity in action on concrete issues such as civil liberties and civil rights. The SWP statement indicates the party's willingness to join in such united endeavors.

Unification of revolutionary socialist forces in the struggle against American capitalism is assuredly today's most vital need. A free, fraternal and constructive discussion is indispensable to the achievement of this goal. We look forward to comment on the SWP's proposals and open the *Militant's* pages to the expression of all viewpoints on the issues involved.

SWP Statement on Socialist Regroupment

(The following is the text of a Statement on the Regroupment of Revolutionary-Socialist Forces in the United States adopted by the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party.)

The discussion now going on in the radical movement about a regroupment of revolutionary socialist forces is a welcome development. It opens a hopeful new stage in the difficult task of constructing a party in the United States capable of guiding the struggle for socialism to success.

The discussion was precipitated by the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union where the monstrous crimes of Stalin were publicly admitted by his heirs and accomplices. These revelations plunged the Communist Party of the United States into a profound crisis. The upsurge of revolutionary socialist struggle in the Soviet orbit following the Twentieth Congress deepened the crisis. Revolutionary-minded members of the Communist Party began to draw the logical conclusion to their bitter experience with Stalinism by seeking a regroupment of revolutionary-socialist forces in America.

Interest in the question of revolutionary regroupment, it has turned out, is not confined to Communist Party members and sympathizers who have become aware of the nature of Stalinism. The question is also being discussed among the youth in the Social Democratic sphere. This is due in part to interest aroused by the ferment in the Communist Party, but more importantly to opposition to the recent reactionary shift in the Social Democracy toward the wing closest to the State Department and the Democratic Party, as signaled by the fusion of the Socialist Party and the Social Democratic Federation.

The Next Stage

In addition, thousands of former supporters of the Progressive Party, presently unaffiliated idealistic youth and class-conscious workers are interested in building a re-invigorated revolutionary-socialist movement in America.

The discussion has gone on somewhat haphazardly, remaining — properly so up to now — at the level of general consideration of the feasibility of regroupment. In the next stage of the discussion, two different ways of proceeding are counterposed: (1) Shall we first attempt a general unification, leaving the discussion and clarification of programmatic questions for a later time? Or (2) shall we first explore the different views, clarify the various positions, and try to reach agreement and unification on at least the minimum fundamentals? It seems to us that the latter procedure is preferable and that the serious elements taking part in the discussion will agree that programmatic issues have to be considered and clarified before durable organizational conclusions can be reached.

The effort to determine what the programmatic aims of the regroupment of revolutionary socialist forces should be is not a matter of splitting hairs in a search for a new dogma. It is a very real problem, for the program that is eventually agreed upon will most certainly shape the movement and ultimately determine its success or failure in the coming period when the American working class again swings into action and turns toward socialist leadership.

Kind of Discussion That Is Needed

A vital stage in the process of regroupment is thus, as we see it, the free exchange of views among those interested in the regroupment. This exchange, coupled with willingness to listen, to study and to learn from each other will greatly facilitate the regroupment of revolutionary socialist forces in America. It will at the same time constitute, we are convinced, invaluable preparation for the next great upsurge of radicalism in America when all the questions of program and theory that are now under examination will become the guiding lines for prac-

tical action on a mass scale. All positions and proposals should be considered without prejudice or preconceived notions as to their possible merit. Scientific objectivity in the discussion is the first requirement that must be met in establishing a solid foundation for a new advance of revolutionary socialism.

The National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party is of the opinion that it would prove fruitful at this stage to try to focus the discussion of the proposed program for regroupment around a number of clearly stated key issues. We have definite opinions on these questions and state them frankly as part of our contribution to the discussion.

This should not be taken to mean, however, that our minds are closed to opposing views. We are open to argument and persuasion and to the weight of facts that may be called to our attention. We think all programmatic positions should be put on the table where they can be easily examined, and we hope other participants in the discussion will take the same position. In our opinion, this is the only realistic and principled way to proceed toward serious regroupment. Otherwise we do not see how a fruitful discussion can be held and clashing views finally resolved.

We list below a number of issues which we think are most important:

(1) **International Outlook.** Revolutionary socialism is, in our opinion, international by its very nature, for its aim is to free world technology not only from the limitations of class rule but from the barriers set up by artificial national frontiers. The international solidarity of the working class stands on the real foundation of this common socialist aim. Thus it would be wrong in principle and futile in practice to attempt to narrow the outlook of the regroupment to nothing but the "American" scene and its national politics. At a time when United States imperialism is reaching out into all parts of the world, it is particularly unrealistic for the labor movement, above all its socialist sector, to put on the provincial blinders of a purely national outlook.

Socialist Internationalism

(2) **Foreign policy.** The bi-partisan foreign policy of Big Business must be clearly recognized as imperialist. American capitalism inherently tends toward wars of increasingly destructive character. **The struggle for peace therefore requires as its starting point irreconcilable opposition to the predatory foreign aims of Wall Street and Washington.**

(3) **Colonial revolutions.** In our view the anti-imperialist movement of the colonial peoples is progressive and must be supported even where it is under the temporary leadership of Stalinist parties or bourgeois-nationalist figures. We hold at the same time that it would be a violation of socialist principles to place political confidence in such parties or individuals as they are invariably ready to sell out to imperialism.

(4) **The defense of the economic and social conquests in the Soviet bloc.** The ending of capitalist rule, the abolition of capitalist private ownership of industry, the establishment of a state monopoly of foreign trade and the construction of planned economy are progressive, we are convinced, despite the extreme distortions they have suffered under the Stalinist bureaucracy. **We stand for the defense of these conquests against the imperialist drive to liquidate them.**

(5) **The struggle against Stalinism.** The parasitic bureaucratic caste in the Soviet bloc has proved, next to the world bourgeoisie itself, to be the worst obstacle to the advance of socialism. The police rule of this caste has been marked in the Soviet bloc by monstrous frame-ups, the murder of revolutionary socialists and mass purges of the working class. On the international field the Kremlin bureaucrats regard the Communist parties as small change in their diplomatic maneuvers and are ready at any moment to sell their support to the imperialists in exchange for a diplomatic agreement. **A clean break with Stalinism and a repudiation of its crimes and betrayals are a necessary part of the program of revolutionary socialist regroupment in this country. This signifies also support of the struggles of the workers in the Soviet bloc which are leading up to a political revolution. The aim of this political revolution is to overthrow the reactionary**

rule of the Stalinist bureaucracy and replace it by workers democracy on the basis of the nationalized industries and planned economy.

(6) **The struggle for peace.** Many people believe that the slogan, "peaceful coexistence," simply advocates an end to the cold war and to the threat of a third world war — an objective endorsed by all opponents of imperialist war. We believe, however, that this slogan as advanced by the Kremlin bureaucracy is deceptive and aims at maintaining the status quo in a world of irresistible change. It means the maintenance of capitalism and the parasitic Soviet bureaucracy. It therefore undermines the socialist struggle for peace and plays into the hands of the warmongers. Instead of the delusory slogan of "peaceful co-existence," or maintenance of the status quo, we advocate depending on the development of the class struggle. Deepening the class struggle can, as a by-product, win deferment of imperialist war while at the same time hastening the advent of socialism with its final guarantee of a world that will no longer know war or any of the other horrors of capitalism in its stage of decay.

(7) **Independent political action.** The class struggle is above all else a political struggle. For that reason we believe that it is a violation of socialist principles to support any candidate on the capitalist party slates, even though they are endorsed by the trade-union bureaucracy. The great task that confronts the American workers today is to break from the capitalist political machines and build their own party — a labor party based on the unions in alliance with the Negro people and the working farmers. It is the job of revolutionary socialists to explain this patiently day in and day out. Above all they must set an example, refusing to cross the picket lines in politics, or support the parties of the class enemy in any way.

(8) **Socialist electoral activity.** The most consistent advocates of independent working-class political action, in our view, are revolutionary socialists. In fact for some years they have been the only candidates to urge formation of a Labor Party in the United States. We feel that every effort should be made to provide candidates running on a socialist program with the widest possible public forum and to give their campaigns maximum effective-

ness. As the movement toward regroupment proceeds, special attention must be paid, we think, to socialist electoral activity to make sure that the voice of revolutionary socialism is heard in election campaigns in opposition to the capitalist candidates.

What Type of Party?

(9) **Party organization.** The general principles of Leninism are applicable, we think, to America. We favor a Leninist-type party. By a Leninist-type party we mean a party that holds firmly to socialist principles, refusing to compromise them for illusory passing gains. In this respect a Leninist-type party is the diametrical opposite of the parties dominated by the Social Democratic and Stalinist bureaucracies. A Leninist-type party combines full internal democracy with unity in action and in this respect, too, is the opposite of the Social Democratic and Stalinist parties. We think that a party that knows how to stick to principles, to guarantee the democratic rights of minority groupings among its members, and to participate in the class struggle as a cohesive force is essential to the victory of socialism in America.

(10) **Policy in the unions.** We believe the strong position of the union movement in America today is a result of the militant struggles of the past and the readiness of the rank and file workers to defend their organizations from attack. Nevertheless the years of prosperity have softened up the unions. The top bureaucracy feels free to boast of its class-collaborationist policies, although they undermine the hard-won gains of the past and block the struggle for new advances. The Social Democratic leaders have long been part of this class-collaborationist bureaucracy; the Stalinist leaders give every evidence of seeking to be accepted by it. Those who favor the regroupment of revolutionary-socialist forces should, in our opinion, oppose the policy of class-collaboration in the unions and stand for the policy of the class struggle.

(11) **The Negro struggle.** The struggle of the Negro people for full equality is by itself completely progressive, and the labor movement has a direct interest in its success. If the unions threw their weight into the scale through financial help and militant action, the fight

to end segregation and discrimination in all its forms could be carried to victory in short order. This victory would at the same time be the best guarantee for successful organization of the South. Revolutionary socialists, we think, can play a vital role in mobilizing labor support for the Negro struggle and should put this problem high on the agenda for action.

United Action for Civil Liberties

(12) The defense of civil liberties. We are convinced that no exceptions can be made in the struggle to preserve civil liberties. The refusal of the trade unions to rally to the defense of members of the Communist Party who have been victimized by the witch hunt is a blot on the record of the labor movement, and it weakens labor's general defenses against reaction. To point to the crimes of Stalinism as an excuse for refusing to defend these victims of the witch hunt only plays the game of the witch hunters who deliberately selected this target as the most vulnerable in the labor movement. It is high time, we think, to once again popularize the old slogan, "An injury to one is an injury to all," and the ones best equipped to take the initiative in this are the revolutionary socialists.

A unified front of common action for civil liberties and civil rights need not wait for programmatic agreement. Common action on agreed-upon issues are essential for the defense of all victims of racism and reaction. United efforts in the arena of action can provide a helpful supplement to the programmatic discussion now in progress.

* * *

These twelve issues seem to us to be the central ones in the discussion on the proposed regroupment of revolutionary socialist forces; but this does not at all mean that we feel other issues should not also be discussed. We propose these twelve only in hope of helping to make the discussion more concrete, thus facilitating the regroupment. We invite all who are interested in a socialist regroupment to a free and critical discussion of our proposals in the press and on the platform.

FOLLOW THE
REGROUPMENT DISCUSSION

Introductory Offer

**A Six-Months Subscription
To The Militant Only \$1**

The Militant

116 University Place
New York 3, N. Y.

Name

Street Zone

City State

Subscribe to the Marxist Quarterly

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST REVIEW

35 cents a copy

\$1.25 a year

Order from

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST REVIEW

116 University Place

New York 3, N. Y.

Name

Street Zone

City State

BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS

On the Theory and Practice Of Revolutionary Socialism

BY LEON TROTSKY

In Defense of Marxism	\$2.50
The Revolution Betrayed	1.50
Stalin's Frame-Up System And the Moscow Trials	1.00
Draft Program of the Communist International .....	.25
Europe and America .....	.50
Marxism in the U. S. ....	.35
Death Agony of Capitalism (Transitional Program) .....	.25
The Suppressed Testament of Lenin .....	.25
Stalinism and Bolshevism ..	.15
Fascism: What It Is — How to Fight It .....	.15
The Class Nature of the Soviet State .....	.25

BY JAMES P. CANNON

America's Road to Socialism	\$.35
Socialism on Trial .....	.50
The Coming American Revolution .....	.10
American Stalinism and Anti-Stalinism .....	.15
Eugene V. Debs: The Socialist Movement Of His Time; Its Meaning for Today .....	.25
The IWW — The Great Anticipation .....	.25
The Road to Peace .....	.25
The History of American Trotskyism	
	Paper 1.75
	Cloth 2.75
The Struggle for a Proletarian Party	
	Paper 2.00
	Cloth 2.75

OTHER

Revolution in Hungary and the Crisis of Stalinism — By the National Committee of the SWP	\$.25
Negroes on the March — By Daniel Guerin	1.50

Send for Complete Catalogue

PIONEER PUBLISHERS

116 University Place

New York 3, N. Y.