

RESOLUTION ON THE FRENCH CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM

The convention of the Workers Party fully endorses the decision taken by the PCI of France in asking the working class to vote "Yes" on the constitutional referendum in May. It hails this decision on the part of our French comrades as further evidence of their break with the sterile and doctrinaire sectarianism that dominates the politics of the IS and which has blighted so much of the heroic and self-sacrificing work of our European parties during and after the war.

The position of the revolutionary Marxists in the struggle around the constitution cannot be considered from the point of view of some abstract principle. Our position must base itself upon the essence of the question, i.e., the actual struggle of the classes for power, and the relationship of forces at a given stage of this struggle.

The French bourgeoisie understood the political effect of a constitution that placed all power in the hands of a single chamber and did away with those traditional bourgeois safeguards against popular pressure such as an independent judiciary and an independent executive branch; control of the armed forces and police. The bourgeoisie, therefore, chose to make the constitutional question a battleground in defense of its historic strongholds. The MRP, consequently, broke the three party coalition to rally the bourgeois front on this issue. This act determined the crucial class character of the referendum struggle by making it an issue of the MRP bourgeois front vs. the working class front led by CF-SP-CGT. This class line-up, not the bourgeois character of the constitution, had to be the point of departure for the revolutionary Marxists.

To call for a boycott of the referendum would have been the height of folly, unjustified and unjustifiable by a single valid argument. Under the given conditions of the referendum, the tactic of boycott would mean the replacement of Marxist politics with anarchist anti-parliamentarism.

To call for a "no" vote with the given relationship of forces would have been worse than mere isolation, it would have, in effect, landed the Marxist party squarely in the middle of the bourgeois front. Under the given conditions all declarations and proclamations as to our basis for opposition to the constitution could not have availed to distinguish us in the eyes of the masses from the camp of reaction. In politics it is the political line, not propaganda, that counts. A "no" position would mean, in political language, the same political line as the camp of reaction.

A "no" vote could only be justified if the relationship of forces would have placed the MRP power in balance between us (i.e. the Marxist party at the head of the masses) and the CP-SP camp as the props of the bourgeois order. In this event, however, we would be on the eve of the struggle for power and our participation in the referendum would have been only a "parliamentary" maneuver related to (or as a spring-board for) the extra-parliamentary struggle for immediate state power. In this situation our political line would be "Against the bourgeois constitution - For the Soviet Power". If in such a relationship an extreme right wing bourgeois camp also voted "no" it would be of no consequence since our struggle for power would crush it the very next day along with the Stalinist reformist center.

Had the MRP supported the "one chamber" constitution and remained part of the 3-party coalition in the referendum struggle, an entirely different relationship of forces would have prevailed. Under these conditions a "yes" vote would have no meaning, other than to sanction the 3-party coalition swindle that has for so long frustrated the desires of the French masses. Whether it would, under such circumstances be most advantageous to vote "no" or to cast a blank ballot would depend upon many factors that cannot be posed in relation to such a hypothetical situation.

However, in the real situation, as it prevailed in May, the "yes" vote was indicated by the entire mechanics of the struggle since the liberation. These mechanics require as the next stage in the leftward movement of the French situation the adoption of the SP-CP Constitution.

NATIONAL COMMITTEE

INTERNATIONAL RESOLUTION

AMENDMENT

These strata attracted to the banner of Stalinism have their own aims which are neither the victory nor an advancement of Socialism and the proletariat but the establishment of the totalitarian tyranny known as Bureaucratic Collectivism. To hope for, to strive for, even to fight for such an aim is one thing. To be able to achieve it, however, is something vastly different. Like the petty-bourgeoisie which may dream of some day reestablishing a middle class paradise, the Stalinists of each separate nation are utterly incapable of themselves realizing their own aims. In fact it is just that impotence which compels them to act PRIMARILY as the instruments of the Russian ruling class.

These groupings which form the backbone of Stalinism outside of Russia...more accurately the backbone of its leading section...do not represent any new class in society and cannot with their own social power reorganize or even dominate society. In Germany, a similar element formed the mass base for fascism and fought fanatically to establish "national socialism". It came to power only to solidify more firmly the rule of monopoly capitalism by crushing the organized labor movement and was crushed itself in turn.

In Russia, it was the proletariat that destroyed the rule of the bourgeoisie. Only after a protracted period of isolation during which the proletariat itself was weakened, was Stalinism able to take power and in time to transform itself into a new ruling class. The destruction of the rule of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat in any nation in Europe today would be the prelude to the destruction of Stalinism not only in Europe but in Russia as well.

Today, however, when the whole world is dominated by the antagonism between Russia and the United States, which contest for complete supremacy, and which represent, each in its own manner, mighty military and economic machines for reaction, and which have only recently emerged victoriously from World War II without facing internal revolutionary convulsions; all nations and peoples are to one degree or another in the shadow of these powers. At the same time, in no country has the proletariat fought to establish its own rule...the dictatorship of the proletariat, for the workingclass in any single country to struggle for power, it must reject all modification or limitation of its struggle in the interests of the capitalist class of its own nation, of the Anglo-American bloc, or of the Russian-Stalin regime. It means in effect to strike out simultaneously against both blocs of imperialists. Such a revolution would face the immediate possibility of international attack by the forces of either or both Russian and American imperialism.

These facts cannot but act temporarily as a tremendous objective and subjective deterrent to proletarian revolution and as an obstacle in the path of the restoration of the complete class independence of the proletariat which independence signifies not only a complete and radical break with the national bourgeoisie and Stalinism as well.

Examples of the impact of world imperialist antagonisms upon the class struggle in any single nation are, of course, numerous.

In Spain, during the war against France, the Spanish proletariat found itself under attack from the forces of Italian and German fascism and at the same time blockaded by the Allied imperialists. Russian stalinism was thereby enabled to gain tremendous influence by supplying limited amounts of arms and ammunition to the peoples Front government. The CP of Spain was able to grow into a mass force overnight and finally to subject large sections of the Spanish workers to Stalinist domination.

During World War II, the national revolutionary movements in their struggle against fascist oppression turned for assistance to the enemies of their main enemy, Germany. As a result all classes in the oppressed nations, including the proletariat, subordinated themselves politically to the aims and needs of Allied imperialism.

Today, with the world divided into spheres of influence and areas of domination by Russia and the United States, all nations, parties, and classes tend to line themselves up with one or the other of these two main imperialist contenders, hoping with the support of one to balance off the other. This is manifest in conflicts over food supplies, boundaries, the composition of national governments. In the workingclass, this trend is expressed in the revival of the social-democracy as the agent of Anglo-American imperialism and Stalinism as the agent of Russian imperialism.

In this delicate balance between the imperialisms on a world plane, it has been possible for Stalinism, especially in the absence of any mass revolutionary socialist proletarian parties to rise in influence in several countries and even to come to power. Those new stalinist regimes bear the unmistakable mark of Bonapartism. But where the capitalist world Bonapartist regimes have balanced themselves upon the conflict between the classes in the nation and have defended the existence of capitalist private property, the Stalinist regimes base themselves primarily upon the balance between the main rival imperialists and defend Stalinist collective property as an instrument of exploitation and oppression.

In Poland and Yugoslavia, for example, Stalinist bureaucracies have taken power and in clear refutation of the analysis that they represent a "capitalist force" have not only disenfranchised and enslaved the proletariat and peasantry but have systematically expropriated the bourgeoisie and the landowners and converted their property into state property, thus giving the final blow to the theory that Russia is a "workers state" because property is nationalized. This victory of Stalinism results not from the inherent viability and power of "native" Stalinism but from the balance of power between the United States and Russia on a world scale. Neither the United States nor Russia is prepared to press its will upon the other by force; the bourgeoisie of Europe has been enormously weakened by the war and its aftermath; the peoples of Europe are under the physical or ideological control of imperialism in the form of Stalinism, social democracy or the bourgeois-democracy of the United States and England. In this combination of circumstances, certain secondary strata of the national population such as the leaders and guides of Stalinism who are normally incapable of playing any decisive independent role in society are able to exert that necessary degree of power and influence to tip the scales the interests of the Russian ruling class and thereby to come to power in their own nation.

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DECLARATION ON THE RESOLUTION ON THE UNITED STATES

The pre-convention discussion of the Resolution on the situation, perspectives and the tasks of the revolutionists in the United States has disclosed the fact that the decisive majority of the membership of the party supports the analysis and the line presented in the Resolution, and rejects the analysis and the line presented by the minority. At the same time, criticisms directed at the Resolution not only by the minority but also by supporters of the Resolution, have revealed that it suffers from a number of defects and inadequacies. A number of amendments have been introduced by supporters of the Resolution with the aim of strengthening it. However, the Resolution requires not only the incorporation of some of these amendments in properly revised form, but the addition of still other sections. Inasmuch as it is impossible to reconstruct the Resolution effectively and harmoniously in the course of the convention itself, the delegates authorize the incoming National Committee to undertake and carry out this task by retaining the basic analysis and line of the Resolution, which the Convention hereby adopts, and by adding to it, in approximately elaborated form, the sections outlined below. Thereupon, the National Committee is authorized to issue the revised Resolution in the name of the Convention.

The supplementary sections shall be added in accordance with the following outlines:

1. The present stage of the profound social crisis of capitalist society, first outlined in the Fourth International in the principal document of its founding conference, "The Death Agony of Capitalism," which remains the fundamental position of our party, is set forth in the convention Resolution on the International Situation. While American capitalism remains inseparably connected with the deepening disintegration of world capitalism and is increasingly affected by the insoluble social crisis, it nevertheless occupies a special and unique position as the most powerful and resourceful capitalist nation and as the greatest victor in the Second World War. It cannot forever escape the more devastating effects of the social crisis which are so clearly manifest, in one degree or another, in the other parts of the capitalist world. Due to its special position, however, it is able to lift itself above the declining level of the rest of capitalist society for a period of time. All the indications are that for the next period, which is the period that the Resolution on the United States must deal with primarily, American capitalism will experience an economic boom. While establishing the fundamental undoundness of this boom and, above all, the fact that it is the forerunner of another and inevitable, economic crisis, it is necessary to underline most emphatically that the next period will nevertheless be the period of boom in this country. It is precisely from this analysis that the party derives its perspectives of a period of bold and aggressive struggles by the American working class, the first storm waves having already broken. It is in the period of boom that there is no place in the working class for moods of depression and passivity. It is in such a period that the proletariat, massed once more by production, feels its economic indispensability and therefore its economic power. It is in such a period that the proletariat is prepared not only to make bold and comprehensive economic and political demands but to enforce them by means of its organized social power. The whole international situation, plus all the recent experiences of the present generation, plus a growing understanding of contradictions of American capitalism itself, combine to deprive all classes of real confidence in the durability of the boom. The determination of the working class to reach the maximum security possible during the temporary prosperity will conflict increasingly and more violently with the anarchy of capitalist production and the determination of the ruling class to achieve the

highest rate and the greatest mass of profit and a stronger grip upon the political machinery during the next period. Hence, the period of boom opens up the perspective of sharp and widespread class struggles, which, in turn, will contribute to the intensification of the social crisis in this country.

2. There is no reason at all for believing that the coming boom is in any sense in the same class as the economic expansion which accompanied the organic ascension of capitalism. It takes place in the framework of the organic decline of capitalist society, in the epoch of proletarian revolution. Moreover, the boom cannot even be identified with the prosperity period that followed the First World War in the United States. That was a period of conservatism and passivity of the American proletariat. That period cannot and will not be repeated in the period ahead. In between the two, there have been the tremendous experiences of capitalist helplessness during the many years of the crisis and the depression and the contrasting "miracle of production" performed during the war. The period ahead will be one of crystallizing social consciousness in the proletariat accompanied and based upon a growing loss of confidence in capitalist stability and in capitalism's ability to provide security. Although still heavily laden with the blinding ideology of the bourgeoisie and of trade union reformism, the advanced sections of the American working class, now that the restrictions and shackles of the war period are largely removed, have already stepped beyond the traditional confinements of the pure-and-simple wages struggle and put forward demands, revolutionary in their implications, for partial control of society. The mine workers have responded solidly to the demand that their own class organization shall have exclusive control of a health and security fund. The General Motors workers have responded solidly to the demand that their own class organization shall have at least partial control not only of wages but also of prices and profits - and this response was unshaken by the most tremendous single campaign in defense of capitalist property and capitalist control ever organized by the ruling class. The insurmountable disorganization of capitalism is assurance that these and similar and even bolder demands will be made in the coming period by wider sections of the American working class. They express the determination of the masses to intervene as a class to obtain that social security which capitalism is unable to guarantee. They underline the highly favorable perspective of class struggle and advancing class consciousness in the United States. They present highly favorable conditions for the growth of the revolutionary party. It is only necessary for the Party, provided it is inseparably connected with the working class in its mass organizations, to be sensitive to the initiative of the masses themselves. The Party must not hesitate for a moment to make its own every demand raised by the masses, no matter how slightly progressive, and as outstanding champion of these demands to show the workers that under present capitalist conditions the most effective and complete realization of even the most modest demands requires a consistent social and political program, requires independent class political action, requires setting up and fighting for the goal of a Workers' Government. The program and agitation developed by the party in connection with the demands of the General Motors workers is an excellent example of the way in which the revolutionists can connect the demands initiated by the workers themselves, with all their democratic and reformist illusions, with the struggle for workers' power. In every one of the coming struggles, in connection with every set of demands made by the workers themselves, the party, through its press and through its members, must at all times dig below the superficial, "traditional" aspects of the struggles and demands and draw attention to the revolutionary political and social implications or potentialities of the struggles the workers themselves have launched and the demands they themselves have put forward. As the struggle for the "GM Program" has shown, it is not necessary to invent programs for the working class; it is only necessary to clarify to the workers the revolutionary socialist implications of the program which the workers themselves are driven to elaborate by the contradictions of capitalism. It is

false and self-sterilizing to try to impose upon the working class the programmatic formulations which the revolutionary party has arrived at in anticipation of the needs and demands of the workers, or to deal with the hesitations, errors and illusions of the workers by doctrinaire lectures; it is correct to seize upon even the most confused initiative of the workers when they are actually in struggle with the capitalist class and to give their demand the most revolutionary interpretations, the one best calculated to heighten their class consciousness and to speed them on the road to workers power. It is primarily from the standpoint of the vitally important social significance of the struggles that have already taken place, and the standpoint of the special tasks of the party in revolutionizing the consciousness of the most advanced worker-militants in these struggles, that the Resolution must deal with the first post-war strike wave.

3. The struggle to raise the proletariat to the position of the ruling class requires a complete break with bourgeois political parties and bourgeois politics. This means for the American proletariat in the present period, the establishment of working class political party, completely independent of the bourgeois parties and their reformist followers and agents in the working class. It means, also, the democratization of the existing workers' organizations, the trade unions, the imbuing of those organizations with an uncompromising class line, and the removal of the reformist leadership so that they may become class instruments of the proletariat free from the control or influence of the bourgeoisie and the conservative or reformist labor leadership. Never, in any country, have the trade unions been such a powerful force as they are today in the United States. This power, and the confidence the workers have in it, is by no means exhausted. On the contrary, all the indications point to a further growth of the trade union movement. It continues to be the principal base of operations of the revolutionary party. At the same time, the party recognizes the profoundly conservative and bourgeois (bourgeois-reformist) character of the present trade union movement. Hence, inside this movement, it must seek and utilize every opportunity to advance the idea - and where practically possible, to set up - democratic rank-and-file bodies of the working class. It is theoretically possible that, under certain conditions, the trade unions may become a revolutionary instrument in this country, not as a substitute for the leadership of the revolutionary Marxist party, to be sure, but precisely under that leadership. This possibility, however, can be realized only if the basis of the unions is transformed into broad, democratic, representative, all-inclusive and all-powerful rank-and-file bodies of workers striving to achieve workers' control of production and eventually workers' political power itself. Only such bodies can effectively break the present stranglehold of the conservative labor officialdom. It is the aim of the party to advance these ideas and to promote the organization of such bodies as the indispensable prerequisite to the victory of the proletarian revolution in the form of the power of the democratic workers' councils. Hence the need for systematic propaganda and agitation by the party in favor of shop committees, increased power for shop committees, etc., especially in connection with the demand for nationalization of industry and workers' control of production. The party does not make a fetish or a ritual of its program for the formation and the power of factory committees. It does not conduct an agitation for forming new organizations which can only appear to the workers as artificial, or superfluous, or as duplicating those organizations which the workers already have at their disposal or which they feel they can easily convert to suit their requirements, for example, shop stewards, shop committees, etc. The agitation and the practical work of establishing factory committees, as against such rank-and-file bodies as already exist in the unions, can acquire significance and value primarily under conditions when the more advanced workers, in large numbers, have lost confidence in their existing mass organizations or feel that they are radically inadequate to defend their interests and cope with their problems, or have become a brake upon their

struggles and their progress. The party does not confine its struggle for rank-and-file bodies and rank-and-file control to the existing trade unions. In every critical situation, in every popular struggle against the manifestations of capitalist exploitation, oppression and iniquity, the party counterposes to capitalist control, to capitalist government control, to bureaucratic control, the idea of workers' control, people's control. The best example of this is the agitation for price control by democratic representative bodies of workers and housewives; for rent control by similar bodies of workers and tenants; etc., etc;

4. It is necessary to restate the point of view that the party holds of the transitional program, first, because there is not enough clarity on this question in the party, and second, because a polemical counterposition has been put forward inside the party and in the Fourth International; The transitional program differs fundamentally from the old social-democratic program of immediate demands, which had only the most formalistic connection with the ultimate goal of socialism but which was in reality not connected at all with the struggle for power. The revolutionary character of the transitional program is based upon the concept of the objective overripeness of capitalism for the socialist revolution and the lagging political consciousness and revolutionary immaturity of the proletariat. The transitional program aims at closing the gap between the two. It is necessarily based upon both phenomena. That is, it aims to seize the workers at their present stage of political consciousness, to participate with them at their present level of struggle, and to move them as rapidly as possible on the road to socialist power. It is a revolutionary program both in that it connects every serious demand and movement of the working class with the question of workers' power (the workers' government) and in that decaying, crisis-ridden capitalism itself creates the conditions in which every serious demand and movement of the working class raises the question of state power with increasing clarity and sharpness. Precisely because the transitional program has both these aspects, it cannot be concrete without first estimating the stage of development and consciousness of the working class in a given country at a given time and estimating the stage of development of the capitalist crisis in a given country at a given time. Without this, the transitional program ceases to be a transitional program and becomes a ritualistic and sterile substitute for the purely propagandistic advocacy of the old "maximum program" of socialism or the socialist dictatorship. The ideas of the socialist revolution must be presented in terms of the actual stage of development of the class struggle and in a way that gives them access to the consciousness of the masses. Otherwise, the masses cannot be approached where they actually are, they cannot be appealed to effectively, they cannot be set in motion as a class from the position they presently occupy to the position they should occupy as the ruling power - in a word, the program cannot serve the function of a transitional program. The program is universal only in that it seeks everywhere to facilitate the movement of the masses to the struggle for power. But inasmuch as the crisis of capitalism is neither as intensive or extensive in one country as in others, and the stage of development of the working class differs from country to country, the concrete forms of the transitional program, the concrete slogans must necessarily be adapted to the changing conditions and class relations in every country. "In the very nature of a transitional program, of course," says the party thesis of 1938, "it cannot in advance be given final and finished form. With the changes in the mass movement and in the state of mind of the workers, the transitional program must correspondingly change, to advance or on occasion to retreat, altering the emphasis and utilization of slogans and shifting tactics through which the program is presented." This is the guiding line which the party followed throughout its existence, i.e., throughout the war. Instead of a struggle under the slogan "Turn the imperialist war into a civil war," the party popularized the slogan "Abolish the no-strike pledge," a concrete

Formulation of the concept that the class struggle should be pursued by the proletariat without regard to the interests of the ruling class in the imperialist war, a formulation accessible to the level of consciousness of the workers, especially the advanced workers, and capable of setting them into class motion. Instead of a struggle under the slogan "Down with class collaboration," the party popularized the slogan "Get off the War Labor Board," a concrete formulation of the concept that the working class movement should break its collaborationist bonds with the bourgeoisie and its government and act independently as a class. Instead of a struggle under a slogan to break the existing unions or to form Soviets or factory committees, the party popularized the idea of rank-and-file progressive committees in every union, a concrete formulation of the concept of militant, democratic working-class organizations and actions as against the bureaucratic subjugation of the union movement to the bourgeois war machine. Instead of a struggle under a mere slogan of "workers' power" which can itself become an abstraction if there is no instrument with which to achieve this power, the party popularized the slogan of breaking with bourgeois politics and bourgeois political parties by forming an independent class party of its own by means of which it could establish a Workers' Government; and when the first halting, confused and ambiguous steps toward class political action were taken in the form of the CIO-PAC, the party further concretized its concept of the class political independence of the proletariat by popularizing the slogan, "Convert the PAC into a Labor Party." These are not revolutionary slogans in every country and at any time. They are objectively revolutionary slogans in the United States at a specific time, just as at a different stage of development such slogans can become mere reformism. While these implicitly revolutionary demands struck a responsive chord in the consciousness of wide sections of the working class whose militant aspirations were repressed and strangled by the bureaucratic labor lieutenants, and while other sections of the labor movement took up these slogans in one form or degree or another, it was no accident that only the revolutionary vanguard found it possible to conduct a militant and consistent struggle for them in the labor movement and to link them inseparably with the slogan of a Workers' Government as the capstone of the program and as the only sure and durable means of achieving most effectively the aspirations of the masses themselves. The concretization of the Transitional Program in the post-war period must follow the same guiding line. This cannot be done without rejecting the concept that the consciousness of the masses in the United States has already reached a high socialist level or that it is even approximately equivalent to the consciousness of the European workers. Without rejecting the concept that the crisis of world capitalism rages with equal intensity in all capitalist countries or that the United States is today in a pre-revolutionary crisis, i.e. a crisis directly preceding the revolutionary crisis in which the immediate struggle for state power is posed before the masses as a concrete possibility. Without rejecting the concept of the inherent revolutionary character of certain slogans and the inherent reformist character of all others. Those slogans are revolutionary which are capable of setting wide sections of the advanced workers into action as a class against the bourgeoisie and its state, along the road to the seizure of power. Those slogans are reformist which help reconcile the workers with the bourgeoisie and its state, which promote class collaboration instead of class struggle, which deepen the petty-bourgeois illusions of the workers instead of helping to free them of these illusions in the course of their own experience in fighting for even the most modest and progressive class demands. Hence, it is not necessary at every stage of the struggle to put forward "more radical" demands than those initiated by the masses themselves. It is necessary at every stage to urge the masses to fight for their demands by the methods of the independent class struggle, by the most militant and aggressive means, to fight for them with the utmost consistency, and to emphasize at every stage that the effective realization of the aspirations of the

masses requires a struggle which cannot but lead to a Workers' Government and socialism. Therein lies the special function of the revolutionary vanguard in the working class and the essentially revolutionary character of the Transitional Program;

5. We reject the theory that the Stalinist party is a reformist party in the traditional sense of the word, namely, a party devoted to the maintenance of capitalist democracy or aiming at its "gradual reform" into a socialist society. This applies not only to the Stalinist party in Russia but, with the necessary changes, to the Stalinist parties in the capitalist countries. The Stalinist parties are totalitarian parties, anti-democratic, anti-working class, anti-socialist. This has already been set forth in the Resolution on the International Situation. Nevertheless, neither are the Stalinist parties totalitarian parties in the traditional sense, that is, in the purely fascist sense.

The demoralized petty-bourgeois, declassed and working class elements who join the fascist party do so on the basis of opposition to Marxism, to the organized labor movement, to revolutionary socialism. The same elements, but above all the working class elements, usually join the Stalinist party because, generally speaking, they see in it the embodiment and carrier of the Russian Bolshevik Revolution, the party of Marxism, the party of struggle against capitalism, the party of struggle for socialism. This is a monstrous illusion in no way warranted by the reality of Stalinism, but it is an illusion that is of vital importance to the revolutionary Marxists who have the problem of combatting Stalinism and of winning to their side the workers duped by it. How vitally important this is is demonstrated by the objective results of the various political turns made by the Stalinist party.

The Stalinist turns, to the "right" as well as their turns "to the left", cannot be judged by convention standards. They are not determined, in the first place, by class relations in the given capitalist countries or by the pressure of the masses. They are determined primarily and essentially by the changing political needs of the Russian ruling class. The clearest example of this was the so-called "left turn" of the Stalinist parties in the capitalist countries following the signing of the Stalin-Hitler pact. This "left turn" did not correspond to a leftward turn of the masses in the democratic capitalist countries or to the leftward pressure of the masses, but solely and simply to the reactionary interests of the Kremlin. However, although these are the interests which determine the turns of the Stalinist parties and their politics in general, the objective consequences of these turns especially in the working class movement, have an independent significance of their own. Thus, a "rightward turn" of the Stalinists facilitates the struggle against Stalinism conducted by the revolutionary Marxists in the ranks of the working class; a "leftward turn", such as the Stalinists in this country have recently made in accordance with the Kremlin's foreign political needs, usually renders more difficult or at least complicates, the tasks of the revolutionists in labor movement, among which is the task of distinguishing ourselves from Stalinism and combatting its influence and its demagogy. This is due simply to the fact that a "more radical" line of the Stalinist makes it easier for them to win, or win back, workers to their banner.

It is important to note that the limits within which these "leftward turns" of the Stalinists are effective in influencing advanced working class elements, are being constantly narrowed down by virtue of the growing realization among all sections of the population that the "radicalism", as well as the "opportunism" of the Stalinists has nothing to do with the interests of the working class but is dictated solely by the interests of the Kremlin. In spite of this, the fact

Remains that the Stalinists have not yet exhausted their possibilities of maneuvering in the labor movement and of deceiving working class militants. The party takes the general position of uncompromising opposition to the totalitarian Stalinist party in the United States. This means that, as a general rule, the party calls upon all workers to fight in every union contest against the Stalinist faction and its attempts to capture the labor movement or any section of it. Save in exceptional cases, as for example, where the opposition to Stalinism is composed of reactionary, Fascist anti-Semitic, or racketeering elements, the party follows the policy of joining with all genuine working-class elements, primarily with the progressives and militants, against Stalinist leadership or Stalinist bids for leadership.

In the political field, again save in exceptional circumstances, the party follows the policy of opposing candidates running for office on the Stalinist ticket. In both the trade union and political fields, we base our opposition to support of the Stalinists on the ground of our opposition to a totalitarian, anti-democratic and anti-working class agency of a reactionary, despotic foreign power.

For the same reason, as well as for the practical reason of its utter impracticability, the party does not make proposals to the Stalinist party leadership for united front activities, even though it favors participation in genuine united fronts of the working class and its organizations in which the Stalinist party may be a part. However, this attitude toward the Stalinist party cannot simply be duplicated in the contact and relations into which we enter, and must seek to enter, with rank and file Stalinist workers. It is not only permissible but in many cases necessary, not only to approach these workers with the most friendly and sympathetic attitude, but also to propose joint actions with them on a shop or local union scale on concrete issues of the day. Such joint actions can be proposed especially under those conditions, and in such a way, as is calculated to deepen the latent conflict between the working class and socialist aspirations of the Stalinist workers and the anti-working class, anti-socialist aims and policies of their party, and to accelerate their break with Stalinism in the direction of revolutionary socialism. In the case of joint actions with rank and file Stalinist workers or with groups of Stalinist workers or Stalinist sympathizers, the principles, methods and tactics of the united front retain all their validity and remain in full force. Our struggle against Stalinism in the labor movement, of which joint actions with rank and file Stalinist workers wherever possible is one part, can be effectively carried on by counterposing to the Stalinist defense of Russian imperialism our demands for democratic rights and national freedom, by counterposing to Stalinist bureaucracy in the unions demand for workers' democracy, by counterposing to the Stalinist policy of maneuvering, intrigue and collaboration with bourgeois politicians and bourgeois politics our program of independent, democratically-organized and controlled working-class political action, etc.

6. The party's position on the Negro question will be established in the convention resolution specifically devoted to it. The resolution on the U.S. must, however, take special note of a new development in connection with the Negro question which cannot but have far-reaching political and social consequences. This new development is inseparably connected with the organizing drive launched in the south by the CIO and AFL, primarily by the former.

This drive cannot be considered as a routine recruitment drive or as an accidental, temporary and inconsequential phenomenon. There are deep and powerful driving forces behind it, and correspondingly it will have deep and powerful effects upon American politics and American social development, as well as upon the development of the struggle of the Negro people in the U.S. for full social equality.

The labor movement, its officialdom included, have had their attention forcefully called, in recent times, to the inseparable connection between economics and politics, between trade union struggle for wages and the political struggle for influencing and controlling the government. The so-called shield of the labor movement, the New Deal section of the Democratic Party, has been repeatedly pierced and shattered by the reactionary Bourbon section of the Democratic Party in the South, which exercises an increasing influence not only in the party but in the national legislative bodies. This Bourbon wing joining or joined by the Northern Republican reactionaries systematically cancels out or threatens to cancel out in Congress all the gains that labor makes or tries to make in the economic field.

Hence, the organizing drive of the CIO (and, to an extent, of the AFL) in the South.

It is of symptomatic significance that this has not been and is not conceived of as a simple recruiting drive. The CIO organizers are either at the same time organizers for the PAC or act as trail-blazers for PAC organizers. Although for the time being, in its political aspects, the CIO-PAC drive in the south may be considered as a last desperate effort to keep the Democratic Party "on the side of labor" and thus avoid the organization of an independent political party by the workers, the fundamental hopelessness of this reactionary aim signifies that this new and massive political intervention by labor in the South can only widen and nationalize the future basis of an independent labor party. The significance of the drive is, however, greater even than this.

It is absolutely impossible to think of organizing the South into the labor movement without organizing hundreds of thousands of Negro proletarians and semi-proletarians. The CIO in particular has demonstrated that the type of organization it carries on and the type of industries which it seeks to organize make it impossible to maintain the traditional Jim Crow barriers in the union movement which the AFL has so long maintained in the South. The destruction of the Jim Crow barrier inside the labor movement, once it is established in the South - and it can be established only in the course of the most savage and violent struggles there - is the beginning of the explosion of Jim Crow throughout Southern society.

By the same token the organization of the Negroes in the South into the CIO cannot but have the most revolutionary consequences for the development of the Negro people and their struggle. At the present time the Negro people in the U.S. is homogenous. Unlike the population as a whole, they are not divided into class organizations. This is not a sign of the political advancement of the Negro people but of their political and social backwardness. The unity of the Negro people as a whole, a people which is overwhelmingly plebian in social composition, is absolutely justified in the struggle against white imperialist oppression. The unity that exists today is, however, an expression of the backwardness of the Negro people.

The indispensable prerequisite to a fighting unity of the Negro people on a progressive and effective basis is the political and "organizational" differentiation of the Negro people into class organizations, tendencies and movements. In the course of this differentiation the Negro proletarians, allied with the white proletarians, will be in a position to take the leadership of the whole Negro people, a leadership without which the struggle of the Negroes for equality is doomed to petty-bourgeois ineffectualness, capitulation, or outright sterility. The unity of the Negro people, in other words, can and must be established first by the separation of the Negro people into class movements and then by its re-alliance under the leadership of the proletariat.

From the standpoint of this perspective and this necessity, the CIO drive into the South is of the most vital and even of historic importance for the development of the class struggle in the U.S. and for the development of the struggle of the Negro people for equality.

For the same fundamental reasons the party, while supporting the struggle, no matter how limited, of the Negro people today in the direction of social equality and against white oppression, seeks at all times to separate out of the Negro people the Negro proletarians and to help organize them into their own class organizations or into organizations in which their class leadership is firmly established. Only by proceeding with this fundamental conception is it possible for revolutionists to join and participate in the work of the present-day bourgeois or petty-bourgeois Negro organizations. Any other analysis or approach to the Negro question in the U.S. leads to opportunism, and helps delay the crystallization of the Negro proletarian leadership which, allied with the proletarian movement in general, is alone capable of fructifying the democratic struggle of the Negro people as a whole against white oppression and for full, unrestricted social equality.

REPORT ON EDUCATION

1. Background of Our Educational Problems:

There has been an increasing awareness in the last several years of a declining level of Marxist knowledge in our party. This situation has accumulated over the last three years or so. Its prime causes have been these: (a) loss of such a large number of the secondary layer of leadership due to the draft, (b) lack of forces at the center to organize nationally directed educational work, (c) occupation of our cadres in trade union work carried on in addition to party activity as such and a work-week of 48 to 60 hours, (d) steady influx of new members without adequate provisions to attend to their education.

By last summer, when the war came to an end and made a number of leading comrades available for full-time assignments, the situation was correctly regarded as one of our foremost problems. As a result, I was designated to become National Educational Director as soon as I became available.

2. The Detroit Active Workers Conference Report:

My first function as National Educational Director was to draw up a comprehensive plan for party education to submit to the Active Workers Conference at Detroit in August, 1945. The main emphasis in this report was the need to gear the party to educate the worker militants recruited as a result of our turn to industry in the war years. It stressed: (a) branch educationals and (b) suitable material for study. It made the point that where the branch was immersed in the labor movement, there was no dearth of material for Branch educational discussions. A skilled educational director could use every new problem that arose in the shop or union as a lever with which to raise the general theoretical and political understanding of the members. Such questions as basis of Negro representation on progressive slates, attitude toward the PAC drive to register voters, the Red Cross blood bank, union committees to lobby at the state house or in Washington, union relations with the FEPC, attitude toward incentive pay plans where workers defend them and company seeks to abolish them, relations of union leaders to FBI activities against anti-semites and anti-Negro agitators, attitude toward priest speaking at union functions, attitude toward labor-management projects like trainee programs and industrial accident prevention school, question of Naval, Military or WLB officials speaking at strike meetings, relations to company in breaking an anti-Negro strike, anti-stalinist blocs with Catholic trade unions and anti-Christian Front blocs with Stalinist trade unionists, etc., etc., all afford the basis for the most fundamental education since these "tactical" questions can only be resolved on the firm rock of Marxist theory and revolutionary strategy.

In addition to the extended section on the nature of branch education, the report listed a project referred to as the "Blue Cover Outline Series." The purpose of the latter was to make available a basic course of instruction for the members of the party beginning with the newest member and providing something for the education of all other layers. It was designed to carry the party member through a course of study that covered all basic questions of the party program.

3 "Unity Negotiations " and the Lay-Offs Require shift in Emphasis:

Our Detroit conference ended almost simultaneously with the end of the war and the resultant ^{mass} lay-offs. With the bulk of our members dumped out of industry, the prospect of having any number of new trade union recruits diminished to practically zero. At the same time the "unity negotiations" with the SWP took on a more serious course with the actual meeting of the committees. This required that the party education provide for the increased interest in the differences between the two parties and the general need to prepare our own membership ideologically for co-existence with the Cannonites in a united party. By the beginning of this year, with the prospects for unity considerably dimmed, convention preparations stood on the agenda of the party and it was inadvisable to map any large scale educational program other than that which normally accompanies a pre-convention discussion period.

4. Materials issued:

The National Educational Department issued a considerable amount of material since its organization. This includes:

- Role of the Party (Blue Cover Series #1)
- Role of the Trade Unions (Blue over series #2)
- Reading List for new members and Contacts
- Basic Reference Guide to Materials on Party Position
- Bulletins (2) to Branch Educational Directors
- May Day speakers Notes
- Resolutions on the Russian Question (Documents Series #1)
- Resolutions on the Labor Party Question (Documents Series #2)

In addition to this material, there is already prepared and ready for publication shortly after the convention the following:

- Study Outline on Transitional Program (Re-issue)
- The ABC of Marxism by Hal Draper
- Study Outline for "Capital" by F. Forest

Assignments have been made for other material and some of it is already in process of preparation.

5. Organization of Education Department:

Though referred to as a "department", the working set-up for the first six months consisted of myself with the invaluable assistance of Comrade Eleanor Mason in research and technical work. The February plenum designated a committee consisting of Comrades Johnson and Craine and myself. The committee met twice and held fruitful discussions on the general question of education and also upon specific assignments. However, the fact that its functioning began with the beginning of pre-convention discussion prevented it from getting into the real problems of educational work.

6. Recommendations of General Perspectives

It is not very useful to engage in discussions of what the party in general needs in the way of education. The problem is one of the various levels that compose the party. Any educational planning that leaves the latter out of sight will produce little in the way of result.

The party can be divided roughly into three general levels as follows:

- a) the new members (less than a year in the party, and particularly the new members from industry.)
- b) the "middle layer" (in the party for several years but joined movement since WP was organized in 1940.)
- c) The "old timers" (members who entered the movement before 1940.)

The educational needs of these different layers are quite different. The needs of the new members will be quite well supplied in the coming period with the following: Shachtman's "Fight for Socialism", Blue Cover series #1 and #2, and Drapers "ABC of Marxism."

The "middle layer" has pretty well assimilated the basic propositions of Marxism on the class struggle, the state, the road to power, etc. Their desperate need, as again revealed by the pre-convention discussion is a knowledge of Marxist politics. This generation never underwent the valuable training the movement received during ten years of world politics from 1930 to 1940, covering Germany 1930-33, the French events 1934-38, the Spanish events, etc. As a result these comrades have a tendency to seek the solution of political problems with the recitation of theoretical and programmatic formulae without consideration for the strategical and tactical extension of these formulae into the real situation of class relations at a given stage of the struggle. It will be one of the aims of the Educational Department to stimulate the study of the great strategical and tactical lessons of the last three decades on such problems as revolutionary situations, pre-revolutionary situations, slogans, constituent assemblies, democratic demands, Soviets, factory committees, united fronts, general strikes, transitional demands, turning-points and stages in the struggle, parliamentary and extra-parliamentary struggles, the national question, the relations with the peasantry, putschism, etc. The real obstacle to this effort will be the lack of available material. Most of this material is to be found in the works of Trotsky which are now out of print. The Educational Department can begin to remedy this with (a) study outlines on some of the questions, (b) mimeographed reprints of some key sections of Trotsky's writings, and (c) reprints in the New International.

Of great value, also, for the education of the "middle layer" will be the Document Series giving the resolutions of the WP, including the publication of all the adopted resolutions of this convention. In addition, the two key political resolutions -- the International and American, should be the basis of study outlines on the party position.

The education of the "old timers" is a more difficult matter. Most of them are immersed in party activity and find little time for serious study. In addition, most of them have reached a "dead end" in their development and tend to drift along. The party provides no media through which they can open up new fields of development. They are in infrequent contact with comrades who are able to advance their understanding or stimulate them to undertake new studies. Their further development cannot be the result of "general reading" what they have not yet read in the classics of Marxism will usually prove repetitious and boring. These comrades need the following:

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(a) definite study projects composed of a specific question and (b) the necessary propulsion to embark on new fields of general study. The study projects referred to are those that take up a somewhat closely defined subject upon which the advanced comrade can put to work his accumulated knowledge, such as: relationship of light and heavy industry to the rise of fascism (Guerin theory), the nature of Bonapartism, social, economic and political role of the New Deal, changes in nature of imperialism since 1914, specific historical questions, etc. These are all in the realm of original theoretical work and give the satisfaction of real accomplishment.

The new fields of study referred to are such subjects as Marxism and philosophy and advanced political economy. Most comrades reach a stage where they contemplate the study of these subjects with great anticipation but also with a lack of self-confidence born of the frightening difficulties they associate with studying these questions by themselves.

The only role the National Educational Department can play in this problem is to give advice in the formation of informal study groups of advanced comrades and the provisions for this layer of members at the Party's projected National Training School.

7. National Training School

The national Committee has provided for the organization of a National Training School this year. The approximate dates are for September, probably the latter half. This, however, requires further study and final acceptance by the incoming National Committee.

Ernest Erber,
National Educational
Director

PRACTICAL WORK AND ORGANIZATIONAL TASKS

1. THE PARTY CENTER

The National Organization of the Party has been attempting to function under the most adverse circumstances and under the most severe handicaps. It is impossible for the National Office to carry on even as well as in the past in the present headquarters. This can be summed up in the phrase; "no place to work." Not only what present efficiency the staff has is in danger of impairment but with the present headquarters there is no possibility of improving the efficiency of the functionaries and the staff. Furthermore the present place as the national center of the Party is physically repulsive. It is not the kind of place that will impress a visitor or prospect with the Party.

This question is posed before the Convention for serious consideration. Not that the Convention itself can solve the problem but the Party must be fully aware of what it is. It is imperative that the Party have a new National Center. This is so important and urgent that it cannot be stressed too much. It is right now the real foundation not only of the growth of the Party but of the proper and correct organization and administration of the Party.

The whole Party will have to be geared to the solution of this problem. The whole Party will have to understand that the first headquarters to be provided must be a National Headquarters. All available funds will have to go toward this end. Additional funds must be raised. The publication of the 8 page LA is in no small measure dependent on this. All other departments of the Party will not and cannot function properly until adequate and suitable working space is provided.

It will be necessary to retrench in other places in order to meet this need. It is a need of the whole Party. Rent and upkeep on a suitable headquarters will be higher than we have ever met. After the Convention the leading committee will take steps to remedy this evil. The whole Party must respond in a very practical way. It may mean retrenchment by the Branches temporarily but this will have to be done.

11. ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

Despite the inadequate facilities for the performance of duty in the National headquarters, there has been real and noticable improvement in organization and administration. Far greater improvement can be made. With the appointment of an Organizational Secretary, Comrade Shachtman was relieved of many routine tasks and given the opportunity for concentration on the political tasks of the Party. Comrade Gould was put on the staff and has been giving his attention to the work of the Branches and to seeking ways and means to improve the collection of Party dues. Comrade Barsch has been in the Center giving attention to a thousand technical details and to devising ways and means not only to meet the Party payroll but to satisfy the demands of the creditors of the Party. Comrades Craine and Drake have been working at the job of taking care of the circulation of LA and the NI as well as taking care of the book service and the publication of the Party pamphlets.

The establishment of the Organization Department has aided in releasing the PC fr from many organizational tasks and decisions, to the end that this body has been able to give more attention to its proper function of giving political guidance to the Party.

It is necessary to go farther in this direction. The Organization Dept. must be strengthened and more efficient. An effective Trade Union Dept. must be established. It is necessary to broaden the education work by a stronger Educational Dept. It is imperative that the Party issue more pamphlets and more of the educational outlines that have been started. It is necessary that the present National Secretary be further released from present responsibilities so that he may have opportunity for the more important and pressing political tasks.

The whole problem of the circulation of the press will be increased with the appearance of the 8 page LA. Our subscription drives for LA have not been as successful as they might be and the circulation of the NI is woefully low.

III. PARTY FINANCES

There is a separate report covering this subject.

IV. BRANCH ORGANIZATION

One of the chief problems before the Party is to improve the functioning of the Branches. This is a matter to which the Organization Dept. and the Education Dept. must address themselves following the Convention. It will be necessary for the Organization Dept to prepare an Organizational Manual for the guidance of the Branches. More centralized supervision of the Branches by the Organization Dept. will be necessary. Following the Convention the NC should prepare standardized By-Laws for all the Branches. It will be necessary for the Organization Dept. to prepare and supply all the Branches with the necessary forms for recording the proceedings and activities of the Branches.

A weak spot in the Party today is the Branch Executive Committee. Also it will be necessary to have a more efficient leadership in the form of politically and organizationally more competent organizers. It is not the rule at present for Branch Organizers to function as leaders of the Party in their localities. Quite often they are only loyal and sincere comrades who have accepted a post which comrades more experienced and competent have dodged or refused to take. The activity of many organizers consists mainly in calling the Branch meeting to order, reading the agenda and the communications from the National Office. They perform no political or organizational function in between branch meetings except on the most routine matters.

One difficulty is the practice of some Branch ECs to meet on the same night as the Branch meeting. ECs have been known to assemble in a restaurant for their meeting about one hour before the Branch meeting. ECs should meet on a separate night. The Organizer should come prepared to lead the meeting and organize the meeting of the Branch.

Each Branch EC under the leadership of the Organizer should have a perspective for the Branch based on the local situation. A local program of action should be devised. The Branch should have some definite aims and some definite thing to accomplish in line with local possibilities.

Branches should experiment with full freedom in line with the general program and aims of the Party. Branches must be encouraged to develop initiative and not lean completely on the Center. For this a live Organizer is indispensable.

Branch meetings are dull, filled with routine and what is known as "business."

Meetings are too long. WP Branch meetings are not for workers but for people who have had a pleasant day and expect a leisurely existence on the following day. The "business" part of a WP Branch meeting should under no conditions consume more than thirty minutes. The rest of the meeting should be devoted to the political and organizational education of the membership.

Education should not only be the formal education as contained in the Marxist classics but all Party resolutions and documents should be used as educational material. Incidents which occur in the shops are excellent educational material. Few comrades are conversant with the contents of the Party political and organizational resolutions. Often discussions are held in the presence of new members who have never seen the documents on which the discussion is based.

Quite often what passes for "education" is merely a give and take between the "old" members of the Party with no attention to the requirements of the "new members." At the end of a year of this sort of "education" nobody has learned anything.

All Branches should adopt the practice of holding "open" meetings. These "open" meetings should be the regular meetings of the Branch and not special meetings which are organized for "visitors". Eligible contacts and prospects should be invited to these meetings. They should be encouraged to participate in the meetings.

There is no reason why prospects should not be invited to Party pre-convention discussions in the Branches. What we discuss in the pre-convention period is not for the Party alone. "Outsiders" (an obnoxious and snobbish term which should be dumped) may teach the Party something by their participation in our discussions. Furthermore if non-Party persons are present some of us may be persuaded to give some thought and attention to our presentations. Also we will be forced to replace some of what is really jargon with language which is coherent and not too difficult to be grasped by the ordinary proletarian militant.

One aspect of the functioning of the Branches in the past must be noted. That is the practice of retaining members on the books who have clearly demonstrated that they are not interested in meeting their Party financial obligations or in carrying their load of Party activity. The Party Constitution provides that members who do not meet their financial obligations must be suspended or dropped from the rolls. In the future all Branches will be required to live up to this provision. A member who is permitted to go on in this manner will have no respect for the Party and will serve to demoralize more worthy members.

V. PARTY FRACTIONS AND THE BRANCH

It is necessary to establish the responsibility of the trade union fractions in carrying on their own work. Too often trade union matters which should have been discussed first in the fraction and then reported to the branch or the EC for approval, have been initiated in the Branch. Quite often the fractions do not hold their own independent meetings and matters which are within the province of the fraction to decide are carried into the Branch only for the reason that the fraction has not met.

Too often the fraction meetings are mere repetitions of the Branch meeting with the Branch Organizer presiding as though it were a Branch meeting. Also it is too often the practice for members to attend fraction meetings who have no business there. Only fraction members should attend the meetings. When the Branch Organizer attends as Branch organizer, he should remember that he is there only as the political leader of the Party and should not dominate the meeting as though it were

a Branch meeting.

VI. There should be some functionary of the Branch, preferably the Organizer who is the spokesman for the Party and the Party "face." It should be the aim of each Party Branch to make the party known in the locality. The Branch headquarters should be kept open and not used merely as a meeting place of the Branch and the place in which forums are held.

VII. PARTY MORALE AND DISCIPLINE

There is far too much organizational laxity in the Party. This must be corrected. This is the task of the Branch EC and the Organizer. The tightening of the organizational discipline of the Party should be directed from the Center to a far greater extent than heretofore. For the Party to go forward it will be necessary for insistence that each member carry his share of the load. There is no need to keep members on the rolls who in any way shirk their responsibilities.

It is necessary to correct the conduct of many members of the Party around the Party headquarters and elsewhere. Much of the language used by Party members in headquarters and in Party meetings is such that the respect of workers for the Party is not developed. What we refer to is often passed off as "worker's language." But it is not the worker recruits who indulge in this practice but the older members. The practices and the type of expression we speak of will prove attractive neither to the worker recruits or persons with petty-bourgeois backgrounds who may be attracted to the Party. What we speak of will only be attractive to bohemians and lumpen-proletarians.

VIII. RECRUITING AND HOLDING MEMBERS

Neither recruiting or holding members is really the difficult task which it has been made to appear. Recruiting is in large part a matter of "leg work." Very few people will join the Party who are not asked to join. Also few workers will join the WP unless they are convinced that the WP, above all other organizations, will do something for them. The Party program to them must become a very practical program which they believe has some connection with their problems and their daily lives.

The worker who joins the Party who says that he believes in "socialism" will often turn out to be a person who is merely glib and articulate. The usual militant workers who come to the WP from the shop will come primarily because he is influenced by the way the Party member has conducted himself in the shop, in the union meeting and for instance, in the struggles which the union has engaged in.

The new member will be held only if he is given a political and organization education so that he knows what is going on and why. He will also remain if he has something to do which makes sense to him. It is not enough that it makes sense to the older members. It is not they who have to be integrated into the Party.

David Coolidge,
for Submission to National
Committee Plenum.

RESOLUTION ON THE NEGRO QUESTION

1. The Party approaches the Negro question from the standpoint of two fundamental facts: (a) that the Negroes form an oppressed minority, (b) that only through an alliance with the American working class, and under working class leadership can the struggles of the Negro people be brought to their highest plane, and that the solution of the Negro problem is only finally possible under the rule of the working class.

2. The rise of the CIO and the entrance of hundreds of thousands of Negroes into its ranks cannot be overestimated in importance. The Negroes are here receiving their first training en masse in economic struggle side by side with their white brothers. In addition the CIO's Operation Dixie will almost immediately raise the whole question of the Negro's position in the Jim Crow South. It is essential that the Party drive home in all its agitation and propaganda among Negroes, the importance of integration of the Negro workers into the labor movement and of the absolute necessity of solidarity between the Negro people and the labor movement in all their struggles.

3. However, the special position of the Negro people as an oppressed minority places them in a position where they can play a special role in the advance of political consciousness on the part of the American working class, and in the building of a revolutionary movement in this country. It would therefore be conservative and abstentionist politics for the Party to think that Negro struggles are primarily limited to those issues on which they can look immediately for substantial assistance from the labor movement, or that the fostering of independent Negro struggles is only of small importance in the future work of the party. Specifically on the question of Negro equality, the readiness of the Negro people to struggle is far ahead of the readiness of the labor movement to participate actively in their struggle. Hence hundreds of thousands of Negroes, both in and out of the unions, find that the first step that they must take to bring the question of Negro rights into the field of action is not to merely appeal to the labor movement (even that part of it to which they belong), but to band together in a Negro organization prepared to struggle militantly for such rights. Such struggles, by bringing the Negroes into conflict with the society that oppresses them, by increasing solidarity of the oppressed Negro minority, and by demonstrating to the organized working class the seriousness and determination of the Negroes, raises the whole level of political consciousness of both the Negro and the labor movement.

4. The party recognizes that the chauvinism of an oppressed minority cannot be merely equated with the chauvinism of the oppressing majority. Therefore, while striving to educate the Negroes whom it reaches with propaganda as to what is incorrect about their chauvinistic feelings, it recognizes the importance of utilizing Negro nationalism by turning it into progressive channels. Already, the overwhelming trend of all the "race" organizations and "race" papers of the Negro people has been not a demand for a Negro nation or for Negro segregation in any form, but rather for full integration into the society of the white majority with equal rights.

5. The Party does not see in riots or in anti-Semitic agitation progressive forms of Negro struggle. There have been good examples of what a militant, independent, successful Negro struggle can be like. Chief of these within the experience of our own New York organization was the bus picketing campaign of the United Negro Bus Strike Commit-

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tee. Here a group of Negro organizations, aided, so far as whites were concerned, only by the small forces of our own Party, used direct action - picketing - to achieve what they had been unable to gain by any appeal either to the bus companies, or to the CIO Transport Workers, who had the bus companies under contract. In this struggle the Party played only an auxiliary role, but the importance to the Party of seeking to initiate and develop such actions cannot be overestimated. The experience of every branch in the country corroborates the fact that the oppressed position of the Negroes makes them far more receptive to the direct agitation of the Party than any section of the white workers, and this fact cannot remain isolated from any organizational conclusions.

6. The position of the Negro people as an oppressed minority raises the question of independent political action for the Negro people. The Party takes the position that such action should be coordinated with independent working class political action and that Negro organizations should be integrated into the Labor Party wherever formed. Where an independent Labor Party does not exist, or where it denies proper representation to the Negroes, the party will support genuinely independent candidates of a militant Negro movement. The Party will not support candidacies which represent temporary groupings of organizations normally involved in the support of the capitalist parties in their day to day political activity.

Saul Berg, alternate Newark
Irving Berg, alternate Bklyn UE

A Note on the Appearance of This Resolution

The members of the Party have a right to inquire why a separate resolution on the Negro question is being introduced at so late a date. The resolution is necessitated by the fact that a substantial group of party members, while agreeing on what the attitude of the Party should be on the Negro question, did not agree on their interpretation of the extent of their differences with the Coolidge and Johnson resolutions. Thus, of the signers of this resolution, some had proposed amendments to the Johnson resolution, others amendments to the Coolidge resolution, still others abstaining. This dissipation of the forces and effectiveness of these comrades could only still further obscure the discussion of this question. Since we found we had complete agreement on what we wanted the party to stand for, we drew up a resolution on the question.

The comrades will note that this resolution has no long historical section. We are not writing a thesis, and we believe the resolution covers that which needs to be covered, namely the determination of a political line on a political question.

Saul Berg

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Saul Berg

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AMENDMENTS TO ERBER RESOLUTION

ON JEWISH QUESTION

I. Insert the following as section (4) and change all numbers of following sections accordingly:

"(4). The wave of anti-semitism which followed the defeat of German labor by fascism and the victory of Hitler led to a tremendous resurgence of nationalistic sentiment among Jews all over the world. It seemed to millions of Jews that the struggle of Allied imperialism against Germany was at the same time a struggle against anti-semitism but this illusion has been rapidly disappearing as the remaining Jewish masses of Europe continue to feel the lash of anti-semitism in the territories occupied by the victorious Allies and in the Allied nations themselves.

"This growing Jewish nationalism has taken the form of a mass desire for a territory (in particular, Palestine) where the Jewish population might constitute a majority and thereby be able to develop its own life free from anti-semitism. These aspirations are the legitimate, democratic yearnings of a people long subjected to oppression and discrimination.

"It is an axiom for revolutionary socialists who alone can be consistent democrats that all peoples who desire to lead an independent national existence be given the opportunity to do so. Wherever such a national struggle, however, conflicts with the needs of the general revolutionary struggle against world imperialism and for the proletarian revolution which alone can guarantee real freedom for all peoples and provide the basis for a solution to the Jewish problem, that national struggle must be subordinated to the socialist struggle.

"To pose the achievement of a Jewish state under capitalism as does the Zionist movement as the solution of the Jewish question is to pose a reactionary Utopia. The effect of the Zionist movement is to divert the struggle of the Jewish proletariat and the Jewish people as a whole from the class struggle of the entire working class of the countries they live in. The attempt to realize a Jewish state under capitalism is, at best, conceivable as a wretched adjunct of one of the imperialist empires. It is precisely because the Zionist aim is a reactionary Utopia that the practical policies of Zionism have a reactionary content. The aspirations of the Jewish people for a state of their own can only find its genuine realization as a Jewish Commonwealth in a World Socialist Federation.

II. Make the following change in section (4): Add this phrase at the end of the paragraph:

"to be achieved not by bargaining with British imperialism but by mass revolutionary struggle against it."

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III. Change in section (2). Add this sentence at the end of the paragraph:

"This struggle against anti-semitism is likewise of greatest importance in the efforts of the Workers Party to educate the American proletariat to the political significance of anti-semitism, to its use by the native fascist movements and by sections of the bourgeoisie as a weapon against the working class."

IV. Change in section (3). Add this sentence at the end of the paragraph:

"For Socialists in the United States, it means also exposing the policy of American imperialism which offers no other solution for the Jews of Europe than life in a Displaced Persons Camp in spite of all the pretensions of American imperialism to being the most liberal and inherently democratic state in the world."

V. Change in section (8). Insert this sentence after the words "...until a Jewish majority is assured":

"Other slogans, such as 'bi-national state' evade this question: Shall the majority of the people of Palestine have the right democratically to decide the fate of their own country through a democratic Constituent Assembly?"

The section continues after the above as follows:

"Not only does this opposition to the Constituent Assembly on the part of Zionism make it an obvious tool, etc...."

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DRAFT RESOLUTION OF THE JEWISH
QUESTION

Moder capitalist anti-semitism, flourishing in the rotten soil of decaying capitalism, is a new phenomenon differing radically from previous forms of anti-semitism and from almost all other forms of national or colonial oppression.

In the past, the anti-semitic program called for the extinction of the Jews as a separate national or religious community and their forced dissolution in the surrounding nation. It offered the Jews a real alternative to expulsion--adoption of the dominant faith and culture.

Capitalist-totalitarian anti-semitism, however, plans and executes an annihilatory policy that signifies the complete and total physical extermination of the Jews. Whether it employs the "cold pogrom" technique of the Polish Enkels, whereby the Jewish population is to be completely frozen out of economic life and slowly starved to death, or the more rapid and scientific Nazi process of gas chamber murder, the goal is the same.

The most brutal imperialism on the other hand, generally seeks only the subjugation and exploitation of the peoples it rules and not their full destruction. The content of national and racial oppression, in the non-colonial areas, is the degradation and subjugation of the oppressed people and their extinction only as a national community. Even anti-Negroism in the U.S. and South Africa seldom go beyond the desire to "keep the Negro in his place" as a servile, second class citizen. The subject peoples are offered realistic alternatives--Death or Slavery. The distinguishing characteristic of totalitarian-capitalist anti-semitism is its total rejection of the Jews even as most abject slaves.

Thus, in a fundamental sense, the very physical survival of Jews is dependent upon the overthrow of capitalism and the victory of Socialism. "The Jewish proletariat is in need of revolution more than any other."

While it is therefore, correct to say that the main cause of anti-semitism is to be found in the nature of capitalist class relations and that the fundamental solution to the Jewish problem lies in the participation of the Jewish masses in the working class struggle for the abolition of capitalism and the construction of a free socialist society, it is not an immediate nor a sufficient answer to the needs of the uprooted, homeless remnant of European Jewry which finds itself in a "worse plight than that of any war torn people of Europe."

For the overwhelming majority of these gas chamber escapees, with no real future in their former homelands, the question of uninterrupted and free immigration into Palestine and other countries has become a life and death question. The general right of unrestricted emigration and immigration is a principle always recognized in the world socialist movement as one of the elementary, genuinely democratic rights to be defended by the working class movement, must be specifically demanded and vigorously fought for in the instance of European Jewry.

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"All barriers against their immigration to the countries they choose must be broken down. For Socialists in the United States, in this the richest nation in the world and one having industrial and agricultural resources for a population many times the present size, this means in the first place, the struggle against exclusion of Europe's Jews from this country. We must fight for the realization of the slogan "Open the Doors of the United States",

The existence of a powerful, spontaneous mass desire among the European Jews to emigrate to Palestine and to participate there in the building of a national territorial center is a fact that must play a key role in determining the attitude of socialists towards the direction of Jewish emigration.

Their desire to go to Palestine has thus far been thwarted by a reactionary alliance between British imperialism and the feudal leaders of the Arab nationalist movement.

British imperialism, in order to retain control in the crucial area of the Near and Middle East, which is a bridge between three continents, a gigantic and relatively unexhausted reservoir of oil, deliberately fosters Arab-Jewish hostility. It courts the Arab world by closing the gates of Palestine to Jewish immigrants and deliberately contrives to present the coming of the Jewish masses as the spearhead of a hated foreign invasion. The struggle for free immigration into Palestine means, in the first place, a militant struggle against the restrictive barriers imposed by British imperialist domination and a struggle against the lying propaganda of British and Stalinist imperialism that the Jewish movements into Palestine is an imperialist invasion. The revolutionary Marxists of the United States, Palestine and England must champion the demand to "open the gates of Palestine". We must give conditional and critical support to the heroic struggle of Palestinian Jewish youth to destroy the immigration barriers by operating an illegal "underground railway" and by armed resistance to all police efforts to end illegal immigration. At the same time we must condemn in the clearest and sharpest terms the reactionary political program of official Zionism, which not only prevents the Jewish masses from becoming "part and parcel of the anti-imperialist revolution which will shape the future of Asia" but also condemns the Palestinian Jews to the fate of other historic Levantine peoples (the Armenians and Assyrians) who permitted themselves to become tools of imperialist protectors.

The bankruptcy of all Zionist parties--reformist socialist, semi-stalinist and bourgeois--is most clearly demonstrated by their failure to work out a concrete program for international unity of the Arab-Jewish masses in Palestine.

Responsibility for the enmity between the two peoples must be shared by the Histadrut (General Federation of Jewish Labor) with the Arab and Jewish reactionaries and the British Colonial Office. The organized labor movement of Palestine has followed a short-sighted, ruinous policy of pushing the working masses of the farms and cities into separate national economies (Kibbush Avoday--"capture of work places). The organizational consequence of this policy--formation of separate, national unions by Jewish and Arab workers to function exclusively in their respective national economic sectors, was and

and is a chief obstacle in the path of genuine Arab-Jewish unity.

Only where the Arab and Jewish workers work side by side (in the government sector of mixed employment) does united proletarian class struggle succeed in cutting through nationalist barriers. As was demonstrated by the inspiring unity of Arab and Jewish workers in the recent railroad and postal workers strikes.

These strikes highlight the crying need for united trade unions and workers organizations encompassing both Arab and Jewish workers. The revolutionary socialists of Palestine must, above all else, struggle against the reactionary separations of Palestinian workers into national trade unions and parties. The demagoguery of the labor Zionists, who defend this practice on the ground that the organized Jewish workers with their high union standards would otherwise suffer from the unregulated competition of the backward, low paid, Arab fellahen, must be exposed as false "progressive" camouflage for anti-democratic nationalist politics little different from the open chauvinism of the Arab Trade unions.

Histadtrut convention resolutions for Arab-Jewish unity are worse than meaningless as long as the labor Zionists continue in practice to exclude Arab labor from the Jewish economy and support joint trade union action only for Jewish and Arab workers in the employ of the government or foreign corporations. The fact that the Arab nationalists are even more guilty of national exclusionism can hardly justify this short sighted practice which destroys the very foundations of unity between the Arab and Jewish proletariat.

The undoubted reactionary character of the Zionist movements support of the British mandate (or a new U.N. trusteeship) must however, not be permitted to obscure the fact that the long run interests of Jewish nationalism are incompatible with British or other imperialist rule of Palestine.

To cling to the outdated, oversimplified, Comintern characterization of Zionism as nothing more than "an agent of British imperialism" is to ignore the intense anti-imperialist temper and activities of the Palestinian Jewish masses, and the ever growing conflict of interests between these two forces. It is not at all accidental that the Zionist appeal to British Imperialism to create what Weitzmann called a "Jewish Island outpost for British interests in an Arab Sea", on the supposed "Providential basis for a permanent alliance between England and a Jewish Palestine" (Jabotinsky), has failed utterly and proved illusory.

The Workers Party rejects the old Comintern formulae which failed to distinguish clearly between the legitimate, democratic, national aspirations of the Jewish masses for survival as a national community and the reactionary parties that presume to represent them. Whether these popular desires should take the path of "national cultural autonomy" (Jewish Bund of Poland and Russia) or that of acquiring a territorial and economic base for group survival (territorialism and Zionism) is a matter for self-determination by the oppressed by the oppressed Jewish masses.

As revolutionary socialists we cannot but reject the attempts

to impose an assimilationist perspective on the Jewish masses as a species of cultural imperialism. Whether or not the Jewish masses should submerge their identity into the surrounding peoples in whose midst they live or seek to preserve themselves as a nation, is for them to decide. "Just as mankind can realize the abolition of classes only through the transitional period of the dictatorship of the oppressed class, so mankind can realize the inevitable fusion of nations only through the period of complete emancipation of all the oppressed nations, i.e., self-determination." (Lenin)

Marxists have long declared that true national freedom and independence for any minority nationality or small state is impossible under imperialism. In that sense it is true to say as Erber "The aspirations of the Jewish people for a state of their own can only find its genuine realization as a Jewish Commonwealth in a World Socialist Federation".

This does not however prevent us from raising the slogans of National Independence and attempting to use these sentiments as a transitional slogan for the socialist revolution. The same can and must be done in relation to the Jewish desires for a national home. This national struggle does not conflict with the need of general revolutionary struggle against world imperialism and for the proletarian revolution.

It is the task of the revolutionary socialists to educate the Jewish masses to an awareness that their aspirations cannot be achieved within the framework of decadent capitalist imperialism; that the struggle for their democratic demands can find its only true expression in the struggle for liberating Socialism against both capitalist and bureaucratic collectivist imperialism.

The Workers Party warns the Jewish masses against the danger of a negative, despairing attitude towards the defense of Jewish and other democratic rights outside of Palestine. There can be no freedom and independence in Palestine in a world dominated by a reactionary Europe and America.

The Jewish masses must learn to understand, what many of them already sense, that the Big Three imperialist world is their mortal enemy; that the struggle against anti-semitism cannot be conducted apart from the struggle for all democratic rights and apart from the fight of the proletariat for a socialist society.

The problem of Palestine is not in the first place a problem of Arab-Jewish relations but rather a problem of British imperialist domination over both Arabs and Jews. The solution of the Palestinian problem must therefore, begin with the struggle of the people against British imperialist rule. This struggle proceeds under the slogan of "out with the British! A free Palestine for both Arabs and Jews! Not the British, but the peoples of Palestine can decide its future.

The struggle for a free, democratic Palestine must be a struggle fought on the basis of Jewish-Arab unity. Every national and religious issue which Jews and Arabs permit themselves to be divided over is another prop for British rule.

- The slogan for a free Palestine finds its concrete political expression in the demand for the immediate convocation of a Constituent Assembly, elected by direct, secret, universal suffrage of men and women over 18. This demand must be the crowning slogan for any genuinely democratic program for Palestine today. The reactionary character of the Zionist parties is seen precisely in their opposition to this slogan. From the extreme right wing to the most left, all Zionist tendencies stand united in opposition to a constituent assembly elected by universal suffrage until a Jewish majority is assured. Not only does the position of Zionism make it an obvious tool* but it plays into the hands of the most reactionary Arab nationalist elements. The latter use this reactionary role of Zionism as a means of assuring their own reactionary domination over the Arab masses, and thereby, to undermine all tendencies toward Arab-Jewish unity.

As demonstrated by every other democratic revolution of our epoch, the only class in Palestine that will prove itself capable of leading a thoroughgoing revolutionary struggle against British imperialism is the Palestinian proletariat. The proletarian class struggle against economic exploitation unites all toilers and serves as the bridge across all reactionary nationalist barriers.

The revolutionary Marxist party must help the Jewish and Arab workers find their way to each other in a common economic and political struggle, directed against all exploiters and oppressors, British, Arab and Jewish.

To do this the revolutionary socialists must advance the following program:

1. Immediate independence from British domination and the convocation of a constituent assembly.
2. Against an Arab State. Against a Jewish State. For an independent, democratic, representative, unitary, multi-national republic.
3. For free and unrestricted immigration into Palestine. Against reactionary immigration barriers and restrictions.
4. Land to the Fellaheen (peasants).
5. Abolition of the usury system. Free credit to the peasantry.
6. For united organs of proletarian class struggle--organization of Jewish and Arab workers and peasants into the same unions and class struggle organizations.
7. For an autonomous, Socialist Palestine, within the Near East Federation of Socialist Republics.

The question of a constituent assembly cannot be posed in the abstract, separate and apart from the legitimate fears of the Jewish population, who are well aware that the cardinal demand of the #of imperialism

Arab Nationalist movement is the stoppage of all Jewish immigration into Palestine, that most of the reactionary Arab leaders favor repatriation of the Jews who came to the country after World War I.

The revolutionary Marxist party can not and does not ask the Jewish masses to make a unilateral sacrifice of their democratic and national rights.

Similarly, the opposition of the Arab masses to continued Jewish immigration stems from their just fears of becoming a denationalized minority in a Jewish State.

The majority of the people of Palestine have the right to democratically decide the fate of their own country through a democratic constituent assembly. However, the majority people have no right to deprive the minority people of its national and civil rights.

Only a political program that expresses the national aspirations of both peoples of Palestine can forge the indispensable anti-imperialist unity of the Arab-Jewish masses.

"The successful conduct of the struggle of the Palestinian proletariat on behalf of national and social emancipation can only be guaranteed by the existence of a powerful, revolutionary, Marxist party, firmly rooted among the Arab and Jewish toilers. The contribution of the Fourth Internationalist movement toward the solution of the Jewish question and the Palestinian question, must begin with all assistance toward the establishment of such a party in Palestine."

Submitted by:

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