

FIFTH NATIONAL CONVENTION

Thursday, March 24, 1949

Morning Session:

A. Call to Order - 10 AM

1. Roll Call
2. Adoption of Agenda
3. Adoption of Convention Rules
4. Election of Committees

B. Opening Speech by National Chairman..... 15

C. Report of Presiding Committee

I. RESOLUTION ON INTERNATIONAL QUESTION (Resolved)

Draper (NC) 60
McKinney 30

Recess for Lunch 60

Afternoon Session

Roll Call

GARRETT-JUDD AMENDMENTS (NOT Resolved) 20

Discussion 120
Summaries

Garrett-Judd 10
McKinney 30
Draper 30

Voting

Recess for Supper

Evening Session

Roll Call

II. RESOLUTION ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (Judd) 30

Discussion 30
Summary 10

Voting

Veterans Panel

Recess to 10 AM Friday

Friday, March 25

Morning Session

Roll Call

III. <u>RESOLUTION ON UNITED STATES</u> (Shachtman)	60
McKinney	60
Byer-Corbin Amendment	15

Discussion

Parts One and Two	60
Part Three	60

<u>Recess for Lunch</u>	60
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Afternoon Session

Roll Call

Summaries	
Byer-Corbin	10
McKinney	30
Shachtman	30

Voting

IV. <u>TRADE UNION RESOLUTION</u>	
NC	45
McKinney	15
O'Connor	15

Discussion	45
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Recess for Supper	60
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Evening Session

Roll Call

Discussion	75
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Summaries	
McKinney	15
NC	30

Voting

Saturday, March 26

Morning Session

Roll Call 9 AM

V. <u>PARTY PRESS (GARRETT)</u>	15
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Discussion and Question Voting 60

Recess for lunch 69

Afternoon Session

VIII. CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS 15

Discussion Voting 60

IX. SYL REPORT (FALK) 30

Discussion Summary 60
15

Recess for Supper

Evening Session

Roll Call

X. RESOLUTION ON NEGRO QUESTION

McKinney (NC) 30
O'Connor 15

Discussion Summary Voting 60
15

XI. ELECTION OF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Va. Draper Amendment

Shachtman 15
Draper 15

Discussion 60

Summaries
Draper 15
Shachtman 15

Voting

Recess for lunch 60

Afternoon Session

Roll Call

VII. RESOLUTION ON JEWISH QUESTION

NC Draper 30
Finley 30

Discussion 60

Summaries
Findley 15
NC 15

Voting

Recess for supper 60

Evening Session

Roll Call

VII. ORGANIZATION REPORT (Gould) 60

Discussion 120

Recess to Sunday AM

(A Trade Union Panel will be arranged for Saturday. The time will be determined by the Presiding Committee.)

Sunday, March 27

Roll Call - 10 AM

Summary 30
Voting

VIIa REPORT ON FUND DRIVE 30

CONVENTION RULES

1. The Convention shall be called to order each morning at 10 AM except Saturday when opening time shall be 9 AM.
2. A session shall be the deliberations of the Convention between Roll Calls. Roll Calls shall be made at 10 AM, after lunch and after supper.
3. An alternate who is seated for any session shall retain his seat for the entire session.
4. A regular delegate who has not taken his seat by the end of the Roll Call shall not be seated for that session.
5. Members of the National Committee and alternates shall be seated as Fraternal Delegates.
6. Fraternal Delegates shall have voice but no vote.
7. A Consultative Vote of Fraternal Delegates may be taken, on request of any delegate.
8. Two members of the SYL shall be seated as regular delegates.
9. 51% of the regular delegates shall constitute a quorum.
10. A Roll Call Vote shall be taken on demand of 25% of the delegates.
11. Voting except for the NC shall be by show of hands. Voting for NC shall be by ballot vote.
12. On all Resolutions and Amendments with allotted discussion time of 60 minutes or over, discussion per speaker shall be limited to 10 minutes; where the allotted discussion time is less than 60 minutes, discussion shall be limited to 5 minutes per speaker.
13. No delegate may speak a second time under one report until all delegates who have not spoken and desire to do so have been given the floor.
14. The following branches are declared to be fraternal branches and are entitled to one fraternal delegate each: Boston (3) Streater (3) Youngstown (3) Reading (4).
15. The City Committee of Local New York shall be entitled to representation by 3 fraternal delegates.
16. The following party functionaries shall be seated as fraternal delegates: Joe Dames, Press Manager, Yetta Marsh, Ass't Director of Organization and Charles Evans.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I - NAME:

Recommendation of N.C.: INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST LEAGUE.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE:

The purpose of the League is set forth in its program as embodied in resolutions and declarations of national conventions: its purpose is to educate and organize the working class for independent political action leading to the establishment of a workers government which aims to abolish capitalism and to achieve socialism.

ARTICLE III - INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATION:

The League is affiliated with no other group or organization in the United States or elsewhere. It seeks to establish fraternal relations with groups and parties in other countries, and, if they stand on the same fundamental program as its own, to cooperate with them in the elaboration of a complete world program and the speediest possible reconstruction of a genuine socialist international. Action on any such step must be submitted to a national convention of the League.

ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP)

ARTICLE V - UNITS OF ORGANIZATION)

ARTICLE VI - ADMINISTRATION)

ARTICLE VII - INITIATION FEES AND DUES)

To remain as formerly with exception that "League" is substituted for "Party" throughout.

ARTICLE VIII - DISCIPLINE

Entire Article is removed from Constitution and placed in By-Laws as number IX, except that the following new number 6 is added and present number 6 becomes number 7:

6 - A unit of the League higher than the Branch may review, approve or render new decisions on charges considered by a lower unit of the League. The higher body when it undertakes such a review of charges and decisions must notify, in writing, the lower body, the individual or individuals charged, and all others involved, of its intentions; and set a suitable time and place for a hearing. Evidences and statements may be presented to such a hearing in writing.

ARTICLE IX - QUALIFICATIONS FOR ELECTIONS

Becomes Article VIII.

ARTICLE X - NATIONAL CONVENTIONS - Becomes Article IX

ARTICLE XI - AMENDMENTS - Becomes Article X

ARTICLE XII - PRESS - Becomes Article XI

Page 10 of present constitution: Section on Youth is changed to:

"The First National Convention of the Independent Socialist League of the United States, empowers the National Committee to make statutory provisions in the constitution for League-SYL relations once the Socialist Youth League ceases to be provisional.

All rules and By-Laws remain.

- New Proposals: 1. (San Francisco Branch)
- A. Name "By a majority vote, the San Francisco Branch passed a resolution as going on record that the new name be 'Revolutionary Socialist League'".
 - B. New By-Law "When decisions of higher bodies are communicated to lower bodies in the party the communication will be accompanied by a tabulation of the vote by which the decision was adopted in the higher body. (Recommended Favorably)

2. (Philadelphia Branch)

- A. "Replacement of the convention head tax on each member by an assessment on each branch." (Not recommended) (See By-Law 14, no. 9.)
- B. "Amendment of the constitution to provide for rank-and-file trial committees in the branches instead of committees identical with executive committees." (Not recommended) (See present Article VIII Section 3.)

3. (Constitution Committee)

Recommends that, in the rules for the next convention - and to be issued with the Convention Call - the National Committee recommend rules on the following problems:

- A. MINORITY REPORTERS: 1. On requirements for equal time; 2. On requirements for extra time but less than full time.
- B. NATIONAL COMMITTEE REPORTERS: 1 & 2 as above; 3. More time for Majority National Committee reporters when there are extra Minority reports.

REPORT FOR THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON THE INTERNATIONAL RESOLUTION
by Hal Draper

(This was an oral report, here transcribed from manuscript)

Comrades:

There is a great deal of ground to be covered on this point, and I am not going to abuse either my time or your patience by attempting to summarize what is already contained in the documents.

I want to spend my time, most especially, on those questions--both overtly raised and involved behind this discussion--which most clearly highlight *the* political problem before us. I shall therefore be compelled, most reluctantly, to say nothing or very little in this presentation about a number of points which are *not* of slight importance, though I am forced to seem to slight them. Among these, for example, is most of the section of the International Resolution on Stalinism--- which, however, has been most fully expounded in the last few months in our press, and here the resolution has merely summarized the analyses we developed. There are others, especially those involving little controversy.

Of this latter, the most important is the document on the slogan of an Independent Western Union, which is included in this discussion. The lack of dispute--amendments or substitutes--has not indicated lack of interest. In fact, when the document first appeared, there were many questionings and doubts expressed, not only by the SYL but by branches; but I believe those were pretty fully satisfied by the Political Committee reply to the SYL. I will present this first briefly:

The slogan for an Independent Western Union is put forward by us as *our* answer to a desire, a need, an idea which is in the air all over the world--it is the desire and objective need for international integration, federation, unity. It is not only the people, the workers, who feel this need. The bourgeoisies feel it also. The compartmentalization of Western Europe into national boundaries has never been more obviously reactionary than now. Churchill's "Western Union" and "Benelux" are not merely imperialist dodges--they too reflect the reality of this need; the Marshall Plan too. But these bourgeois schemes are, necessarily, a *distorted, crippled reflection* of the overwhelming necessity--distorted and crippled and rendered reactionary precisely by the capitalist-imperialist nature of the existing governments.

To them we *counterpose* our own plan for achieving this end--a plan which above all points the way for the struggle for peace in Europe.

The traditional slogan is: the Socialist United States of Europe (or of Western Europe); but there are no revolutionary socialist parties there. We are for this slogan; that is our goal; but our slogan is a transitional slogan which *points* in its direction on the basis of an immediate appeal:

They talk of Western Union. Western Union? Yes, a thousand times yes! But shall it be a Union to fight the war against Russia under the United States?--merely a military alliance of imperialisms for their joint protection? No: we propose a Western Union *independent* of the two colossi (and also of Britain's aspirations)--an independent Western Union based upon anti-imperialism and on a real economic integration regardless of the interests of private property, such as cannot in fact be achieved by the imperialists.

We believe that this germinal idea can be of great aid to the building of revolutionary Marxist groups in Europe. It is to them particularly that this slogan is addressed. I am sure the convention will endorse it.

But this slogan has already shown its power, for us, in permitting us in the U.S. to approach two other problems from a fresh angle; at least thinking along these lines is now going on. One is the question of federation in the Middle East, raised in our minds in connection with the Palestine problem. The other is in con-

nection with the idea of a Southeast Asian federation--which has been written about in *Labor Action*, but the discussion has not been completed.

I want to mention in this connection that there is a big gap in the International Resolution, which we are aware of: the question of the Far East: China, Indonesia, Southeast Asia, which has come up in acute form especially since the resolution was written. Our recommendation is that the convention should instruct the National Committee to prepare a document on this subject.

With that, I want to get to the main body of the International Resolution and the main political problem before us.

The background of the NC resolution and of the present discussion is the evident existence of what in all soberness should be called a *political crisis* in our party. It is a crisis in a sober but literal sense: the party faces a political crossroads. Not only *our* party, of course: the entire socialist movement, no more and no less.

It is not merely a matter of disappointment with the absence of a revolutionary aftermath of the war, and other factors which will come up under "The Role of the Party." What we will be talking about under *that* point on the agenda has quite plain political roots--roots in objective fact, not in our own psyches--roots in *what has been happening to the world we live in*.

It is almost inadequate to describe these as the existence of a host of new problems for Marxists. (That is the phrase which was so plentifully used at the Active Workers Conference in 1947 in this hall, in the discussion of Shachtman's speech on the New York situation.)

The fact is that, on a scale never before seen by the *modern* Marxist movement, in this short period especially since the war, a series of Marxist *predictions, expectations, formulas* have been rudely upset--and not on small points. I mention only some prominent and quite definite examples:

* First and foremost: there has been no second world revolution following this war.

* India's freedom, and that of other colonies.

* Israel, the setting up of a Jewish state.

* Nationalization by the British Labor government.

* The revival of the Social-democracy,

* Stalinist expansionism (although *we* anticipated that in 1939-40 in a certain sense).

These are only among the most definite. And it could only be expected, in any party as ideologically alive as ours is, that there would be an effect and a reaction upon us.

This effect can be described quite accurately. It asks: *Can Marxism explain this? Can we "go by the books" any more? Doesn't this cast doubt on our vaunted "Marxist compass"? Who knows--maybe we're wrong about a dozen other things...which? Yes, Marxism in general may still be valid, abstractly, but: this isn't the world that Marxism told us about; it's a new world, and only doctrinaire, dogmatic, muscle-bound Marxists can conceive of adhering blindly to the old formulas.* This is how the questioning goes.

Is this questioning wrong? The Socialist Workers Party has its own answer: the "closed books" (just like the carpenters union)--that is, all the answers are in the closed books of Marxism and all one has to do is turn to the right page. We do not suffer from this. One of the symptoms of the political crisis in *our* movement is just the reverse: the replacement of political analysis by free-wheeling and improvisation--"flying by the seat of our pants"--the feeling that the landmarks are gone. With neither of these approaches can a revolutionary movement exist. Our books are not closed, of course; at the same time, we cannot exist politically as improvisers. An individual may be able to do so; a movement cannot--it ceases to move, because it no longer knows where it is moving to. This is most of all true in today's world, which is shadowed by the threat of war, which raises all these questions.

For if there is anything that underlines what I have said, it is the way in which the question of the coming war is posed. We have been brought up on the Leninist analysis of the First World War and its social-patriotism--a war between more or less similar imperialist states. Then on our analysis of the Second World War, as one between the democratic capitalist imperialisms versus the fascist capitalist imperialisms (the role of Russia being subordinate to this). But the Third World War which is looming--that (we are constantly told) is different, new; for it will be between two different social systems. Not an old regime on the one hand and a new progressive society on the other, but between an old, outworn society and a new, deeply reactionary one.

It *is* different; we do not close our eyes to that fact. Nor should that fact be obscured by quotations from books. (Cf. Susan Green and her quotations.)

What is the significance of the fact that this war looms between two different social systems, in the age of the Atom bomb? Are we in duty bound to support one of them? Isn't it rather true, as we believe, that it is ten times more unthinkable that a Marxist movement should support *this* looming war?

But here we run into the improvisers, the political freewheelers: "Why decide? The war hasn't broken out yet... Why exclude our determination in advance?" Or this: "Yes, today we are for the Third Camp, we act just *as if* we were opposed to the coming war; the day of choice won't come for some time yet; only the doctrinaires can get excited now over what that choice should be *then*. My mind isn't closed to anything..."

These are the thoughts hedging in, peeping in, battering away at our people--not just the worst, but the worst and the best. That is not strange nor shocking. If anyone has not faced these thoughts, that fact is not to his credit. To believe that we can refuse to face up to them, and still exist as a movement--that we can improvise--this is suicide. This is to accept the political crisis of the party as a permanent state of affairs.

There is not a single major political question which is not bound up today with the question of the coming war. Not because it is so close, but because it is being prepared, whipped up, aligned, so publicly, in the sight of all. One token of this is the phenomenon of the Wallace party in the last election; the fact that the CIO councils split over the Marshall Plan; Reuther's housing program...and much more, let alone all the rest of the world outside the U.S.

Everybody knows this, that the question "Which side are you on?" permeates all of politics today. Everybody knows that you've got to make up your mind today, where you stand. Everybody, that is, except (I gather) some of the freewheeling tendency in the Party, who would *liketo* be able to carry on politics without closing the door of decision on this question, because they can't make up their minds, because they are torn two ways. We are not frightened by such tendencies in the party today--neither by the fact that they exist nor, still less, by their size. What we are concerned about is this: Such tendencies are certain to grow, as they have in fact been growing, and they will be encouraged to grow, unless the party faces up to and grapples with the new phenomena of the world today; not merely for the sake of an interesting and stimulating discussion over tea or even in the branches and press, but for the sake of our *line, our political program, our reason for existence*.

That is why the International Resolution is deliberately and systematically written so that the thread that runs through all of it is the question of the coming war and its present phase of the Cold War--that is, the world-wide struggle between capitalism (what capitalism has become today) and Stalinism.

On the Stalinist side of this cold war, we are pretty clear. There is no tendency in the WP to support Russia. We were born in a violent breakaway from any such tendencies. We did not limit ourselves to deciding against Russian defensism. By party resolution, without which no consummation could have been reached, we decided on the fundamental questions of the "nature" of the Russian regime. At that time we

had no freewheeling improvisers who told us we merely had to decide the concrete question of defense. We bored to the bottom of this new phenomenon, adopted our line on it, absorbed it; and that is one reason why no remnant of a pro-Russian defensism remains in our movement.

But *after* the war, after it had become impossible for any vestige of a *Russian* defensism to remain in our movement: the struggle has broken out between this Russian Stalinism and...what? A capitalism which was apparently "giving" freedom to colonies; which was showing more and more signs of collectivization, statification--and not under Stalinists (that would have rung a bell) but under a Laborite government in England, under a government of "democratic interlude" in France and other countries; a capitalism in which the Social-democracy was staging a comeback--

And between these two social systems--one of which we would never again even consider supporting, and *one which seemed increasingly difficult to understand*--all the voices of the bourgeois world are shouting: "Choose, choose!"

It is for that reason that the resolution, to begin with, addresses itself to an analysis of the nature of the new tendencies in *capitalism* today which, through multiple channels, have helped to shake and rock our comfortable belief that we understood the world we live in, and that we were therefore equipped to steer a confident, firm political line through a morass of complicated social phenomena, including a line on war.

What are these tendencies in capitalism? I have mentioned some prominent manifestations which make them, not scientific-theoretical puzzles, but *political* questions, or essential to political understanding. Are these manifestations, these new phenomena simply quirks, oddments, peculiarities--each to be explained *ad hoc*, on its own basis? Or is it necessary to understand something which is going on as a whole, which integrates them, which connects them up?

It is not only necessary and possible to do so; it was already indicated long before this resolution was written. I regret to say this but we cannot claim originality. It was put forward (though with a qualification) just as clearly as in our resolution, at a time when none of us would have dared do so: *by Trotsky*, in 1939. It is, I believe, the only quotation in the resolution. It refers to the New Deal, fascism, Stalinism together in this way: "all these regimes undoubtedly possess common traits, which in the last analysis are determined by the collectivist tendencies of modern economy," and also: "the tendencies of collectivization assume, as the result of the political prostration of the working class, the form of 'bureaucratic collectivization.'"

What! tendencies toward bureaucratic collectivization *under capitalism*? But nobody then jumped, at any rate nobody jumped higher than one inch, for Trotsky had written it. It was not just "statification" he referred to, but bureaucratic collectivization--lumping together fascism, the New Deal *and* Russian Stalinism, the first two capitalist regimes, the last being one in which capitalism did not exist. Was this of epoch-making importance from Trotsky's viewpoint? No, for a reason we well know. For him, this unorthodox tendency arises under condition of the "political prostration of the working class," says Trotsky in 1939 after the war had begun; and it was expressly unthinkable *for him* that this very intriguing tendency should have more than academic interest in a post-war world where it was to be swept away by revolution--a post-war world which was certainly not to be marked by a "prostrated working class." *But that did not happen.*

It is true that capitalism is doomed. It is dying. We are living in its nightfall. But that does not mean that socialism is its *inevitable* successor. The failure of a second world revolution to mature after this war has meant that these tendencies have budded and sprouted (though not flowered!). We are not living merely in the epoch of *declining* capitalism, as it was ticketed by Lenin a full 32 years ago and which he dated back to a half century ago. We are living in the epoch of a dying capitalism in which the working class has not yet entered upon the revolution-

ary road, and in which therefore the requisites for hooping together the rotting staves of the barrel are becoming, more and more, the War Economy--the production of the means of destruction as a dominant sector of the economy, for a *state* market; bureaucratization of society; bureaucratic planning; bureaucratic controls; regimentation; assaults on our standard of living in the midst of a pseudo-full employment for war production, etc.

And these are not only the requisites for holding capitalism together. *These are also the requisites for gearing capitalism toward victory in the threatened war.*

"Socialism or barbarism"--I am afraid that even for some of our own people this still remains only an agitational phrase. But our resolution says: "It is irresponsible and utopian to believe that the victory of western capitalism in this [looming] war can be ensured at any cost lower than the acceleration of its own descent into that modern-type barbarism upon which it wars." So Comrade McKinney for example therefore challenges: "So that means the United States becomes a bureaucratic-collectivist state if the third world war comes?!" Well, anyone is entitled to speculate and hypothecate, but not in a resolution which is to be voted on. No doubt the end result of a process of bureaucratic collectivization is a bureaucratic-collectivist state--eventually, and if nothing else intervenes. But: during the war? after the war? after five years, ten years, of atomic destruction? after a fourth world war? This is all speculation. I cannot get up enough interest in that kind of speculation even to discuss it over coffee, let alone in this resolution. What we are interested in is understanding the *present tendencies* of capitalism, the *direction* in which it points, and not in crystal-gazing: the direction in which it points *as long as the working class permits it to exist* (even as a lesser evil to Stalinism); and we are interested in the fact that these existing tendencies are integrally tied up with (in fact, are rooted in) the gearing of capitalism for *war*, for the very non-speculative war which is looming, for the very war which is touted before us as donating a "breathing spell" for democracy and the socialist movement.

This, in a world where this famous breathing-spell is to be achieved by atomic blasts, by man-made diseases released from vials... To paraphrase: one more such breathing-spell and everything we fight for and hold dear may cease to breathe! What a blessed breathing-spell! It is mainly in the United States--which escaped unscathed in the two world wars, which was not ravaged, not blasted--it is mainly in the United States that this theory of this breathing-spell can arise, above all in the ranks of the Marxists, as a rationalization for defending U.S. imperialism against Stalinism, as a rationalization for *preferring* capitalist imperialism to Stalinism. And not for social-patriotic reasons--oh no, for the very best "Marxist" reasons, replete with quotations from 1870.

That remark is not anonymous: I am referring, of course, to the position taken in the party and in the discussion by Comrade Susan Green; and I presume it was on the basis of this position that the St. Louis branch appointed her its delegate to this convention.

One thing I want to make clear immediately. We *welcome* the fact that Comrade Green has presented this position to our convention (let alone not dreaming to question her *right* to present it); we are not horrified, or scandalized, or indignant. Naturally we do not welcome the fact that she and others hold this position; we would prefer them to agree with us! But we believe that her presentation of this point of view will *help* us to orient ourselves. We believe this because it has one inestimable quality: it *is* a point of view, a *line*, a line that one can come to grips with, a line which focuses actual tendencies in our movement, tendencies which actually exist, as we all know (much as any of us may not like it) and which therefore have to be politically discussed, held up to the light of untrammelled democratic discussion, and--decisively rejected.

But this tendency has to be rejected knowing what is in dispute, not in the form of some kind of peripheral, muted, oblique controversy, presented as if it were some secondary difference in tactics, but rather a tendency presented for what it is:

namely, the question of an *orientation* toward support of the third world war, as against the position of the Third Camp, as against the position of "Neither Washington nor Moscow," as against the position of supporting the working-class struggle against both imperialists. And that is good, to reject it for what it is.

I cannot (nor, after what has been said, is it necessary to) take up the many tempting points in Comrade Green's document. I limit myself, first to what she herself makes the central point, and which I agree *is* the central point. This is the argument: We must support, or orient toward supporting, the war because there *is* no Third Camp in existence, because the forces of revolutionary socialism are too weak to rally the masses into a Third Camp.

How do I know this is her central point? Because she says, in so many words, that *if* the revolutionary socialist forces grow to the point where "Socialists may realistically see a hope [note: just a hope] for the success of the revolutionary Third Camp, there will be no need for even considering giving the Western alliance critical military support in order to save socialism from annihilation by Stalinism."

This, then, is the decisive reason: if it did not exist, then we would not need to orient toward support of the war. Because there *is* no Third Camp... Such a growth of a revolutionary Third Camp is the key, says Green. But it isn't here, or it is minute in size. So we swallow hard, interrogate our socialist consciences and--do what? Perhaps raise the question of how we, who *are* revolutionary socialists, can *contribute to the growth* of a revolutionary Third Camp? how we can seize upon budding elements here and there whenever and wherever they develop? how we can instill, in the first place, the idea that there *ought* to be a revolutionary Third Camp? No, that is not her answer--that's "unrealistic," because there are no Third Camp masses *now*, are there? Therefore she concludes: you tell people to orient toward supporting American imperialism, you orient toward first defeating Russia. And whom do you tell this to? Precisely to the more advanced workers, because it *is we* are supposed to do this.

We are weak: very well. Shall we use our weak lungs to call for a Third Camp position, or use them to call for the "realism" of supporting the war? And if we, and all other revolutionary socialists, do the latter, then how is a revolutionary Third Camp *ever* going to arise? *against our own propaganda?*

But that isn't all. Comrade Green raises a good question. We have to support the war, she says, because the forces of revolutionary socialism have been decimated. *Why* have they been decimated? Listen:

"Between World War I and today, the forces of revolutionary socialism have been decimated by [mark this!] war, by counterrevolution, by Stalinism, by Nazism."

So the forces of revolutionary socialism have been decimated by Nazism (product of the breathing-spell after the first war), by Stalinism (strengthened by the breathing-spell after the second war), and by war itself. Therefore, since war and its products have decimated the revolutionary socialist forces, *therefore* we tell people to support--*the next war!* (No doubt in order to gain a breathing-spell for the revolutionary socialist forces to be decimated preceding the war after that.) Doesn't this beautifully reveal the heart of this breathing-spell theory?

Comrade Green is nothing if not realistic. Her last section is headed "The Cold War." She doesn't have to scratch around to have a position on the cold war, specifically in Germany; she doesn't have to mumble about Constituent Assemblies, and the airlift to Berlin, and Trieste, and some other secondary issues, as is the case with Garrett and Judd; her position is full-blown. She recognizes what *everybody* knows (except two members of our National Committee, Garrett and Judd)--that the affair over in Germany now is not merely a German question: *it is the question of the cold war between the U.S. and Russia*, it is the *same war* which will be called the third world war when the shooting starts. So she *has* a position:

"Although we are not called upon at this time to commit ourselves on World War III itself (it not being here), in certain countries it is incumbent upon Socialists to take positions on aspects of the cold war now raging. For instance, the question arises both for American and for German Socialists

whether to put forward the slogan for the withdrawal of the occupation troops. A Socialist program must, of course, call for a workers' government, for the arming of the German people, for all democratic rights, for national independence, for workers' control of industry, and so on. In national independence is naturally implied the withdrawal of the occupying troops; *however, it would be the height of folly to push that demand now.*" [Bulletin, III:9, Conv. Bull. #6, Jan. 14, 1949; emphasis added.]

I am glad that Comrade Green recognizes that the demand for national independence "naturally" implies withdrawal of occupation troops. But don't push that demand *now*, she says; "it would be the height of folly," because then the Russians would take over.

(1) If it is the height of folly to push the demand for the withdrawal of the occupying troops from Germany, then not only don't *we push* that demand: we have to make sure nobody else pushes that demand. Can she mean that *we don't push* it but if a movement arises in Germany demanding the withdrawal that we go along with this movement? No, of course not--not if it is the height of folly. We're *against* such a movement, on the basis of her viewpoint. We're *against* independence for Germany, specifically for West Germany, because the Russians will move in. (I pass over some other interesting conclusions from this viewpoint. If *one* of the imperialists moves in, we're for independence; but if *both* of the rival imperialists are moving in, we're against independence...)

(2) So it follows that we have to be against the independence of West Germany. We must tell the Germans: You must not only allow your country to be the cockpit of the cold war, but you must *demand* that it be, you must *insist* that the Western powers stick around to fight Russia over your backs... Am I merely inventing this monstrosity? This is what Comrade Green is saying, is it not?

(3) We don't push it "now," she says. All right, but when? Tomorrow? But the Russians will still be around tomorrow. No, her view means that we *never* push it--as long as the Russians stay. And who will push them out? (We will come back go that.)

Comrade Green's article continued:

"Every sane being knows that the withdrawal of troops now would not be on an equal basis. The Russians could technically comply with the demand, and have made it, but in actuality would leave a Russian trained and officered German puppet army that would swallow up the whole of Berlin--and eventually of Germany--as soon as the western troops left. *Therefore, for Socialists to emphasize today the slogan of withdrawal of the occupying troops is simply a silly leftist gesture which, if carried into life, would mean the annihilation of the Socialists and the suppression of the working class that is just beginning to wake up from the blows of the war and to feel its way towards independent action. Furthermore, all the incipient anti-Stalinist stirrings in Eastern Europe would be discouraged and delayed if the Western troops withdraw.*" [Emphasis in original.]

"Every sane being" is against the withdrawal of the occupying troops. That means the National Committee is not sane, according to Comrade Green. But now, in Germany, they're not all crazy, are they? Now only that: this Social-Democratic Party in Germany is a lousy right-wing party; it is not dogmatic, doctrinaire Marxist. Then please tell me how you account for this fact: Why is this German Social-Democratic Party, *officially, in favor* of the withdrawal of all troops, and in favor of national independence? -- To be sure, their miserable leaders do not carry out this official position in action; but should socialists like *us* be a wing in this Social-Democratic Party which is *against* this official position?

Mind you, you're perfectly right in saying that "withdrawal" of Russian troops would be a fake, for all practical purposes. So you--you *demand* that the Amer-

ican troops stay. (Note that it is a demand that the American troops stay; it is not a question of withdrawal not being the "key slogan," as Garrett-Judd put it.) But the masses of German workers want the American troops OUT!--as is proved by the fact that the German Social-Democracy takes the position it does. And this is supposed to be a "realistic" position against Stalinism! On the contrary, such a policy would guarantee Stalinist strength. For who then would speak for the demand for national-independence? Who would fight for it? Why, only the Stalinists (however demagogically.) I refer to the Stalinists of Western Germany. As it is now, the official position of the Social-Democracy acts as a counter to Stalinism.

What of the Russians in Eastern Germany: would they just walk in if the Americans pulled out? They are having trouble enough hanging on to East Germany. But what is shown by this argument is the acme in lack of understanding of the revolutionary position. For the question is not simply the demand that "the U.S. troops pack up and get out." It is a question of awakening *a mass struggle against the American occupation, a mass struggle for independence*--a mass struggle, yes, a revolutionary struggle, for the setting up of an independent Western Germany, by the people, *against* the Western allies, as against the Stalinists. That is what our policy is directed towards. And this is what Green does not understand, what Garrett and Judd do not understand.

There is nothing, absolutely nothing, that can awaken, arouse and inspire the masses under *Russian* rule as much as this. It would be also the biggest blow against *Russian* power. "What! by ousting the West, you strike a blow against Russia?" Yes, yes, and yes! Because you give the people under Russian rule something to fight for; you show them there is a *third road!* and not only in Germany but in all East Europe.

So much for Comrade Green.

And the Garrett-Judd amendment on Germany?

I have just been discussing a clear point of view on the question. But when you turn to the Garrett-Judd amendment, you have to ask yourselves a different question: *What does it mean?* Not long ago we *thought* we knew what they meant--at least in the case of Garrett. It was Garrett who first raised the question of withdrawal in the Political Committee. He presented a motion: against the withdrawal of the troops "now"--don't push for it; and he argued for it. We waited for his amendment in writing, and we got--jabberwocky. Reading it, one could never tell what the German fight is all about. There is some verbiage about a Constituent Assembly, about the airlift, etc. But that isn't what this dispute is really about: *it's about the cold war.*

Garrett-Judd come out *for* German national independence, unlike Green, and for a real, sovereign Constituent Assembly. But, as we have learned, national independence "naturally" means *the end of the occupation*--i.e. the withdrawal of American troops. This pseudo-Constituent Assembly there--why is it a fake? *Because the occupation authorities are the real government!* Every German, every "sane" German, knows that!

National independence means: For or against the withdrawal of American troops? But Garrett-Judd say: "It is false and misleading to pose the political problems of Germany (in particular Berlin) today, around the issue of withdrawal of the American and Allied troops; or to put unilateral withdrawal forward as a key slogan in the struggle for independence."

All right, let's say we don't "pose it around," let's say it's not a "key" slogan; but: *Are you for or against the withdrawal of American troops?* There is no answer. Instead we're told it's correct to call for doubling the airlift. (You'd almost think that that was the subject of the argument.) Instead we're told that Marxists ought to be members of the Social-Democratic Party (an idea which is in two other resolutions already). Instead we're told that the Berlin election was a great victory; as if there was any doubt on that score.

The question is: *Are you for or against the withdrawal of American troops?* "Ah ha," say Garrett-Judd, "you're not going to catch us with that trick question. But we'll tell you something important: Do you know what the greatest danger in Berlin is? It's Stalinism."

"That may be true in a certain sense; so you therefore want to go easy on the West in order to defeat the greatest danger, Stalinism?"

"Oh no," reply Garrett-Judd, "who said that? You're trying to trap us again..."

"Then what exactly is the political point of yelling that 'the main danger is Stalinism'?"

Or another aspect:

If you're so hotly for national independence, then doesn't this mean the withdrawal of American troops?

They answer: "we are opposed to *all* the forces of occupation and are committed to ending the Allied occupation."

Good: do you then demand it *now*? Does "end the occupation" mean "withdrawal of American troops" or not? The answer is: "'Twas brillig and the slithy toves..."

All right, Garrett-Judd don't believe us when we say it--that "end the occupation" means "withdrawal of American troops"--but Green says so too. I don't know whether she is going to vote for your amendment; but tell us: what's wrong with *her* position? -- The answer comes "Did gyre and gimbel in the wabe."

So look here: Comrade Garrett, this amendment of yours has got as many sides as an eel, but we ought to be able to grab hold of it somewhere. Is it a watered-down version of Comrade Green's view, or is it a clouded-up version of the NC's view? Are you still in favor of the motion you made in July in the Political Committee? Let us know so that we can talk about it. If you are not still in favor of it, then why not?

You'll get as much of an answer to these questions as you will if you ask Comrades Garrett and Judd what happened to their *resolution on Czechoslovakia*. Or as much of an answer as we've been able to get to any question about the Garrett-Judd amendment on the Marshall Plan.

Now the resolution on the Marshall Plan was discussed at length only a few months ago, so I am skimming on it here; the NC resolution on it is before the convention. But the following comment is on the new, big point which is made in the Garrett-Judd amendment.

The NC resolution notes, in its section on the Marshall Plan, that we fight against sending military supplies and arms to Europe instead of economic aid. "Ah ha! [say Garrett-Judd] Here you people say you're against the Marshall Plan and yet you demand economic aid instead of guns! Your resolution 'precludes a meaningful propaganda and political struggle against such prospective action.'"

We ask simply: Why?

(1) You *say* that *you* are "against" the Marshall Plan too; that you would vote against it in Congress; that it's primarily an imperialist scheme. Well then, how come *you* can make a "meaningful struggle" against sending military supplies instead of economic aid?

(2) In our statement, we say we're against the Marshall Plan--correct; but we're *for* economic aid to Europe. We say that the Marshall Plan is *not* primarily an economic-aid plan. (Is it?) We demand only non-imperialist economic aid, under a non-imperialist government--do we not?

(3) We are against the Marshall Plan, but we make a demand on how it shall be run. Is that a new kind of position to take? Of course not. We were against the war, but we made all kinds of demands on what government should do while it was conducting the war. We are against the army, but we demanded such things as the abolition of Jim Crow in the army. We are against American control over Puerto Rico, but we make various demands on what the American government should do there. And so on.

I want to say the following frankly before the convention in order to make myself perfectly clear:

We have a consistent position against the Marshall Plan and against *any* military-armament program and imperialist program for Europe, through the Marshall Plan or anything else. We suspect that *you* want to oppose the Marshall Plan because

it is imperialist *and* at the same time support it because it sends economic aid. We suspect you can't make up your mind in the same way that you can't make up your mind on the withdrawal of troops from Germany. We suspect that you *do* want to fight, like us, against any tendency to support the looming third world war, *but on the other hand, and at the same time*, you don't want to get too much in the way of the widespread notion that, in a pinch, American imperialism is to be supported against Russian Stalinism. Or else: tell us something about what's wrong with Comrade *Green's* views--do. Isn't it important to do so? Do you really think that the *only danger* in the party is the NC majority's "dogmatism," or Shachtman's "doctrinairism," or Draper's "sectarianism"?

Or isn't it rather a question of all those ideas and notions, formed and half-formed and forming, of political disaggregation and disorientation--ideas and notions which the NC majority is attempting to combat, to repel, to defeat, by giving them the full light of day, without half-shadows and murky corners; to combat them so that our movement will be, more confidently than ever, the proponent of the position of independence from, and struggle against, both imperialist camps, both the capitalist camp and the Stalinist camp?

The *movement* cannot remain in suspended animation on these questions, like the Aesopian donkey between the two bales of hay. An individual can; he even has the democratic right to be so; but for the *movement*, a movement like ours, this means quick death. The movement requires answers. We need answers that can be taken hold of. The National Committee has submitted its answers, in its resolution.