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THE ART OF MUDDLING

Paul Temple

Comrade Johnson has written the "rounded" resolution for which Comrade Allen pleaded, and it seems that Allen is satisfied. Rounded it is: it goes round and round the subject of the national question in occupied Europe.

That is why this will not be -- primarily -- an argument against Johnson's views. Revolutionary Marxists (having themselves often a predilection for logic) are inclined to get all set for a slugging match with an opponent who likewise fires away with contrary argument and fact. This is not good preparation for tangling with a whirling dervish.

The first job necessary on Johnson's resolution is to find out what on earth he is doing in between page 1 and page 36 of his document. For Comrade Johnson has an amazing talent -- it is that of juxtaposing two sentences which have as little relationship to each other as they have to the question at issue, and of cementing them together with the boldly assured air of making some kind of point.

I propose to analyze Johnson's command of the art of muddling. When a question is muddled thoroughly, expertly, and with a naive mastery, it is a necessary preliminary.

WHY A RESOLUTION ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION?

Johnson has written his resolution to show that there is no need for a resolution on the national question in Europe.

Its appearance as a substitute for the NC resolution on this question is purely a matter of form. It is introduced only because the NC resolution was introduced. It is, in fact, in essence a protest against the introduction of a separate full-length resolution on the national question at all. The point of his resolution is to relegate the matter to its proper place.

What is its proper place, to Johnson? No need for him to explain; he demonstrates it.

First of all, he deletes the very first paragraph of the NC resolution which states the reason for the document's existence. This paragraph begins:

"This being so, the most important fact to record in the world today is that the yearnings of the vast majority of the peoples of this globe may be summed up in the phrase: national independence, national freedom from foreign rule and oppression."

At this point then, the nub of the discussion is left up in the air. For of course merely to agree that there is a national question in Europe

itself points nowhere; there is also a woman question, a food question, etc. But why does the NC present a full-length resolution on the national question?

The NC presents the national question as being of decisive importance to the revolutionary movement in the occupied countries and to the future of revolutionary parties there; as the new act dominating the political scene, to which the vanguard must react with new policies; and because it is new and decisive, as the one which must be pulled out from the welter of "questions" in a world scene which teems with them, and held aloft so that the spotlight of the party's political thinking may be focussed upon it until it is as integral a part of our ideology as is our analysis of German fascism, faith in the socialist revolution and the revolutionary role of the proletariat, etc.

Johnson deletes. Naturally, one expects that his own document will make the reason for this deletion clear.

A VITAL STATISTIC

His resolution is divided into Part I, an Analysis, and Part II, Conclusions. His 14-page Analysis section amply demonstrates the "proper place," in his analysis, to which he relegates the fact that the minds and hearts of the European proletariat are today pointed in the first instance to the yearning for national liberation.

For in his 14 pages of single-spaced "analysis," there is exactly ONE sentence which -- incidentally and tendentiously -- lets out that SUCH a state of mind exists in the proletariat.

You understand that Johnson is not noted for sententiousness. In this same "analysis" he has plenty to say -- paragraphs, pages and sections -- on the characteristics of **German** fascism; the state of the European bourgeoisie; the inevitability of the socialist revolution; the unity, decisive role and revolutionary pitch of the proletariat; the world role of American imperialism; etc. and so forth....

---and ONE sentence on the fact that in Europe today, the great majority of the proletariat immediately lock upon their task as being the bourgeois-democratic one of national liberation. It is in the interests of "the clarity of the vanguard" that this ragout is labeled "The National Question and the Class Struggle."

This forlorn sentence, which wanders in on page 7, is itself angled to Johnson's purpose :

"In the minds of the masses of the workers of the oppressed countries their liberation from crimes and catastrophes of thirty years of capitalist society undoubtedly takes the form of the struggle against the foreign oppressor."

Characteristically the very next word is "But." I shall return to Johnson's angle later.

Now a political resolution analyzing the world scene at large might mention in a passing sentence the role of the woman workers in industry, or the reaction of the Sicilians to AMG, or the conflicts within the British bourgeoisie. That may be their "proper place", in a general political resolution. Does Johnson believe that the new national aspirations of the proletariat of modern Europe, which are decisive for the work of revolutionists there, merit such passing and cursory recognition in the course of an over-all-survey type of resolution? He does not say so; he does so.

This is one element of his resolution. It conveys its meaning first in what he does not say, what it does not write pages about. It is like a photograph of a midget which includes a normal man in order to emphasize the smallness. The man takes up more room in the picture, but the point of the picture is that the midget is taking up very little room indeed.

A COUPLE OF TRANSIENT THOUGHTS

I have reiterated that the NC resolution seeks to highlight the national question because it is new and decisive. It is plain, is it not, from Johnson's "Analysis" section, that he thinks it is neither. How possibly could an analysis like his be written by a man who did?

But do not jump to conclusions about Johnson. Stuck away in two crevices of his resolution is the very incidental comment that it is both.

For along on page 25 -- AFTER finishing his analysis and proceeding to the "Tasks of the Vanguard"; and even AFTER finishing with the tasks of the vanguard in the occupied countries and having started on their tasks in Germany -- Johnson mentions that:

"the national question in Europe is a new question for the proletariat in the occupied countries, such as France, Holland and Belgium."

This phenomenon, therefore, to which he saw fit to devote one sentence in his analysis -- the striking fact that the proletariat in the big advanced imperialist states is at present preoccupied with the question of national liberation -- is NEW, new for the proletariat, new for us.

Does he mention this intriguing fact in order to make a point of it, for the education of the vanguard? Hardly -- that would confer too much importance upon it. The casual reference, which is first of all qualified by a conditional "if", is therefore limited to a subordinate clause thrown in to introduce the section on the burning problem of national independence.. in Germany!

Still he does admit that it is new, unprecedented. But surely -- not after having written that "Analysis," --- surely he cannot admit that it is a decisive question for the vanguard's approach to the proletariat? Surely he cannot admit what he had post-haste deleted, the fact that "the yearnings

of the vast majority of the peoples of this globe may be summed up in the phrase: national independence...?"

But on page 23, one can poke around and find the following:

"In the circumstances of the underground movement, however, workers, taken as a whole, are likely to make struggle against the foreign tyrant their first and in fact their main criterion."

Is this not unimportant observation perhaps used as part of a build-up to hammer home the necessity of a vigorous, positive, and energetic attitude by the vanguard on the national question? Heaven forbid: it is inserted at this point only to show why the Stalinists are in one sense more dangerous than ever!

"The workers will make struggle against the foreign tyrant their main criterion," says Johnson in passing. Their main criterion for what? Why, their main criterion for whether they will listen to you or not; their main criterion for whether they will swing into action or not; their main criterion for whether they will let you get within a hundred yards of them so that you may raise the slogan of the Socialist United States of Europe! That is why the NC adopts a resolution which, for the education of the vanguard, emphasizes and spotlights and hammers away at and focusses attention on what is new.

BUT HE'S FOR THE SLOGAN, TOO.

But isn't all this unjust to Johnson? Isn't it true that he has written into his document, between page 1 and page 36, a section which categorically proposes the slogan of national independence as the "main political slogan of the day" in the occupied countries? It is all there on page 17, even though there is not a hint of political preparation in the "Analysis" for this sudden burst of enthusiasm.

In Johnson's resolution, the seeker finds. Johnson can say: "There now! See, I'm for the slogan of national liberation; I say so too. What are you complaining about?"

It is precisely because those words are written down on page 17 that the tendency of Johnson's position requires dissection. It is because Sidney Hook says, "Yes, yes, I'm for socialism too..." that his views require special analysis.

Yes, yes, Johnson is for raising the national slogan too. But he writes a resolution which, at this precise moment, has as its primary aim directing the attention of the vanguard AWAY from the national question. I wish to demonstrate that this is the case, and thereby also to show where page 17 fits into the train of Johnson's thought.

He achieves his end in three inter-related ways.

I. To this end Johnson puffs up the IMMEDIACY of the direct struggle for workers' power.

It is not worthwhile to discuss things like Johnson's twice-repeated phrase about "the invading socialist society." Which socialist society is invading what in Europe today is left vague in my mind. But the dynamic vision conjured up by this picture of invasion sticks out in other ways.

In the very first paragraph of the resolution (first things must come first) Johnson writes about

"the bankruptcy of the European bourgeoisie, already (or about to be) so ruined and disgraced that in over one-half of Western Europe the proletariat is the class which represents the nation."

The proletariat represents the nation in France today? Johnson cannot be here paraphrasing the familiar idea that the proletariat's interests and struggles represent the best interests of the nation -- that is, of the masses of people. This fact is not dependent on the ruin and disgrace of the bourgeoisie. He must have something else in mind....

He has. On page 7, he returns to this extraordinary half of Europe

"Capitalist society has already been defeated over half of Europe and the other half awaits its turn."

So -- "the proletariat represents the nation" in occupied Europe because capitalist society has "already" been defeated there! It follows that it is a gross misunderstanding to believe merely that French imperialism was defeated by German imperialism, etc.

On page 10 (all emphasis in quoting from Johnson is mine unless otherwise noted), we find that

"the European proletariat in the oppressed countries is in proletarian revolt now."

And more News from Nowhere:

"The war has merely completed its disillusionment with the existing, that is to say, the capitalist society (which, however, has already been defeated -- P.T.) . Go wrong here and there can be no recovery."

Now, of course, when the proletariat's disillusionment with capitalism has already become complete -- COMPLETE, you understand -- and when capitalist society has already been defeated -- and with a proletarian revolt now going on -- and naturally, with the proletariat already representing the nation -- it can hardly be wondered at or gainsaid that a backward consideration like national sinks rapidly into the background.... although it is still worth

mentioning, to be sure, especially if other people insist upon talking about it.

Just bad formulations? Well, Johnson has a fact for us:

"Since that time (the North African events) the French proletariat...has never for one single moment subordinated its proletarian demands to the struggle for national emancipation."

I do not ask what facts Johnson has to substantiate this crucial assertion; I know. But does Johnson understand what his pen writes? If his assertion is true, then of course the NC resolution is an anachronism. But by the same token, if it is true, why does Johnson say that the workers' MAIN CRITERION is the struggle -- not for their proletarian demands -- but for national liberation? And if it is true, why on earth at all raise the slogan of national liberation as the "MAIN POLITICAL SLOGAN OF THE DAY"?

Just bad formulations?

Consider them now with relation to another series of ideas which runs through the whole of Johnson's resolution. It is a second lesson in the art of muddling.

II. To the same end, Johnson minimizes the power and very existence of the European capitalist class, outside of Germany---

and incidentally reveals the meaning of his "support" to the slogan of national liberation.

To lead up to it gradually, I cite first another revelation by Johnson:

"Unlike the proletariat of Britain and America, for instance, the proletariat in the occupied countries no longer listens to the bourgeoisie for directions as to its participation in the international conflict." (Page 15.)

That is: the socialist revolution is -- not just around the corner -- it is in plain sight. That is, if one assumes that the statement is true, a feat which can be accomplished with sufficient will power.

To be sure, two sentences further on, Johnson gives such believers pause. The proletariat having been demoralized by the fall of France, Johnson writes, "Stalingrad and Casablanca lifted it up again." One gathers that the proletariat must have been listening to the talk of the bourgeoisie at Casablanca, listening intently... But such discrepancies are only incidental to an expansive intellect which spread-eagles itself over reality. The proletariat "no longer listens to the bourgeoisie for directions."

But on the other hand, they well might do so, since (according to Johnson) the directions of the bourgeoisie to the proletariat are nothing more nor less than to go ahead and seize proletarian power. The bourgeoisie, naturally with suppressed curses,

"is compelled to call upon the proletariat to drive out the existing capitalist government, to seize the power, and to administer public affairs." Page 19.)

It is of course doing nothing of the sort; any more than did Wilson in his 1918 maneuvers. When the bourgeoisie puts an explicit superscription on its propaganda appeals, they turn out to look like Churchill's notorious appeal over Mussolini's head, to the Badoglio's and the most reactionary sections of the old society. Johnson goes farther than poor Professor Harold J. Laski; Laski only advocates what Johnson thinks has already been accomplished.

But there is a point to all this mythological construction. Johnson has a thesis: The European bourgeoisie of the occupied countries is a dead duck.

"German Fascism...has completed the ruin of the native bourgeoisie of Europe as intermediate strata between itself and the masses. The ruling classes of Europe have lost not only the right but the power to rule." (Page 2.)

Referring specifically to the capitalist classes of France, Poland and Yugoslavia,

"their class domination of their respective nations have been destroyed." (Page 3.)

The struggle of the Polish workers against the German oppressor

"shows the Polish proletariat exercising all the functions of the Polish bourgeoisie in defence of the Polish people." (Page 9.)

I hurry by the tempting analysis of this lucid thought and cite it only for its tendency in this context.

"The sacred unity of the nation before the bourgeoisie was driven out was a profane lie based on the domination of the native bourgeoisie. The new unity is equally a bourgeois lie based on the domination of the proletariat." (P.10)

What planet is Johnson writing about and in? The proletariat no longer listens to the bourgeoisie for directions; in half of Europe (where capitalist society lies defeated), the ruin of the bourgeoisie is complete, and their class rule destroyed; while the domination of the proletariat reigns supreme, to the "suppressed curses" of aforesaid capitalist class....

MORE MYTHOLOGY; or, EUROPA AND THE BULL

But the best news from Through the Looking Glass is yet to come.

"The fact that stares us in the face is that in France and in Poland the native bourgeoisie as an independent force does not exist. By capitulation or abdication,

collaboration, or absorption, plain flight or plain destruction, it is gone. Nothing like this has ever happened before... no class in any period of modern history can escape the consequences of so complete a removal from all its functions..." (Page 8.)

And having satisfactorily established the fact that in effect the native bourgeoisie "does not exist" in occupied Europe, Johnson writes in the next sentence about

"the relations between the proletariat and the non-existent bourgeoisie"!

I again decline to make an argument here to prove to Johnson that the French bourgeoisie still exists and has not been completely removed from "all its functions," and I also decline to investigate these mysterious "relations" between the very-much-alive proletariat and the so-non-existent bourgeoisie. The latter task, on the face of it, would seem to require the services of a medium or of a philosopher who has read Hegel (with all his prefixes) in the original German.

But now we are ready to grasp the meaning and context of Johnson's section which comes out for the slogan of national liberation as "the main political slogan of the day."

This section (on page 17) is immediately preceded and introduced by a paragraph which represents the bridge, in Johnson's thought, between the content of his whole resolution and his avowal of support to the slogan of national independence.

"For the vanguard clarification either of the masses or of itself is inconceivable without action. And today in the occupied countries, action means the struggle for the expulsion of the German oppressor, i.e., the existing capitalist class." (Page 16.)

Never before was there a more momentous "i.e." With two letters and two punctuation points, Johnson sheds light upon what he is driving at.

"The German oppressor, i.e., the existing capitalist class." What about the French capitalist class? It has been defeated already -- remember -- completely ruined and destroyed -- it does not exist. Only the German capitalist class EXISTS for the French proletariat.

The struggle against German oppression = the struggle against the EXISTING capitalist class = the struggle for the overthrow of capitalist SOCIETY = the socialist revolution.

A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY

The NC resolution makes clear the relationship between the elements of national revolution in occupied Europe and the elements of socialist revolution.

Its views derive from the basic ideas of our theory of permanent revolution. The struggle for national liberation, as it sees it, which today is the key to proletarian action in the occupied countries, tends to grow over into struggle for workers' power and against capitalism; it leads the workers into the socialist struggle; it is the job of the vanguard to see to it that it does. If the revolutionists were very successful, this "growing over into" might, possibly, even bring about socialist revolution before national independence. What is immensely more probable is that it will shorten the interval between national independence and socialist revolution.

But for Johnson there is no question of such an analysis. For him the national struggle is itself, in itself, also the struggle for socialist power: the national revolution equals the socialist revolution.

To make the point in still another way:

We have always made the point about imperialism that its reactionary character is evidenced by the fact that in the oppressed nation, it causes the class struggle to be overlaid by the national aspirations. The NC resolution points out that fascism, the most reactionary form of imperialism, has had the same effect even for countries like France which are themselves imperialist.

None of this for Johnson. The class struggle has not been overlaid by the new national aspirations of the French proletariat. How could it be? Since the only existing capitalist class in France is the capitalist class of Germany, struggle against it IS the class struggle. There is no "growing over" to be accomplished, quickly or slowly.

Here we have the heart of Johnson's vagaries and the reason why Johnson has written himself into this fantastic nonsense about the defeat of capitalist society in half of Europe, the domination of the proletariat and the non-existence of the native bourgeoisie.

III. The Third way in which Johnson puts the national question under a bushel is by the sleight-of-hand trick of concentrating attention in another direction -- Germany.

In his first paragraph on page 1, Johnson writes that "the theoretical key to any question of continental scope" must be sought in Germany. On page 28, in an underscored paragraph, he winds up:

"The analysis of the national question in Europe thus begins and ends with Germany. What was apparently merely the national question in oppressed Europe is in reality the most powerful adjunct to the achievement of the all-important proletarian revolution in Germany..."

That the coming German revolution requires the closest attention and thought is obvious. It is also obvious that the fate of the revolution in

Europe as well as in America depends on Germany. That, however, is in itself no particularly good reason to insist on transforming a resolution on the American scene into a resolution "beginning and ending with Germany." It is also no particularly good reason for writing a resolution on the national question in occupied Europe which "begins and ends with Germany" and passes the given question itself with raised skirts. The fact of the matter is, that Johnson is not so much taken by the importance of the German revolution as he is desirous of slithering over the national question.

As an example, consider the section of his resolution entitled "The European Proletariat and the National Question" (Page 5-14). The sub-titles themselves symbolize the sleight-of-hand. The last ones read:

"The Proletariat in the Occupied Countries and Socialism"

"The Proletariat in the Occupied Countries and Unity"

Naturally one expects next a section entitled "The Proletariat in the Occupied Countries and the National Question." After all, the whole Resolution is supposed to be about this; there really ought to be at least a little sub-section about it. But the next, and last, sub-title reads instead:

"The Proletariat in the Oppressing Countries (Germany)
and the National Question"

I cite this as a symbol.

JOHNSON DISPLAYS EXTRAORDINARY TALENT

Johnson is pretty far gone in his fantasy. He has, as I have shown, taken great pains to emphasize that the direct struggle for socialist power stands now before the proletariat of occupied Europe. But in Germany? There, according to Johnson, the direct struggle for socialism is further down on the agenda than it is in occupied Europe!!

"The German proletariat, unlike the proletariat in the oppressed countries, is not yet permeated with an overwhelming desire to drive out the existing capitalist government and destroy the existing capitalist class. The vanguard therefore raises its central slogan around the central question of peace... the right to organize and the right of free press." (Page 25.)

Germany is the "key," Johnson stresses. The resolution must begin and end with Germany, Johnson stresses. The national question in occupied Europe? "Merely the most powerful adjunct" to the German revolution, stresses Johnson. But on the other hand -- in Germany the socialist revolution is so far down on the agenda that the poor proletariat has to resort to raising ordinary democratic demands, while in occupied Europe the proletariat is

already dominant, etc. Why then must the resolution begin and end with Germany?

Democratic slogans for Germany, says Johnson, because there the proletariat is not yet "permeated with an overwhelming desire" to destroy capitalism. Good. But Johnson makes this point as a distinction between Germany and occupied Europe! For the French proletariat, who have a national struggle weighing upon the clarity of their class-consciousness, the direct struggle against capitalism is immediately on the order of the day; for the German proletariat, in contradistinction, it is only the right to organize!

"None but a man of extraordinary talent can write first-rate nonsense," said DeQuincey.

Democratic demands for the workers in France? "Ridiculous!" says Johnson, "unconditional surrender only!"

"The vanguard in the occupied countries refuses to make any of the traditional political demands upon the oppressing government. It mercilessly castigates and ridicules those political organizations which propose that the proletariat raise the slogans of the right to organize and the right of free press."

The proletariat, writes Johnson grandiloquently, "needs no permission" to organize insurrectionary committees. That is all it is a question of, insurrectionary committees.

"It (the vanguard) seizes the opportunity to tell the European workers that such ideas and slogans lead them back to the stage of looking upon the existing rulers as their masters..."
(page 21)

Why this sentence does not apply to Germany and America also, Johnson will explain to the S.L.P.

Would Johnson favor Italian revolutionists raising democratic demands ("the traditional political demands") today in the parts of Italy under the AMG? Does Johnson favor the French workers fighting for the right of assembly of more than five persons, for better conditions of labor, etc.? Perhaps he is under the impression that "raising democratic demands" means... presenting a petition à la Father Gapon to the occupying government.

Why Johnson declines to apply every single word of the above quoted passage to the German workers' policy also is unexplainable.

But enough -- Johnson is already convinced, five pages later. For there he goes into reverse gear again. He is describing the tasks of the German vanguard:

"For every concrete demand -- food, clothing, conditions of labor, right of free press, right to organize, etc., which it makes on behalf of the German working class, it specifically includes the workers of the nationally oppressed countries, demanding for them special national privileges, such as right to their own press, assembly, etc. and ENCOURAGING THEM TO MAKE THE SAME DEMANDS."

So the German vanguard encourages the French to demand these democratic demands like the right to organize (on page 26), but the French vanguard (having read page 21) "mercilessly castigates and ridicules" this proposal.

This unborn international polemic is quite unresolvable. Whichever he chooses, he is still left with a contradiction as big as a barn.

HOW JOHNSON MAKES SENSE

Yet in its own way, Johnson's flight of fancy does make sense.

With the addition of a little organization, his ideas may be correlated as follows:

1. The bourgeoisie of the occupied countries does not exist.
2. The occupied countries are states which are therefore dominated by the proletariat, or which would be so dominated, were it not for the fact that --
3. The German capitalists have conquered the country. The German capitalist class is the ruling class of France.
4. The class struggle in France is therefore the duel between the French proletariat and the German ruling class.
5. The class struggle and the national struggle become, not merely related as explained by our concept of permanent revolution, but they become identical, absolutely and completely.
6. The French workers think that what they are doing is carrying on a national struggle. Since they think so, the national slogans have force for agitational purposes.
7. But really they are mistaken. For their national struggle IS the direct struggle for socialism, since the foreign oppressor is the "only existing capitalist class" in France too.
8. It is necessary for the vanguard to explain their mistake to them, to teach them that they are in actuality making the revolution in spite of themselves. What is taking place now is the socialist struggle for the seizure of power. In the course of such a struggle, one does not demand merely

the right to organize; one takes it, since one is already organizing the revolution.

Etc. Etc.

From this point on, the reader -- if he is willing to re-read Johnson's resolution for the purpose -- can fit in even some of the less credible observations to be found in that work.

What we have here is a view which is really as fully consistent as the notorious theory of a man named Marlen that this is a "phony war", i.e., an elaborate pretense at a war whose sole purpose is to cover up for the inevitable joint attack on the "workers' state," Stalinist Russia. If Johnson were only to inject a bit of logical coherence in the flow and concatenation of his ideas, this would be fully apparent.

The trouble with Al Gates' replies to Johnson is that Gates is making a creditable attempt to carry on the polemic on a reasonable plane. He therefore encounters the same difficulty that Alice had with the Red Queen.

For example, Gates cannot believe his ears when Johnson says that Hitler has brought the socialist revolution "immeasurably" nearer. He hazards the reasonable hypothesis that Johnson is repeating the Stalinist mistake of "After Hitler, we come." But Gates is dead wrong: Johnson's mistakes are original with himself. What Johnson means here too is that Hitler has made the proletariat the only existing class of Frenchmen. The French capitalist class, being non-existent, is no longer in the way. Speeds the revolution.

It is really too bad that all this is taking place on another astral plane.

It's enough to make you feel like Gelett Burgess, the celebrated author of "The Purple Cow," who has also written:

"I wish that my Room had a Floor;
I don't so much care for a Door,
But this walking around
Without touching the ground
Is getting to be quite a bore!"

WHY I HAVE CHANGED MY VOTE

In my letter of May 5th on the National Question (published in the Internal Bulletin), I raised several questions in regard to the National Committee's resolution and Johnson's article, "The Way Out For Europe" (April-May New International). Comrade Johnson's subsequent resolution (submitted on July 20th to the Political Committee), answers all the important questions and problems satisfactorily. Therefore, I supported Johnson's resolution when it was up for consideration at the October, 1943 Plenum of the Party. Johnson's resolution (now the Minority resolution) is now before the membership. Here I cite some of the considerations for espousing this resolution and opposing the National Committee resolution, even as amended.

GERMANY

1. In my first article, I stated that I regarded "Johnson's presentation of the German question in respect to the national problem as a whole; in respect to the European situation; and in regard to the prospects and perspectives of the Socialist United States of Europe...as probably the most important one in arriving at the most correct estimation of the course of the struggle of the proletariat, in the immediate as well as in the later period of development.... This question was ignored or omitted in the Plenum (N.C.) resolution.... Germany in the Fascist and post-Fascist period.... remains the key to the European situation.... Hence.... Johnson's contribution on this aspect of the National Question requires... first consideration in the social-political estimate of Europe's course."

Events have confirmed Johnson's conception and prognosis. The Shachtman--N.C. Supplementary Resolution on Germany is unwilling acknowledgment of the soundness of Johnson's historic approach and method in dealing with the National Question and the Socialist Revolution.

2. The Johnson (Minority) resolution elaborates and clarifies the conceptions dealt with in his New International article: The proletarian nature of the national liberation movement is made abundantly clear. The slogan of national independence is the main political slogan of the day, but must be infused at all times with class content and aims. The national and socialist **struggles** cannot be boxed separately. The national liberation movement, the class struggle and Socialist objectives are mixing and will tend to telescope from the very outset. The struggle for the immediate economic and political demands impels the masses, even if not yet always with full consciousness, persistently onto the path for workers' power, and the leadership of the nation in each instance.

The events in Africa, Italy, Greece, Jugo-Slavia, etc., all demonstrate the class character of the national revolution. A socialist program and consciousness more and more pervade the national liberation movements themselves. Yet the masses are not for one moment relinquishing the necessary struggle for national freedom and democratic rights. On the contrary, they are finding it possible and necessary to fit these objectives more and more into an independent class struggle program, in accordance with their specific conditions, both in occupied Europe and in Germany. To read the material from the underground press itself is to find a confirmation of Johnson's resolution in the limited events to date. On the other hand, the conceptions of the N.C. resolution, which give almost exclusive emphasis to the national liberation and democratic struggles, have not been borne out.

BUILDING THE PARTY

3. The revolutionary Party must be forged during the mass struggles of all description. Fascism notwithstanding, the working class has remained organized through the instrumentality of the productive forces themselves—that is, on the job. As the cracks in the Nazi structure widen, the workers will persistently mold their organizations, tasks and goal to the ever new opportunities—all the way from the basic labor and Shop Committees to Workers Councils (Soviets). It is during this process and period that the vanguard elements will forge the revolutionary Party. There is no basis for placing the liberation and democratic struggle in such a relationship to the prospects for the development of the struggle for working class power as virtually to negate the likelihood or possibilities for the Socialist victory. This is what the N.C. resolution does. With such a perspective, a revolutionary party cannot be re-born and re-built.

"LONG" OR "SHORT" WAR

4. Unquestionably, an estimation of the remaining length of the imperialist war in Europe enters into the consideration of prospects and perspectives. The N.C. resolution on the National Question still visualizes or implies a war of indefinite length—2, 3, 4 and even 6 more years. Consequently, from its outlook the revival of the masses involves a long period of struggle for democratic rights and an indefinite democratic period before the masses are again in a position to struggle seriously for workers power. That can be the only meaning of the detailed emphasis given in the N.C. resolution to the manner of unfoldment of the democratic struggle.

The Minority resolution is predicated on a relatively early conclusion to the European phase of the war (a year, more or less within months). The possible earlier termination of the war upsets the imperialist apple-carts. It enables and compels the proletariat to seek an independent, final solution to the crisis of capitalism. The struggle for democratic rights and national emancipation become significant episodes of the class struggle.

DEMOCRACY

5. Bourgeois democracy in itself does not contribute to or guarantee capitalist stability. Its effectiveness depends chiefly on the prevailing economic situation. It is or ought to be self-evident that the possession by the workers of democratic rights and of national freedom can be great assets in the struggle for working class power. That should not be of dispute among us.

At this stage, however, democracy in Europe will be achieved only under tremendous working class pressure; in fact, only at the threat or invocation of civil war itself. This means that the Allied imperialists will espouse democracy, if at all, only because of the actions of the masses below. Actual establishment of democracy for Europe is not the real plan or purpose of Anglo-American imperialism, nor certainly of Stalin. From the very beginning, therefore, the struggle for democratic rights must have a proletarian content to get anywhere. This is amply demonstrated by the Italian events, the role of Amgot and the newly-created Anglo-American-Stalinist commission to replace Amgot, etc. This will be particularly re-

vealed in France, Poland, Bulgaria too, etc. (Bulgaria is coupled with the others because Bulgarian developments will form the pattern in the Balkans particularly in respect to Stalin's role).

ITALY

6. The stamp of working class or Socialist pressure is now being placed on the program of nearly all movements, bourgeois or working class. Petain, Laval -- all of them must speak of "Socialism." This is direct recognition of the dominance, potentially and in fact, of the working class in the struggle against Fascism and in the problems of the post-Fascist period.

Our Party was caught unawares by the Italian events (downfall of Mussolini, etc. Our press, for instance, took no note that the military developments, prior to Mussolini's downfall, were already casting deep political shadows in Italy. Our organization took no note of, or ignored, the underground papers circulating among the Italian soldiers and the comments of the Italian press generally. Thus, (and this would ordinarily have been done in a revolutionary press) Labor Action and the New International did not review the 1920-21 revolutionary events in Italy. Attention to these matters would in an important measure have provided a partial orientation to our members for the possible developments in Italy. Only from Johnson's conception was it possible to anticipate fundamentally the Italian events and to present an analysis. The N.C.'s narrow conception of the role of the Party prevented them from seeing the decisive role of the masses in the struggle against Fascism.

But the task today is to prevent being taken unawares, so far as knowledge of the facts and methods of analysis permit, by future developments.

Now, Shachtman's article on Italy (The New International, September) lays great stress on the necessity of the Italian revolutionaries to participate in and lead the struggle for democratic rights. All right. That is acceptable to everyone. However, bourgeois exponents of Italian freedom, such as Count Sforza, themselves see clearly that it is the economic and social questions -- the particular issues that bring forth independent working class actions -- that dominate the minds of the Italian masses today. Sforza and the imperialists are well aware that the economic conditions of the Italian masses today (for example, the millions of Italian unemployed) could easily lead to a revolutionary situation and uprising. Thus, the Italian Azione political party (Sforza leadership) finds it necessary, in order to head off a genuine workers movement, to present as its program a series of proposals which include the expropriation and nationalization of the major industries and utilities; liquidation of large estates and distribution of the land to the peasantry, immediate participation of the workers in the profits of production, etc. Why must the revolutionary vanguard tail behind even Sforza?

REVIVING CLASS STRUGGLE

7. The military events generally and specifically are providing the greatest of impacts politically on all the European population. The N.C. resolution sees the masses pre-occupied almost exclusively with the liberation struggle. However, the military defeats inflicted on the Axis

powers; the devastating effects of the war on the peoples in both the Axis and Allied camps, cause them to consider also the kind of political, economic and social tasks they must carry through for their own present and future. The character and scope of the war itself carries them to thoughts beyond the liberation struggle and toward workers' objectives and Socialism.

To ignore or minimize the utterances of the European underground press on this score, or even the comments of the bourgeois press, is to fly in the face of the increasing revival of the class consciousness, as well as of the class struggle, of the European masses against their oppressors. It is not the bourgeoisie of America, but ourselves who can again be taken by surprise by the coming events in Germany, France, Poland and elsewhere. It is folly to ignore the growing numbers, size and intensity of strikes and demonstrations in France, Holland, Belgium, etc., and see them only in terms of the liberation struggle against Hitler. Already, instead, the lamentations of the Allied imperialists on the continuing and intensifying civil wars in Jugo-Slavia and Greece should be a warning sign to the proponents of the N.C. resolution that it is against possible for us to tail events.

ONCE AGAIN -- GERMANY

8. Shachtman demands: Where is the class consciousness of the German masses? How does it compare with former years? He wants an arithmetical answer. It cannot be given, yet. Still, the reply can be geometric, if one really wants to observe the developments within Germany itself, and is not overcome by the unquestioned fact that German imperialism is at the date of writing still strongly fighting the United Nations.

Is it nothing that the older Socialist and Communist workers (as reports authenticate) have for years systematically, with great care, but despite all dangers, tried to re-educate the apprentices and younger workers of their factories? In thousands of cases they have counteracted the poison of these young people in the Hitler Youth. As recent as 1943, competent observers of the German scene declared that the German masses have changed only by an increasing desire to enjoy the collective, socialist society.

It is the American imperialists who are well aware of the possibilities of great social convulsions or proletarian revolution in Germany upon the fall of Hitler. Thus, the U.S. Office of War Information is already preparing the ground for American intervention in the lives of the German masses. Their propaganda against the coming "phony revolution" in Germany shows their fear of the genuine proletarian revolution.

Armed disciplinary guards in every factory in Europe (occupied areas and Germany) arouse the desire to be free not only of Hitlerism, but also of any rule or social order that breeds fascism and exploitation in any form. Hitler understands this. Hence, he has organized a picked force of 250,000 troops from Europe's dregs to "resist the disruptive influences in critical times"; a force that, the Nazis hope, will "not fraternize with the proletariat" (N.Y. Times). Thus, the Nazis see as real the impending threat of proletarian revolution, fearing this more than Allied victory, as all of us realize. Only we are in a position to be taken in again by surprise if the N.C. resolution, with its eyes focused almost entirely on

the national struggle, is our guide, notwithstanding the recent N.C. Supplementary resolution.

9. It is correct to see all the obstacles in any struggle, -It is not correct to see only them. The great recuperative powers of the working class are being demonstrated before our eyes. Let us not close our eyes and think it is only a mirage. In my judgment, comrade Shachtman's theory of the "long war" yet to be, drastically affects his attitude toward labor and Socialist prospects. Yet, if after 20 years of suppression, all the former political tendencies and ambitions came immediately to the front, following Mussolini's fall, this will be multiplied many times over in numbers, intensity and socialist consciousness, in France and Germany especially, upon the expulsion of Hitler. Yes, the obstacles confronting the workers may be too great to overcome in the early stages. This is certainly possible. Yet it is for that very reason that we must urge the workers now to deepen the struggles in order to prevent defeat and assure victory.

FROM FEBRUARY TO OCTOBER, 1943.

10. Comrades Shachtman, et al have found it necessary to "strengthen the line" of the N.C. resolution. To do this they have not only taken the opportunity afforded by "world events", They have also taken not only some of the ideas but even the actual phrases from the Johnson resolution and written a Supplement to the original resolution.

In February, Shachtman saw the German people only as members of the oppressor nation. The only German revolution to which he refers is the vanquished German revolution of 1918-19. In October, after reading Johnson's resolution of July 20, 1943 and after the Italian events (beginning in August), Germany has become for Comrade Shachtman the "key to the European (and therefore the world) situation." Johnson's resolution had started out by saying: "It is therefore in Germany that must be sought the theoretical key to any question of continental scope." (Emphasis mine - H.A.)

Shachtman now says: "The adoption of the slogan of national independence for the countries oppressed by its 'fatherland' is indispensable for the internationalist education and re-education of the German proletariat and revolutionary movement."

In his original article, Johnson said: "In the historical circumstances of Europe today, April 1943, the National Question must be posed as the combined liberation of the occupied countries and the enslaved proletariat of Germany from their common oppressor; German Fascism." (Italics in original).

Explaining this further, Johnson says in his resolution:

"The German vanguard must raise the slogan of the national independence of every country oppressed by Germany and call upon the German soldiers in those countries at the first possible moment to join the population in their struggle against Hitlerite tyranny...For every concrete demand which it makes on behalf of the German working class, it specifically includes the workers of the nationally oppressed countries, demanding for them special national privileges....On this basis and in every possible manner it strives to create a complete and yet flexible unity between all sections of the wage slaves in Germany for the coming revolution and draws

together the most advanced and resolute elements as a nucleus for the revolutionary international."

Shachtman now says: "The struggle for national independence is thus revealed as being primary and indispensable for the development of the revolution not only in the oppressed countries but also in the oppressor country, Germany.

Compare that sentence with Johnson's: "The national independence of Germany will increasingly become the main question before the German proletariat." And again: "The analysis of the national question thus begins and ends with Germany. What was apparently merely the national question in oppressed Europe is in reality the most powerful adjunct to the achievement of the all-important proletarian revolution in Germany and the strongest preparation for the defense of the European proletariat against American imperialism." (Emphasis mine, H.A.)

The N.C. resolution did not even see the threat of Anglo-American imperialism against the German revolution, precisely because it ignored the German revolution altogether. In February, comrade Shachtman indicated no suspicion of any crisis in Germany. Shachtman now says: "If the German proletariat succeeds in raising itself to the height of a revolutionary consciousness and leadership adequate to a solution of the crisis that will inevitably break out in Germany, the fundamental problem of Europe is as good as solved. A triumphant workers power in Germany would immediately make the prospect of an invincible Socialist Europe a practical and easily realized possibility."

Compare this with Johnson's resolution: "The American bourgeoisie is undoubtedly preparing to seize all strategic positions on the continent.... The chief enemy of its early success here is the revolution in Germany. It is this revolution leading Europe which can unite the European proletariat, sharpen appreciation of America's role and do more than anything else to awaken the proletariat of America, Britain and Stalinist Russia."

"TOO LITTLE AND TOO LATE"

Still, comrade Shachtman does not understand that the European bourgeoisie is discredited and displaced, and that the only state power which exists throughout Europe is crumbling German Fascism. He still refuses to recognize the 12,000,000 foreign workers within Germany, although Hitler himself publicly trembles at the thought of them. (N.Y. Times, Oct. 18, 1943). Hence, the Supplement, like the original resolution, ignores the task of the revolutionaries in preparing the workers in occupied Europe and Germany for the seizure of the "power that will, so to speak, lie in the streets." (N.C. resolution) The only "aggressive struggle" of which the Supplement speaks is the "struggle for democratic rights". Comrade Shachtman sees this as "the first task of the revolutionary Marxists in the situation of the crisis of Fascism." This is the only way in which he can see the building of the Party.

While thousands of European workers are themselves preparing to lead the masses to a struggle for power, Shachtman says: The revolutionary party needs the "enjoyment of democratic rights" so that it can come to the head of the Soviets. Certainly, safeguarding the interests of the revolutionary Party is always an important consideration. But first con-

consideration is the interests of the masses. Thus, instead of emphatically advocating that the workers now take advantage of every opportunity for organizing the workers struggle for power, comrade Shachtman insists that they make democratic demands an "essential preliminary".

But, as pointed out in the Johnson resolution, the revolutionary Party can be built only if the vanguard elements, instead of ignoring or underestimating, uncover and stress the socialist content of the coming insurrection against the Fascist State power. It can be built only if the revolutionary forces persistently point out that the power of the workers in organizing for the national emancipation must be combined with organized steps toward workers power. It is in the heat of the struggle by the workers and the correct interpretation and leadership of this struggle by the vanguard forces that the revolutionary party will be built, and not through the democratic sufferance of bourgeois government.

ORGANIZATIONAL CONSEQUENCES

11. In the articles and discussions thus far on the National Question, no one has commented on the organizational consequences flowing from the adoption of the N.C. resolution by the Party. I comment here in respect to the Party and the Press (Labor Action and New International). I have made reference elsewhere to the failure of our Press to deal adequately and in time with Italy before the fall of Mussolini. However, more basically involved is the attitude of the Party to European (and world) events. To respond well and properly to events, it is necessary for our press, Labor Action, to give the coverage and analysis they warrant.

The N.C. resolution does not see a swift unfolding of great class struggles and the struggle for workers power in Europe. Hence, Labor Action underestimates and subordinates both information and analysis on European events, including the significance of the military struggle on the political front. Otherwise, Labor Action would devote to the European struggle at least one lead article each week on the front page. This is not a question of editors or writers. It is a question of policy. Nor would this lessen the importance of the developments on the American scene. Indeed, it would only enhance and co-relate them more accurately to world events. Moreover, there would regularly be an important editorial on some aspect of the European struggles. German developments would receive their due. None of this need be "scary" or artificial, but accurate in every line and thought. There is a mass of evidence and material in the underground press, and even the bourgeois press. Let comrades take a look at the American revolutionary press of years gone by to see what I mean.

Thus our Press would be giving necessary information to our readers, analysing the news from a class viewpoint. That is one important way to develop the international consciousness and solidarity of the American workers with their fellow European workers. Thus, too, we would be carrying out better one of the functions of a revolutionary Party based upon and espousing internationalism. The Johnson (Minority) resolution sets forth well the tasks of the Party in connection with the European situation. Members would do well to read the section again in this connection.

"The revolutionary vanguard in America is not at all a passive or even merely a sympathetic spectator of these events." (Johnson resolution). The American workers must know and understand the European events

from a revolutionary viewpoint if they are to be rallied effectively against the counter-revolutionary aims of American imperialism in Europe. Full, timely knowledge and correct analysis of events in Europe are a pre-requisite toward this end. Labor Action is needlessly lacking in this respect. The column by Europacus, improving steadily as it is, is insufficient for the times. The isolation of "Europe in Revolt" in a column is evidence of the peculiar isolationism that has penetrated the revolutionary Party.

The New International especially can be a significant vehicle for the education of the more advanced members and sympathizers of the revolutionary movement. At times this effort has been made. Yet one can only do damage to the integrity of the magazine itself when one of its writers can write in the same issue almost two exactly opposite versions of a subject, and endeavor to reconcile them. ("Invasion of Europe and the "Long War" by E. Lund, Sept. 1943, The New International.)

In the same issue, comrade Shachtman writes an article on Italy, describing why "The Italian Revolution Has Begun", but fails to note that it runs counter against the predictions of the N.C. resolution on the national question. In the best interests of the movement, it is necessary to make open acknowledgement when one revises an outlook on a significant question.

Finally, the mood of our own members today is, I believe, an inquiring one. They want to know and to learn, despite the obstacles of hard jobs, etc. It is important to take a stand on a question, yes. It is even more important first to learn what are the facts, and what is the best method of analyzing them. Then our members will know how to speak up and lead their fellow workers on the issues that are about to engulf Europe again, and how to judge these events when by themselves.

November 3, 1943

---HARRY ALLEN.

THE PROLETARIAT INSIDE GERMANY

From inside Germany there has emerged during the last few years a steady stream of reports of popular resistance to the Hitler regime. These reports are indirect and incomplete, but fitted into a general and historical understanding of Europe, such as is embodied in the Johnson (Minority) resolution on the national question, they enable revolutionists to achieve a proper perspective in the European crisis. I propose here to make a partial compilation of these reports, selecting from a flood of evidence those which are most characteristic. These examples can be multiplied many times over.

Hitler's Main Enemy

In capitalist society it is impossible to destroy the workers' sense of identity as a class. They are not lost with the rest.

"No shots are fired, no banners wave; but the words pass from mouth to mouth, and they are understood by the workers... For the average German it is again July 1932. For the German workers it is January 1918."

"The work of preparation is long since finished. In heavy industry the workers act collectively even though unorganized and to a certain extent they feel bound by a common destiny....The powers in the Third Reich know exactly who their most dangerous enemy is - most dangerous because it is the only organized enemy."(1)

The German workers have not had to learn from indirect reports that Fascism is directed against them and their organizations. "The masses of the once organized workers who have gone through the shock of trade unionism" have never been deceived by Fascism's apparent success and acceptance by foreign governments but have remained irreconcilably opposed to the Nazis. (Aufbau, 7/30/43) In the first three years of the Hitler dictatorship a quarter of a million men and women went to imprisonment and death for the political crime of opposition to Hitler. By 1939 and the beginning of the war, the number had climbed to one million. (Ibid.) The Labor Front has never been able to win the workers and has been all but dissolved except as an arm of the Gestapo. (Fascism, (2) 4/7/43).

By skillfully adapting their techniques of resistance to the brutality of the Hitler regime, the leaders of the German working class resistance have maintained the unity of the working class and prepared them for collective action. A striking example of this is the industrial demonstrations, organized within lawful bounds but containing sufficient strength for future revolutionary activity. "When the Fuhrer proclaimed the 'Glory of Work,' they dedicatee a demonstration to 'Glory of Work.' Though one couldn't strike for higher wages, an action

(1) Numbers refer to notes at conclusion of article.

could be built around some harmless wage proviso. The goal was to make these lesser demonstrations a habit, and thus to assure the unity of the comrades." (Riess)

"Accidents," slowdowns and absenteeism have decreased the effectiveness of German production. The Durkoff-Werke of Bielefeld in its annual report for 1939-40 stated that in spite of more intensive supervision and countless imprisonments, production since the outbreak of the war has fallen 27%. (Aufbau, 7/30/43) Absenteeism has become so prevalent that the Labor Front spy service now card-indexes all cases of absence from work complete with the reasons given by each worker. (Fascism, 4/21/43) Private physicians are no longer permitted to sign certificates for absence from work. (New Republic, 6/28/43) Due to the recalcitrance of the workers there has been instituted a thoroughgoing spy system in the factories. The German workers are watched over in their plants like convicts. In addition to technical supervision there is a kind of armed disciplinary guard in every factory. (Aufbau, 7/30/43)

Workers at Blohm and Voss, the largest Hamburg wharf, report that they find illegal leaflets in the workshops from time to time. Unexplained breakdowns are constantly occurring. (Fascism, 2/27/43) Strike action to obtain extra allowances for heavy workers has been taken by workers in the Hamburg U-Boat and Aeroplane works of Blohm and Voss. (Fascism, 2/10/43) Red posters in Austria and Germany regularly announce the executions of workers agitating for wage increases. (Ibid).

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"Tunisgrad"

An underground worker in Germany from 1933-1941 reports that the German people are unusually sensitive to decisive military events. (Neue Volkszeitung, 10/23/43) A German soldier on leave reports that the people he had met felt themselves "uncannily near" the bloody battles on the snow-covered expanses of Russia. (Fascism, 3/24/43) After the surrender at Stalingrad defeatism increased and the new labor service law encountered general bitterness. (3) In the streets of Munich and other cities, signs appeared on the war, against Hitler and against the war. After the North African collapse the cumulative effect of the military defeats was revealed in the use of the word "Tunisgrad" by the German people. (New Republic, 6/28/43)

On May 11, thousands of women and elderly men collected outside the Ministry of War in Berlin, demanding news about the welfare of their relatives in the Afrika Korps. SS troops had to clear the square. (Fascism, 5/19/43). On the second of July the German news Agency had to reassure the German press that the information spread abroad about Italy was exaggerated. After Mussolini's fall, Himmler, notorious for his intransigent terrorism, was elevated to the Ministry of the Interior, in an

effort to forestall the anticipated activities of German workers.(4) But Himmler, notwithstanding, since the Italian events, "the passive mass disobedience has developed locally into more serious moves. From several bombed cities local rioting has been reported, as from Hamburg....There is a flaring up of underground signs on walls; posters and leaflets appear in the streets with the slogan: Down with the destroyers of the nation." (Inside Germany Reports, August, 1943) After Mussolini's fall, there was a report, confirmed from several sources of German workers openly demonstrating with rioting Italian workers in Berlin. (Ibid.)

Proletarianization of the Middle Classes

The middle classes, shopkeepers, women and the youth, have been herded into factories and brought under the leadership of the working class. In the spring of 1943, 100,000 small retail shops were closed and their owners transported into war factories as laborers. On January 27, 1943 two days following the defeat at Stalingrad, it was announced that all men between 16 and 75 years of age, and all women between 17 and 45 years must register with the labor exchanges by March 31. (Fascism, 2/10/43) The reluctance of the population to register forced the Nazis to institute a man-hunt from house to house. Women not properly registered were taken away at once and sent to work. (Fascism, 5/5/43) German girls are drafted in companies of not less than 30 to work in armament plants, billeted collectively, and supervised by Reich labor leaders during all hours of the day. (Fascism, 3/10/43) In the industrial area of Westphalia-Lower Rhine, juveniles and women have been induced by their parents and husbands to leave their forced labor illegally. For this several parents and husbands have already received prison sentences. (Fascism, 2/10/43) The women workers forced to work in Hitler's factories protest unless they are given a day off with pay once a fortnight for washing. (Fascism, 3/10/43) To spy on the women workers there are required 59,000 welfare officers in the service of the Gestapo. (Ibid.) The Schwarze Korps attacks women for complaining: "Why should we have children if they are to be killed in twenty-year's time." (Fascism, 6/2/43). The resourcefulness of the women is revealed in the following story. Wives of soldiers who discussed the privations suffered by their men at the front were ordered to report daily to the police and to repeat: "Our men do not go hungry, the soldiers are perfectly all right". The women became so accustomed to these phrases they began repeating them out loud wherever they went, in the street cars, in their offices and in stores. The result was that discussion was provoked among the listeners who understood in their own way the Fuhrer's wise foresight. (From Freiheit, underground German paper, cited in German-American, 7/43).

The younger generation has known no official education other than that of Fascism. But in the factories the older socialist and communist workers have for several years syste-

matically tried to re-educate the apprentices and younger workers. "The underground concentrated particularly on these young workers and accomplished a great task of education along anti-Hitler lines." Forming friendship teams of older and younger workers, "they might tell them, perhaps, of the great metal workers strike in Berlin in January 1918 - a strike that lasted for weeks, brought the militia out in full force and put the High War Command in a catastrophic position. The 300,000 striking workers demanded peace on the basis of Wilson's Fourteen Points.... Particularly noteworthy is an article in the form of a discussion among three workers who took part in that strike, a discussion pointedly developed with a view to education and orientation of young workers who had not participated in the 1918 strike." (Riess, p.282)

The Nazi papers regularly report a slackening of discipline and moral disintegration among "Hitler's children". (German-American, 7/43) In Leipzig twenty boys and girls of working class circles were arrested and accused of distributing leaflets urging the public to listen to illegal German and foreign radio stations. (Ibid.) After some youths in Hamburg destroyed soldiers barracks during a blackout, an order was issued to parents demanding that children be confined to homes during blackouts. (Ibid.)

The University of Munich used to be the intellectual bulwark of Nazism. Since the disasters at Stalingrad a series of student disorders have disclosed an anti-Nazi movement at Munich. The following is an extract from the manifesto of the Munich students.

"We grew up in a state in which every free expression of opinion was ruthlessly gagged. Hitler youth, Storm Troops, SS, have put us into uniform and crippled our intellects during the most fruitful period of our lives... We have only one slogan: Fight against the Party... Everyone of us is fighting for his future, for his liberty and his honor in a state which will recognize its moral obligation.... The name of Germany will be shamed forever, if German youth does not finally rise to take revenge, to destroy its tormentors and create a new Europe, a Europe of the spirit. Students! The German people are looking to us. They expect much of us... Our people are rising against the enslavement of Europe by National Socialism in a new break-through for liberty and honor." (Inside Germany Reports, 8/43)

One of the leaders of the Munich student movement, Hans Scholl, was a 24 year old sergeant who had been decorated for bravery at Stalingrad. In some of the demonstrations at Munich young officers on furlough participated, and high army officers had to be called to break them up. (Inside Germany Reports, 8/43) Scholl and his comrades were subsequently executed for treasonable activities and for "encouraging sabotage in a factory." It is obvious that these young intellectuals have no social base for their resistance and must turn to the workers in the factories.

The International Working Class in Germany

"Germany's polyglot host of drafted foreign workers employed within the Reich now numbers 12,100,000, including prisoners of war." (N.Y. Times, 7/1/43) The primary aim of these workers is to overthrow the Hitler regime, and some of them have been instructed by their resistance organizations at home to organize the workers in their barracks and factories. (Combat). Against the anticipated revolt of these workers the Nazis have organized special "town guards." (Fascism, 3/10/43) But it is not the alien workers alone whom the Nazis fear. The common misery of the German and foreign workers has led to common action. Reports of this solidarity are the most numerous and spectacular among those emerging from Germany and put to shame any revolutionists who regard the German workers as an "aristocracy of labor," lording it over the foreign workers.

A striking example of solidarity occurred in a well-known munitions factory at Chemnitz where 179 work stoppages took place in the one month of February 1943. When the Gestapo arrested the foreign workers, the German gangs went on a sit-down strike and achieved the release of their foreign colleagues. At Blohm and Voss, German and foreign workers together bombarded with screws a Labor Front official who tried to pep-talk them out of a strike. (Fascism, 2/10/43). In April 1943 the Nazi party in the Ruhr sharply reprimanded Germans who voiced protests in the shops when the requests of alien workers for food are turned down. The German workers are accused of giving part of their food coupons to hungry alien workers. (Fascism, 6/2/43)

"The Nazis worry, not about the bad influence foreigners will have on Germans but about the superior German worker demoralizing the inferior foreigner." (Inside Germany Reports, 8/43). A number of French war prisoners, all of whom were metal workers by trade, were sent to work in a Bavarian motor plant after a period of forced agricultural labor. At first the French workers were so glad to be back at machines that they worked at a normal tempo. The first day, during the non rest period, their German colleagues came up to them and asked if they were crazy to work so fast. (Ibid.) The Russian imported workers who use the slowdown method of resistance, have a stock answer for their foremen: "If we work too fast, we might make mistakes and be accused of sabotage." The management is helpless against this argument because the German workers use the same tactics in order to demonstrate their solidarity with their fellow-workers. (Fascism, 6/16/43)

More and more the German and alien workers are regarded as a unit in the allocation of basic rations, (Fascism, 5/19 43) in threats of wage cuts and other penalties. (Fascism, 5/5/43) Goebbels insistently calls upon the German workers to remember their superiority and threatens those whose "race consciousness is not adequately developed." (Inside Germany Reports, 8/43) The Nazis complain that Germans regard war

prisoners as human beings too. (Ibid.) The following is an example of an official notice from the German Labor Front.

"How German Workers Should Behave Toward Workers From
Former Soviet Districts:

"It is necessary to employ Soviet workers in German factories in order to keep up production. You must always remember that they are culturally, incomparably inferior to you and that they have been trained in a philosophy which is in absolute contradiction to yours. When you have to associate with Russian elements, the following five points must be kept in mind: "1. Always show that you are the superior, be just but strict. 2. All personal contact save such speech as is necessary to give orders is strictly forbidden, comradeship with these elements is impossible. 3. Do not be inveigled into showing sympathy, consideration or friendship which might be falsely understood by these elements; they are cared for and treated in accordance with official instructions. 4. Do not permit any loafing on the job; if an instance arises, call the police at once. 5. The slightest suspicion of saboteurs must be reported immediately, failure to report will make you co-responsible. Your leaders expect from you that you will always be conscious of the fact that you are superior to the Russians, that you will act accordingly. If, in spite of these clear and most natural laws, a German worker forgets himself, he will have to be excluded from the popular community."
(Inside Germany Reports, 8/43) (5)

The news of German working class resistance to Hitler and their fraternization with foreign workers seeps through to occupied Europe. Many of the reports cited in this article are those of foreign workers who have escaped or returned home on leave. In turn the Nazis are unable to keep the news of the strikes, demonstrations and preparations for revolt from being imported into Germany along with the foreign workers. "From mates returning from home all sorts of news is heard about the situation at home." (Fascism, 7/28/43).

Moreover, there are many German laborers who have been deported from their homes and sent all over Europe as forced laborers. There is estimated to be two million of these German workers in and outside of Germany. (Fascism, 3/24/43) Many of the German workers in the occupied countries have rebelled against the hard conditions of work and have been sent to prison. (Fascism, 8/25/43) That an underground organization exists with ramifications into Germany and France is revealed by the recent execution of three Alsatians for building such an organization. (Fascism, 6/16/43)

German Workers in Uniform

German soldiers are scattered all over Europe, policing actively hostile populations, suffering defeats and casualties by the millions, and facing an increasingly uncertain and horrifying future. In 1939 one out of every ten male workers was

in uniform. Today the ratio is one out of every three. Between nine and ten million men have had to be taken from the working population. (N.Y. Times, 5/31/43) More and more there are reports of desertions, imprisonment for military crimes and sabotage.

From the North there is a steady flow of transports with manacled German troops. (Fascism, 4/7/43) From the Polish secret radio station in the east comes a report that between January and April 1943, 342 German deserters have been sentenced to death by court-martial and 765 soldiers and 310 officers await trial. From Badoglio in the South comes the information that German soldiers demonstrated with joy at the news that Hitler had fallen with Mussolini. From Belgium in the West comes the news that German soldiers have to be cleared out of movie houses, so riotous is their jeering when German commentators depict the glories of the Russian campaign. (Daily Worker, 7/12/43) Throughout occupied Europe the underground buys a large part of its supplies from German soldiers. (Neue Volkszeitung, 7/24/43) In Norway, German soldiers are cooperating with opposition Norwegians to assist fugitives. (Fascism, 3/10/43)

German war prisoners in America receive one German language paper, the Neue Volkszeitung. While this paper is vigorously pro-United Nations, it tells the German soldiers in articles and columns that "There is no return to the old Germany. The cities have been destroyed. This misery is all over Europe and not just in Germany. The German people will have to find new forms of political life. There will be no Kaiser, Fuhrer, no nobility and no bourgeoisie to turn to. There is no return to the Third Reich, the Kaisers Reich, to the First Republic, to Weimar. There is no return to the old property relations. Who can imagine that the work of reconstruction can be left to the private homeowners, the land speculators, the capitalist contracts. In a land as poor as Germany after the war, there will be no place for the rich, neither the old rich nor the new rich." (Neue Volkszeitung, 8/21/43)

"If we look at Germany as the capitalists do, we see that out of a collapse of the Nazi regime the possibility arises of a Socialist revolution. This will lead to its outbreak all over Europe. A workers revolution in Germany will reverberate to the corners of the earth even more than the Russian Revolution." (Ibid., 8/28/43)

Yet in Labor Action and the New International no hint of this has appeared except under the title of discussion articles.

All these reports point in one direction - the proletarian character of the resistance to Hitler. It could not be otherwise. That it is mixed with other elements is certain. The army hierarchy, encouraged by Stalin and in time or perhaps even now bidding for terms of "unconditional surrender" from the Anglo-American imperialists, may act as a temporary diversion to the tide of proletarian resistance. But it is the business of the revolutionists in Germany and elsewhere to point out that the only social resistance to Hitler in Germany must come from the proletariat and to clarify its proletarian objectives.

With this perspective, based on a general political understanding of Europe yesterday and today, and on a wealth of evidence, a major task of the revolutionaries in Europe is to stimulate the German working class to work with the international working class in Germany for the German revolution and the Socialist United States of Europe. On our part, as a minimum, our press must carry the most complete information available and point out the prospects for combining the liberation and socialist struggles in Germany as well as in occupied Europe. To assure this is required the adoption of the perspective contained in the Minority Resolution on the National Question.

Ria STONE

As I conclude this article, the New York Times (November 4, 1943) carries reports that the Nazis are erecting barricades in preparation for civil war in Germany. For this the party membership and the readers of its press have been politically prepared only by the Johnson articles and the Minority Resolution.

R. S.

November 5, 1943

N O T E S

- (1) Curt Riess, Inside Germany, 1942
- (2) Published semi-monthly by the International Transport Workers Federation in London.
- (3) Inside Germany Reports published monthly by the American Friends of German Freedom in New York.
- (4) Tribune, August 27, 1943, London.
- (5) Inside Germany Reports, 8/43
- (6) Compare with this the tasks outlined by Johnson for the vanguard in Germany. (Minority Resolution on the National Question, p. 26)

FORESIGHT IS BETTER THAN HINDSIGHT

by
Susan Green

There isn't one of us in the Workers Party who hasn't puffed up his chest because of the proletarianization of our membership. This change has not, of course, come about hit or miss. It is the result of a correct prospective adopted by our leadership and membership, and of the willingness of both to make personal sacrifices.

The importance of having roots as workers among workers is by no means measured merely by the subs to LA we have gotten and will get - nor even by the sympathizers and recruits we have made and will make.

The long-range -- and I might even say, all-time -- prospective for our party requires us to be in industry where our people as workers speaking to workers can - on the basis of their militancy and correctness both on shop problems and on larger economic and political issues - rise to rank and file leadership.

Along this line we have yet - for very good reasons to be sure - taken few and uncertain steps. But the direction is correct. We must continue in this direction.

The end of the war threatens to knock into a cocked hat this orientation of ours. The convention in January must set itself the task - to my mind the most urgent one before us - of making post-war plans so that we will not revert to our pre-war nebulous status - plus a subscription list for LA and some new recruits to our credit.

Both the objective and subjective conditions will be against us. First, of course, with finis to war orders the firing of war workers will begin. Our people will be hit and lose their jobs.

Subjectively, too, it is only natural for our comrades who have been uprooted in order to become rooted in industry, to want to go home. I think, also, that I am not mistaken when I say that many of our uprooted comrades have a "for the duration" point of view towards their present work.

These facts we must face very honestly at the convention and decide what to do about them.

I cannot see any other approach to the problem than that our proletarians must stay where they are. If they are not fired, all well and good. If they are, they must take pot luck with the other fired workers, as part and parcel of them. All contacts must, of course, be kept up.

There will be need to organize the unemployed and to formulate a correct program for unemployment. We must participate. Furthermore, judging by some views expressed at recent

union conventions, there will be a closer tie between the unemployed and their unions than ever before. This also is an opportunity for us:

There will be urgent questions relating to women workers. Most of our women workers should continue to be where the urgent questions arise.

In this milieu we should remain. The convention must send the delegates back with the will to prepare our comrades to play their role as workers in this postwar turbulence. The field should be surveyed and details arranged as much as possible in advance, so that the party may continue to function as a party of proletarians after the war.

Jobs and care for demobilized men will be burning issues. The organization of ex-servicemen into bodies linked with the unions, will also come up. I don't know how practical it is for our comrades to work along these lines. Anyway it is something to look into carefully.

I am making a plea for foresight instead of hindsight. I would want it to happen that at the first, second and third W.P. conventions after the war is over, we may still be talking about the objective and subjective reasons, the qualitative and quantitative reasons, theebb-and-flow reasons, why our party has suffered a blow, etc., etc.

It will be better to be able to boast a little that we anticipated the blow at our 1944 convention, glanced it off, and are in spite of everything doing allright - as a party of proletarians.

November 1st, 1943

AGAINST CENTRISM IN OUR PARTY

"Labor, black and white, must speed the organization of a political party of its own, a fighting Independent Labor Party, which aims to take over the government and run society in the interest of its useful citizens, the workers of hand and brain, regardless of color, creed, race, sex or age." -- From the NC statement on the Detroit pogroms.

Read it again! It's hard to believe, yet it's there, black on white. The Labor Party, according to this statement, is going to establish workers' power. And this is not an isolated quotation, taken out of context. The quotation given above is the whole paragraph dealing with the Labor Party in that particular NC statement -- everything. But what is more, this sort of "explanation" of what we mean by the Labor Party slogan has appeared consistently in party statements and resolutions.

Our conception of the Labor Party which we advocate, as I have always understood it, is that this party would restrict its political activity to within the framework of bourgeois legality. Its function would be to form the political wing of the trade unions, to run working class candidates on working class platforms for the bourgeois parliamentary bodies. It would not be a Marxist (revolutionary) party, such as ours, and it could not be a non-Party, extra-legal proletarian organization, of the soviet type, which would be equipped to organize the dictatorship of the working class. It could, no doubt, develop into the latter in a revolutionary period. But when this happens, the character of that organization will be changed, and will have nothing to do with our present slogan.

Such phrases as "a fighting Independent Labor Party, which aims to take over the government", is an advocacy of a Labor government of the McDonald type, or can be interpreted as such. It is centrist ambiguity and confusion at best, reformism at worst. Centrism can exist only by the use of just such ambiguity, but revolutionary socialists cannot afford to relinquish their clarity of language -- least of all now.

Whenever we mention our Labor Party slogan, we must explain clearly what we mean by it. But above all, we must constantly reiterate that it is only our party which aims to establish workers power, and that the road to a society which will be "run in the interest of its useful citizens" runs through a strong Workers Party, and the establishment of proletarian extra-legal bodies in a revolutionary situation. Let's not forget that the workers cannot simply get control of the bourgeois government, and use it for their own purpose

Let's combat all tinges of centrism in the Party. Constant clarity of language will do the trick.

Arthur STEIN

DISCUSSION ARTICLE
ON
TRADE UNION POLICY

The arena of labor struggles in the U.S. has significantly widened in the past few months. The government is intervening on the side of private property in a new and more active manner than heretofore.

The struggle against the United Mine Workers was planned and carried through, not by a coalition of operators but by the War Labor Board. Everyone understood that the issues were much deeper than the \$2.00 raise, that there was involved the struggle for survival of the WLB itself. This is not at all to say that the mine operators stood aside in the struggle, but that they did not lead it. If the miners had won, the government would have been the worst loser.

On a lesser scale, the story was repeated with the United Rubber Workers. The pattern is already a familiar one: the WLB is the graveyard of workers' grievances. In my opinion this will continue to be the case, even if the Little Steel formula is overthrown, until labor forges the two weapons it so glaringly lacks today--a political arm, i.e., an independent labor party, and a genuine working class top union leadership.

In addition to the WLB the bosses have forged for themselves another new and potent weapon by the passage of the Smith-Connally Bill. Here again, every strike is a strike against the government as well as the company. Roosevelt's alternative proposal of a work-or-fight bill shows that there is no serious disagreement in any of the major factions in Washington on the question of strong and open government interference to help the companies against the unions.

There are plenty of other signs pointing in the same direction. Vinson throws out the railroad workers' 8% raise; the OPA becomes an ever more obvious farce; the talk of rolling back prices is so much sheep-dip. We are witnessing these days more than a mere list of anti-labor developments; it is the unfolding of a new "second front". The arena of struggle has widened and deepened; every union local must reckon with the national administration as an active combatant.

The arena has widened in another direction, partly as a consequence of the government's policy. An anti-CIO bill hamstringing the NLRB is sneaked through Congress under the AFofL's wing. John L. Lewis goes back to the AFofL, apparently, to swing it away from Tobin's Roosevelt-no-matter-what faction, and from Green's spinelessness, and onto the road of a labor wing of the Republican Party. The CIO executive board forms a Political Action Committee which openly states that its purpose is to support Roosevelt and head off an independent labor party. Philip Murray, Sidney Hillman, R.J. Thomas (UAW), Sherman Dalrymple (United Rubber Workers), Albert Fitzgeralds (UERMWA), and either Van Bittner or David McDonald (United Steel Workers)---these top leaders of some of the most powerful unions in America constitute the Political Action Committee.

We call them the labor lieutenants of the capitalist class; it would be more accurately describing their practical role to call them the labor lieutenants of the capitalist parties. Before the laboring masses can tangle with "their" representatives in the government (the WLB, the enforcers of the Smith-Connally Act, with Congress and Roosevelt), and hope to win, there must be some cleaning up in labor's home. It is not a thorough cleaning-up, then at least a strong clean-up squad which can threaten a thorough cleaning-up. Labor needs a political party and a union leadership that is independent of the Democrats and Republicans.

The new developments raise new problems for Party unionists. In one concentration factory our people find themselves in a position to capture a majority on the contract negotiating committee. In the discussion that took place, various ideas for backing out were proposed. (The slate was initiated by nine shop stewards, completely independent of our people). The main theme in the discussion was that we do not want to take the type of responsibility that control of the negotiating committee entails. The shop has had more than the 15% increase allowed by the Little Steel formula; its rates are good compared to most shops doing the same type of work. The position the WLB will take is certain. In addition, the other locals of the union in the area are controlled by the Stalinists. Therefore, we cannot hope to get the membership any significant increases.

It was finally decided, with many expressions of "I hope we lose", that we could not afford to decline the leadership, but that much stress must be laid on telling the membership, from the very start of negotiations and before, the true situation with regard to wage increases. In addition, our fraction has set itself the perspective of establishing the slate committee as the nucleus of a Progressive Group.

This was the correct decision, in my opinion, although the hesitancy is based on a misunderstanding. It is not at all a solution to relinquish the struggle to gain leadership. The workers need leadership all the time, not just when the outlook is pretty good. On the same ballot as the candidates for negotiating committee were the candidates for delegates to the convention. You cannot ask to represent workers at a workers convention, but refuse to represent them in front of the bosses. As long as a committee is set up to perform a progressive function, we must seek to lead it.

It is obvious even from this single instance that the WLB and the Smith-Connally Act are new factors of major importance. Formerly we would have been militant agitators for action that today would be adventurism. We said, and correctly, almost any time we can mobilize the union membership behind a strike, pull it. Most of our efforts in the unions have been efforts to achieve this mobilization. This was correct because in an isolated struggle between the union and company, a solid union membership was almost sure to win. We habitually made "do-something" speeches. We were for picket lines to enforce union demands whenever we felt the union was strong enough. And in most cases all a union needed to be strong enough was to throw out its chest.

Today, the situation is somewhat different. Something new has been added. A new restriction, a new obstacle. For example, the Stalinists and reactionaries are whooping up incentive pay as the only means of getting raises. Our answer cannot be made in the old spirit: "the hell with the WLB and Smith-Connally--we'll close down the shop till the boss gives us our raise." Nor can it be: "never mind the raise; we'll content ourselves with better conditions." Our only answer is the one we give to ourselves: "incentive pay will weaken the union; we'll get raises when the no-strike pledge is rescinded and the WLB is abolished." It is not an easy answer to explain, but it is the only one we can give.

In my opinion, there are four main conclusions for Party trade unionists to draw:

1. We must be a great deal more cautious toward strikes. This does not at all mean that we are against strikes, but that we recognize, and explain, that immensely greater strength is needed to win a strike today. Slow-downs, or even 1-hour sitdowns, however, are still feasible.
2. Our education of the union rank and file must reflect the changes that have taken place. We must explain, in virtually the terms we use to ourselves, why they must stick all the closer to the union in spite of the helplessness of the union to get them raises.
3. We must concentrate much more attention than heretofore on demands for better working conditions. We have been inclined to regard them, in practice, as secondary.
4. We must try harder than ever to form Progressive Groups within the unions. One of the main policies of such a group must be to demand an independent labor party, not only for national elections but local ones also, which can be entered by one or two locals. (We can learn something from the Stalinists' CIO Community Councils). Another policy of a progressive group must be aggressive political opposition toward the top leadership, with the aim of removing them from office. Naturally, we must be very circumspect in handling this anti-leadership campaign, but we must prepare to launch it.

All four of these conclusions can be summed up: we must become more political in the unions. Undoubtedly one of the reasons for our lamentable record of recruitment from the factories (until very recently) in which we have union fractions is that our people, for the most part, play the role of pure-and-simple trade union militants. Our fractions tend to be overly concerned with "union minutiae", discussing and taking a position on dozens of issues of minor importance, and not concerned enough with Marxism and how to propagate it, and particularly with recruitment into the Marxist Party. We have become too much, in some respects, a trade-union party with our union members functioning in the Party as trade-

unionists, instead of functioning in the trade-unions as Party members.

This has been pointed out many times before: the last New York City Convention discussed little else. And we are making progress. In the beginning of our proletarianization, we had trouble because our members became bureaucrats, got posts on executive committees but ignored the rank and file. We put a stop to that, but found that we still lacked something: we didn't recruit. Well, we made another turn, and while recruiting prospects have definitely brightened, there is still lots and lots of room for improvement. We have got to be Marxist politicians in the union movement, as well as militants. We must tell them much more of our program, of what we actually think about current events. We must constantly, by resolutions, in speeches, and in daily conversations, bring out political front and the union's welfare. When a militant draws close to us, it must be to US, not to only a progressive bloc.

The union militants need a new type of weapon--political demands (and political strikes). We have already reacted to this need in our newly raised slogan: Nationalize the Mines Under Workers' Control. (It would be better as: Nationalize the Mines Under Control of the UMWA). It would be a mistake to justify the raising of this slogan today by the fact that the mines are nominally in the hands of the government. We would continue this slogan if the mines were turned back to the operators tomorrow; we would have raised it, I hope, if the government had not perpetrated its legal sham. The correct motivation, and it reflects the problem before the labor movement as a whole, is the realization by the most advanced militants in the UMWA that the traditional and usual tactics, strike against the operators, no longer suffices. The fight is no longer confined, in the immediate sense in which it was, to the economic field; political demands and preparation are needed to win. The nationalization slogan, for us, has changed from a propaganda to an agitational slogan. The struggle has widened and deepened.

B/6/45

Joe LEONARD

A WORKERS' CLASS IN NEW YORK

INTRODUCTION:

AFTER a year of activity in our concentration, our group developed to a point where it was faced with an immediate and serious problem. Our experience is undoubtedly not unique, and the solution of this problem is, in a sense, crucial to the further work of our organization. By their activity, our comrades very soon became widely known as militant trade unionists. Their agitation at union meetings and on daily questions which arose on the floor in some cases earned for them the label of L.A. men. There developed around our comrades a number of individuals who consulted them on trade union questions, who read L.A., were enthusiastic about it and identified our comrades with L.A. It is easy to feel a sense of satisfaction and achievement at having this influence over good trade union members even though it was not concretized politically. Doing only this would, however, convert us from an active political vanguard into a strong trade union group and nothing more. Our problem was, therefore, to educate these trade union contacts politically, solidify their relations to us by our political ideas and eventually recruit them into the organization. We want to emphasize here that one of the most fruitful ways of bridging this seemingly insurmountable gap between comrades and contacts and at the same time to expedite the later integration of the latter into the party is through the contact class. There the framework is provided for integrated and ramified treatment of ideas such as is difficult to duplicate in quick moments taken from work or in the informal atmosphere of a pseudo-social arrangement. We must learn to bridge the gap if our work is not to remain organizationally and politically sterile. The following is the attempt of one of our groups at such a solution.

PROBLEM:

To bring a number of concentration closer to an understanding of our conviction and to recruit them.

BACKGROUND:

1. Comrades A. & B. had already conducted extended discussions at work - primarily around union issues but around some political issues as well, like the Stalinists, war profiteers, Negroes, Miners, etc.
2. Comrades A. & B., not known as members of the Party but identified with L.A. Stalinists denunciations of our comrades as Trotskyites lead to such remarks from sympathizers as: "If that is what the Trotskyites want, then I'm a Trotskyite too."
3. Approval of L.A. by sympathizer M. (a girl with very limited experience in trade unions and no contact with formal politics) who spent some 10-15 minutes reading aloud the transitional program of L.A. to her friends and expressing unmistakable approval.
4. Comrade A. had three contacts, all girls, G, M, and V.
Comrade B had two contacts -- one boy and one girl.

Comrade C developed an excellent Negro girl contact within a week after she had gotten the job.

ORGANIZATION OF CLASS:

1. Comrade A. brought G. to forum lecture after informing her that she was attending herself.

2. Comrade A. informed G. that after inquiry she found that L.A. would be willing to send a teacher for a few girls. The girls expressed great enthusiasm for a class.

3. There remained the problem of making technical arrangements for the class, inviting the contacts of the other comrades and bringing them all together. At this time one of the contacts was fired as a result of Stalinist pressure. It was necessary to assure the contacts that the class would be secure.

4. A letter was therefore drawn up, addressed to comrade A. stating that L.A. was gratified that the paper had elicited interest in discussion and that it therefore invited a number of workers to a class. It described the manner in which the class was to take place, i.e., consisting of both lectures and discussion and it also briefly outlined the scope of the class.

5. At this point, Comrade A. told the group that she was a member. Her prestige immediately rose. One of the contacts who is biologically a "liberal" was somewhat put out but she agreed to come to the class, nevertheless. Contact V. and M. were changed to another shift and found it impossible to attend.

6. The class started with five contacts.

NATURE OF THE CLASS:

1. Prepared a number of copies of State & Revolution, Communist Manifesto, SOCIALISM, UTOPIAN AND SCIENTIFIC, Lenin's IMPERIALISM, etc., to be handed out to class before appropriate lesson.

2. Used Temple outline on ABC of Marxism as an aid. Discussions were very simple, filled in with as many concrete examples as possible from shop life and American history. Avoided "biblical" terminology as a substitute for explanation.

3. Partly lecture and partly questions and answers. Questions posed by teacher, used as an aid in channelizing the discussions and to help pupils come to desired conclusions on their own.

REACTION TO CLASS:

Girls very interested and enthusiastic. One of these contacts asks to bring a friend and both attend regularly. She attends and gradually comes over to our viewpoint.

The serious enthusiasm of the contacts is the most encouraging feature of the whole venture. They take the reading assignments seriously and when unable to fulfill them, feel obliged to answer for their failure. One of the night workers goes to work late so as not to miss the discussion. The discussion most enjoyed was on Marxian Economics. One of the contacts consistently asked, "Well, what can we do about all this?"

Three people recruited at the end of the class. Those who do not join remain intelligent exponents of our views in the shop and outside.

New contacts being made regularly with several of them attending the party school which is now functioning.

Louise BROWN

Note on CENTRISM IN OUR PARTY, by Arthur Stein:

This article was written early in July - for publication in the party bulletin. It was not intended as a contribution for the pre-convention discussion, and, in its present form, cannot constitute that. Moreover, if I were to write a document on the same question today, I would change the emphasis on certain points, use different heading, etc., etc.

ARTHUR STEIN