

Bulletin

OF THE WORKERS PARTY

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Answers to Questions on the Cadre

By Ernest Erber

Up until now, the discussion has revealed that the concept of the cadre has remained as difficult to pin down as a greased pig. Much of this is due to the fact that the supporters of the NC resolution and myself use the same terms to speak of different things. As a result, it often appears as if it is all a misunderstanding or at best, a terminological dispute. I hope to "hogtie" the greased pig in this article and prove that there is far more involved.

1. What does the word "cadre" mean?

In general usage, the word means a "framework" or "skeleton" around which something else is built. Its most frequent use outside of our movement is in the army. Here it refers to a group of trained and seasoned soldiers, mostly noncoms, around whom a new regiment is formed. The cadre becomes the skeleton and framework of the regiment. The cadre has the duty of giving the regiment a backbone. It also has the duty of training and integrating the new recruits who form the rest of the outfit. Such a "cadre man" in a regiment wears no special insignia and gets no special pay. He is considered a "cadre man" on the basis of his record. Yet if he falls down on the job he will catch a lot more hell than a rookie precisely because he knows better and he consequently carries a greater responsibility. The "cadre" in the army is therefore no special organization but a concept which covers a certain type of soldier, i.e. the trained and experienced one.

2. How have we used the word "cadre" in the past?

We have used it pretty much in the same sense as the army has. The cadre of the party was thought of as those comrades who by their training, experience, devotion and activity formed the backbone of the party. A "cadre" man in the party was someone who placed the party above all other interests in life, who was accepted in the eyes of his fellow members as a responsible person who would help keep a branch, fraction or higher committee of the party together and on its toes and who would both by example and direct effort teach and train the newer members of the party. It is because of these qualifications of a "cadre man" that the cadre and leadership were always connected, though they are not identical. A member who was not thought of as "cadre material" could not be considered for the post of branch organizer, member of the executive committee of a branch or as a leader of a party trade union fraction. The only exceptions would be in cases where a new worker member of a branch may be placed on the branch executive committee for purposes of training him. If he made good, he would be considered part of the cadre. Sometimes two or three qualified comrades who are definitely "cadre men" are left off a branch executive committee in order to make room for promising comrades who have never had that necessary experience and training. In this case, though formally rank and file members, the party expects more of such "cadre men" in the ranks than of some new member on

the executive committee or of some old member who has revealed that he is unreliable or irresponsible. The branch executive committee will calmly turn over this, that or the other responsible job to such a "cadre man" in the ranks and know that he will handle it properly. The word "cadre" was therefore a concept that applied to a certain type of a party man - a trained, experienced and responsible revolutionist. The cadre had no distinct boundary. One could not say, "The cadre extends exactly up to comrade X and all with less qualifications do not belong." It would not have such a hard and fast line of demarcation precisely because it was not a special inner-organization but a concept. No one was chosen for the cadre. A member nominated himself by his conduct. Every cadre man was not as good as the other. Within the cadre itself there were almost as many levels and gradations as there were cadre men. Comrade Y would qualify to be sent to Chicago to become a party organizer but comrade Z would not be considered for this job but would qualify as a branch organizer in the New York City organization.

3. What did we mean by a "cadre party"?

The first stage every party must go through is that of propaganda. In this stage it hammers out its basic programmatic concepts and carries them to as many politically educated workers as it can reach. One of the important features of this stage of a party's development is to hammer out a cadre. The members of the party in this stage are attracted by the advanced ideas of the party and the party membership as a whole stands on a high level of theoretical knowledge and discipline. Workers do not join merely because the party stands for socialism or that the party line proved itself in the class struggle. Almost all who join in this stage are therefore considered to be of "cadre material." The organization in this stage is not yet a real party, not even a "small edition" of one. It is merely the skeleton or framework of a party. At a later stage it recruits on a different basis, on the basis of its agitation and activity. The new worker members recruited in the class struggle will be gathered around the cadre. When sufficient numbers are recruited they begin to fill out the organization to party proportions. That is why it was proper in the past stage to speak of our organization as a "cadre party." Today, however, we are in a different stage. Today we recruit on a different basis. Today we should be recruiting workers (and are in some branches) who are not cadre material and may not be for a long time (many of them never will). They are the flesh and blood that must be added to our cadre to make us a whole party. That is why it is proper, today, to speak of a cadre as the backbone of our party.

4. What gave rise to the present discussion on the cadre?

The discussion on the "cadre" grew out of the discussion on the "lack of forces" that developed in the last two years of the war. A widespread feeling existed that our party was not taking full advantage of the many opportunities before us. Comrade Shachtman held that our shortcomings were unavoidable due to our "lack of forces" as a result of the heavy losses to the army, above all, the loss of so many of our National Committee members and branch

leaderships. The great gains of our Labor Action and of our comrades in the labor movement, along with the beginning of recruitment from the shops, were not being utilized, according to Shachtman, because of this lack of trained comrades in the local leadership. One need but read page 15 of the NC Resolution on the Party to see the problems listed that arose from this situation. Immediately following this comes the sentence, "The key to the solution of these and similar problems - which are problems created by our growth, by our progressive change from an existence to which it would be fatal to return - lies in the formation and consolidation of a basic party cadre." The emphasis was not, therefore, on the need to create a cadre that would maintain the political direction of our party and would harden us politically against the SWP, but rather to solve the question of an inadequate and inexperienced leadership. With the return of our soldier comrades, the emphasis upon the "lack of forces" as the reason for a cadre (a reason that was entirely valid) has been dropped. In its place, the sole motivation now is the matter of giving the party a political backbone. It is necessary to understand this evolution of the "cadre discussion" in the NC in order to see how it began with a concept of the cadre that at least had something in common with our use of the word in the past and has since developed away from it to an entirely new concept. The "cadre" question was raised in answer to our "lack of trained people." Combined with it as a subordinate aspect was the concept that we need a cadre based on programmatic solidarity. The question of "trained people" has disappeared from the cadre discussion of the NC majority and the subordinate and incorrect aspect of the cadre based on political agreement has become its central theme.

5. What is Shachtman really aiming at?

It is my opinion that Shachtman did not have a clear concept of what he meant by a cadre based on programmatic agreement when he first raised it. In my opinion, the development of the discussion on this question has, far from clarifying it, added to the confusion of the majority. (Those least confused are those who most identify the cadre with a majority faction.) However, one thing that has emerged clearly is the aim of Shachtman in the cadre discussion. It is Shachtman's aim to instill in the more politically educated layers of those who agree with the party's program a spirit of aggressiveness and pride which gives our party a political backbone, not merely in the Political Committee but down through all sub-divisions into each branch and each branch committee. It is Shachtman's aim to end the situation which prevails in so many branches where a critic of the party program will get up and submit it to sharp criticism and a dozen members of the branch who voted for that program will turn around and look to some NC member in the meeting to get up and defend the party program - as though it were his business but not their's. It is Shachtman's aim to end this fantastic sense of inferiority so many of our members have developed toward the SWP, based upon the wildly exaggerated stories of the SWP's progress (peddled for political ends by the Johnson faction) and to put our party in a frame of mind where we will go over to the political offensive against the SWP, not merely in the pages of The New International, but wherever we come into contact with them. It is Shachtman's aim to drive home to

our politically educated comrades the fullest understanding of the vast superiority of our program over the miserable record of the SWP in all theoretical and political questions and to complete the education of those new comrades in our ranks who do not yet fully understand the party program. With these aims I find myself in more than mere agreement. I want to dedicate the main efforts of the NI and the Educational Department to their realization. (However, more is needed than education in this narrow sense to achieve these aims.) But why is it necessary to refer to the awakening and alerting of the politically educated comrades who agree with the majority as "the formation and consolidation of a basic party cadre?" Or does Shachtman mean more than this?

6. What harm can come from Shachtman's concept of a cadre?

In the first place, Shachtman's concept destroys an old, tested accepted concept of what a cadre is and replaces it with something that does not suffice to take its place, at best, or establishes something that is entirely harmful. If the cadre is identified with the alerted and mobilized supporters of the party program (including its distinctive features) than those comrades who in the past were considered "cadre men" but today are in political disagreement (specifically the Johnsonites) are no longer so considered. In the past, something followed from giving a person status as a cadre man. Likewise, something followed when a person was considered unfit to be considered "cadre material." In the past it was inconceivable to consider a member for branch organizer who was unfit to be a "cadre man." Being in the cadre and being out of the cadre were related to status. If comrade Z was in the movement ten years and was an exceptionally well developed revolutionist, knowing both politics and organization, but yet was "soul sick", tired, demoralized and barely kept up his membership he was not considered a cadre man. But something followed from such a judgment. He was not elected to any post or given any responsibility. The public opinion of the party was mobilized against him as a bad influence upon the party. What follows under Shachtman's concept of the cadre when he says that a Johnsonite cannot be a cadre man? How does it affect the status of such a member? Would he still be considered for responsible posts in the party? If he would, then Shachtman has used the word "cadre" to mean something it never meant. In this case the use of the word "cadre" has merely served to introduce confusion. Or would it follow, under Shachtman's concept, that someone who cannot be considered part of the cadre, cannot as a consequence be considered a reliable and responsible party member, and is not, consequently eligible to hold a responsible post? In this case, "cadre" is used as we have always used it. It is associated with status in the party. However, the cadre is narrowed down to those in political agreement with the main features of the party program. In this case those who disagree have no responsibilities but only rights to remain in the party and defend their point of view.

In the second place, Shachtman's concept of a cadre contradicts the concept of our party as an all inclusive revolutionary party, i.e., a party in which all revolutionary Marxists tendencies can exist on the basis of democratic centralism. (This assumes that Shachtman means by cadre more than merely the political

stimulation of those in political agreement with the party. This assumes that Shachtman maintains the old concept that the designation of "cadre man" gives a member status which being "out of the cadre" does not.) If the framework of the party is composed of those in agreement with the majority tendency, the other political tendencies are merely affiliated to the party but not an integral part of it. They are, in a sense, tolerated but not accepted. This not only violates our concept of an all-inclusive revolutionary party but also violates the concept of democratic centralism. The latter is based upon the view that a minority has obligations and responsibilities to the party, not merely rights to propagate its own views.

In the third place, Shachtman's concept prepares the party for (instead of setting it on guard against) disguised factionalism as an official party procedure and a subservience of the ranks to the leadership. I need not repeat, in the light of what I said was Shachtman's aim, that he does not seek to bring about such factionalism and subservience. But ideas have a logic of their own. Shachtman's ideas on the cadre can easily yield results he does not anticipate. In my opinion there is a strong probability that they will if the membership is not educated to be alert and check them. To identify the cadre with the active members of the majority point of view is to create an informal faction based on political agreement and activism. If only "cadre men" can be considered for posts, then every election in the party is a faction election - the "cadre" against all other tendencies. (Again I repeat, if Shachtman means that not being considered part of the cadre does not affect the status of a member - his availability for responsible posts, etc. - then it is a complete misuse of a word and the source of endless confusion.)

7. Does this mean a "Johnsonite" can occupy ANY post?

No, a member with as many political disagreements as Johnson cannot occupy any post in our party. Nor could a member with far fewer differences than Johnson. It is a matter of the nature of the differences and the nature of the post. Let me illustrate with an example from the union movement. Often an old AFL-man will turn up in a shop organized by the CIO. He is a union man to the core. Since the CIO has the shop he joins and throws himself into the job of building the union. However, he does not believe in industrial unionism. He is a believer in craft unionism. However, this does not prevent him from serving as a shop steward or a member of the executive board. He may even be elected as a trustee or to a post like treasurer or recording secretary. However, it would not be wise to make him president of the local. Nor would you select him to teach a class of new members on the principles of industrial unionism. Nor would you make him editor of the union paper. However, he could write for the paper on problems where he has no differences. He could teach a class on grievance procedure or the provisions of the contract.

There is plenty of responsible work for even those who disagree with the party as much as do the Johnson supporters. However, there are certain party posts which they cannot fill. For instance,

the most devoted party member who agrees with Johnson's views would from the party's view, make a poor branch educational director. He may, however, make an excellent branch organizer or trade union director.

8. Can a "Johnsonite" make as good a cadre man as a majority supporter?

No, he cannot. A person having a whole series of differences with position of the party can be a devoted and active cadre man only despite his differences. A person who holds that the party's program is wrong cannot feel as enthusiastic about building that party as one who feels that the program is right. A Johnsonite has, therefore, a heavier burden to bear. However, the party must demand that he give to the party in proportion to his training and experience despite his differences. The number of functions which Johnsonites cannot fulfill appears so important today because of our isolation from the class struggle. However, as our party grows and is transformed into an active force in the class struggle, the number of functions for those with the widest differences will increase, not diminish. Were we to go back to a propaganda group existence, the Johnsonites would have slight basis, not merely for membership in the cadre, but for membership in the party. However, we aim to go forward to an existence where our increasing participation in the class struggle will open up ever greater tasks which comrades can fulfill regardless of their differences.

9. But don't the differences of the Johnsonites force them to disruptive factionalism?

No, if the hyper-factional activity which some Johnson supporters carry on the year round were the inevitable and normal result of their political views, their views would be incompatible with membership in the party by that fact alone. The fact that there are a group of Johnson supporters who are exemplary in their devotion and loyalty to the party refutes the view that the conduct of the super-factional Johnson supporters is normal for those holding such views. There are any number of Johnsonites (those I choose to refer to as "Party-Johnsonites") whom I would gladly welcome into the cadre of any branch of which I was organizer.

10. Would the SWP Minorityites be part of the party cadre despite their political differences?

My concept of the cadre would include all those who show by their conduct and activity that they are part of the party's framework. The cadre would be no less politically inclusive than the party itself. Whether they would be part of the cadre in Shachtman's conception is another matter. Shachtman says that they would. This could only be justified upon political grounds by arguing that their differences are not as great as those of the Johnsonites. Yet can they be relied upon to do as good a job against the SWP on theoretical and political subjects as a supporter of the party position?

10. Who would form the cadre of the united party if we fused with the SWP?

Such a party would be an all-inclusive revolutionary party, i.e. it would be organized upon our concept of the party, not Cannon's. The very possibility for such a party to exist and function would require that the cadre be an all-inclusive cadre. Upon Shachtman's concept, there would be two cadres, Cannon's and ours'. How would these differ from factions? Shachtman's concept of the cadre contradicts the concept of the united party which we advanced in the negotiations. Our conceptions of the united party were for the integration of the minority (ex-WP) in all the activities and responsibilities of party life with the reservation of the right to our own faction and faction organ, when and if required. This meant that elections to branch committees, etc. would take place upon a non-factional basis. (The NC would, of course, be established with a political majority and minority in the traditional manner.)

THE C.P., CAPITALISM AND BUREAUCRATIC COLLECTIVISM

By Arthur Stein

The socialist revolution has already been postponed very much in excess of the anticipations of the founders of the socialist movement. Lenin and Trotsky expected the victory of the socialist movement earlier; the Fourth International expected decisive revolutionary socialist struggles at the end of the second world war. And as a result of the prolonged failure of the socialist revolution, the system of exploitation has kept on living. But no social organism can live indefinitely without changes, and capitalism was no exception. Our party recognized this fact in its new conception of the national question. In effect, it recognized that conditions arose which no longer corresponded to the capitalism of 1939, which we already at that time termed a capitalism in death agony.

And side by side with the existence of capitalist countries of this type (France, Italy, Germany, etc.) there is a country with a social system which, while not socialist in any sense, we have also recognized to have no capitalist tendencies. We called this new phenomenon "bureaucratic collectivism."

So far, when asked for the exact social roots of this bureaucratic collectivism, we have never gone further than to explain the bureaucratic degeneration of a workers state, which in turn ended up by taking on a new substance. In this article, I shall attempt to go into this matter a little deeper.

The fact that the degeneration of the workers state was due to its isolation has always been a part of our formulations on this point. What I wish to add here is that bureaucratic collectivism was also the direct result of the decay of international capitalism. The failure of the workers state alone cannot explain the failure of capitalism in Russia. The victory and the subsequent defeat of the workers' revolution, taken by themselves, tell us nothing about the failure of capitalist restoration. The explanation for this failure can be found only in the fact that capitalism on a world scale was too weak, too old, too decayed to allow for, let us say, a Japanese development of Russia.

In the Communist Manifesto, the traditional slogan of the alternatives of "socialism or barbarism" is phrased in a statement by Marx that all class struggles resolve themselves either in the revolutionary reconstruction of society, or in the common ruin of the contending classes. In Russia, the victory of the counter-revolution ruined the working class without restoring the capitalists. Today, therefore, finds the classes in "common ruin". While the capitalists remain expropriated, free labor has become slave labor. The most elementary political democratic rights have become non-existent. The struggle for life itself, taking place against a background of extreme poverty and general misery, has taken the place of the traditional working class interests in politics and working conditions.

In Russia, thus, the social crisis has resolved itself into barbarism. And barbarism, here, has become organized and relatively stabilized into bureaucratic collectivism.

Does that mean that bureaucratic collectivism is "progressive" as compared to capitalism? Only if progress is made synonymous with the passing of time! But such a formulation would be totally misleading. Bureaucratic collectivism is post-capitalist, and in Russia it has achieved a vitality and a stability of which capitalism is no longer capable. It has solved certain of the formal (not human) contradictions of the old system, especially those that are connected with the typically capitalist anarchy of production.

Nothing has caused greater confusion recently than the several attempts to estimate the relationship between international Stalinism and capitalism. Specifically, the question that is debated now among us whether or not the CP is "anti-capitalist". Due to the present state of world politics, this question cannot be answered with equal lack of equivocation for all countries.

In those countries of Eastern Europe which are under Red Army military occupation and upon which Russia has immediate imperialist designs, the CP has definitely played an anti-capitalist role. It has supported and carried out measures which have replaced capitalist social relations with the social relations of bureaucratic collectivism. Territory which is intended to become part of the Russian empire politically is made to conform with Russia socially: the capitalist ruling class of Eastern Europe is being replaced by the ruling bureaucracy of the Kremlin.

But in France, in England, in the United States - is the CP in these countries "anti-capitalist" or not? What we now have to consider is the role played by the CP in countries lying outside of the immediate orbit of Russian imperialism.

This question, from our point of view, assumes immediate importance in France for the purpose of determining our position in regard to the slogan of "CP-SP To Power". This combination of a social-democratic party and a Stalinist party makes it necessary to review the differences between these two political tendencies. This review will also bring the matter of the "anti-capitalism" of the CP into a clearer focus.

The SP, since it itself can only exist under conditions of bourgeois democracy, stands for the maintenance, and usually also the extension of this democracy. Further, it is the role of the social democracy to represent workers' immediate interests within the framework of capitalist reformism. In a sense, it can be said that we are no more than "SP plus", that is, we stand for what the SP stands for in regard to democracy and workers' immediate needs, plus our revolutionary (i.e. beyond - capitalism) program. For these reasons, the SP, though not revolutionary, can legitimately be called a workers' party.

But can the same be said for the CP?

The only basis upon which such a statement could possibly be made is the undeniable fact that CP policy is often sensitive to the pressure of its working class following. But this sensitiveness, it is important to remember, has extremely inflexible ceilings: the interests of the Russian bureaucracy. All decisive CP policy is formulated above these ceilings (i.e. it is formulated by the bureaucracy), with only details of the particular form of the application of this policy being determined under pressure from below. And since the Russian bureaucracy, being a class of exploiters, is notorious for its anti-proletarian interests, the decisive content of all CP policy must be anti-proletarian.

Thus, our policy must differentiate basically between the SP and other social-democrats on the one hand, and the CP on the other.

The British Labor Party claims that it will do away with capitalism. But we know that it is too much tied to capitalism to carry out this promise. And insofar as it does, half-heartedly, carry out parts of the promise, we support it and push it forward. On the whole we can say "LP to power - we want you to show everyone your impotence." To say the same to the CP, however, would be absurd and suicidal. The CP is not impotent to carry out its promises. It is in no way tied to capitalism and, if it fits in with its pro-Russian designs, will not hesitate to rebuild, sporadically and here-and-there perhaps, along totalitarian, non-capitalist lines. And since all such rebuilding must be anti-socialist in tendency, we cannot support it, much less push it forward.

Here, then, is the answer to our question. The CP is anti-capitalist wherever it has a realistic alternative to capitalism, that is, it is anti-capitalist in the countries that are being annexed by Russia. In all other countries, it is non-capitalist. In its role as foreign representative of the Kremlin, while not (in an immediate sense) actually representing a positive tendency for a different social order, it is, nevertheless, totally uninhibited by the political and economic boundaries of the capitalist framework.

The Russian experience has taught us that all forms of post-capitalist organization need not be progressive or socialist in tendency. Barbarism, too, needs to organize. Barbarism, too can nationalize. The CP in France, being the representative of a bureaucratic collectivist class, ultimately also may represent the historic alternative to socialism: the alternative of barbarism. And I am not in favor of advancing barbarism to power.

WHAT ARE "FACTORY COMMITTEES"?

By Ernest Erber

In the Minority Resolution submitted for our convention by Comrade J. R. Johnson, entitled "Resolution on the American Question", the main task of our party for the next period is set forth as follows:

"Propaganda for the factory committee, i.e. for the self-mobilization of the masses is the core of the transitional program. Unless this is the center of the party's propaganda and agitation, the slogan of Worker's Control of Production is a meaningless abstraction." (p. 16 of Bulletin #5)

The resolution does not explain what is meant by "factory committees." As a result, the discussion which this proposal has evoked in our ranks has created more confusion than enlightenment. This brief article is devoted to an attempt to throw some light on the question.

The term "factory committees" appeared during the first World War and the revolutionary upheavals in Europe that followed it. It was used to designate the movement toward rank-and-file, on-the-job organization in the shops which had two main aims: (1) to short-circuit the bureaucratic officialdom of the trade unions and secure militant action by control from the ranks and (2) to go beyond the traditional methods of union action in solving the workers pressing economic needs by securing for the workers a voice in organizing production.

Each country saw the "factory committees" take a somewhat different form and emphasize somewhat different demands. The four principal countries in which "factory committees" played a role were: Russia, Germany, Italy and England.

In Russia the "factory committees" sprang up everywhere as a result of the Febbruary Revolution. Outside of the main industrial centers, chiefly St. Petersburg and Moscow, the Russian workers had very little trade union organization. Even in the two largest centers the trade unions led a fugitive existence, constantly being outlawed by the government and leading an illegal existence from time to time. "Factory committees" therefore emerged as a powerful force independent of the organized trade unions and, in large measure, due to the weakness of the latter. However, they did not maintain a completely independent existence. With the rapid growth of the trade unions from February to the October Revolution and with the election of factory delegates to the Workers Councils (Soviets), the "factory committees" led an existence that was increasingly intertwined with that of the unions, on the one hand, and that of the Workers Councils, on the other. The role from the outset was a revolutionary one. The breakdown of Russian economy (in large measure due to the sabotage of the industrialists by means of lock-outs and other efforts to break the back of the revolution) forced the factory committees to establish a control-

ling power over production in their shop by demanding that the management "open the books" and give an accounting of financial resources, orders on hand, raw materials available, etc. By exercising this power the "factory committees" kept production going despite the industrialists.

In Germany the "factory committees" were organized as a result of the openly patriotic support which the trade union officialdom, under the political guidance of the Social Democratic party, gave to the Kaiser's government in the war. The trade union officialdom "called off" the class struggle for the duration. While the cost of living rose, the workers were forbidden to strike for higher wages by their leaders. As always happens when the unions desert their members, the workers sought other channels through which to press their demands. The result was a network of rank-and-file committees in the shops made up of the revolutionary shop stewards (revolutionare Obleute). The highly politicalized background of the German workers gave this movement a pronounced political and revolutionary character from the very beginning. It was a revolutionary, anti-war movement in addition to an economic weapon of the workers. It led the great Berlin metal workers strike in the winter of 1917-18 which put forth advanced political demands and declared its solidarity with the Bolshevik Revolution. It organized the general strike and took a leading part in the mass demonstrations that overthrew the Kaiser's government in November 1918. The leaders of the movement were prominently connected with either the Independent Socialist Party or the Spartacus League, later to become the German Communist party. Even after the revolutionary rising of January 1919 was defeated, the Weimar Republic had to recognize this powerful force represented in industry by the "factory committees" and give it a legal status which required that the employers deal with it. Wherever the "factory committees" came under Social Democratic influence they receded to playing a role as agencies for collective bargaining and were absorbed to some degree in the trade union structure. However, during the crisis of 1923 they revived once more as a powerful revolutionary force around which the entire mass movement revolved. With the failure of the Communist Party to lead a struggle for power, the "factory committees" again degenerated into ordinary shop trade union bodies, affiliated with few exceptions to the reformist trade unions.

In Italy the "factory committees" grew out of the anarchist traditions of the Italian working class. The anarchist doctrine which taught that it was the task of the workers to abolish the capitalist state power and replace it, not with a workers state, but with local workers "communes" organizing production, heavily influenced the "factory committee" movement in Italy. The "factory committees" did not merely establish "workers control of production" but seized the factories, drove out the capitalist management, and proceeded to organize production under their own management. The story of how and why this movement failed would carry us too far afield from the theme of this article. However, the Italian "factory committees" were the outgrowth of a trade union movement with anarcho-syndicalist coloration (and what is more, a trade union movement that had been anti-war and had continued the

struggle during wartime) and their emergence in the revolutionary situation of 1919-20 gave them a frankly and avowedly revolutionary from the outset.

In England the "factory committees" took the form of what was known as the "Shop Stewards Movement". The shop steward had been a trade union representative in the shop with but nominal powers in the pre-war set up. However, the trade union officialdom in England, just as in Germany, had deserted the workers during the war, except to exhort them to produce more for the war effort. As a result, just as in Germany, a rank and file movement started with the purpose of fighting for the workers needs. The stewards of a plant would get together and organize a shop stewards council. The council would contact other councils and form a contact committee of stewards' councils. Out of this grew a well-knit organization that covered the entire country, that published its own press and that, for a time, eclipsed the official trade union structure in importance. However, due to the absence of a revolutionary situation in England, the shop steward movement never was more than a militant trade union movement which in addition to its strike actions, made advanced political demands which were revolutionary only by implication. The movement grew out of the openly pro-capitalist role which the labor leadership was forced to play as a result of its support of the government's war effort. When the official trade union movement began the great strike struggles of 1919 (miners, dockets, etc.) the shop steward movement folded up and the old labor officialdom again gained control. The tradition of the shop steward movement was not lost, however. It continued as a vast rank-and-file progressive movement to win the unions for a militant program, known as the "Minority Movement".

The brief analysis of the role of "factory committees" in the 1917-23 period when they first appeared indicates out of what different conditions they can arise and what different roles they can play. Sometimes they are independent of the unions and even dual to them. Sometimes they are an integral part of the union structure. Sometimes they are frankly revolutionary and sometimes they are merely militantly trade unionist. Sometimes they exist in response to a special need for a short period and sometimes for several years.

In the light of this it is necessary that our party clearly understand what it means when it speaks of "factory committees." Out of what conditions which prevail at present in the United States (or that we can foresee for the next several years) would a "factory committee" spring up?

It would certainly not spring up because the trade unions are too few, weak and small as in Russia in 1917. On the contrary, the trade union movement of this country is larger than any other in the world, now or in the past. As indicated by the drive to organize the South, it is still expanding by organizing the unorganized.

Would it perhaps arise in an effort of the workers to seek a new channel of struggle because the official trade union structure

no longer can be used for this purpose? This might have taken place during the war when the unions were tied to a "no strike" pledge and accepted the wage freeze. But it will not take place now. On the contrary, the great strike wave just concluded proves that even the Murray leadership is capable of leading large-scale strikes. The victory of Reuther in the UAW underscores the fact that the trade union structure is highly responsive to pressure from below. One could hardly, even with the greatest effort, imagine a situation less suited for the emergence of "factory committees" as substitutes for an impotent trade union movement than the present one.

Would the "factory committees" perhaps emerge in the coming period as a result of a revolutionary situation which developed so rapidly as to by-pass the official trade union set up? We are sure Comrade Johnson does not hold this view, not really. What may happen by 1950 no one can say. Nor need we say it now. Our resolution must gear the party for 1946-48. The immediate economic prospect is for a relatively high level of employment, for economic strikes led by the unions and for a growing development of the American labor movement in the direction of independent political action.

However, perhaps Comrade Johnson does not mean that members of our party should conduct a campaign on behalf of "factory committees" in the unions nor that Labor Action should call upon labor militants to organize "factory committees" in this period. What Comrade Johnson may have in mind is that our press should educate the more politically advanced workers to an understanding of the role which "factory committees" can play in a revolutionary period as an important part of their education in revolutionary Socialism. With this no one can disagree. Our enlarged Labor Action should devote many articles to this theme. But this cannot be the main function of our party in the coming period as Johnson proposes, unless we see our task as that of a propaganda circle or educational society. If we are a fighting political movement that intervenes in the life of the working class with our own proposals to solve the tasks of the day, we must proceed from the reality of today and tomorrow and not from the probability of five years from now.

* Even our general transitional demands like "open the books", "workers control of production" and "nationalization of industry" must proceed today on the basis of the existing labor movement. We do not merely want a staff of accountants from the international office of the UAW to inspect the books of GM. We want the shop stewards and shop committees to have the right on a department and plant level to inspect the "work load" schedule, the "cost of production schedule", the productivity of labor figures for each operation and each machine, the local production control statistics of the cost accounting system, etc. This is the meaning of "workers control of production" in its first stage. From the first stage (right to inspect) will come the second stage, the right to veto, to countermand, to counter-propose. If the workers can enforce the latter, they will have more than "a finger in the pie." They will have emerged as a dual power to that of management in the plant.

For general educational purposes, the slogan of "factory committees" is good. But for our intervention as a living movement in the developing class struggle we must proceed from the particular and not the general. We cannot follow the example of Russia, Italy, Germany or England, except in a general way. We must thoroughly understand American conditions and proceed from them. Such an understanding will reveal that there are neither prospects nor need for "factory committees" independent of the union structure in the coming period and that the general slogan of "factory committees" is meaningless as a banner in the labor movement today. Let's keep in mind the great revolutionary lessons of 1917-23 on "factory committees" and let's keep in mind our general strategical objectives, but let's keep our feet on the ground and proceed today from what is - not what we wish it to be.

By Comrade Jones of the Buffalo Branch

Due to the differences of opinion which exist in the Buffalo Branch of the party and which have led to the disintegration of the Buffalo branch, I am stating herein my positions on the American and Negro questions because I think these are related to the situation in the Buffalo branch. It is my sincere desire that this document may be used to eliminate these differences of opinion so that old comrades and also new comrades who come into the party may be integrated into the party on a correct political position so that they will be able to develop and do concrete revolutionary work in their trade unions and Negro organizations and may be able to lead the workers from these organizations into the revolutionary movement and into the Workers Party.

I will give three reasons why the Buffalo branch was practically non-existent from the first week of November 1945 to the second week of March 1946.

1 - It was a tendency on the part of some of the older comrades to be hostile to the approach of any concrete organizational work recommended by Negro or other American white workers. This attitude was so open that the white workers themselves soon developed the feeling that these people wanted only to dictate the policies of the party without giving the workers the opportunity to teach them, through their own experiences that they had had in their shops and in their every day life, how to apply their Marxist theories and their party's political position dealing with the American worker so that they would be able to see why it was necessary to join a revolutionary party and fight in a determined effort to overthrow capitalism.

2 - The leading comrades of the branch seemingly set themselves up in a sectarian group and operated in the most extreme bureaucratic way. They attempted to send workers on assignments that they themselves refused to carry out giving as an excuse merely that they refused to go. They left all physical work for the newer comrades who were workers in the shop and who believed that it was the duty of all working people, even the theoreticians to pitch in and help to do this physical labor.

3 - When the Negro comrades approached the branch leaders and stated the fact that race prejudice existed in the branch to the degree that it could be openly seen by all of the colored comrades and even by some who were extremely close to coming into the party, the leaders were extremely hostile to the Negro comrades and denied that such prejudice existed, even though they admitted that some of the points that the Negro comrades raised did actually happen. They were so hostile to the Negro comrades that when a recommendation was made to establish a Movement instead of a class amongst other colored workers, they howled to high heavens and said that it couldn't be done and that the Negro comrades were wasting their time, giving the newer comrades and workers from the shops the impression that the Workers Party does not need them but they could not manage without the party to defend them in their every day lives, to teach them how to handle grievances in the shop and to teach them how to emancipate themselves as a whole even though the supposed teachers had never had

any experience in doing concrete Negro work. Seemingly the majority of the colored comrades understood the Negro question better than the older comrades who were trying to substitute theory for experience. The colored comrades tried to tell them this but although prejudice existed in the branch, it was due to the fact that the older comrades had never lived with the colored comrades, had never had a complete social intercourse with them. For this reason they were not conscious of their prejudiced behavior. On the basis of these facts they still remained hostile to the colored comrades and to the American workers. This is the basis for the disintegration of the Buffalo branch.

After accepting party discipline to build a class amongst colored workers, I made the attempt and finally succeeded in establishing a Movement in this city although those same leading comrades claimed that according to their analysis, it couldn't be done. It has been the position of the leaders of the Buffalo branch and even of some of the leaders of the entire party, that I, Jones, should be able to recruit many workers to the party on the assumption of my popularity in the shop and my large following. Many attempts have been made by me to correct this position, stating that due to the lower political development of the steel workers with whom I associate daily who face discrimination in their shop, but who fight militantly and join the union, and organization on a racial base was necessary to be able to develop them along fundamental points of why they must participate in trade union work and why it is necessary for them to receive revolutionary teaching before bringing them into the party. Also, if the leaders of the Buffalo branch had a closer association with Negroes and really knew Negro needs, there would be a better relationship in the branch. If the comrades themselves learned how to apply their theory in carrying through social intercourse with Negroes and with other American workers, in a short period of time they could not only integrate the American worker but the Negroes as well.

I feel, as a Negro, that so long as such happenings exist, we will not be able to integrate either the white or Negro worker. It may be due to the political position of these people who seem to be so hostile to all workers and to the political line that they follow in the party.

I am certain from reading and studying of the majority's position on the American and the Negro questions that I am unable to put these theories into practise in recruiting white and Negro workers and in integrating them into the party. I find from the minority's position that I can apply this position much easier in practise in recruiting and integrating both types of workers. There is one thing certain, that through the course of years which I have been in the party, I find not only that there has been no mass recruiting of white or Negro workers but there definitely has been no integrating of these workers, which proves to me one concrete thing in politics, that the said analysis on the American question is certainly false and that it is based on incorrect facts and that the Negro question from the majority's point of view is also based on incorrect facts and incorrect information

which makes the analysis completely false. I want to state my position clearly in saying that I am not a theoretician or an intellectual but a common American steel worker who, with a few years of experience has learned to apply the Marxist theory to the degree that I have recruited white and Negro workers to the party and have been able to bring the most backward element of workers closer to the revolutionary movement, than any theoretician in the Buffalo branch.

To be able to bring these potential members into the revolutionary movement I hope to see in this coming convention, a definite and a clear political line on these questions. I myself, after intense study of both positions, support the minority position on both of these questions. I would like to see the convention adopt said position so that the party will be able to throw off the present false political line and begin to build a mass revolutionary movement in this country.

AMENDMENT TO THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE RESOLUTION ON THE
UNITED STATES

INTRODUCTION

The following statement on the motivation, elaboration and application of the transitional program is submitted for consideration by the delegates to the national convention of the Workers Party for amendment, in the sense of this statement, of the National Committee Resolution on the United States. It is submitted in the name of the majority of the comrades of the San Francisco Bay Area Branch of the Workers Party.

ATOMIC ENERGY AND THE DEATH AGONY OF CAPITALISM

Atomic energy has given a new literal meaning to our characterization of capitalism in its death agony. In all its foulness, capitalism, before passing from the scene, threatens the pulverization of all civilization and life itself. Of all the capitalist countries it is the American colossus which developed and used the atomic bomb. The gigantic American machine reveals again, in the absence of Socialism, its terrible catastrophic potential. It is no exaggeration to declare that our generation stands at the cross roads of socialist revolution or planetary annihilation in World War 3.

THE PROLETARIAN CONQUEST OF POWER AND THE
PROLETARIAT

Our time cries out for the proletarian conquest of power. Consequently, a revolutionary party worthy of its name must constantly keep before itself this objective. In our day no politics can be revolutionary unless it is slanted to the aim of the proletarian conquest of power.

This aim, to be brought about by revolutionary methods of struggle, is the specific contribution of the revolutionary party to the consciousness of a proletariat as yet unaware of its historic task.

THE TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM AND THE PROLETARIAN CONQUEST OF
POWER

In order to overcome the contradiction between the maturity of the objective revolutionary conditions and the immaturity of the proletariat, a bridge is necessary between the present demands and the socialist program of the revolution. The validity of the transitional program is that it can be included in just such a bridge. Its demands stem from today's conditions and today's consciousness and lead unalterably to the one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat.

Unless the transitional program is slanted toward this conclusion it is not the kind of transitional program that we want.

We must constantly ask ourselves: We want a transition to what and how will this be achieved? To say that we must learn to link our transitional program "to the immediate needs of the masses as well as to our ultimate goal which is the establishment of a socialist United States" (National Committee Resolution) is not enough. "The establishment of a socialist United States" is too abstract a conclusion. It is not only a question of distinguishing ourselves from all kinds of reformists who are also for, or, at least, say they are for, the establishment of a socialist United States. More important is the elaboration of a transitional program in which is contained the specific revolutionary forms which develop toward the soviets during the revolutionary stage. "The whole transitional program" said Trotsky apropos America in 1938, "must fill up the gaps between conditions today and the soviets tomorrow."

THE TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM AND REVOLUTIONARY FORMS OF STRUGGLE

Soviets are the democratic organs of the people in the period of dual power. Their appearance signifies the direct posing of the proletarian conquest of power. Most likely, in the United States, soviets will go by some other name, some American equivalent like labor council, plant committee, etc. For our purpose, however, we shall continue to use the word "soviet" as in discussion among ourselves it has a precise and comprehensible meaning.

"To fill up the gaps between the conditions today and the soviets tomorrow" means the inclusion in the transitional program of revolutionary democratic forms in close association with the specific transitional demands. These anticipate the soviets of tomorrow. Thus the demand for a sliding scale of wages and hours presupposes access to "business secrets" and a knowledge of profits, prices, wages and hours. But all this must be carried out by the shop committee or the trade union committee. Therefore: workers control through the shop committee. Agitation and propaganda for the purpose of evoking the initiative of the masses toward the creation of new and democratic forms competing with the ossified and bureaucratic institutions of the bourgeoisie and their labor lieutenants for control over all social categories help to provide the training, education and experience for the "Soviets of tomorrow". It is for this reason that factory or shop committees, committees on prices, committees on housing, workers defense groups, etc. take up such a large place in the transitional program of the Founding Congress of the Fourth International. The failure to discuss and include these in a resolution on the American question (National Committee) represents a most inadequate consideration of the transitional program.

It is not our purpose here to elaborate in detail a transitional program for the United States. Our aim is primarily to supply the motivation for and to indicate the general content of a transitional program and its place in the general activity of the party. However, some of the more obvious suggestions for a

program can be stated: workers control or trade union control of atomic energy (to insure its use for construction as against destruction) through plant, mine, laboratory and trade union committees (particularly committees from those establishments which are involved in the production of atomic energy); veterans control of housing for veterans through vet committees; workers, trade union, or community control of housing through workers, trade union, or community councils; trade union, farmers, and consumers control of prices through trade union, farmers and consumers committees (low prices at the expense of profits, the OPA is powerless before the offensive of big business); a sliding scale of wages, access to all "business secrets" including profits through factory or trade union committees; workers defense groups evolving out of the strike struggles and the reentry of the fascists on the American scene. These are some suggestions which can be considered for inclusion in a transitional program elaborated more fully by the party.

It is essential to encourage the initiative of the workers and the common people to form their own lower and "grass roots" committees which challenge the established bourgeois institutions of ownership and control with demands which invade the "sacred" bounds of capitalism. However, consciousness in the proletariat at the level of a comprehension of its historic task or at the level of the socialist solution through soviets is not possible without supplementing the transitional program with propaganda which explains and generalizes the workers experience and shows them the connection between that and socialist solution through soviets. The transitional program is essentially a program of radical experience for the workers. The party must, in addition, educate toward the unalterable conclusion: the proletarian conquest of power for the purpose of expropriating the bourgeoisie. It is this dual aspect of party activity, one inseparable from the other, which alone can supply revolutionary socialist consciousness.

TWO DANGERS IN THE ELABORATION OF A TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM

There are two dangers in the elaboration of a transitional program. One is sectarian abstraction due to a complete ignoring of the concrete and the other is to lose the general revolutionary line by an over adaptation to the local conditions.

In discussing the transitional program in 1938, Comrade Trotsky observed that the second danger was more real in the approach of the American comrades toward the transitional program. At that time the social crisis had already lasted 8-9 years and a mass fascist development seemed real. It was essential that the backward but virile American working class come to a realization of its historic task in time. It was a question of who would come to power first: the fascists or the workers; and who would crush whom: the fascist terror or the workers defense formations. The workers had to be moved boldly but not abstractly to sever its connections with the bourgeois parties and turn from the misleader-

ship of the labor bureaucrats to the honest leadership of a revolutionary party. As against long standing prejudices and reactionary traditions which tied the workers to bourgeois concepts, new revolutionary concepts had to be introduced which had their support in the objective revolutionary conditions. To introduce something new which counterposes itself to the all pervading bourgeois milieu is always difficult and may even appear as "unreal" and "fantastic". Such indeed was the reaction of comrades who participated in the initial discussions of the transitional program.

THE GENERAL DEVELOPMENT: DECAY OF AMERICAN CAPITALISM

The general developmen -- the decay of American capitalism -- and the backwardness of the American proletariat which was the motivation for the transitional program in 1938 remains equally valid today. There has been no change in the fundamental features of American capitalism's decay. The economy experienced no "normal" recovery from its prostration during the decade before the war despite all the nostrums of the New Deal. The wheels of industry could not be induced to turn except for the scourging of mankind in the universal devastation of World War 2. For this capitalism achieved the miracle of full employment and even a substantial development of the productive forces.

For six long years men and the works of men were devoured by imperialist war. The huge stock of goods, "unconsumable" during the years of the depression were completely emptied from their shelves. Liquidated, too, was a good section of the world's "surplus" population, the millioned masses of the unemployed. As a result of the universal ruin the continents hunger for food, clothing, housing, machinery and materials of all kinds. Within the United States, the domestic market is characterized by an uncommon mass demand for civilian products. By means of loans American imperialism supplies the purchasing power for its goods to the bankrupt nations of the world but not before exacting from them conditions which further extend its military, political and commercial power and all the powder kegs that go with such an extension. American exports are today at the unprecedented rate of \$10,000,000 a year or three times the average of the pre-war years. Such are the basic premises arising out of American imperialism's special position in the world decay, for the continuation of "full" production of American industry and agriculture for the next two years or so of the postwar period.

CONJUNCTURAL ECONOMIC BOOM

While a temporary boom is most probable, the growth of the productive forces, productivity, and the proletariat presage an outpouring of civilian goods which will rival the miracle of production during the war. It will not be too long before production will again outstrip the available purchasing power in the hands of the masses. The present boom will prove to be a conjunctural aberration in the context of a permanent social crisis. The transitional program is just as appropriate to the American scene as it ever was.

SECTARIAN ABSTRACTION AND THE ELABORATION OF THE TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM

The general development of capitalist decay cannot release us from the obligation to make a specific analysis of American economy in the immediate period. A convention resolution must at least, carry us over, from one convention to the next. The pre-occupation with the general economic and social decline of American capitalism to the point of failure to concern itself with a concrete economic analysis (Johnson Resolution) must result in a sectarian elaboration of the transitional program. Particularly is this the case if there is at the same time a misreading of the subjective development of the American proletariat in the direction of an underestimation of its backwardness. Despite a verbal acceptance of a backward proletarian consciousness, the Johnson resolution expresses continually a belief in the opposite. Thus, it makes repeated reference "to the unprecedented radicalization" and the "advanced state of social and political consciousness" of the American workingclass today. It is only by ignoring the present economic boom and overstating the present political development of the American proletariat that it is possible to suggest in a resolution "the possibility of Soviets" in the next two years (Johnson Resolution).

LOSS OF THE GENERAL REVOLUTIONARY LINE IN THE ELABORATION OF A TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM

The danger of sectarian abstraction in the elaboration of the transitional program is, however, less immediate than its opposite -- a loss of the general revolutionary line. This is not only because the Johnson resolution finds a minority of supporters in the leadership and in the party and is therefore not likely to become the position of the party. More important is the tendency toward such a danger in the actual elaboration of the party's transitional program and the discussion of it in the resolution of the National Committee. Moreover, unless corrected, this danger is apt to become more pronounced in the atmosphere of the economic boom which will tend to develop moods of complacency and routineism.

The agitation and propaganda of the party, the demands put forward in the press have not sufficiently appealed to the initiative of the worker toward creation of the new and democratic forms which compete with and challenge the old reactionary institutions for the stakes of society. We do not provide the indispensable training and education for the "Soviets of tomorrow" and toward the realization of our strategic aim: the proletarian conquest of power. Our conclusions: a socialist United States, a Workers Government do not contain within them the answer to the question -- How, and by what means? Yet the answer to that is our specific contribution as against all reformists and even the Stalinists.

THE LABOR PARTY AND A REVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVE

Our advocacy of the Labor Party and political independence of the working class is very often divorced from any revolutionary perspective. Without revealing what kind of a labor party we want is to go along with all the current notions of a constitutional labor party on the British or Australian model. We are for a Labor Party which will smash fascism and expropriate monopoly capitalism which is behind fascism. The advanced decay of American capitalism and the dangers of a rapid fascist development dictates that the American workers go beyond their economic organization as a class and organize also politically. It is absolutely necessary that we are in this movement which very likely will develop very rapidly when the boom is finished. However, our concern in this movement is to create out of the workers political movement a revolutionary party. This can be done only by deepening the class character of the independent politics, by destroying reformist and pacifist illusions and by preparing the revolutionary conquest of power. If the workers have to depend on a constitutional labor party for the struggle against fascism* That is why we must, from the very beginning, tell the workers more than that we are for a Labor Party and a Workers Government. We must say that we are for a Labor Party that believes in organizing the workers to defend themselves with the proper means against the fascists and will organize the proletarian conquest of power by revolutionary methods. That is the general line.

THE WORKERS PARTY - THE PARTY OF THE SOVIET SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

The temporary economic boom stems from a bankrupt world capitalism. All the ingredients of disaster; a lack of faith of the masses in the system, a divided bourgeoisie, growing statism, are so firmly compounded in capitalist society that even an economic boom cannot dislodge them. The coming catastrophe will telescope even more sharply the choice: fascism or proletarian revolution. Ours is the only party which stands for the soviet solution. Despite all conflicts between American and Russian imperialism, which have at the moment turned the Stalinists "leftward", it is everywhere excluded that the latter are capable of fighting for or of proposing the truly democratic solution of the soviet revolution for socialism. The Fourth International alone in the world comes forward with this only realistic solution. While maintaining at every step our connection with the masses, it is necessary that our transitional program, our advocacy of a labor party, our agitation and our propaganda lead to the recognition by the workers that, as against all other parties, ours is the party of radical solutions to radical problems, of direct popular working class action, of open declared war of class against class, of the social revolution through the democracy of soviets.

Scopa	Peter Marlow
O'Connor	Ellen Barbee
Rita Ritchie	Carlo
Dean Miller	Roger Ott
	Scott Byers

* they will surely suffer defeat. Only a strong revolutionary party can lead the workers correctly in the mortal fight against fascism.

AMENDMENTS TO THE JOHNSON RESOLUTION ON THE NEGRO QUESTION

1. On page 16 (NEW INTERNATIONAL, January, 1945), second column, third paragraph, after the sentence beginning "he recommended that under certain circumstances the revolutionary party would withdraw its own candidate..." add the following sentences:

"However the Workers Party takes the position that the endorsement of a Negro democrat by the Negro community is not in itself grounds for support any more than, for example, the endorsement of Frankenstein by the UAW made him worthy of support. The same criterion must be applied to Negro candidates as for labor candidates by us, namely, that the Negro candidate is a candidate running as the representative of an independent militant movement of struggle for Negro rights. This would represent genuine independent Negro political action. The difference between such a candidacy and one put forward by a bunch of petty bourgeois Negro leaders who spend the other 364 days of the year dickering with the old parties is obvious."

Cross out the following line and the concluding paragraph of this section.

2. On page 19, at the end of the first paragraph headed "Negro Chauvinism" add the following sentence:

"While recognizing this progressive kernel inherent in black chauvinism the party rejects any attempt to appeal to the Negro workers in the party as having vested interests as Negroes on one side in the political disputes of the party. This would be an unpardonable concession to chauvinism and any demagogic appeal aimed primarily at the Negro party members must be unreservedly condemned."

3. On page 19 cross out the whole section headed "Program of Action."

* * * * *

On the Amendments

The first amendment dealing with Negro candidates is self-explanatory.

The amendment on Negro chauvinism is necessitated by the chauvinistic approach to the Negro party members used by various Johnsonites in the present discussion in the party.

The proposal to strike out the "Program of Action" results from the fact that it's really a program of inaction. After showing the tremendous significance and importance of independent Negro mass struggles, Johnson comes out with his typical pure propaganda approach. His program of action consists of education of the party members on the Negro question and the collection

and spreading of Trotsky's writings on the Negro question plus the organization of a Negro department in the party.

The author of the amendments does not propose any substitute program of action for the resolution. There is no such program in the majority resolution and whatever resolution is adopted the incoming national committee can then proceed to implement the resolution in the organization of our Negro work.

Let us add a note on just what the fundamental difference is between majority and Johnson resolutions on the Negro question. The Johnson resolution emphasizes the significance and importance of independent Negro struggles and points out the relationship of "black chauvinism" to the Negro's readiness for such struggle. It is insofar as this chauvinism results in driving the Negro into resistance to oppression that it has a progressive kernel. Recently in a Newark discussion, Comrade Erber, speaking for the majority resolution, said "We would not seek to initiate such struggles." What a fantastically reactionary position! Such campaigns as the Negro bus picketing campaign in Harlem or the abortive March on Washington are activities which we would be opposed to initiating according to this position. Mark you, nobody on either side could possibly oppose the labor movement joining with the Negro in action but the Johnson resolution proposes that given the special oppression of the Negro and hence his special readiness to struggle, we should push the development of these struggles to weaken capitalism and to educate the labor movement as to the force which the Negroes represent. The majority would instead sit on its fanny waiting until white labor joined the struggle.

It should be marked that when it comes to initiating mass struggles in the field of anti-fascist action (such as the anti-Smith demonstrations), the party did not propose to wait until some unions were ready to participate; yet in the field of Negro action where it is much more likely that the party can succeed in rousing large numbers to struggle, it seeks to abstain.

Finally let us hear from Comrade Shachtman and those others who were on the 1939 National Committee just wherein they have changed their line since then. Comrade Coolidge maintains the same position now as then. His responsibilities are fulfilled. But the other party leaders have evaded any attempt to establish continuity in the development of their views on this question.

Saul Berg

The fundamental necessity in the world today, and in the United States in particular, is the organization of a revolutionary party of the working class. We are not a party. We use the word "party" in our name to emphasize our realization of the need for a revolutionary party; and that we, handful that we are, are the only group of people who have a basic understanding of the organizational and political principles upon which that party must be organized in order that it may lead the working class in its historic task of the seizure of power for the building of the socialist society. We are then, fundamentally, the organizing committee for the revolutionary party of the working class.

How can we consider ourselves as more than that when we number in hundreds and the revolutionary party must number in at least thousands? And yet in one sense we are more than that. We are not only the organizing committee, but also the seed, or the innermost core, of the party that must be brought into being. We are the bearers of the Marxist analysis, tested and developed through a hundred years of working class experience and of theoretical criticism. We, a tiny group, are the bearers of this living Marxist analysis into the period of the utter catastrophe of capitalism, a period when the alternative of socialism or barbarism is a stark imminent reality. We must then be such a nucleus as can with great rapidity attract the body of the revolutionary working class, and can impart to that whole body the political and organizational principles necessary to the achievement of its task. History, now holding within its hand the three-fold threat of the atomic bomb, the rise of fascism in the United States, of the extension of bureaucratic collectivism, will not soon provide us, or the working class, the luxury of another chance if we once fail.

As a party, today, we have then a double task: 1 - We must be able to absorb any number of new members without diluting the fundamental principles and program of the Fourth International; 2 - We must express within the working class, as widely and as intensively as our forces and means permit, the Marxian analysis of the crisis of capitalism and the solution of the crisis by the working class seizure of power.

To realize the above, we must have among ourselves a crystal clarity on fundamental points, which we must impart with great care to new members and to contacts. First we must have a clear, though flexible, conception of the revolutionary aim of the party - not only in terms of the socialist reconstruction of society, but especially in terms of working class power. It is our conception of the structure of workers' power, and of the process through which that power comes into being, that distinguishes us from the reformists. It is the essence of our position as revolutionists. The conceptions we have constitute the reality of independent working class political action culminating in the seizure of power, and are the basic political contributions of Marxism to the working class. They are the *raison d'etre* of the revolutionary party, and the basis on which recruits remain within the party. These conceptions, therefore, are central to the life and building of the party.

The socialist revolution is the culmination of the independent political development of the working class - independent of the bourgeoisie and of the bourgeois parliamentary system. In propaganda and program, we must avoid as a destructive disease the bourgeois conception that the political characteristics of a group can be determined by ascertaining the political characteristics of its individual members and then averaging the lot. This "Gallup-Poll" concept, which is applied with unfortunate frequency by members and even leaders of Marxist organizations, has nothing in common with Marxism. No basic Marxist conclusions have ever been founded upon the consideration of individuals per se, but rather upon the consideration of classes; not upon the averaging of the members of those classes but upon the internal and external relations which form the basis for the consideration of such classes.

An eminent bourgeois logician (A.N. Whitehead, with whose views we have little else in common) has correctly stated, "To be, is to be related." This conception marks a first necessary step, which must be expanded into the social law (implied, if not stated, in Marxist theory) that: Any group of individuals will have characteristics which cannot be predicted from consideration of the individuals per se - characteristics arising from the internal relations of the group as well as from the relations of the group to other elements of society. Moreover, the internal and external relations are not completely separated but are themselves inter-related so that changes in any of them causes changes in all of them.

It would, of course, be absurd to consider that the consciousness of individual workers is irrelevant. It is impossible to understand a relationship in the abstract - the elements related are essential parts of the relationship itself. While individual consciousness does not determine class consciousness, it does condition and limit it. From that standpoint it is clear that our propaganda and agitation must be similarly conditioned.

To sum it up concretely, it is necessary to recognize that the political level of the working class is not to be wholly measured by the consciousness of individual workers - we must consider how that consciousness is being continuously reorganized by the process of capitalism.

The socialist revolution will take place not within the parliamentary framework, but without it, and ultimately in violent opposition to it. A nationwide development of working class representative bodies with rank and file control - workers' councils - must be the foundation for the overthrow of the bourgeois state. We can expect the growth of these workers' councils on a local scale out of factory committees, housewives, veterans and unemployed committees; committees on prices, housing, evictions, workers defense; and then the linking of these councils on a national basis. It is this independent extra-parliamentary working class political action that is the road to the socialist revolution. It is this line of development that must be foremost in the consciousness of the party and in the propaganda and agitation of the party.

The committees, the local and national workers' councils, develop originally on the basis of immediate demands: union demands, demands for housing, for lower prices, against evictions, for relief, against conscription and the preparations for the next war. The committees and councils determine what action should be taken in the interest of the working class. They demand that the governmental authorities take these actions. When that is refused, the councils, if they are able (regarding evictions, foreclosures, gas and lights turned out, etc.) take the actions themselves. As the revolutionary situation approaches maturity, the field in which the councils can act will widen until the point of dual power will be reached, and the seizure of state power by the councils will be on the order of the day.

This conception of the revolutionary development must infuse all members, must be taught in detail to new members and contacts, and must be the underlying theme of party propaganda and agitation.

The first requirement of a revolutionary party is a clear and concrete conception of its revolutionary nature. The second requirement is the conception of democracy not only as a formal matter of party administration and protection of minorities, but as a positive stimulus to membership participation in all party thought and decisions, and to the independent thought and study of each individual member upon the problems relevant to the tasks of the party.

In our party, the principle of democracy is coupled with that of centralism. That centralism provides rightly for a unified party in action, but that unified action is not only to be democratically controlled by regular conventions and elections, but also by the constant participation of the membership in the determination of fundamental policies and decisions. The authoritative committees of the party have, between conventions and in the absence of specific referendum action, complete power to decide all issues before the party in accordance with the constitution. But these party committees have a democratic responsibility that far exceeds their authority. It is their responsibility, to the fullest extent possible, to take the membership fully into their confidence, to submit to the membership for their consideration and advice all important issues of party policy. While it is clear that the right to decide the issue remains in the hands of the authoritative committee, the responsibility to submit matters to the membership and to listen to the advice of the members extends to the PC itself. There frequently may be occasions when time does not allow for such submission prior to decision, but unless the matter is one of irrevocable action, it can be later submitted as a question of continuing the decision. While elected committees have full power to over-ride even the overwhelming view point of the membership, they do so in realization of the necessity of justifying this action to the next party convention.

Such a procedure within the party, will result in the utmost democracy in control - in the highest degree of membership participation in the determination of party policy and practice. The other side of the democratic coin, commonly regarded as the protection of minorities and individuals, is here considered as stimulus

to minorities and individuals to the fullest study and expression of independent ideas, limited only by the requirements of unified action, wherever the party decides such is necessary, and by the usually mandatory regular party activity to be required of all members. It is only by this stimulation of individuals to do their own thinking that the party will reap the best fruits of democracy; an educated membership capable throughout the ranks of initiative and leadership, and a ferment of ideas such as will provide the radical solutions necessary to the problems of the socialist revolution.

The first task is to make of our little group as it lives and grows now by tiny steps, an organism so alive with directed revolutionary purpose, and so imbued with the spirit of inner democracy, that the influx of hundreds of revolutionary-tending workers can not corrupt it, either in the direction of reformism or of bureaucratism. But the building of ourselves into the most perfect tiny groups of no purpose if we do not succeed in bringing to our group in time, the vanguard of the working class. Our second task is to so express within the working class the Marxist analysis of capitalist crisis and the socialist solution of that crisis, as to bring to the more advanced workers the understanding of the necessity of building the revolutionary party.

In Labor Action and in our pamphlets today we make clear the rottenness of capitalism, the prospect of its continuing decline into depression, fascism, and the atomic war, and, more or less, the desirability of a socialist society. But the accomplishment of our second task demands more than that. It demands that the central purpose of our propaganda and agitation shall be to give to such widening elements of the masses as we shall be able to reach, an understanding of, and an impulsion to move to, the soviet solution of the crisis. The central purpose of our agitation is to popularize certain aspects of the Marxian analysis and solution.* In our propaganda we will explain that parliamentary democracy serves the governmental needs of the bourgeoisie and must be replaced by the democratic system of workers' councils - of soviets - as the governing instrument of the working class. In our agitation we will advocate the building of committees on prices, housing, and others as the need arises.

To bring the vanguard of the working class to revolutionary understanding, organization and action, we cannot simply proclaim the analyses and theoretical solutions. We must speak to workers in words and phrases and concepts that have meaning to them, and we must struggle side by side with them for their daily demands on the basis of our proletarian members. But we cannot blunt our revolutionary message by saying to politically backward workers the things their backwardness make them want to hear. And in the struggle for daily demands we cannot fail to point out the road beyond, and to urge the daily struggle on the basis that leads to the soviet revolution.

For our tiny group of revolutionary Marxists the task is, above all, recruitment. And we recruit to the revolutionary party - or the revolutionary party that is to be - by making the

*and to move the workers toward taking certain elementary steps toward the soviet solution.

worker understand the revolutionary working class solution to the problem of the death agony of capitalism. Any transitional ideas that will lead the worker to understand this solution of the working class seizure of power, are good and must be used. But any so-called transitional demands which are acceptable to backward workers by the very reason of the fact that they are reformist in content and lead their thinking in no way toward a revolutionary understanding, are worse than a waste of time and ink. They reinforce illusions that must be destroyed.

Thus, any propaganda and agitation based upon a temporary evaluation of the level of consciousness of workers must necessarily lag behind the developing situation. Our main task is the formulation of conceptions which may not be immediately acceptable to the mass of workers but which are necessary preparation for the situations that are to confront them. Our analysis must be dynamic. We must indicate clearly the approaching tasks and their relation to the ultimate goal of socialism.

The real transitional ideas are not advanced in connection with parliamentary reformism but in the arena of the extra-parliamentary political action of the working class. This is the basic field of action for the revolutionary party - though not to the exclusion of the parliamentary field, which must actually be valued only as providing a platform from which to speak. The revolution will eventually be organized in the extra-parliamentary arena. It is there that revolutionary ideas, and ideas leading to revolutionary understanding, can be advanced. It is there that workers can be set in motion for transitional demands that lead on toward the struggle for workers power. It is there that workers can be recruited to the revolutionary group, and that the revolutionary party will be built. It is in propaganda and agitation for extra-parliamentary committees and councils - soviets - and then in action within them that the activity of revolutionists, and of the revolutionary group and party, must lie.

April 28, 1946

S. Ogden - San Francisco
P. Quine - Los Angeles
E. Griffin - Los Angeles

ON THE DUES SYSTEM

By the Detroit Branch

At the meeting of the Detroit branch held to discuss and vote upon the referendum on changing the party dues system the following motion was passed for submission to the NC and to the coming National Convention:

That the dues system adopted in the national referendum be amended as follows:

- 1 - Initiation fee.....\$ 1.00
- 2 - Regular dues..... 1.00 per week
- 3 - Exempt dues..... .25 per week
- 4 - New members to pay 25¢ per week during their probationary period. As soon as they become regular members they pay regular dues, (or exempt dues if they are entitled to it as regular members).

The purpose of this amendment is to establish a dues system which will treat all members of the party on an equal basis. Every regular member should be responsible for the same dues. Our past dues system was defective not because it was impossible to reach some satisfactory deal with new people but because the difference in their dues established and added an unnecessary wall between them and the rest of the party.

THE POLITICS OF RAZZLE-DAZZLE

By H. Judd

The course of the pre-convention discussion has, so far, been dominated by the party's dispute with the minority Johnson faction. It seems clear that this will remain the situation up to, and including, the convention itself in May. Speaking only for myself - but with ample reason to believe that this view expresses the feeling of many comrades - I must say that this exclusive, or near exclusive, concern with Johnson is regrettable and a great disappointment. While recognizing the necessity for this discussion (really forced upon the party), there's no point to concealing a real disillusionment. Instead of a discussion on serious issues - to me of far more significance - we have been hacking away at ABC's of Trotskyism! Necessary, in the given situation, but a sad reflection on the general political and theoretical level of the party today...

Many comrades, like myself, have recently come back from a long absence in the army. Many problems puzzled us, about the party and its politics. Have they been answered? At best, they have been briefly touched upon, or raised. Instead, the whole atmosphere has been dominated, the whole discussion cornered, by Johnson. He and his friends have attempted to dictate the character and scope of the discussion, at the expense of real, living questions. What are some of these questions? We list the main ones:

- 1 - Stalinist Russia, Russian imperialism and the nature of the Stalinist movement today.
- 2 - The doctrine of "retrogression", advanced by the German comrades of the IKD; the whole relation of our party to the Fourth International.
- 3 - The question of the proposed party cadre, and the Lund amendments.
- 4 - The new estimate of the European national question; the role of American imperialism in the world.
- 5 - Problems of party activity, building and education.

Most of these problems haven't even been touched upon; those that have been touched are done in the lightest, most subordinate fashion. Such is the price we've paid in an essentially futile, unsatisfactory discussion. Yet the Johnson faction is a reality, and the discussion has proceeded far enough to attempt some estimate of this faction.

Johnson differs with the party on every question and finds, as time advances, that he must revise virtually every conception he held in the past (a not unfamiliar happening). The 1939 split was, among other things, a grave error, so Johnson informed the Detroit branch. To those comrades acquainted with Johnson's record in our movement, his exaggerated pose of today as (a) a super-orthodox Marxist; (b) a thoroughgoing, orthodox Trotskyist and (c) a heroic champion of the official Fourth International -

this pose is somewhat ludicrous. We have far too much respect for Marxist philosophy to take seriously Johnson's rigidly mechanical interpretation of dialectics; far too much respect for Trotsky's doctrine to take seriously his theories on Russia and far too much respect for the parties of the Fourth International (including the SWP) to take seriously his championship of the European Executive Committee and Secretariat. If Johnson ever follows out the organizational logic of his politics of today (and no one, least of all, Johnson, can dare make a prediction on this); if he ever fulfills his slogan of "Back to the International", how long would it be (6 months?) before he blossomed out with a new doctrine, a new set of theories, within the fold of orthodoxy?

For Johnson is today what he always has been in the movement. He is no orthodox Trotskyist, no SWP'er, no spokesman of the International - Johnson is a Johnsonite; that is, a political prima donna, surrounded by a group of idolatrous admirers, whose essence consists in always distinguishing himself from the group to which he belongs at the moment. It would be an error to take seriously Johnson's pose of orthodoxy. Orthodox Trotskyism is represented by the SWP in America, and above all by the theses, articles etc. issued in the name of the European sections of the Fourth International. These opinions are political lines, with which we disagree, but which are serious, important and merit our study. But let's not confuse Johnson's momentary parallel with these doctrines (and even then, in a most superficial manner) with the real thing.

Many comrades spend time searching for some key, some central system, to Johnsonism. They feel if they can find the kingpin to the system, they can pull it out and topple the works. In my opinion, they're wasting their time. The whole point is that there is no method, no system, no consistence, no basic approach. Comrade Trotsky long ago indicted Johnson, on the basis of his writings, discussions, etc., with the charge of empiricism: that is, reliance upon experiment and not upon theory, to give the classic definition; quackery, to define it more bluntly. Empiricism is marked by the total absence (in fact, condemnation) of methodology. Yet in Johnson's peculiar brand of empiricism we find an a priori set of propositions, or rather conclusions, and then a wild and indiscriminate jumble of "facts", intended to back up these conclusions. Let us give some random examples of the Johnson empirical method, selected from his writings of the present discussion:

1) Revolution by Literary-Phrase: Comrade Stanley Grey has excellently characterized the notorious Johnson style - "revolution by literary juxtaposition". When a GM worker says, "Open the Books", Johnson informs him, "No, fellow worker, you don't really mean that. You really mean to control the industry and then direct it, i.e., socialism." Vaila! (see p. 26, Convention Bulletin #1). A hundred examples of this type of literary deduction could be drawn.

2) Facts and Johnson Facts! The workers of North Italy still hold the factories: that is, still have dual power. (See article 1 on Retrogression, THE NEW INTERNATIONAL). The slogan of "Not National Socialism, but the Socialist Nation" has emerged from Germany. (See article 2 on Retrogression, THE NEW INTERNA-

TIONAL) Comrades, like myself, who spent long months in many parts of Germany, who know the language etc., are given no source or reference when we press Johnson for the origin of his "facts".

3) Demagogy: This familiar substitute for argument is a speciality of Johnson. Do you, German comrades, want to restore capitalism in Germany, he asks the comrades of the IKD? (See article 2 on Retrogression, THE NEW INTERNATIONAL). The party has no confidence in the American proletariat, etc.

4) Rigid Mechanism: The American proletariat is the most instinctively revolutionary because of the advanced nature of its capitalism! (See pp. 27 and 28, Convention Bulletin #1). Accordingly, the Russian proletariat should have been the most backward in 1917. A conception of dialectics, the inevitability of socialism and proletarian "instincts" (see article 1 on Retrogression, THE NEW INTERNATIONAL) that must make Professor Burnham chortle with glee, so permeated with idealism and downright mysticism is it.

5) Confusion: A constant, uncritical use of two conceptions inter-changeably employed by Johnson (1) the general, objectively revolutionary crisis of capitalism; (2) the concrete, subjectively ripened pre-revolutionary situation or revolutionary crisis. When the apparent contradiction between Johnson's estimate of the situation in America as (2) (see Convention Bulletin #1), and his proposal that the party retreat to a propoganda status in such a situation - when this contradiction is pointed out, he obligingly retreats to (1).

6) Wishful Thinking: So familiar to Johnsonism. The fate of the Democratic Party can be decided at any instant by the labor leaders. (See Convention Bulletin #1). The demands of the UAW strikers, carried to their logical conclusions, are for a social revolution. (See Convention Bulletin #1). This pseudo, that is, false, revolutionary "optimism" runs throughout Johnson's writings and has often been commented on.

7) Religion, or Faith: Comrade Louise Gestalt has called our attention to the conclusion of Johnson's resolution on the party. (See Convention Bulletin #3). Lack of confidence in the "historic destiny" of the proletariat even with the "correct revolutionary line" will continue our present "stagnation". A correct revolutionary line - not sufficient; faith and destiny are needed, in addition.

Many other examples of the Johnson method could be introduced. We have selected only a few examples, scattered throughout the resolutions and articles. Johnson has accused the party of wavering on a series of political issues of today. (See Convention Bulletin #3, pp. 20, 21). That he, of all people, should make accusations - among other things - regarding the party's position on a "German revolution during the war" would be laughable, if it were not so insolent. But attack is always the best defense, is it not? With what apparent relish did Johnson describe to the Detroit branch how Cannon brushed aside the "Retro-

gression" document of the German comrades, refusing to look at it, touch it or print it. He, Johnson, of course, would not employ such methods, BUT Cannon has a "line"! Cannon hasn't a trace of "retrogression"! Admirable indeed. We know about these "lines", Stalinism has the best "line" of all.

There is a substance of truth in Johnson's accusations that the party "wavers" on these political issues, if we understand by that the fact that no thoroughgoing discussion has yet been had, and we have not yet arrived at full clarity. BUT FAR BETTER SUCH A SITUATION THAN THE ALTERNATIVE SUGGESTED BY THE JOHNSON FACTION. The party will hold its discussions on these matters, in the proper educational and political atmosphere. The party will go into these matters thoroughly and take its stand when called upon to do so. But it will never have the slightest thing in common with Cannon's method of discussion, nor with those who describe such methods with the slightest trace of approval. The party is not clear on these problems, you accuse? We venture to say that 75% of the fault lies with you, who stand in the way of a fruitful discussion and education. You have hogged the pre-convention discussion, and we must deal first with you.

We have suggested at the beginning of this article some of the real problems many comrades would like to see discussed. But before we can proceed to these vital points, questions that will drastically affect our future, it is obvious that the party must resoundingly defeat, during the discussion and at the Convention, the Johnson faction. Then we can settle the other problems.

By Bea Grey

Though it is true that the lack of forces accounts in some measure for the deficiencies of the organization at the present time, still it is necessary to recognize these deficiencies and the marks that the difficult war years have left on the party. There have been certain trends established which it is necessary to recognize right now, and which just the mere influx of the returned members will not automatically halt.

Ours is the party that was organized and founded on the recognition of the dangers of degeneration inherent in any party and the necessity for being eternally vigilant of party development. Though the party has gone out of its way in establishing and protecting the rights of a political minority, such as the Johnson group, it has developed certain other procedures and conceptions which can be detrimental to the healthy growth of the party. These are organizational procedures and habits perhaps, which have developed in the course of functioning under adverse conditions. In some cases they are just automatic carry-overs from the past of the movement, that haven't been held up for inspection for a long time. Nevertheless, they reflect certain attitudes on party building which it is necessary to acknowledge and change.

Since Lenin, no fundamental work on organization has been written. We have never clearly formulated what should be different or similar in our party organization to that of the Bolshevik organization. We in America, have just maintained or changed procedures in practice, without formulating clearly what kind of an organization is necessary in America, in the present political arena. The party is just beginning this discussion now. What I wish to do is just point out two or three developments which demonstrate that we operate in a blind traditional manner and to indicate how I think we ought to change.

The way the PC reacted to the national elections in 1944 demonstrates most clearly one of the points. In October of 1944, a month before the elections, the PC received a letter from one of the branches in relation to the elections. The PC had a short discussion and sent out a set of motions. That disposed of the national elections, an event so important in the political life of the workers of America and practically the only time they think politically, no matter how crudely. The manner in which it was treated indicated that on an important question like this we can still act in the sectarian, Trotskyist-propaganda-group style. We have not yet trained ourselves to be concerned with what the workers are thinking and how the party appears to them.

Had we been operating properly both internally and externally, the committee would have formulated its ideas long before the election, presented them to the party and stimulated discussion on it. The membership would have been made to feel the necessity for thinking about and deciding on policy. Instead, during the war, when many of our more politically alert people were away, the

party became dependent on the top committees to think about and hand down decisions on our political line. This is bad enough in itself. However, since the top committees were short handed and not alert, the party was often caught without a line or late with a line or without a course of action on a line we already had. The party was caught in a vicious circle of a depleted and inexperienced membership looking for guidance to a depleted leadership. This leadership, in turn, was not alert to the political opportunities presented us, (no matter how limited our degree of participation would have to be) and did nothing to stimulate alertness and initiative among the membership.

Externally, the reaction of the PC shows that we have not learned yet how to supplement the work of the individuals and fractions that we have sent into factories. Our task is not only to print our position on a political issue in Labor Action, when we finally get around to adopting one. It is necessary also to think in terms of stimulating the workers both inside and outside the party into thinking and acting independently and on class lines. Our role should be to break the workers away from the habit of waiting for a decision to be handed down, be it from the PC of the party or the Executive Board of the union.

Had we been conscious of our role in this manner, we would have been thinking months before the election, about how to utilize the elections to further advance the workers along this path. We would have felt the responsibility to our periphery, no matter how small, to help them along this road on such an important question as the national elections. If we were more divorced from our sectarian past we would have at least given much more serious consideration to Lund's proposal to support the SP, even though we may not have been in favor of it in the end.

This manner of functioning has become regular procedure in the party and is an obstacle to the healthy development of the party both internally and externally. The NC recognizes the internal danger only, when it raises the clarion call for a cadre. But as far as our external activity is concerned, it can account for the fact that we have "not advanced substantially further", only by pleading a case of lack of forces. Now it is true these difficulties developed during the hardship of the war period. But then the whole life span of the organization covers only the war years. We can't point to the years before that and say, "See, it was different then; the war is the cause of all our difficulties." Nor can we expect to be any different after the war unless we formulate clearly what kind of a party we want and how to build it, unless we break completely and consciously with our sectarian and bureaucratic past.

That is why it is so important to insist that the party learn to conduct itself like the small edition of a mass party. The hesitancy on the part of the NC to accept this concept indicates that it still is a little hesitant to accept what it means. That is what is most discouraging and at the same time surprising. Surprising, because to me it means no more than what we proposed to do in 1940 when we first organized the party. We were concerned with "the popularization of our immediate demands and slogans

among the workers" and we proposed that "This means the revival and extension of the campaign principle of party activity. It means, above all in the present stage, concentration upon the printing and distribution on a large scale of the simplest and most popular leaflets and cheap pamphlets, each confined to a single slogan expressing and popularizing our program. These must be written, disseminated with an eye toward the industrial workers and be calculated to arouse them to political consciousness and action." (N.I., March 1946, p. 93)

Today this would mean if we recognized that the end of the war must bring some changes, that we would be concerning ourselves with some of the major immediate problems concerning the working class and trying to intervene in some way. To conduct a campaign around the housing question, the withholding tax, the rising cost of living or the veteran's problems would seem a logical and necessary thing for us to do at the present time. (I will go into the details of such a campaign at a future time, in relation to the discussion on the American Resolution. Right now I just wish to lay down the general line for party activity.) We have to recognize that getting back into the factories is going to be a long and difficult job. Is the party to do nothing meanwhile but conduct sub drives and fund campaigns. The party would fulfill its obligation to the small workers periphery it has now and even enlarge that periphery by engaging in this type of activity at the present time. Instead we content ourselves with having Labor Action "present our program for the adoption by the labor movement." What both the NC and the Johnsonites fail to see is that it is not the party program, but rather the way it has been utilized in party activity which accounts for the limited growth of the party. It would do the party well to heed the words of 1940 again when we said: "It is not so much the program as it is written down in our fundamental documents that must - or can - attract recruits to the party, but the program as translated in the daily political activity of the party that will accomplish this end...An attitude of alertness and boldness, of seizing on appropriate occasions, can often make such mass actions possible and fruitful...Such an attitude should not be decried as 'baseless in the present objective situation' or as 'adventuristic', but should rather be encouraged." (N.I.? March, 1946, p. 94)

In other words, activity like the anti-Smith campaign in Los Angeles should not be an extraordinary and isolated case in the party. But, on the contrary, party branches should take advantage of more opportunities to participate with the unions and other organizations in political actions of this type. They should organize and centralize their activity around it so that party work is concentrated around some specific political slogan rather than around trade union work, in general. Anyone knows that successful action can gain more adherents to the party than abstract argumentation. As a matter of fact, it is the lack of this type of work which I am sure accounts for the limited amount of recruits from the unions. Our fractions were left stranded in the factory, except for the distribution of LABOR ACTION. This situation may or may not have been avoidable in the past, but we must aim to avoid it in the future.

Obviously, I do not mean by this that the Party should engage in all of these campaigns at the same time or one right after the other. Any attempt to represent my proposals as meaning this betrays, at best, a very amateurish approach to the problem of party activity. Nor do I mean that we should substitute street activity for union activity. My proposals are necessary supplements to our union work and in addition to our union work. This can work no hardship on us now, especially when our union work is so limited. They would take the form of a literature campaign around a specific slogan, the organization of neighborhood committees around a specific demand, or work in veteran and Negro organizations and joint activities with them. This sort of limited campaign is surely not beyond the abilities of the party and could be tied up with our union work. In the unions themselves we could be foremost in proposing action on the specific demand or slogan, at the same time as the party is carrying on a campaign for it through the press, pamphlets, leaflets and other organizations. Even granted that all these things are not possible today, if the party adopts this as a perspective, party activity takes on some unity and organization of purpose. Instead we take one direction in LABOR ACTION and another in party activity. Our problem has been to bridge the gap between the two. If we adopt a clear perspective on what kind of a party we want, we can begin to do that.

The Party Cadre

The NC senses something wrong in the development of the party, so it pleads for a cadre. Failing to make the necessary connection between the problems of the healthy growth of the party and the development of a cadre, they believe that by repetitious exhortation a cadre will automatically arise. They never indicate, otherwise, how to build one nor have they, in action, actually ever encouraged the development of party cadres. The cadres are those who most fully recognize their responsibility to the working class and the party and train others to attain the same level of development and consciousness. The atmosphere in the party has not been one of encouragement and stimulation towards that development but, on the contrary has operated to stifle it. Let me take a concrete case again:

The party was founded on the recognition of the necessity of "making the turn from the past of the movement as a propagandist group to a movement seeking to exert growing influence among the masses." We called for "the revival and extension of the campaign principle of party activity." We had become particularly sensitive to "routinism and conservatism" and decried the "haphazard direction and general lack of initiative of the leadership." (N.I., March, 1946, p. 93)

During the war a secondary leadership arose from the ranks which had been in the party since its inception and who learned these lessons well. In effect, this was the emerging party cadre, new and unexperienced perhaps, but anxious to make these founding principles part of real party life. What was the reaction of the party leadership? They denounced the group as demoralized and disillusioned panic-mongerers, because they had some strong words of criticism for the record of party activity in the past two or three

years. This sensitivity to criticism was something else we had been taught to watch out for. The whole section on page 20 of the National Committee resolution displays this sensitivity, an attitude which is not conducive to the building of a cadre. You can't build a corps of comrades devoted to building the party, if you're going to smack them down every time they try. I do not mean, of course, that the leadership must coddle the growing cadre and agree with everything it proposes. It must not, however, use personal characterizations as a method of reflecting on the validity of comrades' criticism and proposals. This is another time-honored practice of the movement, long associated with polemics of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky, which we can now afford to hold up for inspection and discard.

I would be content to drop the whole matter were it restricted to the attitude and practice of the two or three individuals involved in that discussion. But this attitude is now formalized in the resolution of the National Committee when it points out that the function of the party cadre is to combat these "negative tendencies." According to this directive the exclusive cadre must not only propagate all of the party line but must also spread the idea that all is for the best in the best of all possible parties. Even though the resolution warns against this, combatting negative tendencies can lead to nothing else but the smugness the Committee wishes to avoid. What the Committee should be emphasizing instead is that the best kind of cadre is one that feels the responsibility of contributing something to the party line and growth as well as acting as a transmission belt for that line and growth. It is true that the party cadre should be both the leaders and teachers of the party. But it is also true that unless they consider their task to be also that of contributing creatively to party development, they become party hacks of the Cannonite variety.

Similarly, the National Committee, in an effort to correct one fault would create another, by overemphasis. Faced with the fact that our new members have been prejudiced against the party line by irresponsible Johnsonites, they point out the necessity for the cadre to teach these new members just what the party program is. With that no one can disagree. However, they go on to say that our greatest boast is, not that we are a democratic organization, but rather, our correct political and theoretical position. This is the first time we have been presented with this formulation on the relative importance of democratic organization and it is one which is likely to spread some wrong ideas, especially among our newer members. At this stage in the development of the revolutionary movement, after the experiences of Stalinism and Cannonism, the least we can do is say that democratic organization is equally important as the theoretical position of a revolutionary party and that our democratic organization flows from our correct theoretical position. Why, the only obstacle in the path of unity with the SWP is just this matter of organization principles, even though, according to the NC, our political differences have diminished over the recent period. Another reason for stressing and boasting of our democratic organization as well as our theoretical

position is a propaganastic as well as educational one. In this period, when Socialism has come to be associated with totalitarianism and Stalinism, we must place a great emphasis on the importance of democratic organization and, yes, boast about how we have a democratic party as well as a correct political line, always showing how the two are connected.

Typical of Johnson's generalities is his attempt to recall the party to the "Bolshevik method." According to him it means shouting revolutionary slogans at the drop of a hat. According to Cannon it means a monolithic party based on the principle that "what was good enough for the Old Man is good enough for me." It means all things to all peoples. My demand is more modest and more real. I should be satisfied with recalling the party to the principles of 1940 and with building a party based on a collective leadership and one that acts like it is "seeking to exert growing influence among the masses."