

# Bulletin

## OF THE WORKERS PARTY

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## THE DRIVE AGAINST THE STALINISTS

Today we see before us a drive gaining in momentum against the Communist Party.

We see Attorney-General Clark, J. Edgar Hoover, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce coming out for the prosecution of C.P. members as enemy agents, etc., etc.

We see developments within the trade unions, the U.E., the Shipbuilding Union, the Mine Mill and Smelters, coupled with further splits in the C.I.O. councils in Detroit and Cleveland.

In California five unions have pressured for the removal of Bridges and in N.Y. 33 officials of the C.I.O. have joined together to form a committee for democratic trade unionism.

The issue faces us squarely. What is our attitude in the present situation. I think an approach must be worked out and given widespread distribution. The whole question of the role of the C.P. gives us an opportunity of explaining them from the left.

We have nothing but contempt for the FBI and the Chamber of Commerce's concern on the matter. We know their motives. We equally abhor the newly found anti-Stalinists who worked with the C.P. throughout the war and squelched any militant fight in the interests of the working class. Jack Altman, as an example, just a few months back was in one of the shadiest deals of his shady political life at the Clerks convention, with those same C.P.ers he is now attacking.

We know that the change in foreign policy has occasioned the origin of this development. We need not be informed by the Militant of its dangers. The drive no doubt weakens the unions. Milwaukee's scare headlines against the Buse leadership at Allis Chalmers during their current strike are known to all of us. Further, the rising cost of living is bound to produce further strike struggles and a workers offensive. The bosses are intent on using the C.P. as their counter chess piece.

There also is the danger to our militants and all militants. We know they won't stop at the C.P. when they (the F.B.I.) drive. We know that the bureaucrats (speaking of course of the C.I.O. as most sections of the A.F.L. are immune already) want to consolidate their positions, prestige, etc. by eliminating any possible opposition. All this we know. However, we cannot take the position of the S.W.P. and give up our fight against the C.P. That is the logic of their Russian position. The C.P. still remains the most dangerous force within the labor movement. We must push aside any of the emotional crap that we are reflecting bourgeois pressures.

The S.W.P., for instance, in their article on the C.I.O.-P.A.C. merger in Detroit, speak of the boycott of the Wayne County convention by the C.P. opposition (Reuther forces) as charging that "it was a 'communist plot' to rule the newly formed Wayne County C.I.O. Council." They obviously O.K.'d the convention. They even sat through it all (six hours) and were incensed that Nat Ganley made the motion to adjourn. (Militant report October 5) At Electro-motive they have voted with the C.P. in the election of the C.P. whip, Rubeio, and approached them again for a new combination (Stalinist candidate, no doubt) in a forthcoming election.

We have seen their group in the AVC vote with the C.P. against a resolution for the withdrawal of all troops from China. We also have seen how they shamefacedly withdrew from the progressive caucus in the AVC (ostensibly because its composition was bourgeois, and its line red-baiting). In the AVC caucus we have seen a timidity to discuss the CP's policy because it would be red-baiting. The "liberals" really have been buffaloed by the C.P. on this business of their immunity from criticism. In the plant, we have the opposite that of a short sighted policy of welcoming the FBI's investigation of the CP because of their hatred of the CP and their policy.

We need an approach now. Only we can provide a real program for this fight. We have to give leadership in this issue; we know what is at stake. I think the conclusions should be this.

After discussing the role of the C.P. in the political and labor movement, we come out against all imperialisms; for an independent working class position on the political issues of the day. The solution is not the N.Y. Altman position of supporting U.S. imperialism or of Roy Reuther's approach (Michigan State Convention) of defending the British Labor Party's rule in India and attacking Russia's role in Iran. For an independent position; for self-determination, withdrawal of troops, colonial freedom, etc.; against any constitutional clauses barring political people from holding union offices. Fight political policy on issues, not membership cards. For the independence of the trade unions from government victimizations. Keep your noses out, Mr. FBI. The union rank and file has to correct incorrect leaderships by themselves; your interests are not the workers. To the Chamber of Commerce -- last year it was racketeers in the unions; this year it's the Reds. Labor, recognize these people for what they are and the problems of "racketeers" and "CP policies" have to be fought within the union movement and corrected there. There is no substitute method.

Ken Hilyer - Chicago

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## THE WAR AND THE VETERAN

The American army under the impact of the war was a distillation of the social processes going on in capitalist United States as a whole. If war is the sharpened political expression of a society, the army at war is the sharpened expression of the contradictions growing within that society between the development of the productive forces\* and the social relations.

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRODUCTIVE FORCES AND THE SOCIALIZATION OF LABOR

The tremendous development of the productive forces was demonstrated during the war with some differences of degree rather than kind between the Pacific and European theatres of operation. Whereas in Europe the army operated in an already developed milieu of capitalist technology, in the Pacific, for the most part, entire islands of primitive economy were taken and converted in toto. Saipan is a case in point.

Under Japanese occupation, this Marianas island, in area about 75 square miles, consisted of a sugar refinery, a handful of administrative buildings, a jail, a post office, about two streets of official residences, another street of geisha houses, cane fields, the miserable farms of the natives -- Japanese and Chamorro -- bananas, coconut palms, jungle and coral. With the assault, virtually every trace of Japanese occupation was wiped out.

Within eleven months, and the process began as early as A-day plus six in the midst of ferocious fighting, Saipan was converted into a tremendous workshop tied together with superb black-top roads and serving magnificent air-strips. The most advanced construction techniques were used without stint.

In Europe, the huge wartime expansion in production was demonstrated by unbridled technological competition among the belligerents. Material grew obsolete with unprecedented rapidity. The revolutionizing of production was most dramatically displayed in the air arm, the key weapon of the second World War. The change from air tactic to air strategy constituted the change from German offensive to Allied offensive and was based upon the change in aircraft design and structure with corresponding developments in organization and bombardment. Germany countered with the introduction of missile warfare and in the explosives competition, the atomic bomb was the crowning achievement.

Concomitant with the vast development of the productive forces was the obvious demonstration of the social character

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\* "An army," said Trotsky, "is always a copy of the society it serves with this difference that it gives social relations a concentrated character, carrying their positive and negative features to an extreme."

less tool of a methodical mode of warfare. He ought not to be so. What the war of the future will for for is good all-round men, self-confident, and each able to take his place in the community of fighting men standing on his own feet. As individual fighters, each one will be a person. Each individual, being the necessary means for the carrying on of the battle, will be the counterpart of the will of the commander." \*

Although some of the elements of all-out war began to manifest themselves in the first World War, the accumulation of changes in the second World War made the two armies qualitatively different in one sense. Contrast the combat troops of the two world wars. The combat soldier in today's mechanized army had to be personally competent with a great variety of weapons and tactics and had to possess considerable individual combat initiative as well as technical acumen. He saw the interdependence of the myriad of army assignments. Among other things, he was trained in the recognition and function of the various types of aircraft. Consequently, he had an understanding of the varying tactic and strategy of the operation. He followed with avid interest and comprehension the unfolding of the grand strategy involving entire armies. He had the conception of one war in one world, and the individual battle had to be seen in the light of the overall plan. He was trained to function independently but as part of the whole rather than as daredevils. The result, as was observed with great insight and sensitivity by Gertrude Stein\*\* was a more mature individual with more developed social conceptions and less provincialism.

#### SOCIAL RELATIONS IN THE ARMY

The enormously developed productive forces and the socialization of labor are the key to the sharpening of the social relations in the army.

The army is not a unity. It is the naked weapon by which the bourgeoisie maintains and enforces its class rule, one feature of which is imperialist conquest. The Army -- with a capital "A" -- is part of the structure of the ruling class. The soldiers in this period, although composing the mass of the army, are not part of the structure of the ruling class. In the main, they are drawn from a class fundamentally antagonistic to the ruling class.

Trotsky has pointed out the fundamental class differences between the "pacifism of the diplomat, professor, journalist and the pacifism of the carpenter, agricultural worker and charwoman. In the one case, pacifism is a screen for imperialism in the other it is the confused expression of distrust in imperialism." \*\*\*

\* Foertsch, Hermann. The Art of Modern Warfare, N.Y., Oskar Peist, 1940, pp. 263-4

\*\* Wars I Have Seen

\*\*\* Founding Conference of the Fourth International, p.33

of labor in production. From engineer to factory worker to ground crew to air crew to tank crew to engineer outfit to service troops to combat troops the line was direct.

The mass conversion of Pacific Islands from primitive to modern society, the unfolding of the mobile war, the vast interrelations of communications were the product of the direct participation of each enlisted man drawn from every background. Mysticism was removed from production. "Ordinary" G.I.s in carrying out their daily assignments had worked together and had used the most advanced equipment to make the widespread transformations. From paper work to technical execution, production was palpably social -- the labor of the entire organization, including the labor of the home front, was needed.

So far, we have spoken primarily of the technology of modern industry as manifested in war. But modern industry is not only technology. "Modern Industry," says Marx, "by its very nature...necessitates variation of labour, fluency of function, and universal mobility of the labourer...." \* That is to say, the requirements of modern industry pull man from being a mere appendage to a machine towards becoming a more complete man.

The modern American army required the greatest fluidity of labor from the individual army worker, i.e. the soldier. Irrespective of previous experience and training, the soldier was but a man to be used for whatever job the army assigned. All jobs were, of necessity, so organized that if special skills were needed, one could be sent to a service school for a period from two weeks to 22 months and be sufficiently trained to perform the functions required. This was true even to the mass conversion of enlisted men to officers via officer candidate and aviation cadet schools. Moreover, military assignments changed with great rapidity. A man might be assigned to the Military Police; with a change in personnel requirements, he might be reassigned and, if necessary, sent to school. After the prescribed course, the former MP would come out a personnel clerk, engineer or surgical technician. This demonstrated man's capacity to perform a great variety of tasks. It is significant to note here that precisely because of the varied occupational demands of the army, full 35% of army personnel were skilled workers, i.e., technicians, a higher percentage than is found in civilian industry.

As a result of the development of the productive forces and the socialization of labor, the objective necessity of modern warfare is a new type of soldier. Prior to the war, a military expert had written: "The life led by the individual today and by the community, has made the men of today, who are the fighters of tomorrow, more critical, mentally more alert, and more independent. The individual soldier is no longer the help-

\* Capital, v. I, P. 533

Within the army there was reflected this attitude of the proletariat toward the war. The broad masses in the U.S., particularly the proletariat, viewed the declaration of war with passive hostility or bitter cynicism. Insofar as the masses actively supported the war, they supported it as a war against facism and not as a war for the greater glory of America. After the disillusionment of the first World War and of more than a decade of depression, the masses had little faith in the industrial leaders. This class antagonism, more instinctive than conscious, was drafter into the army along with the draftees.

If there was direct participation of enlisted men in immediate planning and production, there was also the separation of the overall plan from the mass. On the one hand, there were the brass hats and the politicians; on the other, there were the actual executors of the policy of the enlisted men.

In civilian society, the existence of private ownership of the means of production makes it easier for the ruling class to justify the distinctions in social rights. The property forms which give traditional authority to the ruling class were absent from the army, posing sharply the consciousness in the ranks of the social and class relations.

Particularly since so many officers had come from the ranks and from the same civilian status as the enlisted men, the soldiers could not understand why officers should be considered as superior personages. The more the officers tried to establish their authority in terms of rank, the more the men saw them as a class and not as individuals. Those officers who professed to take an individual and personal interest in the men, demonstrated by this paternalism their conviction of their own superiority as a class to protect "their" men. Moreover, although many had come from the enlisted ranks, the officers considered themselves the watchdogs of the war. They had to protect the army from the enlisted man who, to them, was in the main, recalcitrant, shiftless and irresponsible. The soldier felt he was pushed around and he resisted. He resented these privileged officers who considered it their war and their army and their country.

But the question cannot be posed subjectively in terms of privilege differential. Objectively, the officers were right. It was their Army and their War and their Country. The moment the enlisted men, acting as units, pushed against their officers for immediate demands, they began to push against the bulwark of class society. The antagonism between the officers and the enlisted men reflected the conflict between the actual imperialist war and the putative war for democracy.

#### THE SOLDIER DEMONSTRATIONS

Distrust of the war purposes of the ruling class expressed itself in the army as a cynicism of the "army way." During the war, while he was an active participant, the soldier saw results; the inefficiencies he had become used to regard-

ing as the fault of the brass hats and the politicians. With the end of the war when the enlisted men ceased being active participants, this distrust and cynicism sharpened and burst forth in the demobilization demonstrations. For suspected reasons, they saw their demobilization held up. They sought again actively to participate, this time for their own benefit. They resented their occupation of Europe, of Asia. They questioned the combat status of the 86th Division in the Philippines after hostilities had ceased. Bourgeois publicists and commentators wept aloud that the American soldier was ignorant of his duties to democracy in the occupation. What they actually bemoaned was the organized form of protest which could not be dismissed as traditional "soldier griping without which no army is complete" and the implications of which were far-reaching.

As the soldier demonstrations gained momentum and grew more articulate, along with their demands to go home, the soldiers struck at the officer caste system. Again, because of the greater nakedness of class rule in the army than in civilian life, the struggle of the enlisted men for immediate demands brought them up more quickly against the social fetters of bourgeois society.

During the war the proletariat on the home front underwent a tremendous social experience. The contradiction between the development of the productive forces and the "accumulation of misery, agony of toil," etc. in production relations exploded in the wave of post-war strikes. These strikes demonstrated that the large masses of people were increasingly coming to the realization that production must be for use and not for the profits of a few.

In the army, the comparable realization was concerned not so much with material benefits. The demand for the democratization of the army in the absence of private property relations is a challenge to the existing social relations.

The very absence of private employers compelled the men to make direct demands on the government in both its executive and legislative branches. It is enough to recall in this connection that among the slogans raised by the soldier demonstrators was "No Boats, No Votes!" It is significant that in seeking to stem the movement the government sought to compel the men to negotiate via their superior officers and not directly with the government.

In their formation of rank and file committees to negotiate directly with the government and to address themselves to the American public, the enlisted men gave organizational form to the lesson they had learned in the most authoritarian institution of bourgeois society. The very absence of the conservative and outlived leaders characteristic of bourgeois-democratic civil society forced them to create their own ad hoc organizations to carry out their aims.



In their telegram to R. J. Thomas, these soldiers, who are essentially workers in uniform, merely expressed a growing recognition by the American people as a whole that labor is the leader against the exploitation and degradation of the existing society.

A word of caution. Nothing in this document is to be construed as seeing in these movements the complete breakdown of bourgeois discipline and bourgeois rule. Such a breakdown is the result of the struggle of the proletariat as a whole in which the soldier plays an important but not an independent role. It is obvious that American capitalist society has not yet reached the stage of complete breakdown. But we are concerned with the direction of these soldiers' movements and their link with the class struggle. If further proof of their strength and organic class nature were needed, such confirmation is to be found in two strikingly significant facts: 1) The officers were unable to stem the tide of demonstrations and the Chief of Staff was unwilling to impose discipline. When finally Eisenhower commanded that the demonstrations be banned, he admitted doing so because the demands began to go beyond the simple one "to get the boys home." Even after the various commanders had reiterated the order of the ban, sporadic demonstrations continued affecting even the Marine Corps. 2) The bourgeoisie sought to restore greater equilibrium in the service by (a) disciplining the lax occupational troops in Germany; (b) trying by court martial the military prison guards and officers of Litchfield Barracks as a concession to the enlisted men and veterans in particular and the working masses in general; (c) window-dressing talk of liberalizing the army--centering particularly around reform in military courts-martial procedure as a blow against military caste.

### THE VETERAN

Returned to civilian life, the veteran bears with him the experience -- whether conscious or not -- of years of hostility to bourgeois authority. He bears with him too, the experience and confidence of his skills and initiative and the experience of overt oppression, both developed to a high degree during his war service. Freed from this overt oppression and regimentation, the veteran, seeking to express himself socially finds no ready opening in civilian activity for his developed abilities. For the overt oppression of authority is substituted a more covert oppression under the guise of free labor. As an individual the veteran faces the personal problems of readjustment, but these today are essentially the old unsolved problems of his class brought into sharper focus by the war.

Of course, there are contradictions in the personal and social orientation of the serviceman. During the war, he was subject to the vicious propaganda that war workers were coining fortunes in industry while the soldiers were sweating it out on pennies. Also, there was the resentment against the relatively unruffled lives of civilians while servicemen were

subjected to the pressures and bestialities of war. But these prejudices are neither significant nor decisive. Because of the interpenetration of the masses and the uninsulated character of the wartime army, these prejudices, to the extent that they existed, were essentially an expression of the soldiers' resentment against the war and the army and thus against bourgeois rule of which the more concrete expression was opposition to the officers.

The effect of the army upon the millions of men and women who served is of importance in the potentialities revealed to them. In the service was developed a sense of comradeship and a sense of the absolute necessity of working together in a way which civilians experience only under conditions of intensified class struggle. Moreover, the soldier's experiences and training accustomed him to the concept and fact of violence and of tremendous transformations by direct action. In addition, he came into direct or indirect contact with the masses of many countries in the resistance movements. He saw the disruptive effects of the guerillas upon the plans of the Axis High Command. He saw them accorded the military rights of co-belligerents. As a result, to his more conscious awareness of the interpenetration of the American masses was added his growing awareness of the interpenetration of the masses of the world. This, plus his opposition to officers and the growing realization that behind the officers stands capitalist rule, the veteran takes back to the civilian proletariat which itself under the impact of the war and immediate post-war period is learning that labor's struggle is the struggle for humanity against the oppression of bourgeois rule.

To regard the veteran's militancy as a response merely to his more complicated post-war readjustment problems is to reduce the veteran to the level of a special bread-and-butter problem. Such a reduction can come only from the assumption that the army is a classless unity from which also flows the moral indignation against the personal behavior of the soldier at home and abroad -- the condemnation that the soldier of the imperialist American Army behaved not like the long awaited liberator but like an oppressive conqueror. As though the role of the American Army is to liberate! The peculiar ethics of war, the horrors, the reactionary prejudices of the soldiers are part of the degradation of capitalism. To be preoccupied with the horrors of war is to fall into the fatal trap of pacifist agitation. True, the American soldier abroad demonstrated brutality along with occasional demonstrations of generosity. But this is typical of all invading and occupying armies. What distinguishes this army is not the brutality but the sharpened social relations.

Among the petty bourgeoisie there were some who were preoccupied with the brutalization of the American soldier and who feared that the veteran would be prey to fascist propaganda. These elements were both astonished and relieved that the veteran did not assume the anti-worker mantle prepared for him by the bourgeoisie, but they were unable to understand the transition from "brutalized" soldier to militant prole-

tarian. It was the consequence of looking solely at the degradations of capitalism rather than at the class struggle within capitalism.

The specific prejudices and "brutal" behavior of the soldiers and the veterans are part of the degradation of capitalism and will be moved by the proletariat because the veteran --and the soldier--will move with and as part of the working class. This the veterans themselves have demonstrated: 1) In the first post-war strike wave, veterans were among the most militant fighters and unionists on the picket lines 2) In politics, particularly in Tennessee and Arkansas, veterans have spearheaded armed movements to oppose old line political machines 3) The American Veterans Committee, most representative of all veterans organizations growing out of World War II, in order to divert the militancy of the rank-and-file veteran had to appear with a political coloration.

The veterans militancy is no happy accident. While still in the service, their hostility and opposition, deeply rooted in fundamental class antagonisms had an organizational framework for expression, e.g. unit, company. For the soldier separated from the army, the framework -- not the hostility -- disappeared. With the post-war upsurge of class struggle, the veteran saw in the organized working class the only force in society which could give organizational form to his basic anti-capitalist antagonism, and a social movement of which he could become part. Even veterans with little or no pre-war factory or union experience fought with a determination which equalled and sometimes surpassed that of long-time unionists. It was a manifestation of their combined development.

This dialectical movement has special significance for the Negro veteran. The Negro soldiers, doubly oppressed by the army were also, as a result, very highly organized by the army. Their opposition to bourgeois rule was more overt. In the few instances where Negro outfits were formed for combat, while there were individual examples of determined fighting, the organizations made neither the outstanding combat record of the Nisei nor a record comparable with that of the bulk of the white combat troops. This stemmed not from any Negro differential in bravery or ability, but from a refusal to do determined combat in an army of existing American society. In their own outfits, on the other hand, Negroes fought with militancy and disregard for personal safety against the Jim Crow discrimination of the American Army. In significant numbers, Negro veterans have reenlisted for occupation duty. This is a two-fold expression of their rejection of American bourgeois rule and their determination for social integration. On the one hand they reject the discrimination of American bourgeois society in favor of their greater social equality among foreign nationals abroad. On the other hand, they reject American bourgeois society where they have little hope for meaningful employment.

For the discharged Negro, as for the discharged white

veteran, separation from the service has meant a loss of the organizational framework for the expression of his deep-going hostility. Here, too, a sharpening of the class struggle will offer both the organization and arena for the expression of his opposition. The Negro soldier in the army like the Negro veteran in America is thus a potential spark and whip for revolutionary action.

The militancy of the veteran on the picket line is the incipiently revolutionary militancy of a generation imbued with hostility toward the authority of the ruling class, inculcated with the conception of the importance of the rank and file worker in the utilization of the productive forces.

If the working class were to suffer defeat, sections of the veterans might well become part of a fascist organization, but so might non-veteran members of the working class. However, before the fascists can struggle for the power, the working class will become increasingly radicalized. In that radicalization we can expect the veterans to help push the movement forward to a greater consciousness of its social destiny.

His military experience gave the veteran a sharpened hostility against capitalist rule and a tremendous impetus toward social action. These essentially socialistic manifestations can be developed only 1) by the American proletariat heightening its struggle; and 2) while the soldier remains abroad, by the impact of the proletariat there as a revolutionary social force.

#### THE ROLE OF THE PARTY

The American soldiers and workers were in a sense skeptical of the war, and in the same sense skeptical of the government. But there was no obvious alternative to the war and to the government. It is at this point that the party can play a key role. Just as it posed the concrete alternative of "no support to the imperialist war" it must go before the veterans and pose along with an explanation of their present situation, an actual alternative to it. That is, the party must pose revolutionary reconstruction of society against reluctant and reforming acceptance of bourgeois rule. By linking this perspective with the clarification for the veteran of the objective meaning of his military experience, the party will attract to itself many veterans who are seeking a solution of their deep-rooted problems.

The bourgeoisie is planning a peacetime army of approximately one million men. This is no insulated, small volunteer army of traditional peacetime America. Because of the antagonism existing between the ruling class and the class from which the mass of soldiers is drawn -- internationally as well as nationally -- to agitate against conscription in terms mainly of brutality of military life is to run the danger of opportunism. Analysis of conscription must be in class terms

and agitation in terms of class action. In making the proper analysis and propoganda to the veteran, the party has the bridge to the soldier of the post-war army. In making the veteran aware of the objective character of his experiences and nature of his role, the party thereby gives the soldier the key to understanding his own experiences. In the epoch in which we live, it is well to remember and apply the lesson contained in Trotsky's words: "But opportunism was perhaps most plainly expressed in the superficial and disdainful attitude toward militarism as a barbaric institution unworthy of enlightened social-democratic attention.... It was the October Revolution that was first called upon not only to restore the active-revolutionary attitude toward war questions, but also to turn the spearhead of militarism practically against the ruling classes. The world revolution will carry this work to the end."

Ike Blaké - New York

ON THE LETTER OF THE I.K.D. TO THE CONVENTION  
OF THE WORKERS PARTY

NOTES FOR A RESTATEMENT OF OUR POSITION

The Workers Party is a political organization based on the principles of revolutionary Marxism. It is not yet the party of the American proletariat. It aims to become that party, through whatever stages it may be necessary to pass in order to achieve that goal.

The Workers Party is a revolutionary socialist organization which aims at establishing a workers' government and a socialist society. This aim cannot be achieved except by arousing and uniting all the classes and strata that are exploited and oppressed by monopoly capitalism, for the socialist victory liberates all oppressed social groups in defeating capitalism. Resistance to capitalist oppression and, finally, its destruction, is possible only if all these groups join in the struggle against it. The effectiveness of the resistance and the guarantee of the victory of all these groups is possible, in turn, only on the condition that the organized proletariat, which is the only consistently progressive and revolutionary class in society, achieves and maintains its leadership in the struggle. Finally, the hegemony of the proletariat and its revolutionary character can be assured only if it is inspired and led by a conscious socialist vanguard, that is, the revolutionary party, which has won its confidence in the actual struggle. A revolutionary party cannot win the confidence of the proletariat and gain its support for the fighting program of socialism, unless it takes part, day-in and day-out, as the most militant and conscious vanguard, in the mass organizations and struggles of the proletariat. All the other political activities of the revolutionary socialist party must be subordinated to this. It must aim, therefore, at an overwhelmingly proletarian social composition and at an overwhelming concentration of its efforts in the ranks of the proletariat and particularly of its organized vanguard, the trade unions.

Where, as in the concrete case of the Workers Party in the United States today, the revolutionary socialist vanguard is an exceedingly tiny and isolated force, its primary task, once it has worked out and established clearly those distinctive principles of its program that justify its existence as an independent organization separate from all other working class organizations, is to establish the closest connection with and sink the deepest roots in the mass organizations of the proletariat, above all others the trade unions. Not only the intellectuals and other petty-bourgeois elements, but workers as well, who have acquired an understanding of scientific socialism and joined the party of socialism, can be effective in the struggle for our goal only if their main efforts are exerted in the ranks and in the daily class struggles (strikes, etc.) of the organized working class.

The American working class has succeeded in recent years in establishing the largest and most important trade-union movement in the history of this or any other country. This development is of the profoundest importance both for the working class and the revolutionary socialist movement. No other social organization of any kind

whatsoever in the United States is the equal of the trade union movement in numbers, social weight and significance. A revolutionary Marxist organization which does not make this mass movement the principal basis of its activities and concern, is utterly doomed to sterility. We reject categorically the contention that the trade union field, particularly in the present period of the United States, is the most barren of all fields of activity for Marxists.

The Workers Party, for numberless well-known reasons, had at its origin and has even now a considerable, and in any case an all too great, percentage of its membership who fall into the category of non-proletarians. The revolutionary socialist party appeals both to proletarians and non-proletarians to enter its ranks. But it does not lay equal emphasis upon the two. The revolutionary socialist party is a class party and this is represented primarily by its class program but not last of all by its class composition, which is or must become overwhelmingly proletarian. Basically, the means of establishing an overwhelmingly proletarian composition in the party is by recruitment to the party of the best elements of the factory workers and their training in Marxist science. For the Workers Party as it is, and especially as it was, this is too general, not concrete. To win these factory workers, it is first necessary for those already in the party to participate as revolutionary socialists in their struggles, in the solution of their daily problems, to demonstrate in their practical experience the need to organize into a revolutionary political party. For the Workers Party, as for most revolutionary parties in their infancy, this required, and still does, an intensive campaign of "industrialization" of "proletarianization," of the existing party membership.

It is false to assume that the activity of the Workers Party membership in the factories and unions is based upon the policy of their becoming "good trade unionists." The Workers Party is not a trade union party. Or rather, the members of the party who function in the trade unions must become the best and most militant trade unionists as the indispensable pre-condition to gaining political influence over the workers and their struggles, to infusing their economic struggles with class political consciousness, to transforming their economic struggles into political struggles, to raising the thinking and fighting of the working class to a revolutionary level. At the same time that the Workers Party established the indispensability and tremendous fruitfulness of revolutionary work in the trade unions, it recognized that the latter are a powerful source of opportunist infection. But while this is undoubtedly true, it is one thousand times more true of these mass organizations, much smaller in size and in social weight, which are not exclusively or even decisively proletarian in composition.

The party firmly rejects the contention that it is suffering from "unionitis," that is, from too great a preoccupation with the trade unions and party work within them. What the party suffers from primarily and mainly and most acutely, is still its isolation from the main mass organizations of the proletariat, its lack of influence within them and upon them, from the fact that these organizations are still entirely under the domination of the reformist and Stalinist bureaucracy, a stranglehold that must absolutely be broken before the

party can think of raising itself to the heights of solving the main task of society. The party cannot even think of undertaking to break this stranglehold today by concentrating its main efforts outside of the mass organizations. The lamentation about "unionitis," combined with the assertion that the trade unions are the most barren of all fields of our activity, is a disorienting, demoralizing, and therefore a reactionary cry in the party today. It cannot but give aid and comfort to those who have wearied of the difficulties of the work and the struggle to build the party, and to those whose petty-bourgeois characteristics still rebel against plunging into the mass proletarian organizations, the struggles which they conduct and which, to develop in a revolutionary direction, must be directly influenced by actual revolutionary participants.

The party does not exclude work in mass organizations other than the trade unions, even non-proletarian organizations, any more than it excludes taking the initiative in forming other organizations on specific occasions and for specific purposes, and within the limitations established by availability of forces and primacy of tasks. But, in the first place, such work must be subordinated to the main concentration upon the basic mass organizations of the proletariat and under no circumstances counterposed or substituted for it. In the second place, work in the non-proletarian organization and among non-proletarian sections of the population is permissible precisely to the extent that the party seeks to link up this work with its work in the unions, precisely to the extent that it emphasizes among these non-proletarian sections the indispensability of linking their aspirations and struggles to the proletariat and under its leadership. It is not to be denied that in the preoccupation with proletarianizing the party, work in such fields has been, in practice, ignored. It is necessary now to see to it that those members who, for one or another reason whose validity has been established, cannot participate directly in the trade unions, shall be assigned to join and work inside another non-party organization, so that there remains no member of the party who does not function politically in a fruitful organized field.

The party does not exclude, either, political work and political actions organized by itself outside the framework of the trade unions. It is entirely correct to emphasize over and over again the vital importance of the party, in the first place the party press, devoting consistent attention to all the significant political and social questions of the day, and appearing in the eyes of all as the defender of all sections of the people, and even individuals, who are oppressed and maltreated by capitalism. It is entirely correct to emphasize the importance of the party being alert to every practical possibility of participating in every popular movement of protest against the iniquities of capitalism; of taking the initiative in organizing such movements, no matter how small, wherever it can. Such emphasis is especially required against those, inside or outside the party, who conceive of its activities in the narrow "lab-omite" sense. There is no lack of such political questions and such political movements. But it is likewise correct that the party must retain a sense of proportion and balance in judging its ability to take advantage of such possibilities; that it must remain aware of the limitations of its forces and the primacy of its main task in



ordered to avoid a dispersal and eventual immobilization of the former and a neglect of the latter.

The party seeks to become a party made up mainly of factory proletarians. It does not exclude non-proletarians. To remind the Workers Party that it needs intellectuals, men and women who have acquired and can unite the proletariat with the greatest achievements of bourgeois science, technical skill, culture; that such persons are indispensable in changing society from capitalism to socialism, is perhaps to remind it of a worthwhile commonplace. To place exceptional emphasis upon this need, today, in our concrete circumstances, cannot but be misleading and disorienting. The party is a considerable distance from the problem of building a socialist society. It can begin seriously to bridge that distance not by a great concentration on the work of recruiting to its ranks intellectuals and technicians, but by a great concentration upon breaking its isolation from the factory proletariat and recruiting its best elements to its ranks by the hundreds and the thousands. Without abandoning for an instant our appeal to the intellectuals to join the ranks of socialism, the party is aware of the fact that these elements will join its ranks in serious numbers and be able to make a serious contribution to increasing the cultural and political arsenal of the party, only when the party has demonstrated its capacity to win to its ranks considerable numbers of devoted and influential workers. If this is not understood, then all talk of winning to our ranks truly qualified bearers of culture and science who would make it possible for the party to speak with real authority on problems of culture and science, instead of with ineffectual amateurishness, is largely abstract preaching.

The party reiterates the conception of the stage and process of its development that is embodied in the resolutions adopted at its last convention. We are not yet a party in the true sense of the word, and the first step toward becoming a real party is to understand this fact without a feeling of consternation. We cannot become a party by "acting" like one. To argue that five men or fifty men can be a party by setting themselves into motion, by endeavoring to extend their political influence, which is nil, to others; that they are a party because or while they are becoming one, is a play upon words which deprives the word "party" of any serious sense. The "dialectics" of building a revolutionary party lies precisely in such a change taking place in the "quantity" that a change finally takes place in the "quality" that is, that a propaganda group which has firmly established its principles and right to existence finally breaks through to the position of a genuine political party, a political organization capable of calling considerable numbers of the masses into political action and capable of taking responsibility both for the call and for the action of the masses who respond to it.

The party cannot accept any mechanical identification of our present situation, problems and tasks with those confronting the Bolsheviks in the period of their birth and rise. All the less can it accept an identification which grossly distorts the history of the Bolsheviks. The Bolsheviks fought, as representatives of the proletarian tendency, against the Mensheviks as representatives ..

of the radical-intellectual tendency. The Bolsheviks insisted on the revolutionary social-democrat being qualified as such by virtue of his close connection (even "fusion") with the organization of the proletariat. The Bolshevik professional revolutionists, for the most part, concentrated their activities in the factories and in whatever primitive labor organizations existed at the time. The Bolsheviks faced the bourgeois-democratic revolution; we the socialist revolution. The Russian proletariat of the early Bolshevik days demanded what purified capitalism and accelerated and strengthened its development; what the proletariat demands today undermines capitalism. The Bolsheviks faced the task of first establishing popular social organizations, trade unions in the first place; we face the task of permeating trade unions which already exist on such a scale and with such social significance as was simply inconceivable under Czarism. Reforms demanded by the Russian proletariat were compatible with capitalism; reforms demanded today are less and less - much less than ever before - compatible with capitalism. Under the autocracy, Lenin advocated narrowing the party membership to the point where it was confined entirely or mainly to professional revolutionists; he never advocated this for the communist parties after 1917, but rather the contrary. And so on and so forth.

Lenin sought to work out a "plan" for the Bolsheviks. The Workers Party likewise seeks to operate along the lines of a "plan." The revolutionary vanguard in this country works under conditions in which it is a tiny propaganda group, capitalism is objectively over-ripe for socialism, there is a huge economic organization of the proletariat, there is no political organization of the proletariat, there is no socialist consciousness in the proletariat, its struggles are massive and militant but, being without revolutionary leadership and objective, they are doomed to exhaust the very proletariat that engages in them. Our political task in this country today is summed up in the struggle to establish the proletariat as a class for itself, as a politically independent class with its own class goal. This is represented by our main political slogan for an independent labor party, with an independent class program and the aim of a workers' government. In the sense that these slogans are given by our general conception of the transitional program, we propagate them in the spirit of a genuinely class (i.e. revolutionary socialist) party, a genuinely revolutionary program, a genuinely revolutionary workers' government. We are still far from achieving that. Nevertheless, the Workers Party considers that the most favorable practical (or realistic) perspective is the formation of a reformist labor party based on the trade unions. Once the American proletariat has established a class party of its own, the revolutionary Marxists would have before them an extremely favorable organized political arena in which to function and - given the necessary intelligence - to grow rapidly. The subsequent development of such a party would in all likelihood decide the fate of the American proletariat for a long period of time. The development of such a movement, however, would depend in no small measure upon the policies and activities (hence, first of all, the participation in it) of the revolutionary vanguard. What would most positively assure this participation, this influencing of the development of the politically-organized American proletariat? The fact that the vanguard is already deeply rooted in the trade unions upon which the labor party is based. Again and

again, we must, beginning yesterday, or today, or tomorrow, become a force in the trade unions, and that is in general an impossibility ...if we are outside the unions or "inside" of them with the paralyzing conception that they are the most barren of all fields of activity. (Why, indeed, should any revolutionist want to waste time in a field of activity which is more barren than any other in existence?)

The importance we attach to the political independence of the American workers, to the formation of a labor party, is not less than that attached to it by Lenin and Trotsky when they "imposed" the struggle for the labor party on the American communist movement more than twenty years ago. All our work in the trade unions reached its most concentrated practical political expression in the slogan and practical work that can be done in favor of establishing a labor party. But not in the trade unions alone. Without reducing the struggle for a labor party to an empty ritualistic formula repeated in season and out, we nevertheless seek to permeate all our political work, including that carried on outside the unions, with that slogan and the political concepts we attach to it. For all the oppressed, for all the exploited, for all the maltreated: their fortunes are inseparably linked with the establishment of a workers' mass political party which has such a program, aim and leadership as will put the working class in the leadership of every progressive social and political struggle, as will make the working class the conscious champion of the progressive aspirations of every social group and stratum, as will make the working class the leader and organizer of the nation itself. That is the political essence of our "plan" in the United States today, which seems to have escaped the notice of our welcome critics. That is how it is understood and should be understood by every party member. That is what should animate and imbue every ounce of the political activity of the party as a whole, of its press, of every member, whether the activity is conducted in the unions, outside the unions, among organized workers, unorganized workers or non-workers. In our conception, it is in the course of the propaganda, agitation and action conducted to advance this "plan," that the present small revolutionary vanguard, as the most consistent, most persistent and most conscious advocates of the ideas put forward, will gradually acquire the flesh and blood, the mass support and authority, that the revolutionists require before they can seriously consider themselves and act effectively like a party, that is, like the actual spokesman and leader of hundreds of thousands and millions.

If this is understood, then all talk about our "acceptance" of plans such as are put forward by Reuther (GM Program), about seeing in such plans "anti-capitalism" and "even socialism," becomes a sort of friendly but ill-considered jest. The party seizes promptly and eagerly on every apparent step forward of the reformist bureaucracy which the masses regard as a real step forward and to act accordingly. But instead of embroidering it and its authors as "anti-capitalist" and "even socialist," we seek in our propaganda, above all in our press, to use this sentiment of the masses as a concrete, a real, point of departure for imbuing them with real class consciousness. We seek to show how their real desires and needs, which are "expressed" in these "plans" in such a way as to frustrate them (that being the role of the reformist bureaucracy)

can be realized; how what they want and need can be achieved by fighting for control of industry which can be obtained by control of the government for which they require, in turn, a political party and political action of their own. It is a concrete illustration of... our unpolitical unionitis.

Three words about our press: For the Workers Party today, in the United States, to publish Labor Action in such a way that it would be the same type of paper as that once published, say, in Germany by the German section, would be swift and thorough suicide. All other considerations apart, the press of the German section addressed itself, as it had to, to a working class already "educated" to social-democratic and Stalinist socialism; it is out of these workers that they had to try to make revolutionary socialists. Our press must address itself to a working class which, while militant, has no (practically no) social-democratic or Stalinist education whatsoever; it is out of these workers that we must try to make revolutionary socialists. The difference in the press is dictated in the first place by this difference. Second, it is indeed necessary for our press, even our popular press, to try to deal with finance, regulation of currency, legislation, postal service, radio, the motion pictures, psychology, philosophy, pedagogy, literature, art, family life, sports, recreation, penology and a thousand other questions. There are many questions we should deal with for which we have more or less qualified people, or can get qualified people for, yet we do not deal with them; and that is remediable defect in our press which must be eliminated as soon as possible. But there are far more questions we should deal with that had best be left absolutely alone, inasmuch as they should be dealt with by authoritative and qualified people, whom we do not have, and not by ambitious amateurs, whom we do have but who do not add to our stature or to the education of the reader. Third, too many people who talk about the popular press published by the bolsheviks never saw a copy of that press, either in the original or in a translation or in an adequate description. Everything else about our press has been said a hundred times in the party.

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The crisis of socialism is indisputable. The attempt to find a royal road out of it is most natural. Not every attempt is most laudable. In rejecting a new explanation of the crisis, we are under no obligation to supply a new one of our own. The causes of the crisis are not simple any more than they are superficial. They are deep-rooted, but extremely complex and complicated. We believe they have been set forth most adequately - if we are speaking of the causes for the general (as against a specific) crisis of socialism - by Trotsky in the course of the twenty-years of political and polemical struggle against Stalinism and social-democracy. To say that the crisis is due to the triumph of bourgeois consciousness and bourgeois politics in the working class over socialist consciousness and socialist politics, adds something (and something very important) to the explanation of the crisis given by our movement, but adds something only in the sense that it gives the same explanation in different terms. If it is true that it is not enough to explain the crisis, but that we must overcome it, then it is likewise true that the

crisis cannot be overcome but only deepened if the revolutionary Marxist groups and grouplets abandon the mass organizations of labor, the trade unions, in the countries where they exist. (The problem is posed quite differently, as we have taken care to point out for years, in those countries in which the decay of capitalism has reached the point where bourgeois democracy, and consequently the political existence of all classes, the proletariat included, is literally wiped out. It would, however, be the sheerest mechanism to make a serious comparison between such countries and, for example, the United States or England.) An explanation of the crisis and its causes which does not take into account the determining existence of social-democracy and Stalinism - or which, worse yet, estimates Stalinism as a bourgeois-reformist movement - is automatically invalidated. To argue that the strength of reformism and Stalinism is due to the misery, dilletantism, complete helplessness, indescribable confusion, dishonesty, opportunism and bankruptcy of the Fourth International, as it has been qualified, is literally to stand things on their head. To argue that nobody in the history of the Fourth International understood the causes of the crisis or fought in a Bolshevik way to overcome them, is to wipe out the revolutionary history of the Trotskyist movement with a purely literary stroke of the hand. To disregard the well-known powerful objective forces and to argue that the situation was continually favorable to a reconstitution of the class-conscious political (Bolshevik) movement in the past decade or two, if only Trotsky and the international movement had really understood how to overcome the causes of the crisis, is unhistorical mysticism. To ignore the absolutely unique and unforeseen-unforeseeable fact that the usurpation of the Bolshevik Revolution by Stalinism took place under the banner of that Revolution and with its formal authority still potent among the advanced workers; that the criminal blunders and outright crimes of Stalinism enabled outlived social-democracy to eke out a parasitic existence, just as the misery of social-democracy enabled Stalinism to live a parasitic existence; that Trotskyism acted and had to act for a long time as a faction of the official communist movement and could think of establishing a party of its own only after years of Stalinist degeneration and devastation of the working class; that Stalinism appears today in a different form and on a different social basis than in 1923 and is able to exert a powerful mass influence precisely because it is not a bourgeois-reformist movement; that it is really only in the present period that the decay of capitalism and social democracy, on the one side, and of Russia and Stalinism on the other, reopens the prospect of "good luck" to the revolutionary movement in the most promising proportions - to ignore all these and numerous other facts is to stand directly in the way of an understanding of the crisis and therefore of the means of overcoming it.

The specific crisis of the Fourth International is something else, even if it is by no means unconnected with the general crisis of the revolutionary movement. The specific crisis, manifested most cruelly with the outbreak of the second world war, was due to the failure to abandon in time the by-then reactionary theory that Stalinist Russia is a workers' state that must be unconditionally defended in the imperialist war, and inseparably connected with it, the illusions about the mid-war or post-war victories of the "proletarian revolution" which would be induced by the victory of the

"workers state" and would fall under the leadership of the Fourth International. Combined, this reactionary theory plus the illusions (to say nothing of the fact that the movement was deprived of Trotsky's direct guidance) so focused the attention of the International on the "revolutions" that were forecast as to blind them to the truly revolutionary mass movements (national resistance) that developed in the reality of political life in Europe. Scattered, leaderless, inexperienced, the sections of the International - except for the Workers Party and the IFD - revenged themselves for their illusions by first ignoring then condemning and abstaining from the real revolutionary movements. Therein lies our criticism of the official Fourth International and the reasons for the specific case of bankruptcy which it suffered during the great crisis which was the war. For the persistence and extension and deepening of the crisis in the Fourth International, the principal responsibility lies with the leadership of the bureaucratized, opportunistic, phrasemongering Cannonite sect.

In view of the framework within which our criticism of the Fourth International is made, it follows that we still consider it our International. This determines not only the tone of our criticism, but our political and organizational attitude toward the international center and its sections. Our criticism of the theories, policies, estimate of the period and of the tasks which are held by the International, remains in our opinion compatible with that regular membership in the International which we seek to obtain. The international movement today is tiny. It requires a radical change in course before it is in a position to make the progress which it must and can make. We shall seek in all firmness and comradeship to contribute to that change. But in the solution of the problem of reestablishing the revolutionary proletarian political movement, we see in the world today no serious movement or organized forces as the basis of the reconstituted movement outside of those represented by the Fourth International. It is therefore our International as well.

In view of the discussions already held on the question of the crisis of socialism and the specific tasks of the revolutionary movement in the United States, in the course of which reference was made to the possibility that some comrades, abandoning both the SWP and the WP would take the initiative to establish here a new press and a new party, based on the views set forth in the letter of the I.K.D. to the convention of the Workers Party, we consider it necessary to declare that we have nothing whatsoever in common with such an enterprise or with anyone who might sponsor it, and that we condemn it in advance with double vigor in view of the fact that those who contemplate such a possibility seriously are among the comrades who declared themselves in favor of unity between the SWP and the WP among other reasons on the ground that there was no place for more than one Trotskyist organization in the country.

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(NOTE: The above was adopted by the National Committee at its Plenum held in November, 1946.)