

Bulletin

OF THE WORKERS PARTY

CONTENTS

JOHNSONISM IN THE COAL FIELDS - By Gerald McDermott	1
A QUESTION ON REUTHER, THE SOCIAL DEMOCRAT - By George Leo Gordon (Buffalo)	5
STATEMENT OF RESIGNATION - By Allen Baker, Sylvia Collins, Joe Leonard and Chet Marco	7
OPEN LETTER TO THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE AND ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE WORKERS PARTY - From E. Germain (October 10, 1947).....	9
FOR THE RECORD - By Hal Draper	36

15 CENTS

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JOHNSONISM IN THE COAL FIELDS

By Gerald McDermott

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The purpose of this article is to examine objectively the one situation in the U.S. where Johnsonism, as a political tendency, has actually been put into practice.

Johnsonism, throughout the course of its existence, has been a minority tendency organizationally subjected to the discipline first of the WP and now of the SWP. While the special political theories of the WP and SWP have been tested in practice--as in the UAW, for instance--Johnsonism has been confined to party discussions and mimeograph paper.

The revolutionary movement in the Appalachian coal fields provides the only exception to this. Here, because of a singular confluence of circumstances, Johnsonism has had an organizational expression.

The WP late in 1946 established a branch in the coal area. Part of the work was among miners, part among students. Work in this new area proceeded somewhat slowly as would be expected. Comrade Fenwick, as organizer, worked towards the education and integration of the miner comrades and the recruitment of students to help in the work of the party. Then, in the early summer of 1947, Comrade Fenwick left for another assignment. The student comrades transferred temporarily to another locality to do special work under the direction of the party. Consequently, the split of the Johnsonites found the Johnsonites in the leadership of the branch. Almost the entire branch went over to the SWP.

Herein lay an unparelled opportunity for the Johnsonites. They could prove to the WP the validity of the Johnsonite approach, and likewise establish their effectiveness in the eyes of the SWP. There was only one WP member in the area. There were no "regular" SWP members, the nearest branch of the SWP being a hundred miles away in Pittsburg and too busy trying to stay alive itself to intervene in the situation. There are no Stalinists in the area. The movement had established some roots in the mine communities and a very fruitful field for student work nearby. Although formally a branch of the SWP, the Johnsonites operated from the start on their own political principles. (It is interesting to note that in the mine area, the SWP did not wait for the "approval" of the CIC, but--anxious to seize on the first Trotskyist penetration of the coal fields--took in the Johnsonites immediately. In the case of the miner comrades, they were issued SWP membership cards with their dues marked "as Paid.")

In this extremely favorable situation, how did unfettered Johnsonism prove itself in action?

The first evidence was a letter of resignation from the SP signed by four miner comrades. A highly polished piece of political expression, this letter appeared in the Bulletin of the Johnsonites. The ~~comrades~~ had left the WP for the SWP.

Comrade McKinney, who had organized the branch, was able to visit the area ^{for} one day. He was suspicious of the literary letter of resignation from the miner comrades because he knew that not all of the signators were able to read and write. His suspicions were justified during the day he was there. The miners had been innocent of the letter.

The area remained in the hands of the Johnsonites, however, for the entire summer and early fall. Then, the WP members together with one additional WP member arrived on the scene. The object, of course, was to try to salvage as much as possible of the party work done there.

By and large, the problem was not winning back people from the SWP. The problem was to win people back to the movement in any shape after their experience with Johnsonism.

The Johnsonites had operated according to their principles. Scorning the concept of "backward workers", they had acted upon their own concept of the state of development of the American working class. One result of this was an attempted general strike in the area. Quite understandably, this strike never got beyond the stage of an idea in the heads of the Johnsonites. The miner comrades wisely refrained from any attempt to carry it out in a local area and under conditions where it was obviously impossible. They were able to learn, however, something of Johnsonism.

A second manifestation of Johnsonites theory was a general ignoring of the UMW of A and its locals. Seeing the trade union bureaucracy as the sole barrier between the working class and soviets, they ignored the union in issuing mimeographed manifestoes direct to the miners. Their general orientation was towards a mass mobilization of miners rather than action through the locals. This likewise came to an ignominious end. All miners may not appreciate all the shortcomings of their union, but they universally appreciate its usefulness. And in this instance, they gained a further appreciation of Johnsonism.

There was yet another aspect of the application of Johnsonite theory. This was on their really distinctive point, the Negro question. The miner comrades are largely Negro and therefore, also, the branch. The Johnsonites seized on this. Contact lists became almost exclusively made up of Negroes. The entire branch was oriented towards recruiting Negroes and fighting Jim Crow.

Here it was that the Johnsonites really broke their backs. The Negro comrades, as union miners, appreciate fully through long experience the necessity for class solidarity of white and colored workers. They rebelled against what was obviously a stupid course. Protests that work should be carried on among white miners were largely ignored. As a result, by and large, before long the Johnsonites were largely ignored.

This was true not only because the miner comrades desired class solidarity but because the anti-Jim Crow campaign of the Johnsonites was largely fraudulent. Race relations in the Appalachian coal camps are perhaps the best in the country. There is Jim-Crow, it is true, but

to say, as do the Johnsonites, that "East Virginia is a Jim Crow state of the worst sort" is to ignore reality. The miner comrades are largely from the deep south and know something about "Jim Crow of the worst sort". Further, they know that Jim Crow must be fought through the unions and white workers must participate in the fight.

Throughout this period while the Johnsonites were squandering their capital as described above, one miner comrade who had remained with the Workers Party was able to effectively criticize these Johnsonite tactics. As a result of his work, upon the return of other WP members to the area, the branch was soon reestablished and included those who had resigned except for one person who is too ill to participate in either organization.

We have made one reference to the Johnsonite treatise on the area--(Jim Crow of the worst sort). Several others might be made in passing. Busily squeezing workers into their preconceived categories the Johnsonite leader in the area writes that he "has yet to see a miner who has heard of, or cares about, the Paris Commune," etc. The "abstract ideas" and "dull histories" of the WP are not for the miner; what is needed is "mobilization; the crystallization of the miners into mass organizations." !!

Passing over just which mass organizations(plural) are needed in addition to the party and the union at a time when we have little influence in the union and few people in the party, it must be stated that the Johnsonites were so busy giving orders to miners to mobilize themselves that they never discovered people under their noses who could teach them things about the Paris Commune. Yes, and the Communist Manifesto, and the struggles of the American working class since slavery days, and the rise of Hitler, and a number of other things. For there are such miners--and the Johnsonites were in touch with them--but in their intellectual arrogance, they were too busy "crystallizing mass organizations" to learn from miners or even learn what miners--former Communists, former Wobblies--knew.

The most telling comment that can be made on Johnsonian writings concerns their sources and their methods. The last paragraph of page three of Morgan West's authoritative document on coal mining contains a quote from a miner which strongly bears out the Johnsonian assertion that miners have an "innate desire to dig coal." The words of this miner, instinctive and elemental word for instinctive and elemental word, can also be found at the bottom of page 99 of the book, "I Went to Pit College", by Lauren Gilfillan, published by The Literary Guild in New York. Comrade West's treatise appeared in 1947, whereas Miss Gilfillan published in 1934; we leave conclusions to our reader. Miss Gilfillan is a petty bourgeois dilettante, a student from New York City who fails completely to understand Marxism. In differentiating between the two, it should be said that Comrade West is from Pennsylvania instead.

Mention should be made of the Trade Union Director of the SWP in this field. This young miner was evidently given a little quick indoctrination on the dictatorship of the proletariat. At any rate, he came to the conclusion that the SWP intended to replace capitalism with a monarchy, and openly espoused these views in his capacity as Trade Union Director.

A second product of Johnsonite education was a new member of theirs, a student whom the writer of this piece engaged in discussion on the Russian question. This new comrade understood the question perfectly. Russia, it seems, is a fascist, state-capitalist country which must be unconditionally defended because it has nationalized property. Obviously, this formulation is not a reflection on the new comrade who put it forward. It is a reflection instead on the shotgun wedding of Johnsonism and Cannonism.

In the only case where these Johnsonites with an SWP fig leaf have borrowed from the SWP line, they have chosen the most unfortunate part of it and applied it in a way that would make even E.R. Frank's hair stand on end. Borrowing on the line of the Militant and the SWP in the UAW, they are in the fore-front in the defense against "red-baiting." On campus, in class room, in veterans organizations, the NAACP, and in the mine area, they are tireless and loud in defending "Communism." They indicate in no way that the "Communism" under attack now is largely Stalinism, the antithesis of true communism. They do not indicate that they themselves are not "Communists", that is, Stalinists. Thus, the majority of their listeners firmly believe them to be Stalinists. Those who have been told that they are really Trotskyites come to the conclusion that the differences between Stalinism and Trotskyism are slight indeed.

Such heroic striving towards disaster can result only in--only in disaster. Already isolated, depleted and defeated, the Johnsonites continue to invite bourgeois repression in this small and vulnerable area by their ultra-left adventurism.

And such external failure could not but have its internal repercussions. Colonizers have decolonized after developing bitter differences with those who remain. Those still in the area explain their lack of success by deprecating (in private, of course) one or another of their comrades.

One cannot scientifically generalize from a single piece of evidence. The evidence described above is, however, all that there is so far on Johnsonism in practice. Since the Johnsonite deformation is especially peculiar to our epoch, it is worth noting.

It may be argued that the errors of the Johnsonites are a result of their inexperience. There is a certain validity to this. The writer knows comrades of the Johnson tendency who would at least avoid plagiarism and give a better account of themselves in general. This, of course, means only that such comrades should never have left the WP.

Then, too, the WP branch in the area is equally new and inexperienced. Further, the Johnsonites had an initial advantage. While the WP certainly has many unsolved problems in the coal fields, we are at least able to attack them without the handicap of having broken our backs.

Finally, it may be logically argued that the WP branch has had far more help from its national center than has the SWP branch. Here, surely, the Johnsonites are not to blame. Rather, the undeniable condition reflects directly on the claims to power, seriousness and size of their parent organization.

A QUESTION ON REUTHER, THE
SOCIAL DEMOCRAT

By George Leo Gordon (Buffalo)

* * *

Almost two years ago, Walter Reuther launched the GM strike program and backed it up with a hundred thousand workers and picket lines for the avowed purpose of winning his wage-price program contractually.

This created the basis for enthusiastic support by UAW militants, and the basis for support of the Reuther caucus by the Workers Party. Re: the Workers Party, Reuther deserved support for, (1) his GM wage-price program in a period of imperialist inflation, (2) his anti-Stalinism which co-incided with the Marxist position that only the workers themselves could cut the cancer of Stalinism out of American unionism.

Thus a clear cut relationship between social-democracy and revolutionary Trotskyists was laid down.

However, two years have gone by since then, and programs and positions, like history itself, do not stand still.

Social Democrats only appeal to the anti-capitalist sentiments of the workers for the purpose of maintaining a use-value to capitalism. They must maintain their prestige in order to have careers and in order to have bargaining power with capitalism. If they can achieve this without turning a left face to the workers, they will do so by preference since leaning upon the revolutionary sentiments of the workers also poses the danger that the leadership may at some conjuncture pass over directly into the hands of revolutionaries.

Having achieved position and use-value with a left turn, it is also an inevitable characteristic of social democrats to then begin a shift toward the right, as imperceptably as possible through clever tactics and a cover of radical phrases. This takes place slower or more rapidly depending upon the pressure which the revolutionary and militant sentiments, organized and unorganized, exert.

It is obvious that the Walter Reuther of two years ago is not the same Reuther of today. His GM program, once a contractual demand, is now reduced to a militant phrase, with buyers strikes, co-operatives, etc. the main emphasis in his price program. His anti-Stalinism is blurring at times into open bids to use the red-baiting drive of American Imperialism against the workers, as a means of ridding the unions of Stalinism. Thus two points upon which the Workers Party have supported Reuther have changed, are changing, and will continue to change their emphasis in the living reality of events.

Before the reader jumps to conclusions I would like to state that this article is not proposing any ridiculous SWP flip-flop to the Addes caucus, is not proposing any third camp position, and is

hoping to avoid any extraneous side discussions of this nature.

The purpose of this article is to elicit replies on the relation of social democracy to revolutionaries, in order to sharpen the Party's orientation toward Reutherism.

In too many cases this relationship is reduced to ritualistic phrases, about the GM program and anti-Stalinism, without regard to the fact that two years have gone by with changes in emphasis taking place, whether recognized or no.

It is characteristic of social democrats for instance, to turn sharply against their left support, when their objectives have been secured. This means that Walter Reuther, if he is a social democrat and not a revolutionary (the orientation can be lost in the vicious heat of UAW battles) may even now be preparing to turn out his left support into the driven snow, when he contemplates the possibility of a clean sweep in November.

This fact should not only be taken for granted, it should also be used to orientate Party members to the coming possibilities of change which may be decisive and less imperceptible than those which have already taken place in two years.

My point is that the Party's orientation has been heavily emphasized from a trade union point of view but almost brushed over from the point of view of what is the relation between social democrats and revolutionists. Just as the SWP can make heavy sectarian trade union blunders because of its lack of theoretical orientation, we can make blunders of "tailism" unless the Marxist basis of our presence in the Reuther caucus is more clearly defined and traced through the coming changes and shifts of forces.

STATEMENT OF RESIGNATION

By Allen Baker
Sylvia Collins
Joe Leonard
Chet Marco

* * *

We, the IKD faction, predicted more than a year ago the present crisis in the WP. Today, the crisis is openly recognized. The departure of the Johnsonites reveals the terrible sterility of the internal life all this time. The gloom throughout the ranks at the downfall of unity perspectives reveals that the WP no longer believes that it has reasons for an independent existence.

The recognition of the serious state of the WP has precipitated, not some new thinking, but an empty discussion on perspectives. Shechtman recently formally opened this discussion in a New York City membership meeting, and made it clear that the leadership is completely bankrupt. The discussion on perspectives was over the night it was launched. The WP has only the choice of eventually going home to the SWP or dying where it now stands.

The IKD tendency has presented its point of view. In three major articles ("Political Party or Trade Union Party", and "The Class Concept Substituted for Politics") the critique was made, and in several shorter articles, analyses were made of special problems. There have been debates and discussions in several branches. There have been individual discussions.

We have fulfilled our obligations to our party; we have tried to win the party to our point of view. We did not try to escape responsibility for the years of service which we have given the

Movement, but we have indicated that we have come to realize that only a radically different method of political activity could save the Movement or the WP wing of the Movement.

We have been answered. The "Notes for a Re-Statement of Our Position" were adopted without open dissent by the entire plenum (including Johnson, Forest, and Dreper). The ranks failed completely to develop any perspective apart from their leaders. Neither our articles or the plenum's provoked any answers or comments from the ranks. Even where a member agreed with us on this or that issue, there was never a willingness to buck the leadership.

There is a time for pleading, and a time for stopping pleading. Further attempts at discussion degrade both the party and us. Even the presentation of a correct orientation cannot interest or revitalize the WP, but could only provide the party with a cover for its emptiness.

Not only the IKD faction, but all those who attempt to awaken the WP are doomed to failure. For example, M. Slater's article "On Sub Drives" not only did not deter useless street hecking of Labor Action but drew as a "spark" the assigned article, "Is the Hearings Worth While?". And Tunis and Forstner's "On Guard" made not a ripple among the WPers, let alone raise the question of non-participation in the current EPC. Only organizational and prestige questions can arouse real interest.

The WP has no road ahead. All the Labor Party editorials, Active Workers Conference, industrialization and colonization schedules, all the transferring of members hither and yon, all the Labor Action sales -- will come to nothing. The WP is an obstacle to the revolutionary movement; but to fight it, it is sufficient to ignore it.

A democratic party would view our decision to carry out our own ideas as an experiment. If we succeed the whole movement gains. If we fail, then there is evidence of our mistakes. In the microscopic revolutionary movement this experimental approach is the best guarantee of finding solutions to the problems that are holding the movement back. It is not the least of our reasons for disgust with the WP that the WP leadership has lost the little courage it once had for serious, responsible, educating experimentation. The WP has shown that "inclusiveness" as an abstract principle means a disregard for political theory and the substitution for socialist incentive of blind loyalty to the party as such and discipline wielded by people who want to lead without earning prestige.

We see the road and we shall take it. We resign from the WP, not to leave the revolutionary movement, but in order to build it. We predict that the best elements of the WP will be with us again, for they will be those who are honest enough to recognize the hopelessness and sectarianism of their organization and the strides that we shall make.

August 1947

1751

OPEN LETTER TO THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE AND
ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE WORKERS PARTY

* * *

October 10, 1947

Comrades:

I hesitated greatly before sending this letter. I realize that its political effect will be, in large measure, neutralized by the incredible atmosphere of suspicion and calumny that at present overshadows the debate between us. It would be futile, too, to want to clarify concrete political questions without discussing fundamental divergences -- on the Russian question, the nature of the Stalinist parties and, above all, the nature of the epoch in which we are living -- which separate us and from which stem the majority of tactical differences which have enlarged the gap between your position and ours. But your National Committee finds itself on the even of an important decision, decisive perhaps for the future course that you will follow. You are going to take these decisions on the base of misinformation and systematic miseducation on the nature of the Movement, its fundamental orientation, the nature of its politics and the tasks posed before it. That is why I address this appeal to you. The personal contact that I have had with the comrades of the WP who have visited us has shown me that they have a sincere desire to return to the bosom of the Movement. I count on them to inform you further on the real situation of our movement. I count on them to reinforce by their testimony the entire second part of this letter. Listen to them. Question them. Ask them if they dare, in the face of their experience with our movement, uphold the ridiculous legend that your leaders are spreading, according to which the leadership of the Movement and the majority of the European sections are "the agents of Cannon." Then judge with a little more basic understanding. There are none more blind than those who imagine that they see clearly in the dark.

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THE POLISH QUESTION AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION

The answer that I wrote on the position taken by the Editorial Board of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL on the Polish question has been the pretext for an attack of unprecedented violence launched not only against me but against the leadership and, in fact, the majority of the International which shares these opinions. Erber, in his long answer published in THE NEW INTERNATIONAL (July and August, 1947) characterizes without blushing our position as "an open defense of the Stalinist police regime and national oppression against the national democratic movement of national liberation." And the partisans of the IKD, always ready to show what their "higher school of polemics" is, coldly declare that we are "with the Stalinist oppressors against the opposition of the enslaved peoples" and even against the masses! We are only opposed, it seems to us, to Mikolajczyk, agent of imperialism. For Erber, is the "national democratic movement" then to be identified with the agents of imperialism since he deduces from our hostility to the one, our hostility to the other? For the IKD, the revolutionary masses and the counter-revolutionary

agents of imperialism appear as the same thing. Judge these pick-pocket methods by their intrinsic value, and realize how they have distorted the position of the International.

A Necessary Self-Criticism

After having followed the erroneous course taken by the international discussion on this question, I am perfectly aware that the resolution of the Second Plenum of the ECI, as well as my article, "The Conflict in Poland," constitute tactical errors. Not because the ideas outlined there are false. Very much on the contrary, I remain more than ever convinced of the exactitude of these ideas, and all the information that we receive from the countries "behind the Iron Curtain" confirm them daily. But these two documents proceeded from the supposition that it was not necessary to repeat the obvious, that it was only necessary to resolve the point in dispute. This supposition was erroneous. Polemical methods "carried to the bitter end.." have fallen to this - another "specialty" of the "higher school of polemics" - that the mere fact of not having mentioned explicitly that the International in its entirety is obviously for the unconditional support of every movement of the masses against the Stalinist regime in eastern Europe was enough to draw the fantastic accusation that we would be opposed to the support of this movement and even partisans (sic) of its police suppression.... Jeffries, another partisan of the opinions of the IKD, pushes the provocation to its limit, declaring that this absurd position would be the consistent result of our conception of Russia as a degenerated Workers State. (THE NEW INTERNATIONAL, August 1947, p. 191) It seems that he who has said A must say B. Jeffries forgets only that his own IKD leaders were themselves, in 1939, the most tenacious supporters of this theory of the "degenerated Workers State." Since these are such consistent people, were they for the support of the GPU against the workers of the Wilno Soviet? And in Russia itself? Trotsky, partisan of the theory of the degenerated Workers State, was he "logically" led to say B and support the bureaucracy against the workers? We think that this "logic" condemns, above all, its unfortunate inventor! But the fact that in Russia we are and we were for the unconditional support of any form of spontaneous popular struggle against the Stalinist dictatorship does not at all signify that we given an iota of support - even with a thousand conditions - to the white guard organizations of Miliukov. On the other hand, the fact that we support neither Kerensky nor Miliukov in their "struggle" against Stalin, is not to be equated with a "refusal" to support the struggle of the masses. Nor do we equate the Polish state and the Russian state, nor Mikolajczyk with Miliukov - all these formal and superficial equations can only disorient our movement. Let our dear comrades, so "consistent" with themselves, reflect a little on that - it will not do them any harm.

Unconditional Support of the Struggle of the Masses

Thus it is clear and established that there is not, to my knowledge, one tendency in the International which is not for the most complete and unconditional support to all forms of the spontaneous struggle of the laboring masses of the city and village in Poland. Wherever partisans of the Fourth International are to be found in the countries of Eastern Europe under the subjection of the Stalinist regime, they must be in the vanguard of the workers!

struggle against restrictions of personal liberty, against the restrictions of freedom of labor, against piece-work, against the lowering of the real wage, against the unrestricted powers of the factory managers. They must base themselves on every movement of protest and popular discontent - which, of course, they must strive to organize according to the strength of their forces - in order to coordinate, develop, generalize and politicalize these struggles. Their central political slogans must be those of workers' democracy. Withdrawal of occupation troops (where these are still to be found). Complete freedom for the workers' movements - freedom of press, assembly, organization, strikes, etc.; real workers' control of production; democratic election of factory committees; election of all functionaries; lowering of their (functionaries') salaries to the level of a skilled worker; dissolution of the police, standing army, Stalinist "militia;" general arming of the people, etc... The question of knowing whether a slogan like that of the "Constituent Assembly" can or cannot be launched, or if at a given moment the slogan of "All power to the committees" can be put forward, depends on the concrete circumstances of the stage of mobilization of the masses, of the orientation of the petty bourgeoisie, etc. It would be ridiculous to try to resolve this problem in an abstract and theoretical fashion.

In order that you don't say that we have changed our position under the blows of your criticisms, and to show you that this has always been our position, I shall take the liberty of citing here what I wrote in June, 1945, on this subject:

"...The principal task in the countries occupied by the USSR remains that of the mobilization of the masses against the existing capitalist regime. Such mobilization is only possible through the struggle for the transitional demands, through the struggle for political democracy, for workers' rights. The direct struggle against the occupying force will be integrated, to the degree that the masses become conscious of the exploitation and oppression foisted on them by the Soviet bureaucracy. The goal of this struggle will be the substitution for a Red Army, which has not been 'red' for a long time, of a workers' and peasants' militia, an army of the popular masses. This will be the substitution of a true proletarian democracy, a free and independent Soviet Republic for a miserable bourgeois 'democracy' protected by history's most totalitarian caste, a 'democracy' that was never more than a window-dressing in the worst taste.

"However, it would be false to put forward immediately, as agitational slogans, the slogans: For a Soviet Hungary; For immediate and complete expropriation of the bourgeoisie; For the immediate constitution of democratically elected workers' and peasants' councils. We do not address ourselves to either the Russian army or its indigenous Stalinist supporters to demand that they make the 'revolution' bureaucratically, from the top. We address ourselves to the popular masses on whom rest our hope and confidence for the final victory of the revolution. This work of adjustment will pass inevitably through the first stage in which the slogans for "soviets" will be premature, in which, on the contrary the democratic slogans 'Free elections,' 'For the Constituent Assembly,' 'Freedom of strikes, press, speech, organization, etc.' will be the most appropriate for mobilizing the masses for the struggle. But during this agitation campaign, we will not cease for a moment our propaganda for an in-

dependent soviet republic, we will not keep silent, for even an instant, the fact that only the victorious proletarian revolution will be able to achieve freedom and sovereignty for these nations..." (Bulletin of the European Secretariat, October 1945, pp. 15-17)

The Balance Sheet of Two Years of Experience

We continue to subscribe to every word of this resolution, which does not apply, of course, to Germany and Austria, because experience has confirmed us in a striking manner. During the first months after the arrival of the Russian troops, and during the different conflicts which tore apart the "coalition governments," the working masses, under the illusion that the Communist parties would really bring the socialist revolution, streamed into these parties en masse - except in Poland - giving them their complete support. The experience of the occupation itself in no way was enough to reopen the "national question." It was still necessary, as we had correctly predicted, "for the masses to become conscious of the exploitation and oppression they were undergoing at the hands of the Soviet bureaucracy." This consciousness, which came only slowly in several Eastern European countries, was not expressed in a violent new wave of strikes, like those which characterized mass resistance to German imperialism. On the contrary, it was expressed in a retreat of the working class, disoriented by Stalinist activity, demoralized and completely without immediate revolutionary perspectives.

Only Poland and Finland have seen important workers' struggles in recent months, struggles having an economic character and proceeding from an extremely low level. To speak of the Stalinist poison and then to act as though that proletariat which was most poisoned were capable of immediate revolutionary movement is a real mockery!

With a class logic that you do not seem to understand - comrades of the National Committee of the WP who, like the Stalinists, spread the illusion of the "destruction" of the bourgeoisie in the countries "behind the Iron Curtain" - the retreat of the working class augmented the confidence, appetite and audacity of the bourgeoisie. The latter who, in 1944, had only hoped for a "sincere" collaboration with the Soviet bureaucracy even if it were only to maintain partially its tottering class domination, is now patiently regrouping its forces to attack, at the opportune moment, the Stalinist regimes, and to become once more masters of their own fate. The bourgeoisie of these countries know very well that they cannot attain this goal without the direct military aid of American imperialism. That is why its politics consist of this: twist and turn, gain time, make every possible concession, resist bitterly any Stalinist interference with that holy of holies, private property and meanwhile prepare morally, politically and militarily for the return to the "normal" conditions of the pre-war period.

What is the reaction of the advanced workers to this development? How is their passivity to be explained? Of course, the absence of a revolutionary party capable of channelizing the discontent of the masses into other paths plays a main role here. But there is a psychological factor which all observers, even the most anti-Stalinist, have had to recognize: **THE PASSIVITY OF THE ADVANCED WORKERS IS EXPLAINED BY THE FACT THAT THEY FIND THEMSELVES BETWEEN TWO FIRES.** On the one hand, they have lost their illusions concern-

ing Stalinism; on the other hand they very well realize that all right opposition movements of the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie objectively signify the abolition of the reforms of 1945 and the return to the pre-war situation - which they wish at all costs to avoid. That is why the only political move that they dare make is from Stalinism to the Social Democracy; no further than that!

That is why, for a whole period, the only movements in which they will participate will be economic strikes, local protestations against travesties of elections, bureaucratization of the trade unions, etc... that is to say, all those movements which we must unreservedly support. The events of these two years have proven beyond all doubt that no section of the working class, not to speak of the most advanced, will, at the present stage, throw itself into a clandestine armed struggle against the Stalinist regime. Not to understand this, to operate by purely formal analogies between the reactions of the masses under the German occupation and under the Russian, means not to understand that from the beginning the workers considered fascism as their enemy number one, while, on the other hand, they thought at first that Stalinism would bring the revolution! Those who, elaborating their political line, do not make a distinction between the mobilization against enemy number one and the disillusionment towards a movement once considered by the workers as their own had best abstain from giving advice left and right!

There is a source of information particularly interesting for you that confirms our analysis of the state of mind of the masses and their attitude towards the reforms of 1945. Zygmunt Zaremba, one of the principal leaders of the Polish Socialist Party, one of the principal leaders of the Warsaw Commune and editor-in-chief of the clandestine Socialist press under the occupation, at present undergoing his third emigration to France, has just published in Paris, a pamphlet, "The Warsaw Commune, Betrayed by Stalin, Massacred by Hitler" (Cahiers Mensuels, "Spartacus," April 1947). In this pamphlet, which we recommend above all to our IKD-ist comrades - they will see there a clear manifestation of this "impossibility" of jumping from fascism to the socialist revolution. Zaremba describes the attitude of the advanced workers, including those of the illegal PPS, towards the reforms of 1945 as follows:

"Thus the ideological inheritance of the Warsaw Commune, fruit of the social transformations and new conceptions born in the resistance, lose nothing of their value. They still constitute the base on which Polish society desires to develop itself and governments imposed by foreigners cannot avoid taking this into account. Thanks to this inheritance, touchstone of every act of political or social life, the structural reforms recently introduced by the provisional government are appreciated for their real worth and for their promise for the future." (p. 43)

It is in understanding this fundamental attitude of the advanced Polish proletarian that we can define the dialectic task of revolutionists in the countries under Russian domination: to prevent the channelization of popular discontent into reactionary organizations; to be the best fighters at the side of the workers and poor peasants against Stalinist exploitation and oppression; to prevent Stalinist channelization of the hostility of the advanced workers in face of a return to the pre-war Polish situation; to be the best fighters

against the restorationists; to concentrate our efforts on the Social Democracy, where at present political life is concentrated, and to struggle there for a revolutionary current at once anti-Stalinist and opposed to all collaboration with the bourgeoisie. Civil war between the proletariat and the Stalinists is excluded at this stage. But in such a case, let us have no doubt but that Mikolajczyk would be on the side of the Stalinists. The only "civil war" which could break out would be that of the reaction, supported by imperialism, against the Stalinists. In such a case, the workers and Mikolajczyk would find themselves in two opposing camps.

This has nothing to do with the "Third Front." It signifies only that there are different lines of demarcation in the social and political life of the country. When the workers go out on strike, we fight in their ranks against the Stalinists. BUT, FAR FROM BEING ON THE SIDE OF THE WORKERS, MIKOLAJCZYK IS "NEUTRAL" IN THIS STRUGGLE OR EVEN ON THE SIDE OF THE GOVERNMENT; this has been entirely confirmed by the events of 1946 and 1947, as well as by recent events in Finland. When reactionary forces attack the reforms of 1945 either politically or militarily, we will be among the working masses who will fight them. Mikolajczyk is not the "legal cover" for the revolutionary opposition of the masses, he is the legal vanguard of bourgeois counter-revolutionary reaction. Between these two parallel, but diametrically opposed forces, there can be no meeting point. This is the goal of our politics: to prevent a new and futile massacre and a new betrayal of the Polish laboring masses.

What is the Significance of the Support Given Mikolajczyk?

You are entirely mistaken, comrades of the National Committee, in the judgment you have made as to the nature of such parties as Mikolajczyk's. This error is understandable, because you have tried to define their function by way of formal criteria rather than through the mechanism of the class struggle. The party of Mikolajczyk is really a quisling party. According to the Manifesto of the Emergency Conference, written by Trotsky, the Quisling parties are bourgeois formations that come forward in order to allow a certain political cohabitation with the occupying power. It is difficult to consider the Stalinists as "Quislings," they are the agents of the Kremlin and not of the bourgeoisie. On the contrary, it is precisely Mikolajczyk's party that has the function of being the liaison agent between the Stalinist "New Regime" and the old propertied classes. They behave "loyally" in relation to the Bierut regime. Its political line consists of attaching itself to Stalinist legality and trying to obtain all possible concessions. That is why it finds less and less sympathy among the population. Those who place themselves frankly on the terrain of the bourgeois anti-Stalinist struggle swerve to the right, those who are fundamentally opposed to any return to the past, go to the left. Only the Stalinists are interested in the simplistic approach which consists of confusing the workers' opposition with that of Mikolajczyk's bourgeois opposition. Our duty is to distinguish between them - and fundamentally!

Comrade Erber wished to merge the question of colonial revolution with that of support to Mikolajczyk. We accept the challenge all the more gladly since it is precisely on this terrain that confusion arises.

Contrary to the Theses of the Second Congress of the Comintern, written by Lenin, which state:

"The communist party as conscious expression of the proletarian class struggle for emancipation from bourgeois bondage must, conforming to its principal task - lead the struggle against bourgeois democracy to unmask its lies and hypocrisy, also on the question of nationalities, must not place in the forefront formal and abstract principles, but on the contrary, a correct estimate of the historical, and above all, economic milieu. . ." (Der Zweite Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationalen Protokoll, p. 225)

Erber bases the question of the principal tasks of the revolutionary party in China and Poland ("...the main tasks of the revolutionary party are the same in both countries..." - THE NEW INTERNATIONAL, August, 1947, p. 17) solely on the formal principle that "neither enjoys national independence," AND THUS MAKES AN ABSTRACTION OF THE GIVEN HISTORICAL AND ECONOMIC MILIEU! That is why he arrives at another abstraction - "the national democratic movement," which he refuses to give any class characterization, placing Mikolajczyk at the head of this national democratic movement and establishing an analogy between conditional support of Chiang Kai-shek and conditional support of Mikolajczyk. These are the wares that he wishes to sell us as ... bolshevism!

What fundamental distinction do we make between the bourgeoisie of colonial countries and that of even backward capitalist countries? Not that it is "progressive" nor that it has "historical tasks to resolve" - experience having shown us that the lines between the colonial bourgeoisie, landed proprietors and world imperialism on the one hand, its fear of the popular mass revolution on the other, make it impossible for the colonial bourgeoisie to clothe itself in this or that characteristic of the rising bourgeoisie of the advanced countries of two centuries ago. The difference consists in this: that in the particular circumstances, that is given the colonial character of the country, the bourgeoisie can exploit inter-imperialist conflicts, profit to a slight degree by the development of the proletarian movement or its temporary prostration to take certain hesitant steps along the path of the anti-imperialist struggle. Therefore, we support these steps WITHOUT SUPPORTING THEIR GOVERNMENTS OR POLITICAL PARTIES, because we know that they will weaken imperialism and they will create the premises for a new impulsion for the masses' revolutionary struggle. The classic example of such a case was the support that it was necessary to give to the movement unleashed by the Hindu bourgeoisie in 1942. It must be added immediately that support of the movement - which was followed by large masses of peasants and workers precisely because of the colonial character of the movement - in no way meant support of the Congress Party since the independent proletarian parties had already appeared on the political scene.

Is the Polish situation the same? Is the bourgeois revolution on the order of the day in Poland after "the exact estimation of the historical and above all economic milieu" demanded by Lenin? It is not by accident that you have not spoken up on this question, comrades. Is it necessary to support the Polish bourgeoisie? Is this a colonial bourgeoisie? Has the workers' movement reached so

low a stage of development that the bourgeoisie can risk provoking even the smallest national democratic struggle without fear of proletarian revolution? Can the Polish bourgeoisie, one of the most abject and venal of Europe, depend even to the slightest degree upon the most educated and conscious proletariat on the continent? These are the first questions that must be asked you before taking up the question of the "national democratic" movement. But you who take as a point of departure the absurd view that there is no longer a Polish bourgeoisie, you are incapable of even posing this question for yourself.

But perhaps the Mikolajczyk party does not represent a movement under bourgeois subjection? Perhaps this is a question of an "independent" peasant movement. You have written, comrades, that you know that this movement is an agent of imperialism. Then do you claim that an "alliance between the illegal PPS and Mikolajczyk" represents "the great tradition of the alliance between workers and peasants" as Comrade Rudzienski says? How is it possible to forget so easily all that Trotsky wrote on this subject against the Stalinists in the "Krestintern" period? (Trotsky, "The Third International after Lenin," Pioneer Publishers, p. 235) Have you forgotten that Lenin wrote with such great emphasis:

"The city inevitably leads the village, the village inevitably follows the city. The only question is which of the urban classes will lead the village." (Lenin: Works Vol. XVI, "The Year 1919," p. 442)

You have not, I hope, the illusion that it is the proletariat which is leading Mikolajczyk? Who leads him then? The "non-existent" bourgeoisie, according to you? Has this bourgeoisie that was more reactionary than the Russian bourgeoisie under Czarism suddenly become "democratic"? (Trotsky, op. cit., p. 178)

All these suppositions are, of course, absurd. But it is necessary to know how to draw the conclusions that they impose. Poland is not a colonial country, in the economic and sociological sense of the word. The mass movement against national oppression can at no stage be started or lead by bourgeois organizations. Workers do not participate in the first stage of a struggle started by the bourgeoisie, only to oppose it in the second. From the first small forward step that the working class makes, it will find itself in opposition to its own bourgeoisie. THE "NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC" MOVEMENT - an inappropriate term that can, however, be used only if it is carefully explained what is meant by the term when we use it - CAN ONLY BE A MOVEMENT OF THE WORKING MASSES WHO DRAW IN BEHIND THEM THE RADICAL LAYERS OF THE PEASANTRY AND THE URBAN PETTY BOURGEOISIE. Mikolajczyk's movement is not "a national-democratic mass movement" - it is a counter-revolutionary bourgeois agency to prevent and break such a movement. Unconditional support of the mass movement, unreserved struggle against Mikolajczyk - this is the combination that flows perfectly from a concrete study of the conditions in which the national question is posed in Poland.

Unfortunately, it is Comrade Erber, so ready to accuse us of "sectarianism" who does not understand that he is a prisoner of a formal and completely schematic opposition: "either" imperialism is the main enemy and therefore it is necessary to support the

"bourgeois democratic movement," "or" the national bourgeoisie is the main enemy and it is necessary to struggle directly for the proletarian revolution. We have heard this kind of argument, ad nauseum, from sectarians during the war. Reality does not allow itself to be inclosed in this type of formal opposition. There is a connection between the bourgeoisie of these advanced countries subjected to national oppression and the imperialism - or in Poland, the Soviet bureaucracy - which imposes this oppression. The bourgeoisie makes not the slightest gesture to arouse the masses, on the contrary, it leans upon the foreign military apparatus in order to prevent any real uprising of the masses. For their part, the masses do not for a moment cease the struggle against their own bourgeoisie which seems to them linked to imperialism. The classic "national democratic" movement, where all classes in society at first struggle together and then take successive leadership of the struggle is absolutely lacking. In place of this, there is a class struggle in which the national question is integrated - not vice versa. This was equally the case under the German occupation.

The National Question: "A Systematic Distortion."

The most astonishing legend that has been spread among you, comrades of the Workers Party, is the legend of the so-called "sectarianism" of the International on the national question during the war. Tons of paper have already been blackened in order to spread this myth and through the blustering, you continue to ignore the real orientation of our European parties under the German occupation. NO continental section - with the unfortunate exception of the Greek majority whom you have abstained from attacking because of its position on the Russian question - took an abstentionist, delaying or neutral position towards the mass resistance movements under the German occupation. Every movement made by the masses, even the smallest, most hesitant, most confused as to ideology and aim, we supported. We were partisans of this support from our first manifestation of political life. And we lead a bitter struggle in all the parties against sectarians opposed to such support, a struggle materialized in hundreds of pages of internal bulletins. But that was not the real problem or the real difficulty. The necessity for such support was clear to us all from August, 1940 (we did not at all wait for the IKD to "pose" the national question). But the question was to know how to determine exactly the manifestations and forms of the mass struggle, to calculate its rhythm and to deduce perspectives from it. There, of course, we committed grave errors in judgment - but errors which have nothing in common with "sectarianism on the national question." But we at least posed the problem right side up. The fashion in which you posed the question, comrades of the Workers Party, was entirely abstract and unreal, having nothing in common with what happened in Europe under the occupation.

You have approached the national question from an absolutely false angle - that of the existence of an abstract "resistance movement," in which it was necessary to be integrated while at the same time organizing the proletariat independently. Reality is completely different. In Western Europe, up until 1943, there was never a mass movement of active resistance. The only "active" movements were small groups of spies, saboteurs and franc-tireurs carefully organized into "cells" of three, either by officers in the service of the Anglo-Saxons or by the Stalinists. This movement never took on a

mass character. The "entire population" never participated in it. Apart from this, there was the clandestine press - where each little group worked isolated from one another - isolated economic strikes, protest movements against the closing of universities and against the deportation of Jews, some demonstrations against the high cost of living. We participated in all these movements in the most active fashion, organizing what we could organize with our feeble forces. Our Dutch comrades played a most important role in the aid given to Jews in hiding. In Belgium, we organized resistance of worker miners against famine rations and forced labor, we actively supported the students' struggles against the closing of universities, we organized aid for Jews and political refugees who went underground; in France our comrades supported every demonstration of workers, students, petty bourgeois, alerting the population against forced labor and organizing in many spots demonstrations and struggles against deportation. No concrete reproach could be made about us during this entire period and if there is any reproach which is completely absurd, it is that of "passivity" or "abstention." We had to struggle constantly against sectarians in our ranks who complained of our "nervousness" and "exaggerated activity."

Towards the end of 1943, a new period began, above all after the outbreak of the Italian revolution. To escape mass deportation of laborers, thousands of workers took to the maquis or went underground. In Belgium and Holland, they remained passive and ungrouped, with rare exceptions. In France several large groups of Maquis were formed with a total of some ten to fifteen thousand participants. With the expectation of an imminent Allied landing, bourgeois and Stalinist organizations recruited at an accelerated rhythm. Military groups began to be coordinated and directed on a national basis (in most cases this signified being bureaucratized and becoming impermeable to political discussion). Social movements, strikes and demonstrations became more marked and took on a broader character: general strike in Copenhagen, Amsterdam and Luxemburg. A general uprising was approaching. All during this period we, too, accentuated our activity, played a greater part in workers' struggles, sent certain of our cadres into the Maquis, others into key factories. Then, after D-Day, there were real mass movements only in France - in Paris and in a series of southern cities. In Belgium, the big movements came after military occupation of the country by the British. In Holland, the last big movement - the railwaymen's strike - came several months before "Liberation." In Norway and Denmark - no mass movement - except for demonstrations of joy at the moment of the German capitulation during the last months. We knew the events in Italy - unfortunately, we had no section there. I hope that you will not lay that to our "sectarian line on the national question."

One Struggle on Two Fronts

What was our strategic line during all these events? Our point of departure was an objective analysis of the relationship between classes and the evolution of class consciousness. Our strategy was dominated by the fact that the national question took an absolutely different character in these advanced European countries than it had in the colonial countries. We started from the point of view that in no occupied country did the fact of the occupation "destroy" the class consciousness of the proletariat nor "throw them far back." Certainly, the reduction of mass organizations to clandestine move-

ments, the weight of occupation, oppression, hunger and the systematic miseducation of Stalinism greatly influenced the state of mind of the masses. But we understood that there was a fundamental difference between the "national" preoccupations of the proletariat and those of the petty bourgeoisie or even of the bourgeoisie. At no time did the old workers' organizations "dissolve themselves voluntarily" in a "national democratic movement of resistance." This never happened except in the schematic and abstract minds of certain New York "theoreticians." IN ALL COUNTRIES WHERE THE MASSES PARTICIPATED ACTIVELY IN THE STRUGGLE, THEY WERE ORGANIZED SEPARATELY FROM THE BOURGEOISIE, UNDER THEIR OLD FLAGS - STALINIST-COMMUNIST or SOCIALIST-REFORMIST - WITH A PROGRAM WHICH WAS NOT SUMMED UP IN "THE STRUGGLE FOR NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE" BUT WHICH LINKED THIS NEW PREOCCUPATION TO THE SUM TOTAL OF THEIR PRE-WAR OBJECTIVES PRESENTED IN A MUCH MORE RADICAL FORM! These are the facts and we challenge anybody to deny them. Show us a single strike, a single mass insurrection which was "kept within the framework of bourgeois slogans." That of Paris? And the occupation of the factories? And the demand for nationalization of all heavy industry? And the unwillingness of the partisans to let themselves be disarmed? And the dual power maintained in certain big cities for months? That of Greece? With the popular tribunals, the partisans occupying Athens with revolutionary songs, installing their own organs of power everywhere? That of Milan and Turin? With a council of workers and soldiers? With the occupation of the factories? That of Warsaw? With the following program cited by Zaremba:

"It was here that the principal legislative acts saw light, giving the Commune not only the character of a national insurrection but that of a social revolution... the principal of agrarian reform, mentioned above, took the form of law.. The statute of factory committees, guarantee and corollary of the socialization of production, applied democratic principles to the internal lives of factory and mine. It instituted workers' participation in the direction of industry and control of production. It was a first step toward workers' rule..." (Op. cit. p. 41)

Naturally, we do not share this centrist's illusions as to "progressive" evolution towards socialism. We do not regard these decrees as a substitute for the proletariat's taking power. But isn't it highly significant that at the very moment that there was fighting over the ruins of Warsaw, face to face with the SS, the proletariat had not "blurred its class consciousness," but posed with such audacity its own class objectives in the struggle so that even the centrists understood that it was a question of the beginning of a social revolution!

However it was precisely on this perspective that we had based our entire strategy on the national question.

I wrote in March, 1942, in a polemic against the sectarians:

"To claim that mass movements or even insurrections will take a 'nationalist' character because these masses are above all preoccupied by the national question means to understand nothing of the dialectic mechanism that sets the proletarian revolution into motion. Lenin repeated for us dozens of times that those who wait for a 'pure' 1762

proletarian revolution will never see it come. In every revolution many layers of the population participate with all their aspirations, preoccupations and often their own prejudices. But can it be admitted for a moment that once in the streets, arms in hand, the Belgian, French or Dutch worker will demand nothing but to 'kill the German soldier' and to 'proclaim national independence'? Will this worker suddenly have forgotten that his boss appealed to the Gestapo when he went out on strike? Will he have forgotten his hunger when speculators gorged themselves? Will he have forgotten his healthy rancor against the 'national' sharks of the black market? **WHATEVER THE MOMENT OR OCCASION OF THE FORCIBLE ENTRY OF THE MASSES ON THE POLITICAL SCENE, MOMENTARILY SHUT OFF BY DICTATORSHIP, THE FORMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STRUGGLE WILL BE DETERMINED INFINITELY MORE BY THE SOCIAL NATURE OF ITS PARTICIPANTS THAN BY THE PARTICULAR CONSCIOUSNESS OF THAT MOMENT.**" (Internal Bulletin of the PCR, May, 1942)

Our theses on the national question, adopted by our convention in July 1943 said:

"If the masses go into motion against the oppression whose victims they are, no matter under what flag, it will not be the ideological character ('national consciousness') but the social character ('class struggle') which will determine the direction and forms of their fight. The inevitable predominance of the proletariat in any mass movement will determine the specifically proletarian forms of struggle - committees, strikes, militia, etc... The moment that the proletariat enters upon open and general struggle against the German occupation, it creates at the same time, the seeds of dual power which threatens to sweep away the national bourgeoisie.

"THE PCR SUPPORTS AND PUSHES FORWARD THE MASS MOVEMENTS OF RESISTANCE TO IMPERIALIST EXPLOITATION IN ORDER TO CREATE AND DEVELOP THE ORGANS OF PROLETARIAN DUAL POWER AND TO SABOTAGE ALL ATTEMPTS OF BOURGEOIS AGENCIES TO RECONSTITUTE THE NATIONAL CAPITALIST POWER. IT SUPPORTS THE IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVES OF THE MASS MOVEMENTS OF RESISTANCE TO IMPERIALISM, TYING THEM TO ITS TRANSITIONAL SLOGANS." (IVE Internationale, No. 25-26, pp. 33-34, reprint)

Comrades of the Workers Party, after having read these quotations, speak frankly: does this conform to the presentation that Erber makes of our position:

"That is why the bankruptcy of the Fourth International on the national question during the occupation of Europe by the Nazis meant its bankruptcy as a revolutionary leadership, no matter how loudly it called for 'soviets' (!) and the Socialist United States of Europe. Or rather, one can say that the louder they called for these as substitutes for the struggle of national liberation, upon which they had turned their backs...." (!) (THE NEW INTERNATIONAL, August, 1947, p. 177)

And tell us frankly: Is it our perspective that has been confirmed exactly - or that of the IKD comrades who claim that "the movement nowhere went beyond the limits of bourgeois slogans"?

The unfortunate thing, here again, is that you remain a prisoner of the same formal opposition as the sectarian. The sectarians

say: "either" the movement will have a predominantly national character and we must be against because the question of the proletarian revolution can only be posed at a higher stage; "or" it will be a true proletarian movement "and therefore" the national question will play only a subordinate role. You say: "either" the national question dominates everything, "and therefore" the movement will be a movement of national liberation that must be supported; "or" there is a proletarian revolutionary movement "and therefore" the national question has only a tactical importance. You are as incapable as the sectarians of understanding a combined movement, in which the national question is grafted upon the class struggle which continues as before and which results in the internal logic of the movement pushing the proletariat to resolve the social question at the same time as the national question.

Our ideological struggle during the occupation was above all concentrated against the sectarians who either denied the existence of the national question, or took a delaying attitude, or even worse, were defeatists in the face of the mass struggle. But we also had, above all during the second stage, to combat the very serious opportunist errors of the leadership of our French sister-section. What separated us from them was not the question of support of the mass movements, we were all in agreement there. The question of larger participation in the then still-limited Maquis was not even raised. The academic question - academic to the degree that no different orientation in the practical struggle flowed from it - as to whether or not France had become an "oppressed country," played only a very minor role in this discussion. What was serious, and what we could not tolerate, was the deviation which consisted in adapting our language to that of the petty bourgeois and Stalinist organizations. That was participation, not in the struggle of the masses, but in the deceptions of the leaders. When they wrote in 1940: "Through fear of the Revolution, the bourgeoisie threw itself into the arms of the Germans and through fear of the Germans it will throw itself into the arms of the revolution" (thus giving a progressive mission to this "oppressed colonial bourgeoisie" when during the same year they called for the constitution of a great party (!) of the Resistance, uniting as far as possible the progressive elements of the bourgeoisie, when in 1941 they asked the English government to give satisfaction to the strikers' demands in order to renew national solidarity and to bring a "just sharing of sacrifice" - at that point, we attacked them and happily so!! For it was neither more nor less than a matter of capitulation to bourgeois nationalism and the ideal of national unity. Do you think that this struggle was out of place, comrades of the Workers Party?

Certainly, we committed certain tactical errors. We did not place enough emphasis in our press on the fundamental differentiation that we made between the organizations of partisans and those of the service of imperialism; we sent too few comrades into the Maquis; in France, we failed to put forward the slogan of "All power to committees of liberation elected and subject to recall by the masses," etc. But here it is a matter of absolutely secondary errors which would in no way have changed the course of events. To think that we could have become mass organizations at that stage with a different policy is a mockery. The French right-wing led the organization until the end of 1943 on the basis of a line that Morrow identified as identical to his KKKist line. It made progress just as

slowly as afterwards a mixed leadership did. We entered the war with organizations half-overwhelmed and decimated without real roots in the factories, without real roots among the masses. The wave of 1943-44 was too brief, too sporadic, to permit us to stabilize ourselves more seriously. It had inevitably to be channelized by Stalinism as the only workers' organization which had gained the confidence of the proletariat during the preceding period. Searchers for blueprints think that a party can be built if it has a "plan" or this or that apt slogan. We know that on the contrary, propitious objective conditions must exist as must a work of years of preparation and efficacious penetration before the masses begin to place their confidence in a new leadership. This could come for us only after a profound and disillusioning experience of the masses with Stalinism, that is to say, in the stage which has just begun.

DeGaulle and Mikolajczyk

The real difficulty arises when it becomes necessary to distinguish between movements of the masses and the organizations which at different stages pretend to speak in the name of the masses. As you now have the impression in the United States, in line with your impressionist fashion of envisaging matters, that Mikolajczyk represents a "national-democratic movement" in Poland, thus not a few people abroad considered DeGaulle to be the personification of the mass resistance movement! This was not the official conception of your organization, but to my great surprise and indignation I recently read in one of the old numbers of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL discussion articles emanating from members of your organization in favor of "conditional support" to De Gaulle. The very interesting parallels in these two cases lead us to insist further upon our point.

De Gaulle, ultra-reactionary agent of the French bourgeoisie, performed three functions for his class: a) to maintain political liaison with the Anglo-American camp, b) to prepare renewed cadres for the army and bourgeois state in the event of an Anglo-American victory, c) to try to channelize petty bourgeois discontent - the bourgeoisie had fewer illusions than certain partisans of the Fourth International as to his hold on the workers - towards counter-revolutionary bourgeois goals. The "Gaullist" organizations were either purely isolated networks of espionage and sabotage or small groups of clandestine propaganda without great importance, or military organizations composed of reactionary elements directed against organizations lead by the Stalinists in which the active elements of the workers' "resistance" were assembled.

It was precisely the crime of the Stalinists to fight for the "unification" of the workers and bourgeois "resistance," this latter being fundamentally opposed to every action of the masses, sabotaging it wherever possible and limiting itself to the preparation of the elements for a rapid junction with the Anglo-American military forces. It was the Stalinists who lauded De Gaulle to the skies, representing him as a "great national leader," a "symbol of the resistance," etc....., giving him the leadership of the organized movement, permitting and helping him to break the spirit of the masses, and preparing thus the elements for his Bonapartist career which is beginning now. In reality it was necessary to understand - and happily our whole movement and it alone did so, which is now one of the principal sources for our political prestige in France -

that De Gaulle was in a way the Petain of the Anglo-Americans. Whatever the intermediary period, he would soon appear as the rallying point for the worst enemies of the working class. To have given the smallest support, no matter how conditional, to a character of this type, to have created confusion as to the "progressive" character in any degree of his fight - which was nothing more than a struggle for the reinstallation of the French bourgeoisie to all its imperialist privileges - was really to have taken a decisive step towards suicide! The monstrosity of this "national-communism" of the Stalinists - which recalls their "conditional support" to the struggle of Ludendorff against the Treaty of Versailles - is to revenge itself against them: if the French proletariat does not liquidate them, they will be liquidated by this same general whom they, so to speak, "installed" in the minds of the French petty bourgeoisie.

For us, comrades of the Workers Party, the fatal error which you are committing in according "conditional support" to Mikolajczyk is exactly of the same nature as the error of the Stalinists who "critically" supported De Gaulle. The Stalinists who apply in practice the theory of retrogression and carry it to its logical conclusion, declaring that the only struggles possible are national struggles against imperialism, were lead logically to discover a historically progressive role for the Polish, French, etc. bourgeoisies under the German occupation. Do you think that the existence of the Russian occupation gives the Polish bourgeoisie a progressive role? If it is so - and I do not believe it even for an instant - then it must be said clearly, and then everybody can judge where the real differences lie. But if it is not so, you must reexamine your attitude which stems from this fundamental confusion and understand that unconditional support to every movement of resistance of the masses must be accompanied by an equally stubborn and merciless struggle against all bourgeois agencies which attempt to channelize this struggle in order to paralyze and break it. It is not the masses who followed De Gaulle, they followed the Stalinists and reformists who imposed their leadership upon them. Nor is it the masses who follow Mikolajczyk, they follow the Socialist opposition and a misfortune it will be if the latter commit the same fatal error as did the Stalinists in France.

A Word on the Nature of the State and Polish Economy

The answer of Comrade Erber to our analysis of the Polish state and economy (THE NEW INTERNATIONAL, July, 1947) is a typical example of the irresponsibility with which you take a position on the most complicated and serious problems without serious documentation, without a careful study of facts, without attempt to assemble and coordinate your points of view on different questions.

With incomparable facility, Erber constructs his entire argument on the hypothesis that the Polish state has expropriated large sections of the Polish bourgeoisie. Where did he discover this? We defy him to cite a single serious economic source to prove this thesis, apart from the articles of bourgeois journalists ignorant on the subject of "nationalizations." Actually, there were two kinds of expropriation in Poland:

a) Expropriations by Nazi imperialism of a part of the Polish bourgeoisie, and the Jewish bourgeoisie, as well as the repurchase,

at prices far below its value, of foreign capital investments in Poland.

b) Expropriations by the Polish state of means of production possessed or held by the German bourgeoisie particularly in the western part of the present Poland.

Polish State.

Swept away by his polemical impetuosity, Erber ironically cites us when we say that the Polish bourgeoisie has little capital at its disposal. According to him, this stems from the fact that the state is so little "capitalist" in Poland. If he had taken the trouble to read correctly what we had written, he would have seen that the Polish bourgeoisie (a) was already extremely poor in capital before the war and (b) lost an important part of its wealth under the German occupation.

Actually, even if a Russian soldier had never set foot on Polish territory, a large part of the nationalizations would have had to be introduced because it was a question of mines and factories without legally existing proprietors and because there were no capitalists who could have taken them back.

If Erber wished really to read the articles of Rudziński and not merely to try to utilize them in a polemical fashion, he would see that numerous fascists and bourgeois politicians, innumerable police, functionaries, officers and ecclesiastics continue to occupy situations of first importance in the apparatus of the Polish state. There is a powerful group of National Democrats, led by Grabski, the old leader of the reaction, says Rudziński, and a group of colonels led by Ryzmowski. Nobody can deny that a powerful faction of what still physically exists of the old Polish bourgeoisie collaborates with the present regime. Can the bureaucracy transform the social nature of the country without destroying the apparatus of the bourgeois state? By "inheriting" the largest part of this bourgeois apparatus and simply filling some key positions with indigenous Stalinists? These are the important theoretical questions to which we are really waiting a reply.

Erber does not claim that there is the same economy in Poland as in Russia, but he says that the Polish economy is oriented in that direction. By what economic mechanism? A comparison with the NEP is completely superficial and out of place. The NEP came after previous destruction of the big bourgeoisie. During the NEP, the state continued to employ more than 90% of all salaried workers, its part share of commercial capital never fell below 70%. It had a monopoly of foreign trade. Foreign debts were repudiated. Foreign capital no longer had a hold on the country. In spite of all these extremely favorable factors, a new bourgeoisie was so rapidly constituted, that after five years it had the state by the throat. In Poland, the state owns only 60% of industrial capital and employs only 30% of non-agricultural labor. It controls only 20%-25% of commercial capital. Currency exchange, including foreign exchange, largely escapes its control. It continues to pay tribute to foreign debts. Immense wealth is to be found concentrated in the hands of the old bourgeoisie which has by no means been destroyed. This wealth as well as a very rapid process of differentiation which is

taking place in rural areas will bring formidable bourgeois pressure to bear against the politics of limitation of private enterprise. The state bureaucracy, extremely corruptible, is above all subject to the influence of the bourgeoisie; its state revenues are entirely insufficient. This enumeration might be continued ad infinitum.

Of course, there is the Russian army, the NKVD, its Polish counterpart, etc... These factors will play an important role. But we do not think that the terror is capable of operating social revolutions. We have never claimed, as Erber says we do, that the bureaucracy wants "above all, the maintenance or reestablishment of capitalism." We think that the bureaucracy is above all interested in the growth of its revenues. ~~BUT THAT IT HAS BEEN FORCED~~, by its counter-revolutionary character, TO EXERCISE ITS CONTROL OVER POLISH ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL LIFE THROUGH THE GIVEN PRODUCTION RELATIONS AND A STATE STRUCTURE WHICH REMAIN FUNDAMENTALLY BOURGHOIS. That is precisely why the situation remains "in transition" in Poland as in the other countries under Russian control. For this cohabitation can only be a transitory phenomenon. On the part of the bureaucracy, this cohabitation can be explained by its desire to lean upon all the elements of "order" that are willing to "collaborate" with it in its counter-revolutionary work.

Erber does not understand what the Polish bourgeoisie has gained in this counter-revolutionary action. But how then, can the collaboration of Grabski, the most conscious politician of the bourgeoisie, and Mikolajczyk, the imperialist agent, be explained? By masochism? Isn't it clear that all of the bourgeoisies of Eastern Europe have gained important years of respite from the Kremlin and their "indigenous" Stalinists when they were threatened by complete annihilation? Isn't it clear that the workers could have wiped these discredited elements of the past from off the face of the Polish territory within 24 hours if the Kremlin had not intervened? The bourgeoisie had to pay a high price for this protection, to be sure. But between two evils, it chose the lesser. And there is no doubt but that from its own point of view, it chose well!

It is time, comrades, that you abandon this irresponsibility in juggling facts, as it is time that you abandon your irresponsibility in judging the positions taken by the International. Our "sectarianism on the national question" and our "support to the GPU against the enslaved masses" are part of the same category of notions in which you find "the Polish bourgeoisie expropriated by the Stalinists," notions which are real only in your imagination!

- II -

THE ORIENTATION AND INTERNAL REGIME OF THE INTERNATIONAL

What Is Your Principal Criterion?

From the beginning of the violent campaign you let loose against your Johnsonite minority, you introduced into the debate an argument of a nature that would profoundly disorient your members. You have "educated" the members of the Workers Party in the spirit that "the struggle of tendencies within the International centers around the question of whether the International will be turned into a left wing of Stalinism or whether it will become once again the left wing

of the proletariat." The Political Committee in the resolution which it submits to you now repeats this monstrosity and raises it to the level of the leading idea of your movement. At the same time, however, another "axe" has been discovered: you have discovered the "Cannonism," the "bureaucratism" which is supposed to have corrupted the leadership of the International and you propose a bloc with all tendencies which wish to break this "bureaucratic" leadership.

This, comrades of the National Committee, is a matter of two irresponsible mystifications which throw a sad light on the path taken by your leadership. This is a question of an attempt on its part to evade its responsibilities by systematically perverting the direction of the debate, turning it from its true objectives, by alienating you, consciously or unconsciously, from the Movement to which you wish to return.

What is the meaning of the discovery that the principal lines of demarcation in the International are drawn between the "philo-Stalinists" and those who fight Stalinism? Have you for a moment reflected on any possible explanation for this astonishing phenomenon? The Social Democracy is objectively the left wing of bourgeois democracy, says the Political Committee document. Why? Because bourgeois democracy creates all the conditions of life and power of the Social Democracy! How can it be explained that the leadership of the International represents "objectively" the left wing of Stalinism? Is Stalinism the base of our life and our power? Are we not all conscious that it constitutes a mortal threat to humanity, the working class, our movement, every member of our movement? Is not the violent destruction of our International the goal of Stalinism? Don't you see that this absurd theory is the other side of the coin of that other ingenious invention which made of the Social Democracy the left wing of fascism (whose political aim was as directly the destruction of the Social Democratic organizations as the Stalinists' aim is the destruction of ours)?

From where does this transformation of the majority of our sections and leaderships stem? From Stalinist power? But here it is a question, with the exceptions of the French and Italian sections, of sections in whose countries Stalinism is infinitely less strong than American imperialist pressure? What do they hope to gain in this manner? What is the sociological explanation of this exceptional development? You can find no other than the "conservatism" of the "Cannonite clique." This is no longer a materialist explanation of history, it is a demonic interpretation of events, real witch-hunting!

Erber in his articles in THE NEW INTERNATIONAL insists on the fact that two decisive political questions separate the tendencies in the International: the Russian question and the national question. Your Political Committee in its resolution attacks against the "sectarianism" of the leadership of the International. However, "against the bureaucratic regime" you are ready to unite with the French extreme right - the only tendency in the International which has shown real tendencies of capitulation to the Stalinists - and with Munis, a real sectarian. What is the aim of this bloc? The overturn of the present leadership and its replacement by a new leadership.

What politics would a Shachtman-Munis-French-extreme-right bloc apply? There is not one concrete political question on which these tendencies are in agreement. Is your aim to no longer have the general political line of the International? Do you wish to reduce it to a federation of national parties? Or perhaps elect a "democratic" leadership which would apply a political line with which it is not in agreement? Is this not another indication of the complete irresponsibility with which your leadership attacks these problems so vital for the International?

The practical results of this political "orientation" torn among three different directions in which it wishes to engage itself at one and the same time, appears most clearly in the Greek question. In 1944, you tried to utilize the Greek affair to prove our "sectarianism" on the national question. In reality, all our sections were partisans of unconditional support for the struggle of the masses grouped behind the EAM, in line with our fundamental orientation.

At present, Greece is the only country in Europe in which a true mass resistance to imperialist oppression exists. The overwhelming majority of the population actively or passively supports the partisan movement which now enjoys a greater degree of independence from Stalinism than in 1944. You know all this. And in spite of all, in Greece, where no one can abstain, where misery, unparalleled fascist terror, firing squads and daily executions continually pushing workers, students, petty bourgeois and peasants into the Maquis - there you are for...the third camp. Why? Because the mass movement is led by the Stalinists who are the agents of Russia!

But according to you, Mikolajczyk too is an agent of imperialism. The supposition - erroneous - that he would be supported by certain laboring sections in Poland permits you to "support him critically." But you are against a movement in which every worker has taken his place and where all those who abstain will remain isolated from the proletariat for years, if not for decades. Don't you see that this is exactly the same position as that of the sectarians under the German occupation whose argumentation consisted of saying that the "leaders" wished to install a regime subordinated to imperialism? As if these victoriously insurgent masses blindly followed the instructions of their leaders! Can you, even for an instant, suppose that a victory of the partisan movement in Greece under the fascist dictatorship - a victory that even more than in December 1944 would mean the end of capitalism in Greece - that this victory would allow the Stalinists to crush a victorious working class? Under these conditions don't we have to abstain from all European mass movements led by the Stalinists? Isn't the Russian army to be found within 24 hours distance from everywhere? Alas, comrades of the National Committee of the party fighting for a good understanding of the national question, against sectarianism and against Stalinism, your concrete position in Greece can only be at one and the same time sectarian, ignoring the most burning national question in Europe outside of Germany, and in practice giving the Stalinists the monopoly of the mass movement!

Our Fight against Stalinism

The accusation you bring against the leadership and majority of the International is all the more absurd in that the latter is engaged everywhere, for the first time in its history, in a practical fight against Stalinism and has succeeded in winning the first victories in this struggle. It is there that the real difference between your tendency and ours is to be seen. While you content yourself with violent anti-Stalinist language and save the greater part of your "practical actions" for the fight against the leadership and majority of the International, we are beginning to fight Stalinism on the only terrain on which it must be combatted - that of the mass movement!

Are our Dutch comrades who have won first-rank positions against the Stalinists in the trade unions, who mercilessly excluded from their ranks a high trade union official who showed tendencies towards "tactical" compromises with the Stalinist political line - are they "left Stalinists"? Our Belgian comrades, who since the end of the war have twice succeeded in splitting off a section of Young Communists - are they "left Stalinists"? Our French comrades, who thanks to their active participation in the mass struggle, lead a meeting of thousands of Renault strikers to chase from the hall a high Stalinist functionary who calumniated the strikers and our members - are they "left Stalinists"? Our Swiss comrades who successfully pushed back Stalinist influence in the most important trade union in the country and in an important section of the youth movement - "left Stalinists"? Our Bolivian comrades who have completely destroyed Stalinist influence in the working class - "left Stalinists"? Our Ceylonese comrades who have driven the Stalinists from all their positions - "left Stalinists"?

However, all these sections are the most stubborn partisans of our majority analysis of the nature of the Russian state and the nature of the Stalinist parties. And they have only been able to obtain these successes, which mark a new stage in the development of the International, because they have correctly understood the phenomenon of Stalinism and because they have known how to approach it without any compromise but also without that sectarian attitude which would condemn us to isolation from the overwhelming majority of the proletariat. How can you maintain the calumnious accusation of "left Stalinism" in the face of these facts?

OUR ENTIRE INTERNATIONAL IS PROFOUNDLY CONVINCED THAT WE CAN ONLY ACCOMPLISH OUR HISTORIC TASK THROUGH A DEATH STRUGGLE AGAINST STALINISM. OUR ENTIRE INTERNATIONAL IS PROFOUNDLY CONVINCED THAT THE STRUGGLE FOR THE IMMEDIATE OVERTHROW OF STALIN IS THE NUMBER ONE TASK OF THE RUSSIAN WORKER AND PEASANT MASSES. There is also at present the fundamental task of defending what, in our opinion, remains of the conquests of October. THE ENTIRE POLITICAL ORIENTATION OF OUR LEADERSHIP AND MAJORITY STEMS FROM THE POSSIBILITY AND NECESSITY FOR A REVOLUTIONARY WORLD LEADERSHIP OF THE STRUGGLE OF THE MASSES AGAINST AMERICAN IMPERIALISM AND AGAINST THE SOVIET BUREAUCRACY. We have expressed this conviction in the fundamental documents of the International. We have expressed it in two plenums of the IEC. We have made it the central point of the two last manifestos of the International, that of the 1st of May and the one against the Belgrade Bureau. Your observer who attended our

cadre conference can inform you that we also made it the principal theme of this meeting. If you continue to persist, in the face of these absolutely undeniable facts, in spreading this slanderous accusation, we must logically conclude that your aim is neither the clarification of differences nor the education of the membership in the discussion, but merely to poison the atmosphere and systematically to prepare splits. This would be the criminal result of an irresponsible orientation. We refuse to believe that the members of the Workers Party, once they have understood the real political line of the International and the truth about its internal regime, will accept such an orientation!

The True Line of Demarcation in the International

Actually, the real line of demarcation in the International is outside of these three questions, chosen absolutely arbitrarily. The real line of demarcation was drawn by Trotsky in the last years of his life: **THE TRANSFORMATION OF OUR MOVEMENT FROM PROPAGANDA GROUPS, whose activity is above all literary and whose composition above all petty bourgeois INTO REVOLUTIONARY MASS PARTIES WHOSE PRIMARY PREOCCUPATION IS THE APPLICATION AND REALIZATION OF THE TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM, parties that become the true organizations of leadership of mass movements.**

This transformation could only have been approached before the war. The preparation of the war, the strong final ebb-tide, the isolation and disorganization in which our movement found itself put its realization forward to the next historical stage.

But according to us, this stage has already begun. That is why we are convinced that the true line of demarcation is drawn, in the International and in each section, between those who accept and consider as possible, in the era in which we live, this transformation of the International into the real revolutionary leadership of the mass struggle and those who either think that this task is not realizable or who refuse to enter in every country upon the concrete path which leads to its conclusion.

We consider the Russian and national questions as important theoretical and political questions. We discuss them and will continue to study them in line with the concrete development of the situation. But we refuse absolutely to judge the tendencies in the International by these criteria. A deviation on the Russian question can be the index of a completely revisionist attitude to Marxism: that was the case with Burnham. It can be a transitory error without any influence on the fundamental orientation of the member: that was the case with Comrade Craipeau's pre-war "defeatism." In a historical period of an ebb in the workers' movement, when the central strategic task consists in defending and safeguarding its ideological integrity from the tendencies towards decomposition which are so fatally born in the depths of the ebb, discussions around a question like the Russian one can and must be considered as decisive for the alignment of forces. But when Trotsky differentiated us from the POUM during the Spanish civil war, he accorded only a completely secondary importance to the Russian question, concentrating all his forces on revolutionary tactics. That was the logic of the situation and the responsibility of the revolutionary leadership at that concrete stage of developments. That is also the

logic of the present situation and the responsibility of the leadership and membership of the Trotskyist movement.

Our International has a heavy burden of the past to overcome. During the years of stagnation and ebb, habits were established, methods of thought and organization were adopted which are absolutely incompatible with the tasks of the present period. To disengage ourselves resolutely from dilettantism, to understand that discussion must above all be considered as a method of clarification to resolve problems of action, to eliminate mercilessly from the leadership of our sections all irresponsible elements who are not imbued in their every act with a sense of the historical responsibility which weighs upon their shoulders, to have done with all literary and abstract unrealizable politics, to stop talking for our own satisfaction and to concentrate all our efforts on patient and stubborn penetration into the most decisive sections of the working class for principled, resultful intervention in every mass struggle - such must be the principal preoccupation of the Congress and all its decisions must be so oriented. We are convinced that the recently opened period is one in which the victory or defeat of the proletariat will depend more and more upon our own politics. We must act according to the responsibilities which we assume.

On this terrain, we feel complete political solidarity with the leading comrades of the SWP. We may have differences on this or that detailed question with them. We may prefer this or that manner of raising a problem to that which they use. But we have been convinced that the overwhelming majority of the SWP is composed of militants and cadres WHO HAVE THE SAME FUNDAMENTAL PREOCCUPATION AS WE. It is on this, and this only, that the political accord which exists between us is based. Everything else is calumny, and an attempt on the part of the calumniators to escape their responsibility which is that of defining their own position in each concrete discussion ACCORDING TO THIS FUNDAMENTAL CRITERION WHICH MUST DETERMINE THE ATTITUDE OF EVERY RESPONSIBLE TENDENCY.

"Cannonism" in Action

The second slanderous accusation made by the resolution proposed to your National Committee by the Political Committee consists in presenting the leadership of the International as "factional agents of the Cannon clique" who intervene bureaucratically in the International solely in the "factional interests" of the SWP majority "even against their own political solidarity."

It is difficult to imagine a more defamatory declaration or one more contrary to the truth. Actually, the present leadership of the International, as well as the Provisional European Secretariat and the European Secretariat and International Secretariat, have followed a line of conduct strictly outlined before the forum of our movement and consistently and uncompromisingly applied.

Its conduct in all internal discussions which took place in the sections was inspired by these two fundamental preoccupations:

- (a) To unify in every country all the tendencies of the Fourth. To safeguard the unity of our movement. To avoid the poison of factional struggles by associating, as far as possible, the strong tendencies of the section in the work and responsibili-

ties of daily leadership.

(b) To intervene politically in all sections to defend the line of the International and its fundamental orientation towards mass work and the application of the spirit of the Transitional Program. To abstain carefully from all organizational intervention until after the Congress.

Let us see how these principles have been applied. I will try to enumerate the principal interventions of the present leadership, in their different forms, recognizing that this enumeration is very incomplete:

(1) In France, since 1945: attempts at unification, then unification. The whole French party will verify that without the efforts of the European Secretariat, unification would not have been achieved and above all would not have been maintained in the first, most difficult period. Constant efforts to associate every tendency in the day-to-day leadership of the party (the last effort in this direction was made at the end of Spring of 1947).

Politically, the ES, struggled against all the sectarian errors of the comrades of the ICC, until they undertook a thorough-going self-criticism and came over to the position of the International. Then, the IS struggled against the right wing errors of the present majority of the PCI, above all in the question of its political perspectives and its concessions to Stalinism.

Moreover, the ES intervened to associate Comrade Craipeau with the leadership of the left in 1945, with the special task in the work of regrouping, the importance of which, at that time, most of the cadres of the PCI underestimated. It is equally due to the uninterrupted efforts of the IS that the question of breaking out of the underground could be resolved by the PCI.

(2) In Belgium: unification of our forces was at first posed, then achieved, under the direct instructions and thanks to the efforts of the ES.

(3) In Greece: unification of our forces was realized solely through the efforts of the ES and the IS. It was a constant effort on the part of the IS to join all tendencies in the leadership of the party. There was political intervention radically to revise the sectarian position on the national question and for the slogan of the Republic.

(4) In the Spanish section: there was political intervention for the slogan of the Republic and a less sectarian orientation towards the IOUM. There were constant efforts to unite the two tendencies in the leadership of the party.

(5) In the German section: Under the occupation - there was coordination of all the work among the German soldiers, thanks to the ES. After the occupation ended, there was repeated intervention to help in the formation of a centralized section in Germany. There were repeated proposals to the old leadership of the IKD to resume its place in the section in Germany.

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order to apply the line of the International in Germany and to work out a policy in Germany itself, with special attention to the national question.

(6) In England: The orientation was towards the organization of the left wing of the Labor Party and to smooth over the struggle of the opposing tendencies, a struggle which had been sharpened by a division of labor accepted by the two tendencies.

(7) In Italy: The task was to unite all tendencies in the leadership of the party. Comrade Mangano entered the secretariat of the Italian Party (POC) on the proposal of the IS, after signing a declaration that he would apply the line of the International on the question of democratic demands, the Republic, united front, the SP-CP-SGT government, etc. Then there was political intervention against the sectarian line followed by Mangano in spite of his agreement. There was intervention for organization of the work of regroupment.

(8) In the Indies, in Indo-China, in China and in all the Latin American countries there were constant efforts at unification of our forces and the coordination of their work and categorical condemnation of any split, even where it concerned tendencies which were closer politically to the majority of the International.

(9) In New Zealand: there the discussion of the possibility of unification was considered. Against any split, for a reconsideration of the expulsion of M. and J. in spite of their repeated breaches of discipline. For the "Unity Statement."

In the case of the J. tendency, we publicly disclaimed any responsibility for this split with which we had not previously been acquainted nor advised; and, confronted with the accomplished fact, we accepted the unification only with the statement that it would in no case be an obstacle to a broader unification.

That is the balance sheet of four years of efforts at regrouping our movement on a world scale. Thanks to these efforts, we now have an International more solidly united, stronger, more sure of itself and applying a more concrete policy than ever in the past. Let any member of the PC stand up and refute this balance sheet! Let him explain each of our interventions by mysteriously "bureaucratic" preoccupations. Every member must, in good faith, recognize that whatever the errors we may have committed on this or that question, we were motivated in these efforts solely by the desire to strengthen the International politically and organizationally. And this balance sheet will remain more eloquent than all the mystifications and slanders when the Congress comes to judge it.

Reproach of the EPC

But the most irresponsible and slanderous accusation, the one which, in the eyes of the entire movement, has thrown the most discredit on your leadership, is the one concerning the "bureaucratic repression" of the EPC. Comrades of the National Committee, the great majority of the members of all our sections have only one explanation for this absolutely baseless accusation: you were never ready really to accept the discipline of the EPC and you were seeking

pretexts to break your agreements. If that is not the case, you must make your leadership responsible for discrediting your party in the eyes of the Movement. This is the logical conclusion to which everybody must arrive. In examining this question, you have abandoned any objective criterion, any effort to understand the decisions taken, without looking for "criminal" intentions - decisions taken, not by the Secretariat, but unanimously by the entire CIC, in which most of the major tendencies in the movement are represented.

You have created an atmosphere of suspicion around these questions which attains such a degree of overagitation that the revolting spectacle was to be seen of your accusing the CIC of "machination" in the "designation of a section" when we simply wanted to give symbolic mandates to Comrade Natalia, symbolically representing a section which we consider the most numerous section in the movement, that of the thousands of our brothers in the isolation and prison camps of the Urals and Siberia.

You were so imbued with factional preoccupations that you had projected them, almost unconsciously, over all our actions. With unparalleled blindness you were eager to interpret each of our decisions, unanimously accepted by all the minority tendencies, as "obscure machinations." When we established a method of representation to defend the small sections against eventual effacement by very large sections, you accused us precisely of that which we were eager to prevent. When we adopted rules for participation so flexible that concretely any minority whatsoever in any section whatever could be represented, you accused us "of oppressing minorities." You accused us of "sectarianism" because we refused to give concrete answers to questions such as those of the POUM and Bordighists posed abstractly. When such a question assumed reality, we were the first to put it on the order of the day. This happened at the last plenum of the CIC. You accused us of not "organizing" the discussion. If we had done this, you would have accused us of wanting to "limit the discussion." But, when after months and months of the freest discussion, we fixed a date for accepting resolutions, cries of "maneuver" were raised. It was our desire to prevent the convocation of an EPC where decisions would be taken in advance by the delegations loaded with mandates given to individuals. We do not recognize instructed mandates and we think that only the delegates to the EPC must have the power to make their own decisions and the power to change their opinions in the course of the discussion. Immediately you accuse us of "wanting to exclude the poor little sections." But if we had accepted instructed delegates, you would have immediately attacked us for wanting to organize a "hand-picked" EPC. Under these conditions, could we have any other impression than that you wanted to sabotage our efforts to organize a serious EPC, both democratic and representative, a real step forward in the development of our movement.

The discussion which has unfolded until now is, without any doubt, the broadest, the most democratic and the freest which has ever been held, not only in the Fourth International but in the entire working class movement. From now until the end of November we will have turned out about 80 bulletins which together with the articles in the magazine and printed supplements and brochures circulated consist of more than 1000 printed pages, more than 150 articles of at least 30 tendencies or parties in the movement. We

achieved this in spite of a crying lack of material means, techniques and human aids. Let each of you compare this accomplishment with the preparation of the Founding Conference or with the first Congresses of the CI. Is there anyone who would dare to question the exceptionally democratic character of this effort? Drop the masks of factionalism and prejudice which prevent you from seeing clearly, comrades, and judge, at last, the reality.

We Maintain Entirely Our Orientation towards the
Realization of the Unity Statement

We profoundly regret the proposal made by our PC to disassociate yourselves from the unity statement. We think, so far as the leadership of the movement is concerned, these proposals take as their point of departure, absolutely false premises, veritable mystification, which do not stand up under the slightest objective examination. As for the arguments on the national plane, cited in justification of this retreat, we consider them petty preoccupations, worthy of small town politicians rather than of revolutionary leaders convinced of the justice of their cause and of the historic responsibility of our movement. Furthermore, unity cannot take place because Cannon and Stein said something or other in a meeting or because they refuse to accept the change of name on a ballot! Or because they did not want to admit the existence of a third independent tendency calling itself Trotskyist and confronted with the accomplished fact of the Johnson split, for which they themselves have declined any responsibility, have accepted these comrades in their ranks, basing themselves on your explicit statement that you will not invoke the "Unity Statement" against accepting them.

Until yesterday you claimed that unification was a profound historic necessity. And incidents of such limited importance suddenly cause you to change your position! Don't you see that all the sections of the movement will come to the conclusion that the SWP was right when it accused you of not really wanting unification but only of seeking to break it by a maneuver. Above all, don't you see that this treacherous little trick which consists in first saying, "We have no objection against fusion with the Johnsonites on the basis of the Unity Statement..." only to add, two weeks later, "...because we wanted to repudiate this Statement" can only discredit you in the eyes of the movement.

I am sure that I speak in the name of the vast majority of the movement when I tell you: WE REMAIN MORE THAN EVER FAITHFUL TO THE TERMS AND THE SPIRIT OF THE UNITY STATEMENT. We invite you not to disassociate yourselves from it. We will do everything in our power so that the leadership of the SWP may not disassociate themselves either. We want you to participate in the EPC in order that you may judge the truly democratic atmosphere which prevails in the movement, in order that you may be able to defend your points of view. IF YOU DO NOT NOW BREAK YOUR AGREEMENTS, IF, AT THE EPC, AFTER THE DEBATES HAVE BEEN CONCLUDED, YOU DECLARE YOURSELF READY TO ACCEPT THE DISCIPLINE OF THE MOVEMENT, I HEREBY PUBLICLY GIVE MY WORD - and I'm sure that all the responsible leaders will commit themselves along with me - TO DO EVERYTHING I CAN TO ACHIEVE UNIFICATION BETWEEN YOU AND THE SWP. At the same time, I declare (and this too will be accepted, I am sure, by the whole movement and first of all by the leadership of the SWP) that I am ready to propose to the EPC the formation of a

committee to settle disputes to which all accusations of "bureaucratism" or "suppression of minorities" will be submitted, objectively studied in the presence of the interested parties and reported back to the EPC before the end of its discussions.

Comrades of the National Committee, you now have a heavy responsibility. Once before you have split our movement although you have never admitted it. I do not doubt that deep down within yourselves you profoundly regret it today. Your proposals for unity, to the extent that they were sincere, could only be the expression of such regret. Reflect for a moment before acting in a way which risks making more difficult than ever the unity which yesterday you seemed to hope for.

Nothing is further from our minds than the idea of wanting to build a monolithic movement. Our movement has hardly emerged from its period of incubation. As it is today, it will pass through many transformations before reaching its greatest power. We will have to assimilate mighty mass currents, infinitely more numerous than all the present parties of the movement before we have organizations at the head of the masses. We have full confidence in our ability to preserve for our movement its true physiognomy, only by the means of political persuasion and the maintenance of discipline in action because we have unlimited confidence in the justice of our ideas and our methods of work.

Two years ago, you posed an academic question to us, to which, at that time, we refused to give an answer in the same academic fashion. "Yes or No, are the differences between the WP and the world movement compatible with their living together?" Today, comrades of the National Committee, my answer is clear: YES, THEY ARE COMPATIBLE IF THEY MAKE POSSIBLE YOUR PRESENCE IN THE MOVEMENT AS A RESPONSIBLE AND DISCIPLINED MINORITY TENDENCY WHICH, EVEN WHILE PRESERVING ALL THE RIGHTS OF INTERNAL DISCUSSION, REALLY CAN ABANDON ANY ORGANIZATIONAL AND FACTIONAL PREOCCUPATION AND ANY IDEA OF "ENTRY" AS A MANEUVER, IN ORDER SINCERELY AND DEFINITELY TO JOIN IN THE GREAT WORK WHICH WE ARE UNDERTAKING - THE BUILDING OF THE PARTY OF THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION!

Now, it is for you to reexamine your answer to this question.

Outside the movement there remains no perspective at all for you outside of stagnation, retreat and ever-growing isolation. No revolutionary organization, in the months and years to come, will be able to maintain itself outside of the movement without disintegrating as all the centrist organizations are now disintegrating. At the moment when the revolutionary regrouping is beginning to attract to us the first currents of the masses and the best elements of the centrist and social democratic organizations, your break with the movement will mean suicide as a political tendency. Yours is the choice!

E. Germain

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(NOTE: The reply of the Political Committee to the foregoing letter will appear in a subsequent issue of the PARTY BULLETIN.

- Editor.)

FOR THE RECORD

By Hal Draper

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In the "Statement of Resignation" by the four comrades who sign themselves "the IKD faction," reference is made to the National Committee resolution entitled "Notes for a Restatement of Our Position," a criticism of the IKD's views on the "all-sided" (i.e., more or less non-class) struggle for socialism.

In their document the IKD comrades make the statement that the National Committee resolution was "adopted without open dissent by the entire plenum (including Johnson, Forest and Draper)," This statement is not accurate as far as it concerns myself.

At this same plenum I refused to vote for the resolution on the following ground. Although agreeing with the contents of the resolution and its criticism of the IKD position on the questions discussed, I expressed the view that (a) the resolution was not strong enough in its attack on the IKD; (b) it restricted itself to the IKD's views on how to carry on socialist propaganda, whereas what was necessary was a broader attack on the IKD's position; (c) that such a stronger and broader resolution was necessary because, in my opinion, the IKD represented a tendency in the movement which was at least as far from us and as incompatible with Marxism, as was Johnson -- though in the opposite direction. After expressing these reasons, agreeing with what the resolution said as far as it went but unsatisfied with its character, the indicated vote was abstention on the resolution. If I am not mistaken, Comrade Garrett took the same position at that time.

It is some time now since I informed the National Committee that I intended to press for a resolution (for our next National Convention) attacking and rejecting the IKD position, not only on the nature of socialist propaganda, but on what they call "retrogressionism." Naturally, this involves preliminary discussion articles on the same subject, whether for the PARTY BULLETIN or for THE NEW INTERNATIONAL. I had hoped at that time that I would find sufficient time in the ensuing months to do so, but moving and the press of work in New York has made that impossible so far. The resignation of the IKD'ers, however, does not do away with the necessity of either such discussion or rejection.

March, 1948.

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