

FORUM

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INTRODUCTION

With this issue of Forum we open the post-convention discussion of Socialists and the Labor Movement. At the July 1957 convention this section of the resolution on Socialist Perspectives in the United States was tabled for further discussion after the convention.

The first three pieces are the resolutions and amendments to resolutions presented to the convention. The discussion is begun with an article by H.W. Benson and A. Winters in support of the respective resolutions.

The Editor

SOCIALIST PERSPECTIVES IN THE UNITED STATES

Part I: SOCIALISTS AND THE LABOR MOVEMENT

Prospects for the socialist movement in the U.S. are linked closely to the fate of socialism throughout the world. Because it has been relatively weak here, socialists and radicals have been especially sensitive to the course of different tendencies in countries where the movement was a mass force. If socialism was without mass influence, or only in the first stages of real influence, it was possible to point to Europe where the working class was solidly socialist as a model for future America. And if Stalinism finally triumphed over socialism among radicals in the U.S., it was not due primarily to any particular American conditions or events but to the victories of Stalinism internationally.

On a world scale, the socialist movement appears already to have entered a new historic period. Its resurgence is unmistakably illuminated by the appearance of the anti-Stalinist socialist revolutionary movement in the nations under Stalinist tyranny, culminating in the Hungarian revolution. Here, it was at last revealed, is the mass, popular force capable under favorable conditions of ending totalitarianism; an event equal in historical significance to the rise of the modern working class movement and its early struggles more than a hundred years ago in Europe and sixty years ago in Russia.

The period of setbacks, defeats, disintegration appears to be coming to an end. The resurgence of world socialism is visible. It is not necessarily the moment when a single giant stride forward will quickly change everything at once, but we have reached the dividing line between the end of one epoch and the beginning of another. The collapse of the Second International in the first World War; the defeat of the revolutionary working class movements in the post-war era; the crushing of the German workers by Hitler; the Austrians by Dolfuss; the Spanish by Franco; the Italians by Mussolini; the ~~xxxxxx~~ victory of Stalinism over the Russian working class; and finally the second World War followed by the spread of Stalinism which wiped out every independent socialist, democratic and popular right where it triumphed - this was the grim course that led almost everywhere to demoralization and decline of socialism. In the U.S., it was this that facilitated the rise of Stalinism and reduced the democratic socialist movement to a group of small, fragmented sects. It is this period that is at last, coming to an end as Stalinism is struck by revolutionary, democratic socialist uprisings and is forced into decline as a world movement.

What does this signify for the socialist movement in the U.S.? We have reached a turning point in events which demands a turn in the outlook of all socialists and all socialist groups. New opportunities arise; it is possible now to rebuild the democratic socialist movement. All groups, tendencies, sects and individuals that turn their attention to this task can make a lasting contribution to American socialism; those that turn their backs upon it, or who stand in the way, risk political obliteration and decline.

In the years of stagnation and defeat, socialist sects had the duty of preserving the ideals and perspective of socialism as widely as possible even when their political role was drastically restricted by enforced isolation. But new times demand a new outlook. If the rebuilding of socialism now is truly possible, then the era of socialist sects is coming to an end. In any case, it is their duty now to make the attempt to move forward to a broad movement.

The new possibilities do not arise directly within the U.S., out of big events in its domestic politics or out of the native class struggles. But they do arise in the U.S.. The task could be summed up as follows; 1) to rebuild the democratic socialist movement in the U.S. in the light of the new world situation and 2) to win a place for it on the American political scene. These twin tasks; to reconstruct the move and to bring socialism to the American people are of course intimately related; in fact, inseparable. It would be impossible to win a new hearing unless the adherents of socialism can be ~~reoriented~~ reorientated and re-assembled into an effective force.

Socialist perspectives in the U.S. are dominated and determined by the following key facts:

1. The organization of the majority of the industrial working class into unions. The American workers are an organized class.
2. The fight of Negroes for full equality; above all, the struggles for democracy in the South.
3. The decline of McCarthyism.
4. The disintegration of the Communist Party and the collapse of Stalinism in the U.S.
5. The search for the road to Socialist regroupment and reunification.

I. SOCIALISTS AND THE LABOR MOVEMENT

Socialism can become a genuine working class movement not merely in theory or perspective but in actuality only when it can summon the support of significant sections of the class and act as the vehicle of its political aspirations. It is certainly not that now, nor will it be for some time to come. The movement at this point is a small and fragmented force. It can be reorganized and reorientated in a reasonable short time and emerge as a movement of political significance. But under the best of circumstances, even after its present strength has been multiplied many times over, it will remain relatively small compared to the movement of the American working class, the trade unions.

The organized working class numbers 18 millions, a cohesion class force of unprecedented power. It is this class to which socialism must look if it is to become a real political force. Yet, this giant class, organized, remains non-socialist, even anti-socialist, tolerating capitalism as a social system.

The paradox will remain: a weak socialism which can become strong only with the support of labor; a powerful labor movement which rejects socialism. Upon this background, any newly emerging socialist movement will have to fashion its tactics and approach. It will ~~not~~ determine the relationship of the socialist movement to the labor movement, two forces of vastly different proportions.

The permanent organization of a majority of the working class, stringently influenced by radicals and socialists, opened the way to organization in the mass production industries and now the whole working class has poured through. There have been times when the organized labor movement was more democratic, more militant, more interested in independent political action, more receptive to socialist ideas than today. But the militant organized sector lived and fought surrounded by a vast unorganized, sometimes backward, and always helplessly unorganized majority.

The new fact of decisive significance is that these millions, this majority, in the course of decades of struggles in politics and in industry have raised themselves out of amorphous disorganization to conscious organized class power. What has been accomplished cannot be wiped out; it is the base upon which all future development begins. If the militant victory has stagnated, even moved forward, the majority, the whole class has advanced.

The AFL-CIO merger was not the cause of this great advance; it resulted from it and climaxed the period. It represented, too, another step forward. All the gains of the past were preserved; all the rights and potentialities of industrial unionism were enforced. But more. The influence of the most conservative sections of the labor movement was instantly reduced to a minor position; corrupt elements were thrown on the defensive; the opponents of racism were encouraged. For decades progressives had denounced racketeering in the unions and called for a fight against it. But the relationship of ~~the~~ forces was such, that the CIO could do little outside its own ranks and the AFL was paralyzed from within. Unity made it possible to begin what had been impossible in practice before. Above all, unity increased the political power, the self-confidence and class feeling of the workers, factors which, in the long run, enhance the possibilities of socialist consciousness.

In the long run, in the period ahead, however, when the socialist movement has yet to emerge as a ~~the~~ genuine mass movement it is essential that it avoid presenting itself as a sect... that is, to guard against demanding that the real labor movement submit in advance to ideal norms worked out for it lest it meet a withering castigation from socialists. If socialism remained merely a sect, without ties of any kind with the labor movement, if its message found no audience whatsoever in the unions, then its attitude toward the unions could make as little impact for harm as for good. When no one is listening, it hardly matters ~~what~~ what is said or how. But once the socialist movement advances to the point where it is no longer simply a sect, even though not yet a mass movement; once it has attained a hearing in the labor movement and some influence in it, its policy and activity must be carefully formulated. By a wise policy it can cultivate and ever-increasing circle of sympathizers. By a rash one, it can squander its first capital.

The trade unions, which are nothing less than the class movement of the American workers, will undoubtedly be staffed and led by officers who accept capitalism and carry on trade union struggles within that framework; just as the vast majority of American workers, organized and unorganized, are pro-capitalist in their outlook and will remain so for some time. Socialists confront not a disorganized, amorphous, idealess working class which must first be organized and educated in political elements but an organized, politically-conscious (if not yet independent), procapitalist labor movement. There arise, then, the difficult and delicate problem of the relationship between a renewed, but still small minority socialist movement and the big, majority labor movement, non-socialist or pro-capitalist in varying degrees.

The labor movement needs the inspiration of socialist ideals, ideals which have proven their vitality and indestructability in the working class movement of the world for a century and a half through times of tragic defeat and reaction as well as in times of advance. If the labor movement in the U.S. becomes bureaucratic, as it does, if it becomes mired in self-defeating opportunism, as it does, if it often wastes its own superb potential for human betterment for trivial gains, as it does - one reason is that it is not inspired from within by the genuinely, democratic liberating goals of socialism.

But we do not expect, and we certainly cannot "demand" that the unions (i.e. the working class movement) accept socialist policies before we recognize that their struggles can advance the cause of labor and democracy. Above all, we do not derogate their achievements because they do not set goals which we propose. Rather we explain that all their advances, all their demands, won or partially won, are not the benevolent dispensation of social engineers, enlightened employers, or self-styled friends of labor, but are the fruits of their own class strength and solidarity, their ability and readiness to fight if necessary. In short, we aim not to disparage the real movement of the workers but to enhance their feeling of class pride and consciousness of power without which any genuine socialist consciousness is impossible.

There are those who see nothing but defeats; successfully perpetrated betrayals; setbacks, impermissible concessions and compromises at every point. They delude themselves that such an attitude somehow demonstrates their own unmatched "revolutionary" zeal and unshaken socialist faith. They are wrong - but this is not all - in the spirit of ultra-left sectarianism they would undermine the confidence of the working class, not in its leaders but in itself. They cannot understand that even without their strictures from without, the working class is so powerful that it can move forward despite political shortcomings and lack of socialist consciousness.

We do not anticipate any fundamental change in the character of the present union leadership in the near future. The workers will participate in significant political, social and industrial

struggles - class struggles, in practice - still captained by a leadership which abjures the class struggle in principles. This leadership, at least its most socially conscious authentic representatives will remain, and the rank and file, who share the same general ideology, will continue to place its confidence in such a leadership which in fact represents them as they are.

Socialists in the labor movement do not seek to control the unions, or to manipulate them for private aims through secret factional maneuvering. This deserves restatement new because of justified distrust instilled in the working class through its experiences with Stalinism. Rather they join with all other militants and progressives in the labor movement to support the labor movement against all its enemies, within and without, to defend it from anti-labor attack, to rid it of racketeering and racism in all forms, to promote democracy. Like all union militants, socialists strive for the advance of the honest wing of the labor movement - the alliance of the progressive section of the AFL and the CIO - to cut down the power of the ultra-conservatives and above all to end the power of the corruptionists. We strive too for the increased influence of the most socially conscious wing of the labor movement, represented in part by the forces in the CIO that made Reuther's rise possible in the UAW and in the CIO.

Socialist unionists do not aim to graft some special credo of their own upon the labor movement. They are distinguished from other union loyalists and militants essentially in this: in all struggles and activities of the union and of the workers, they see the long range implications of working class independence and finally the full democracy of socialism.

The interests of labor and of the nation imperatively require the formation of a new political party initiated by the unions, a Labor Party. This is the central issue of domestic politics. The founding of a new party would advance democracy and open new possibilities for the rise of socialist influence. Wherever a strong working class possesses democratic rights, it organizes its own party - except in the U.S. The fact that this perspective is more than a remote abstraction but a realistic possibility here too is indicated at every critical point in the nation's politics. In 1948, to mention only one notable example, the UAW called for a "political realignment" in the U.S. through the formation of a new people's party, a proposal which could lead in essence only to a Labor Party. Since then the idea has remained on the shelf, inert, but in a somewhat attenuated form it comes up again and again, kept alive and available for use when necessary. Socialists in the union propose that it be taken off the shelf and made a living proposal in the ranks of organized labor.

While there is now no organized or conscious pro-labor party tendency, organizations which represent a certain measure of independence from the old parties have been founded. They have moved away from mere bourgeois politics but not yet to independent working class politics. Typical are such groups as the PAC, COPE, Liberal Party based upon organized workers; and the ADA among professionals and liberals. Socialists support such movements as a

step in the right direction - toward full political independence. Their general ideology, if not the officially stated program, is based upon an acceptance of capitalism, or, as they put it, "free enterprise." Yet socialists can find a place inside them as loyal supporters while retaining their own opposition to capitalism and their conviction of the need for a new society. As liberals and laborites, these groups demand full democracy, consistently applied as they understand it. Toward ~~that~~ this end they seek to curb the power of monopoly, to fortify and widen the strength of popular institutions as the base of democracy. They seek, not the rule of the capitalist class, but the rule of the people. Their own aims are vitiated by their pro-capitalism and contradicted by their failure to break with the old parties. Yet it is precisely the same goal of democracy that we seek more consistently through socialism.

In the context of American politics, such groups represent not barriers to socialist ideas and politics but vehicles for the promulgation of democratic ideals and demands. As such, socialists, in good conscience, are able to participate as members and support them in the common cause of democracy. A revived socialist movement would properly urge its own followers to become active participants in such movements and by its structure and rules make it possible for them to do so.

The Labor movement plays an active role as a left wing in bourgeois politics. It seeks political advantage and progress by supporting bourgeois candidates in one of the two old parties, generally in the Democratic Party. A correct socialist policy rejects the line of supporting bourgeois candidates as disorientating and self-defeating and stresses the alternative of a Labor Party.

However, while the labor movement continues within the old party framework, the political antagonism between it and its bourgeois allies is not overcome or abolished but only slurred over. While socialists do not favor labor's continued alliance with the Democratic Party, they nevertheless urge the labor movement to press further and more aggressively, more militantly for the program and political demands which it has already formulated. From its own standpoint, which we do not necessarily share, the labor movement should fight for its own candidates in the old party primaries rather than confine ~~itself~~ itself to supporting old-line machine men or self-styled liberals; it should insist that the liberal New Dealers whom it supports inside the Democratic Party break with the reactionary Slave Dealers and cease giving aid and comfort to them in the name of party unity. Such a demand was put to them by Reuther in 1956 ("you can't have Eastland and us at the same time") but it turned out to be a mere bluff. It should not rest content with the crumbs tossed to it by the old party hacks but should press aggressively for its own demands in Congress and in the old parties, judging politicians by their readiness to fight for it in Congress - or their failure to do so. In short, in politics as in all arenas, socialists point to the concentrated numbers and social power of labor suggesting that it demand democratic recognition of that power.

Labor is engaged in political struggle - not always for what socialists would propose, not in the manner they suggest - but in its own way. Never was the discrepancy between the power of labor and the weakness of organized socialism so great. In the days of its most impressive electoral triumphs, the old SP could win a million votes at a time when the unions numbered perhaps only twice that number. And within the unions, socialism was a strong and respected current. That relationship of forces is gone, probably never to return in exactly that form. Now organized labor enrolls 18,000,000 and organized socialism is fragmented. Even under the most favorable conditions, a reunited, revived American socialist movement will remain a relatively minor force compared to the giant organizations of the working class. It will require new big class struggles, new political experiences before socialism can expect to influence and lead even a substantial wing inside the labor movement.

Socialism must come forward clearly as part of the labor movement and not as a rival to it. It seeks always to stimulate the working class and its organizations toward greater social independence. At the same time it is careful even when it disagrees not to appear as an obstacle to them or to their efforts to win what they can through methods and institutions which they favor.

There is, of course, no genuine workers party today - a workers party in the sense that it enrolls significant sections of the working people who look to it for leadership in political action. Socialist participation in electoral campaigns through their own candidates at this stage could at best serve only for minor propaganda and not for real participation in political events. It could interest at best only thousands while the labor movement leads millions and engages their active loyalty and support.

When the ISL was founded as a propaganda league out of the Workers Party, it recognized that our tendency was not a party then and could not hold out the realistic prospects of becoming one. Electoral campaigns were abandoned and never revived. The same factors that motivated our decision then will undoubtedly hold true for a revived socialist movement tomorrow. Except under unusual circumstances which cannot be foreseen at this time, it would be a mistake for socialists to enter their own candidates in the elections. It is not simply a question of time, money or energy in a technical sense but a question of the relationship between a politically active, organized working class and a small organized socialist movement.

When the labor movement supports bourgeois candidates, despite the urgings of socialists, it campaigns among its membership for support in the elections. The more active, the more militant, the more union-conscious members, precisely those most likely to be interested in socialism and to look with sympathy upon it, are the first to follow the union's leadership in this respect. They do so not because they are eager to support capitalism or capitalist candidates but because they support their union out of feeling of class solidarity.

This places a difficult, even delicate, task before socialists: how to present the idea of political independence at a time when labor is engaged in political campaigns in alliance with bourgeois elements. Socialists have the obligation in their press and at their public meetings, before, during and after elections to explain in a patient manner and in the most friendly terms that so long as labor continues to support bourgeois candidates it will nullify its own power and find it impossible to win its most important political demands. Yet in doing so the socialist does not wish to put himself in the position of alienating these advanced workers who having recognized the importance of political action and of labor's increased political consciousness have accepted, temporarily, the policy of campaigning for labor endorsed candidates of the bourgeois parties through their PACs, etc.

This poses a problem for every socialist, and particularly for those active in the labor movement; how to best propagandize for socialism and more immediately for a labor Party at a time when the better and more advanced unionists, who are not yet socialists, are campaigning for the labor endorsed candidates. In these circumstances we feel that the propaganda advantages of running socialist candidates must be carefully weighed against the possible alienation of these more advanced currents within the union, so that it will not appear that the small socialist movement is pitting itself against the present class movement of labor in politics during election time. In today's climate the minor propaganda advantages offered by running candidates is too often more than cancelled out by antagonisms and difficulties created among labor militants loyal to the union and its official policy. However, let us emphasize before going on that we are not suggesting that in such circumstances we or any other socialists should support bourgeois candidates and parties; what we are examining here is when under what circumstances we would favor running socialist candidates, which question flows not from any attempt to facilitate support to bourgeois candidates but solely from an examination of the tactical advantages to be gained or lost from such campaigns.

Thus the ISL does not, as a general rule, expect that the socialist movement, reunited or not, can or should orient towards running candidates in such elections with general socialist propaganda or "party building" purposes in mind. This in no way means that (1) there are not circumstances and areas in which running socialist candidates, where either there exists no lib-lab type candidates or such lib-lab endorsed candidates are so obviously of the most corrupt and backward sort, cannot serve as a fruitful means of propaganda and as a source of useful party activity without incurring any of the above-mentioned dangers, or (2) that there are not circumstances when strong progressive currents of dissatisfaction and revolt against the present policy arises within the labor movement where the running of such independent candidates cannot help to serve as a means of aiding and supporting such currents, even when opposed by the dominant, official policy of labor. The Socialist movement must always keep both these types of "exceptions" in mind, as they undoubtedly will and can occur, especially on a local scale, in the immediate future.

Our position on this question does not proceed from any general principles about the proper relationship between the socialist movement and the trade unions, but rather from an analysis of the circumstances which prevail today and which we expect will prevail in the immediate future. The key consideration is not that socialists should not counterpose themselves to the official policy of labor, but that socialist electoral activity should be based primarily on considerations arising out of the real trends in the working class, and not merely for the purpose of socialist propaganda regardless of such trends or the absence of them and regardless of the effect of such a socialist campaign on encouraging or discouraging such trends and of alienating and driving away the more militant unionists.

However, despite our own views, other groups may propose to run socialist candidates. From the standpoint of the long range question of the relationship between the socialist and labor movements in the U.S., it may be unwise, as we see it, to take such a step. But this is a period of discussion of socialist regroupment in which the shape and nature of a reunified socialist movement may be determined in a comparatively short time. Under such circumstances, the attitude of the ISL toward socialist candidates in the elections will be determined not be the objective of making general socialist propaganda for independent labor politics, but by the more immediate aim of furthering the most effective and desirable socialist regroupment.

AMENDMENTS TO THE RESOLUTION ON SOCIALIST PERSPECTIVES
IN THE U.S. PART I, SOCIALISTS AND THE LABOR MOVEMENT

Gerry McDermott

To replace item (1) in last paragraph of page (8) of P.C. Majority Resolution.

"It is quite probable that there are local or state situations where a socialist candidate can be run without seriously alienating the progressive elements in the labor movement. Where the socialist movement has the forces and the opportunity to utilize such an opportunity to bring socialist ideas, and the existence of the united party, to the public, it should seriously explore and seriously seek opportunities to run candidates, not excluding a presidential candidate in 1960."

Max Weinrib

Add to the end of the last paragraph on Page 8:

"The major consideration in running or not running candidates in elections by a socialist organization in the coming period, should be whether or not such a campaign would advance or retard the forces working for a labor party."

Julius Falk

Add to the end of the 4th paragraph on page 4 ending "... socialist consciousness.":

"However, a repudiation of sectarian and irresponsible criticisms of the labor movement is not to be confused with apologies or rationalizations of the social conservatism and timidity of the labor leadership. The record of even the best of the labor leadership in the anti-McCarthy struggle, in the fight for civil rights and during the Hungarian Revolution has ranged from pitifully inadequate to outright timidity. We have criticized the labor leadership for such failures in the past and we do not propose to abandon this criticism so long as the labor leadership fails to live up to its responsibilities on such vital national and international questions."

On page 5 in the last paragraph beginning "While there..." in the sentence beginning "Yet socialists ..." substitute "responsible participants" for "loyal supporters" and delete the rest of the paragraph.

On page 7, in the 2nd paragraph beginning "Socialism must come ..." delete the last sentence beginning "At the same time..."

On page 7, delete the 4th paragraph beginning "When the ISL..."

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SOCIALISM AND THE LABOR MOVEMENT

By Hal Draper and Archie Winters

In the past period the American working class has taken another great step in the march of class organization. In the '30s the great step was the industrial organization of the mass-production fields through the CIO upsurge; a decade later, it was the permanent organization of a majority of the industrial working class which was consummated in the great post-war strike wave; and a decade after that--in the couple of years just past--it has been the AFL-CIO merger, which once again united the by-now tremendously bigger labor federations, into the most powerful labor organizations the country has known.

A generation ago, the militant minority of the working class, strongly influenced by radicals and socialists, opened the way to organization in the mass-production industries, and now the whole working class has poured through. There have been times when the organized labor movement was more democratic, more militant, more interested in independent political action, more receptive to socialist ideas than today. But the militant organized sector lived and fought surrounded by a vast unorganized, sometimes backward, and always helpless unorganized majority.

The new fact of decisive significance is that these millions, this majority, in the course of decades of struggles in politics and in industry, have raised themselves out of amorphous disorganization to conscious organized class power. What has been accomplished cannot be wiped out; it is the base upon which all future development begins. If the militant minority has stagnated, even moved backward, the majority, the whole class, has advanced.

The AFL-CIO merger was not the cause of this great advance; it resulted from it and climaxed the period. It represented, too, another step forward. All the gains of the past were preserved; all the rights and potentialities of industrial unionism were enforced. But more: The influence of the most conservative sections of the labor movement was instantly reduced to a minor position; corrupt elements were thrown on the defensive; the opponents of racism were encouraged. For decades progressives had denounced racketeering in the unions and called for a fight against it. But the relationship of forces was such, that the CIO could do little outside of its own ranks and the AFL was paralyzed from within. Unity made it possible to begin what had been impossible in practice before. Above all, unity increased the political power, the self-confidence and class feeling of the workers, factors which, in the long run, enhance the possibilities of socialist consciousness.

Therefore, the merger, as the latest climax in this march of labor, operates to raise the combativity of a working class which has made tremendous gains in its struggle to raise the standard of living, and which remains undefeated and undemoralized by setbacks. Its potentialities for militancy are greater than before, not less. The possibilities for socialist work are better than before, not worse.

In face of this giant organized labor movement, the socialist movement remains tiny. Its fundamental problem is still that of achieving ties to and roots in the big labor movement, as a part of it-- as that part of the labor movement which proposes a wider perspective, a more militant policy, a more independent and class struggle line.

There are important tendencies making for new ferment and progressive discontent in the trade-union movement. In the shops, speedup, layoffs, decentralization, automation, and other issues remain problems that threaten the security of the workers. The more progressive union leaders, like Walter Reuther, have failed to solve these problems no less than others. In more than one union, unexpected outbreaks of rebellion and discontent among the ranks against the top bureaucracy, have occurred to cast sudden light on the danger of ever assuming that the bureaucracy adequately reflects or represents the feelings or aspirations of the ranks. The Steel Workers Union, one of the more heavily bureaucratized of the big industrial unions, saw indeed one of the most dramatic evidences of this in its last union election. In the UAW too there is clearly evidence of sources of seething discontent underneath. These important movements of discontent reflect important unsolved problems of labor about which socialists have their say.

Socialists can, and must, present policies and proposals within the labor movement which correspond to the needs of the workers on these unsolved problems, and are not trimmed to the sensitivities of the officialdom. Socialists must not turn back from pursuing these policies nor de-emphasize them, if as a result they find themselves in opposition to the union leaderships, even to the Reuther type of leadership. For while we support the Reuthers in every progressive step, as we supported Reuther against the Stalinists, still we are not "Reutherites."

Socialists aim to build a progressive, democratic, militant wing of the labor movement. They will work with all those who help to further the progress of such a wing. They are distinguished from all other unionists by their consistent struggle for democracy in the unions, for a militant fight for better working conditions, for a Labor Party and no reliance on capitalist politicians; in general, by the integration of their day-to-day struggles with their longer range views and solutions.

We want to see a loyal opposition in the labor movement: loyal precisely in the sense that the Stalinist factions in the trade unions are not loyal oppositions, though unfortunately it is the Stalinists whose heinous record colors the attitude of many good workers, a fact we therefore take into account; but while loyal, an opposition on behalf of progressive policies as distinct from the official leaderships.

As a loyal left-wing - loyal to the labor movement, not to the officialdom - we socialists have never demanded that unions accept any of our socialist ideas before we deign to support their real struggles; nor do we automatically attack everything done by the official leaders as "betrayals." The official labor movement, especially under pressure from the ranks, has made notable gains, and when this happens, socialists openly say so; we are not "professional oppositionists." However, our loyalty is first and foremost to the struggles of the workers against all of their enemies.

Socialism can become a significant force in the labor movement only insofar as it learns to give (and fight for) new, more adequate, more militant policies which do answer the discontent that seethes in the American working class and among the Negro people; learns how to articulate the aspirations of the ranks on this; and, to this end, and first of all, how to link itself inextricably to the labor movement in its own life and thinking.

This convention, therefore, calls to the attention of the League the basic task: to make its life a part of the life of the labor movement by integrating its forces in that labor movement. The main task of socialists is to link themselves to the trade union struggle. A socialist group which abstains from this task

dooms itself in advance as far as ever becoming a force in the American labor movement, no matter how kindly the labor bureaucracy may look on it. No socialist movement can ever give up this effort, and in its perspective, even if the difficulties multiply. There is no other way for Independent Socialism.

We must show not the slightest sympathy for the trend of thought which says or implies: "We've been through this old stuff about getting into the labor movement; it hasn't gotten us anywhere and it can't get anywhere. Let's not talk about it any more.... Besides, there really isn't much that we can do in the labor movement nowadays anyway...." We reject any tendencies in this direction because this line of thought guarantees the isolation and stultification of the Independent Socialist movement.

* * *

II

The central issue for labor, and the central issue of democratic politics, is still this: that the interests of labor and of the nation imperatively require the formation of a new political party based on the unions, a labor party. The founding of a new party would advance democracy and open up new possibilities for the rise of socialist influence. The fact that this perspective is more than a remote abstraction but a realistic possibility in this country is indicated in every critical point in the nation's politics. Although since 1948 when the UAW was calling for a "political realignment" through a new people's party--the idea of a labor party has remained on the shelf, it comes up again and again, kept alive by the disappointments and disillusionments that result when labor's support to bourgeois candidates shows its unfruitfulness. Socialists in the unions have as one of their main tasks to propose that it be taken off the shelf and made a living proposal in the ranks of organized labor.

Socialists, therefore, make every effort to win the ranks away from the line of the official labor leadership of supporting candidates of the two old bourgeois parties. Discontent with the results of this policy already exist and is even rife; this discontent can take retrogressive forms, as when disgust with the Democrats or with Adlai Stevenson's Fair-Dealism leads workers to vote for an Eisenhower instead; it is the socialists' special task to lead this discontent to express itself in progressive terms as a demand for independent class political action through a labor party. While among the more politically aware elements in the labor movement the majority are still enmeshed in the official line of "lesser evil" thinking, there are bound to be more and more militants who will become receptive to proposals for independent political action.

As far as the majority are concerned, socialists have the obligation to explain at all times, including during elections, in a patient and friendly manner that so long as labor continues to support bourgeois candidates it will nullify its own power and find it impossible to win its most important political demands; that it is a mistake to support such bourgeois candidates; that nothing important can be

gained by voting for them as the lesser evil; and thus seek to use the issue of the day and the lessons of the election to turn the workers and the labor movement as a whole against the present official line and in favor of a labor party.

Short of a labor party, and where there are no independent labor candidates, the socialist movement faces the question of running its own, socialist candidates in an appeal for a "protest vote" and for its educational value in bringing the socialist message to the people, including education on the need for a labor party.

In general, the ISL since its inception has refrained from running election campaigns. It is even possible that at least at first even a new and broader socialist movement would have to do likewise, pending acquirement of more strength. The consideration in these cases is the degree to which the movement in any given case estimates the tactical advantages to be gained or lost from such a campaign, politically or organizationally; whether the campaign efforts are organizationally practicable and bid fair to be politically fruitful; and considerations of this order.

But where these considerations are taken care of, socialists should and must seek the advantages and the gains that become possible with the running of a socialist campaign and socialist candidates counterposed to the old parties. This is one of the most important party-building means available to strengthen the new, broader socialist movement toward which we look. Far from considering that such a socialist campaign is a bad thing because it counterposes socialists to the official labor bureaucracy, or to bourgeois candidates supported by the official labor movement, we would urge it as a good thing, one of the best things the movement can do, to bring socialist ideas before the people precisely when political interest is at a maximum, and before the workers while they are faced with the disillusioning results of the "lesser evil" line. Thus a socialist campaign could be of great value in helping and supplementing also progressive aims in the trade unions, particularly in educating for independent political action and a labor party.

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IDEAS, PERSONAL RELATIONS, AND THE "ALL-INCLUSIVE" CONCEPT.

By Frank Harper, Philadelphia

I am ordinarily not much concerned with the personalities of my political companions but in recent months I have observed certain phenomena which leads me to make a few comments about our future in the socialist movement. Perhaps they will be helpful and not merely provocative.

The bitter personal "polemics" by Comrades Hall, Draper, and Shachtman at the recent convention were, in my opinion, harmful and indefensible. I was pleased to note that Comrade Shachtman deplored these sharp exchanges but did not share his views that such incidents are a manifestation of the Independent Socialist League's high regard for the tremendous importance of ideas. Indeed these encounters seem to show not only a disregard for the opponents and the audience's sensitivities but an equal disregard for the ideas involved. Frankly such behavior seemed to me to be both anti-social and anti-Socialist. If such bitter personal attacks are carried out in the branches the only result can be the loss of present membership and the end of recruiting opportunities.

In my opinion, the ISL has moved measurably in the direction of becoming an all-inclusive movement. The same historical events, experiences, and social forces which make an all inclusive socialist organization desirable also operates on the League and its membership.

It is true that most of the membership agree with the bulk of the revolutionary Marxist Leninist program as printed in Labor Action. However one finds that on many issues coming before the branches there are substantial differences. I regard this development a healthy one and suggest furthering its advance with two proposals:

1. Without subtracting from the program in LA, we should add a paragraph to the effect that socialists not agreeing with the bulk of that program are still welcome to join the League and to promote their ideas within the ranks with the purpose of winning others to their viewpoint.
2. Individuals in the League should make a conscious effort to modify their attitudes so that it will be apparent to the socialist public that different ideas are welcomed and not merely tolerated in the ISL.

It seems necessary in this period of preparation for socialist unity and regroupment to widen the ISL so that it may continue to hold individuals whose viewpoints are diverging but which are well within the bounds envisaged in the merged ISL-SP-SDF merger. It would appear very stupid, if by rigid adherence to our tradition, we alienate present ISL members who are the same sort of individuals which the merged organizations will contain and will attempt to attract.

September 20, 1957

SOCIALISTS, UNIONS, AND POLITICAL ACTION

By H. W. Benson

Our discussion can properly be divided into two distinct sections: 1) the role of socialists in unions, and 2) socialist political action policy. In dealing with both questions, the convention resolution on Socialists and the Labor Movement is guided by two fundamental considerations and these must be kept in mind at every point, namely:

1. The new situation for American socialism. For the first time, the rebuilding of a broad unified and strengthened democratic socialist movement looms as a practical possibility. At any rate, every radical group is preoccupied with that possibility.

2. The unique position of socialism in the United States: in particular its relationship to the organized labor movement. The industrial working class is organized as a class into unions, active politically, engaged in the class struggle; but it remains non-socialist, if not anti-socialist. Socialism, on the other hand, exists now merely as a group of small sects and even if united will be a tiny movement compared to the authentic class organizations of labor. Yet, socialism must be based upon the workingclass.

From these two main considerations, everything in our resolution is derived. (The substitute resolution actually ignores both foundation stones of any policy and where it takes begrudging notice of incidental aspects, it derives no conclusions from them.)

The unique situation: Compared to Europe, the socialist movement in the United States has always been small. There socialism was the labor movement. Here, even in its best days, socialism constituted only a section of the labor movement and a minority within it. But, it may be objected, that has always been so: why underscore old facts now?

But it has not always been true to the same degree. Before the first war, the socialist movement could rally a million votes; enroll a hundred thousand members; win the support of an impressive section of the AFL; enjoy the support of well-known intellectuals. The unions numbered less than two million. After the war, socialism went into a decline; but so did the labor movement as a whole; unions organized only a small minority of the class. During the mid-thirties, when socialism and unionism began their rise together, it was possible to postulate the rapid emergence of socialism as a mass movement. In the mid-forties, it was possible for our own movement to hold out the perspective of growing into an authentic workers' party as socialism surged forward in the capitalist nations of Europe.

Whatever doubts or misinterpretations could have persisted then, the overwhelming fact is so obvious now that no one can avoid it. The labor movement in the United States is at the

peak of power; it has organized the predominant majority of the industrial workingclass; it enjoys the loyalty and support of the workingclass; it (and it alone) is the organized class movement of the American workers. There is no other; there is no other important organized section of the workingclass; there is no rival to it.

Meanwhile, the socialist movement has been shattered; thousands were corrupted or disoriented by Stalinism; thousands drifted to left-liberalism; the remaining hundreds were reduced to a sectarian existence without real following or influence. Argue at will over the causes of the debacle; yet, the fact remains stark and clear. We have now a small socialist movement engaged in propaganda side by side with an organized class engaged in class struggle. Never has there been so weak a socialist movement side by side with so powerful a labor movement. Please keep that in mind.

The new situation: Now, it is possible to make a new start. Our resolution has urgency only in the context of the new situation where we are engaged in discussions with other radicals. We must put forward a policy not merely to guide the ISL -- our attitude toward the labor movement in past years has been exemplary and no turn is required for us -- but for all socialist tendencies. In other words, we are discussing not the private problem of the ISL but the common problems of all socialists.

But more! We now have an unprecedented opportunity to overcome the prejudices of other socialists against our views; I refer here not to actual differences which have distinguished us from them and which will doubtless persist for some time but to prejudices, that is, to those criticisms of our tendency which have no basis in reality. We all know the unmerited reputation of third-camp socialists like ourselves. We engage in debate with our critics on assorted questions: war, Russian Revolution, labor party, Stalinism; at the end, we have silenced but not convinced them. They say to themselves: yes, these left-wingers are sharks when it comes to political debate; but in real life they are nothing but sectarians; if you follow them, you end up perfectly "correct" and hopelessly isolated. By addressing ourselves now to the tasks of the renewed movement of tomorrow we do double duty; we begin the political preparation of that tomorrow and we demonstrate that our politics can face up to the issues of our day.

It is with these two considerations in mind, the unique situation and the new situation for socialists, that we turn to the two sections of our current discussion: 1) Socialists in unions, and 2) Socialist political action policy.

I. SOCIALISTS AND THE UNIONS

So many side-issues have been tossed into the pot and so many questions brushed upon (not to mention a few wild charges, ill-thought out) that we must delimit this part of the discussion to bring it into focus. Our point of view might be summarized

and clarified under two headings: 1) the "loyal opposition," and 2) industrialization.

1. The "loyal opposition": Naturally we all agree that socialists must be loyal to the labor movement; they want to build unions; to defend them against all enemies; oppose manipulating them for secret aims or for anti-labor ends -- we reject in full that basically disloyal attitude most characteristic of Stalinism. That is not at issue. What remains is this: are we a loyal opposition? Do socialists come forward inside the labor movement as an opposition; if not immediately, do they work toward the speediest possible formation of a distinctive oppositional movement in which they participate as a guiding or initiating force? What is involved is an attempt to define, in the broadest sense, the role of socialists in the labor movement, not forever, but at this stage.

Let me state my own answer as baldly as possible: No! Socialists can no more come forward as the leaders of a special opposition in the American union movement than they can come forward as an authentic political party in the country. To attempt either now would be self-deceiving and disorienting; and would make our movement a curio. That is, if we understand what we are saying and actually mean it. Here, I must add, I do not think that those who are talking about a loyal opposition fully realize what they are proposing. If not an opposition, does that imply that socialists cannot oppose some key official labor policies or oppose some labor officials locally or nationally? Not at all. We want new policies; we want some officials changed and we intend to agitate and educate, vigorously and persistently among unionists for our point of view.

But there can be no genuine opposition movement unless it proposes to remove the old leadership and offers a reasonable and realistic prospect of replacing it by a new one. Not in words but in fact. Anything less is mere play-acting. Can socialists be such an opposition inside the labor movement today? Could they lead one now or in the foreseeable future? It is almost embarrassing to ask such questions because the answers are so obvious. From a long range, historical standpoint, we hope for a socialist leadership for the union movement, just as we hope for the rise of a socialist labor party. How and when are hidden in the mist of the future. But such a historical perspective can be realized only after innumerable and unpredictable movements within the workingclass and class struggles by it. But what we do today -- the manner in which we present ourselves inside the labor movement -- must be based upon the facts of life today. Here, in the heart of the workingclass movement we know that socialists are not able to constitute the gathering center of a distinctive opposition; but they can serve as a distinctive ideological educating force.

Socialists, I would say, form not an opposition but a tendency in the labor movement, a tendency which strives for militant, democratic, independent workingclass policies. They participate in the union movement at all levels, from top to bottom; in the ranks, in the leadership where they have won the confidence of the membership; they cooperate like good union

members with all others, in the ranks and in the leadership at various levels, in grappling with all the problems of the unions and of their membership: speed-up, racketeering, Jin-Crow, political action, strikes, contract demands all in the spirit of democracy, militancy and independence with the aim of building the union and educating its membership, illustrating through their own activities and participation in union life that socialism is not something opposed to or in contradiction with unionism but only the most logical and consistent expression of its ideals.

But, it is charged, if you are not an opposition, doesn't that mean that you can't criticize official leaders; that even in a local situation socialists cannot oppose their local officials? Not at all. It is not a question of whether to criticize but how to criticize. It is not a matter of whether to run for office against other union officials but upon what basis. Take the question of tone:

In what tone shall we criticize the official leadership? How do you decide that? If it were merely a matter of personal taste, a gentle soul might speak in dulcet phrases while the rugged fighter used his characteristic rough language. But tone should be related to political aims. If you want to eliminate the confidence of unionists in their leaders, if you hope to convince them to throw out one set of officials and install another, then you want language which tells that clearly to your audience. You will be tempted, then, to dip into an old lexicon where you can pick out labor fakirs, lieutenants of capitalism, rotten agents of imperialism, sell-out, betrayal -- the list only begins here. One trouble with all this is that it gets you exactly nowhere; nobody listens, after the first few minutes, except that handful of devoted supporters whom you convinced a long time ago. (Reader please note: I am not suggesting that our ISL critics are guilty of the indiscretions and stupidities cited here and later. You will discover them not within the League but outside, among other radical groups or individuals.)

The most union-conscious, democratic-minded unionists have a deep confidence in the most progressive wing of the labor leadership. I refer not to the racketeers, not to the out-and-out bureaucrats but to the CIO industrial union type of leadership best represented by Reuther. They compare him and those like him with all possible rivals and substitutes and they see no reason to change their minds. The language of oppositionism doesn't undermine their confidence in their leaders, it only succeeds in destroying the confidence of intelligent militant unionists in the radical-sounding socialist who is a victim of his own rhetoric. This sad fate is best exemplified by the Socialist Workers Party whose attacks on the official labor leaders of all kinds increases in intensity and fervor as its influence in the real labor movement declines. And, as its following in the unions reaches the vanishing point, the stridency of its denunciations and vituperations reaches ultra-sonic frequencies. Fortunately for it, no one in the workingclass movement listens.

To repeat the question: "Do you mean that socialists must never oppose any of the present labor leaders, even on a local scale?" Of course not. But socialists are scattered through the union movement in separated locals and internationals each with its unique problems. A socialist, presumably, is not a primitive activist; he tries to show his union brothers how local union activity is connected with the position of the workers as a class and the union as a class movement. Suppose a socialist in one local organizes or joins a caucus organized in opposition to the incumbent local officialdom. Here, he is truly participating in an opposition which proposes to vote out one group of leaders and put in their rivals. This is not a literary opposition but a real one. But our socialist must have some idea of where his local opposition movement fits in with the big trends in the labor movement. The union activist who looks beyond local problems -- and he is the most advanced union militant -- soon wants to know what his local group has in common with other militants and radicals in other unions. What kind of movement is he associated with and what is its significance to the workingclass? Do you tell him that his local group must consider itself part of an oppositional movement throughout the labor movement, being formed or to be formed, which aims at overturning all the old leaderships and installing some other? If so, it is an illusion; it will cut the local militants away from their brothers in other locals and in other unions; when this becomes obvious, as it must, the thinking union militant will lose confidence in the socialist colleague who has offered an empty generality when he needs a guide to concrete labor politics.

The case is basically the same on an incomparably bigger scale. Suppose socialists were fighting together with other militants in the Teamsters Union for a new, decent leadership. Yes, they would certainly try to set up an opposition. But an opposition to whom and for what? If socialists want to educate now toward an opposition movement in general, throughout the labor movement, against labor leaders in general, they presumably they want to convince the best oppositionist Teamsters that their fight against Beck and Hoffa is only one front of an inner union fight against the labor leaders as a whole: the Becks, the Hoffas and the Reuthers and the Meanys. If, heaven forbid, our putative loyal opposition socialist succeeded in making this clear, however diplomatically and intelligently, to his fellow teamsters, that would be his finish. They want an opposition which, so to speak, can replace a Hoffa with a Reuther.

Such would be the case in the Steel Workers Union if socialists joined a rank and file oppositional movement to democratize the union by getting rid of MacDonald. They would have to decide whether they were in opposition to MacDonald and Reuther -- to put it in formula fashion -- or with Reuther against MacDonald. The difference here in mood, tone and tactic would be decisive.

The historical perspective of socialists is to win the labor movement to the ideas of socialism and to strive for socialist leadership for it. But it is impossible to do more than speculate on how these aims will finally be achieved.

Meanwhile, this historical perspective cannot be a substitute for a guide to action in the real mass movements within the unions as they arise in practice.

The big line of division within the labor movement right now is between the alliance of corruptionists and ultra-conservatives on the one hand and the Reuther-Meany bloc on the other. That difference has already erupted into a bitter slug fest; the probability is that the fight will become more intense with each side appealing to support from the ranks.

That is the main division today. But there are other differences and tendencies among sections of the labor movement, without the same internecine bitterness. One line of demarcation corresponds roughly to the old division between AFL and CIO but is not identical with it. On the one hand, are those who look upon the labor movement as a genuine social movement with vast political and social objectives; on the other, are those who strive only for "collective bargaining" in the narrowest and most conservative sense. Since these are only tendencies and not organized groups, it is not always easy to label every union and every leader. But we know that Reuther is the foremost representative of the more radical type; the building trades, of the most conservative type; we know that MacDonal leans toward the more conservative.

Every grouping and every tendency within the labor movement has to locate itself within these already existing tendencies. The Stalinists and former Stalinists have disintegrated among them. The task of socialists within the labor movement, in this period, is not to hold out the illusory perspective of constituting a new rank and file oppositional movement but to point the way within the real struggles as they arise in the union to push the most progressive wing forward against the most conservative.

"you say that we cannot aim at constituting a distinctive loyal opposition in the labor movement. But wasn't that our aim in the early years of our movement, especially in the forties?" Yes, it was. Since then, however, two things have changed -- I state them only in concentrated fashion: 1) Our conception of the role of the ISL and of the probable course of development of the socialist movement in the US has changed. 2) Then, there was a genuine trend among militants against the official leadership, particularly against the no-strike pledge. Our attitude corresponded at that time to real movements among militants in the unions. Now, this trend has disappeared; the exact date when the change took place can be pinpointed: the post-war strike wave which was led by the regular union officialdom.

Strikes and Contracts

An oppositional movement must tend to adopt an oppositional attitude toward contracts and strike settlements. If the leadership urges a settlement for a 10% increase, the opposition tends to denounce it and demand no less than 15%; if the leadership urges acceptance of 15%, the opposition insists that

anything less than 20¢ is a sell-out; if the leadership proposes 20¢, the opposition argues that it should have fought for a guaranteed wage; if the officials propose to fight for a guaranteed wage, the opposition insists that only a shorter week will do; if the shorter week is proposed, there is still speed-up. In other words, the opposition always tends to deprecate the actual achievements of the union, to castigate the leadership for not fighting harder and for giving up on the decisive questions; all with the aim of discrediting or "exposing" the present officials. I realize that the picture drawn here is an exaggeration; but the basic features are valid. Exaggeration and all, by the way, you have only to pick up an issue of the Militant at random to find a living caricature of this point of view.

Now, all this sounds very revolutionary, radical and uncompromising. But a moment's thought will show that its effect is quite different from its intention. If a genuine opposition actually existed and not a mere literary facsimile of one, it might make sense. In that case, the radical would in effect be telling his fellow workers: "In every strike, on every issue, at every contract negotiating table, your leaders fail you. There is a way out. Adopt our policies; replace your present leaders with the slate we propose; then the union will really become an organization which fights for your basic needs."

But how different where no alternative leadership can be offered. If the union militant knows in his bones that there is no other leadership available, he can only conclude that his radical friend is nothing but a professional, captious critic; or, if he is deeply impressed by the arguments of his radical friend, his conclusions have to be gloomy indeed. For, if this workingclass which has founded a union movement of 18 million is incapable, through its existing institutions, of making any real progress; if it is constantly being betrayed; if it is eternally losing strikes or being outwitted at the contract table; if it only fights for trivia and wins less --- then what hope is there, really. Can we expect such a class, outwitted and maneuvered at every turn, to be capable of rising to new heights? In other words, the effect is not to eliminate the trust of unionists in their leaders but to undermine the confidence of the organized workingclass in its own capacities.

Every union contract deals with a hundred questions and every strike raises a dozen varied demands. There can be no specifically socialist point of view on all these union questions. In this respect, a socialist criticizes the present labor officials, not necessarily because they settle for only one instead of two, but essentially for this: they do not understand, appreciate, and promulgate the full potentialities of the workingclass. And, as a consequence, where the labor movement does make gains, they are ready to give credit to other classes; they praise the bourgeoisie for "social engineering;" they attribute successes to "friends of labor"; they point to labor's steps forward as a fruit of mutual collaboration of labor and management.

It is a primitive conception to believe that socialists

disparage the real gains of unions in order to weaken the officialdom. It is the duty of socialists to underscore and to hail and to proclaim every success of the workers in the class struggle -- under their present leaders and with their present unions, for there are no others. To make clear that it was their own organized power that made these gains possible; and that this power will win more, even a new society. Not to flatter the leaders but to raise the self-confidence and self-respect of the workingclass without which any socialist movement is impossible.

"Industrialization"

There can be no socialist movement worth taking seriously unless it is closely tied to the workingclass and that through a membership active in the unions. Every socialist, worker or not, should be familiar with the problems of the union movement; and there is no substitute for direct, personal participation. We should encourage young people to get jobs in industry, at least for a time. There, they can enter as members into the big class movement. Or, if they finally leave for a professional career, as so many have, they will have learned on their own backs what factory life is like and perhaps avoid that supercilious attitude toward the workingclass so characteristic of many professionals.

When the Workers Party was founded in 1940, its membership was almost exclusively drawn from student youth and middle class elements. We campaigned for a program of industrialization, aiming as a key organizational-political task to convince our friends to take jobs in industry where they could join the labor movement. It was the success of this program that helped sustain us as a tendency. No doubt it is with this remembrance that some comrades contemplate a revival of a similar campaign today. But how much has happened since then!

Then, we had to found a new movement. We sought to establish it in the workingclass as against all other socialist tendencies with the perspective of emerging, after a heroic effort, in some reasonable time, as a genuine socialist party, in fact as the only authentic socialist party of the American workers. We foresaw too the rise of a new leadership for the organized workingclass directly influenced by our movement if not stemming from it. If this perspective now seems grandiose and exaggerated as it proved to be in fact, it flowed from a highly optimistic estimate of world events. We fully anticipated that new, vigorous left-socialist movements would arise all over the world, and in Russia too; that they would be successful in getting rid of capitalism and of Stalinism in Europe; and that as part of this world resurgence, socialism would rise to become a powerful force in American life. It was with this in mind, with this sense of urgency, that we called upon all our supporters to make an effort to become part of the labor movement.

It didn't happen that way. Instead the world socialist movement was shattered by the war; Stalinism rose as the apparent wave of the future. A long and slow rebuilding of socialist

forces throughout the world loomed during which the working-class could assess the experiences of a generation. In the United States, it is clear to us now, we must begin to reconstruct the socialist movement not in opposition to other democratic socialist currents and tendencies but together with them. We do not propose that the ISL become the socialist movement; we do not propose that the socialist movement become the ISL. We want to participate in building a broad socialist movement encompassing many tendencies, the only kind that can serve to rear a new generation of socialists and reorient the old. We should continue to encourage our own supporters to go into the shops and join in the labor movement. But with a clear understanding of the new times and new tasks. At our last convention, the following was proposed in a substitute resolution: "This convention therefore calls to the attention of the league the basic task: to make its life a part of the labor movement by integrating its forces in that labor movement."

The basic task? This would seem to be a belated revival of what is past, an attempt to renew the old campaign of "industrialization". But consider how different the times!

I am for people going into shops and helping to build unions. How many can do it? How many will do it? It can serve as a guide for a dozen individuals but not as a guide for socialist policy. A few individual ISLers may perhaps get into the labor movement; but there are thousands of socialists and socialist-minded workers already in the trade unions. The workingclass has been "colonized" by the thousands, after decades of socialist (and pseudo-socialist) propoganda and activity; individual socialists are scattered all over the labor movement, a few here, a few there in virtually every union. We need a policy which enables the organized socialist movement to reach them. To put it bluntly, the key now is not to get a few more ISLers into factories but to get those socialistic workers who are already in the factories into the movement. For that, we must help build a broad socialist movement. Not the least of the problem here is political action.

II. POLITICAL ACTION

No socialist group, whatever its politics, has been able to arrive at a satisfactory and effective political action policy. I emphasize: satisfactory and effective. All kinds of answers are proposed by all types of socialists. Right or wrong, however, none has been particularly effective in persuading workers how to act from the standpoint of the socialist movement. This is true of all: those like ourselves who are for an independent political policy and those who urge support to the "lesser evil" among the bourgeois candidates.

It is simple for a left-wing socialist to arrive at a policy in principle. But except in rare cases, where independent labor candidates are in the field, he seldom has anything convincing to advise unionists to do at election time when their political interest is at a high pitch.

It is also quite simple for others to advise workers to vote for liberal bourgeois candidates. Superficially, it is effective -- the socialist tells the unionist to vote for a liberal Democrat and the unionist follows that advice. The trouble is that it leads not toward independent politics but away. It teaches not aggressive and self-confident political action -- which is essential for the rise of socialism -- but reliance upon bourgeois liberals. It is impossible to arouse socialist consciousness by urging workers to support bourgeois candidates. The right-winger has been trapped by the search for immediate practical results into undermining his own role as a socialist educator.

Thus, when election time rolls around, after the candidates have been nominated and endorsed, as millions prepare to vote, it has been exceptionally difficult for socialists to argue effectively for independent politics and at the same time offer any alternative in the elections that seems to serve a practical purpose to thousands of union militants.

Let this be clear. I am not suggesting any quick solution for there is none. It is a deep-rooted problem and it would be misleading to look for any simple formula.

Fundamentally, the difficulty lies in this: socialism can develop, grow strong in morale and spirit, educate toward a Labor Party and create socialist sympathies among workers only by advocating and following an independent political line. Toward this end, it has to oppose the policy of supporting the Democratic and Republican parties and oppose bourgeois candidates in general. But -- and here is the rub -- socialism must look toward the workingclass which is now highly organized and actively supports bourgeois candidates through their own class institutions; the labor unions. There is the problem. There is no magic way of dodging it. At least we must face up to it.

Socialists, who constitute a relatively small educational or propagandist movement, must continue to press for a change in the political policy of the organized workingclass. But how? We suggest that it is easier to talk to unionists about our policy if we avoid a head-on clash with them during elections. In substance, we want to guard against presenting the small socialist movement as a rival to the big workers movement at election time.

A revived and united socialist movement, consequently, should refrain from running candidates for office where it brings us into sharp clash with the labor movement. We are not searching for a dogma; there are bound to be complexities, special problems and borderline cases. For example, where the labor movement endorses no one, socialists have full freedom of action; where the unions support some obviously reactionary or corrupt old-line politician and workers are repelled by their unions' choice, socialists could consider entering their own candidate. (Questions like these were treated in the Meir-Walsh amendment to our resolution which we accepted.)

But, to make our position clear on the main issue I'd like

to state it as baldly as possible: Where the labor movement in fact is rallying its members to vote for a bourgeois candidate -- in virtually every important case he will be presented as a liberal -- socialists should not run their own candidates. Examples of the problem in its most acute form have been the union campaigns for Lehman, Stevenson, Mennen Williams, Humphrey, and Douglas.

You may not agree; you may have misgivings; you may be undecided; you may be hotly opposed to our view. Let us hope, however, that its intent and motivation are clear.

We do not propose to support bourgeois candidates endorsed by the unions; we do not propose "not to oppose" them (as it has been put by some of our critics). We continue to criticize and to oppose bourgeois candidates and to criticize and oppose the political policy of the labor movement which endorses them. That is not at issue. We are arguing about running socialist candidates and under what conditions.

No one in the ISL can argue that some basic principle decrees that a socialist movement must try to run candidates everywhere and under all conditions. The ISL has never run a candidate for public office: as far as I remember, no one ever proposed that it do so. Our critics, themselves, the authors of the convention substitute resolution, try to be flexible. They write:

"In general, the ISL since its inception has refrained from running election campaigns. It is even possible that at least at first even a new and broader socialist movement would have to do likewise, pending acquirement of more strength. The consideration in these cases is the degree to which the movement in any given case estimates the tactical advantages to be gained or lost from such a campaign, politically or organizationally; whether the campaign efforts are organizationally practicable and bid fair to be politically fruitful; and considerations of this order. But where these considerations are taken care of socialists should and must seek the advantages and the gains that become possible with the running of a socialist campaign and socialist candidates counterposed to the old parties. This is one of the most important party-building means available to strengthen the new, broader socialist movement toward which we look."

They try to be flexible -- but without success. What are they actually saying in this roundabout manner? Only that socialists should run candidates wherever they decide to run candidates. And how do we make up our minds? They haven't much to advise except that election campaigns are a good thing and when we are stronger we should have more of them. They insist upon mulling over all kinds of organizational matters. But notice what they will not even begin to consider. We read in the text of the first substitute resolution, "We reject... the conception that a socialist party should refrain from opposing capitalist candidates because the latter are supported by a

majority of the organized workingclass." What is under discussion is not whether we "should refrain from opposing capitalist candidates" but this: under what conditions should we oppose capitalist candidates by running socialist candidates against them? Or can it be contended that we oppose capitalist candidates only by running candidates? If so, where has the ISL been all these years? The declaration quoted above is a refusal, almost on principle, to be swayed by what "the organized working-class is actually doing. Yet, that constitutes the basic problem and they will not face up to it.

At best, socialists could participate in election campaigns at this stage only for pure propaganda purposes addressed to a few thousand workers. That is politics for us. But the union, not just the officials but tens of thousands of militants, secondary leaders and millions of unionists, look upon election campaigns as an opportunity not merely to convince a few people of some very important ideas but to influence the course of national policy, to determine their own conditions of life, to affect the rights and power of their organizations. They do it badly, wrongly, ineffectually but they are trying -- their way. While they are engaged in their political struggle are socialists, in order to make their propoganda, to come forward as a movement which campaigns in competition with them?

The union supports bourgeois liberals for office; we explain in our press, at our meetings, in our conversations, at our union halls, in an educational fashion, that it is wrong, that it gets nowhere, that we need a new party. That is enough right now! Why must we mix up this task of political education with what would necessarily be a campaign among unionists not to heed the call of their union but to follow us instead. Such is the inevitable effect of running a socialist candidate in opposition to the candidate endorsed by the unions. The union -- class organization of the workers -- campaigns as widely as it can to call on workers: "Vote for Mr. Democrat; he is your union's choice." To run its own candidate against him, the socialist movement -- small propogandist group -- must campaign as widely as possible in this sense: "Do not vote for Mr. Democrat; support our socialist instead." But if you consider you will see that we inevitably are forced to present our views in the most difficult, most disadvantageous manner possible. We run full tilt against the pro-union loyalties of militants when it is not necessary. For what advantage? On the basis of what principle?

Who will support the union's call? Thousands, millions.

Who will heed the socialist call? Only dozens.

And the hundreds of militants, the union-conscious workers who want more independent and better candidates? Even they, with all their misgivings and criticisms, will follow the union because it is their union and that is the only practical thing they can see to do. The union appeals to them as their fighting class organization; the socialists, only as an ideological grouping.

A protest: "You want to please labor bureaucrats; but socialists should address themselves to workers." It's not much of an argument but it is worth pausing over it to clear the air. Our problem arises not because a thin layer of union officials is politically misleading masses of workers who are straining to break through to political independence. That would be a different situation at a different period at another time. But the big majority of the organized workingclass, its militants, its progressives -- all -- support bourgeois candidates and the Democratic party out of radical, class considerations. We don't think that the Democratic Party is a labor party; we don't think that the liberals are workingclass candidates. Neither do the trade unionists -- not exactly. But they do support Democrats from their own workingclass standpoint. They want to elect liberals not because they are eager to compromise with capitalists but because they want to advance the interests of the labor movement against the capitalists.

The political activity of the whole labor movement, with rare exceptions, centers around the Democratic Party and the Democratic liberals -- not just the officials but secondary leaders, militants, radicals and even many socialists. This is not news in the ISL; it has pervaded our league discussions for years: 1) five years ago during the debates on the so-called "Abner policy", and 2) at our last convention where we faced the problem of relations among the various socialist currents on political action. (I refer to the resolution on unity adopted unanimously not to the disputed sections on Socialists in the Labor Movement.)

The "Abner Policy"

After years of intermittent debate, the ISL (at the convention before last) finally adopted the Abner policy, so-called because it was first applied in Chicago where Willoughby Abner, a leading UAW militant, entered the Democratic primaries with the backing of his local PAC club. What was decided was this: the ISL urged the labor movement to enter its own labor candidates in the Democratic primaries against those of the party machine. If the union ran its own candidates under these conditions in the primaries, the ISL would support them and if the union man won the Democratic nomination, the ISL would support him in the general elections even though he ran as the Democratic candidate. It was a policy hedged in by qualifications and restrictions but essentially that was it.

The discussion on political action policy today is somewhat different. Then, it was proposed that we support labor men on the Democratic ticket under certain conditions. Now, it is not proposed that we support bourgeois liberals endorsed by labor on the Democratic ticket under any conditions. But in both cases we had to take into account the sentiments, not of officials, but of the union conscious ranks, even the most radical of them.

Now, let us put it this way. Suppose an Abner ran on the Democratic ticket. You may agree or disagree with the "Abner

policy" which implies ISL support for him. But should we favor running a socialist candidate against him? In order to brush all trivia aside, let us assume, what is not unlikely, that we had a nice-sized socialist branch in the area, one which could pass out plenty of handbills at plant gates, hold meetings and perhaps even get on TV. If we ran our candidate and the unions had theirs -- on the Democratic line -- we would have to campaign in effect "Don't vote for Mr. Abner but vote for our socialist." Or is there some other way of conducting an election campaign for the socialist? How would we decide whether or not to run our candidate in those circumstances? Any socialist movement which had a serious orientation toward the working-class would have to take into account the sentiments of the union conscious workers, the actions of their class organizations, how they looked upon their campaign for their candidate on the Democratic line. Our answer: no socialist candidate! What is yours? And how do you make up your mind?

This only begins to show how difficult the problem of labor's role in the Democratic party can become. The same Ford local 600, which adopts resolutions for a Labor Party one day, endorses a slate of Democrats the next. In the face of this, it is futile to get caught up in primitive arguments about pleasing bureaucrats.

At any rate, in our hypothetical case we have to take the actions of the official labor movement into account. If not that, what? But this is precisely what we are debarred from doing under the terms of the minority substitute resolution. "Far from considering that such a campaign (one in which we run candidates) is a bad thing because it counterposes socialists to the official labor bureaucracy, or to bourgeois candidates supported by the official labor movement, we would urge it as a good thing...." (The reader will have to make his own adjustment to the primitive way of putting it: note the implication that our concern is with the "bureaucracy".)

What changes if the union supports not an Abner but a Democratic liberal like Lehman? You may reply: "but Abner is really a labor man; Lehman is not. We may consider supporting an Abner but not a Lehman." These are some of the differences; but there are also important points of similarity. Union militants will campaign for a Lehman not with quite the same pitch of enthusiasm as for Abner but at a high level of class feeling; they will be just as serious in their attempts to elect him; the stakes to them will appear just as high; and they will try to campaign just as widely. We must take all these sentiments and actions into account in both cases: in one case, Abner, we have decided to support the union's candidate. What about the other case, Lehman? We do not propose to support him. We do caution against running a socialist candidate against him under those conditions. Not because we want to support a Lehman. Not because we want "not to oppose" him. But because it would be folly for the small socialist movement to pit itself head on against a workers movement which is acting out of class feelings, even if misdirected.

Political Action Inside the Socialist Movement

The same problem that vexes socialists in the labor movement arises inside the socialist movement itself. As a matter of fact, a majority of socialists today would favor the support of liberal Democrats in one case or another under certain conditions. We do not. Our convention resolution presumes that the differences here cannot be "settled" by the adoption of a clear party line in any reunified movement and its imposition upon the minority by party discipline. (See ISL pamphlet on Unity, p. 14.) Even if a reunited movement decided against supporting bourgeois candidates, as we hope it will, it might properly leave its members free as individuals to support bourgeois candidates endorsed by the labor movement. It is hard to see how a united movement could be built on any other basis at this time. But I am afraid that our convention delegates who agreed so readily to this concept -- unanimously in fact -- were not really aware of the problem in all its depth.

If we insisted that every socialist submit to discipline on political action policy, we would be demanding that he choose between the organized socialist movement, which let us say opposes bourgeois candidates, and the organized labor movement which supports them. And that, at a time when many socialists think that the official union line is right. We cannot put such a demand without terrible injury to the prospects of a revived movement.

Then think for a moment. If we have to find a way to soften up the antagonisms on this question; of putting the issue less sharply so that various trends can live together inside the socialist movement ... if this is what we look for in the relations among socialists themselves ... isn't it obvious that we have to seek the same objective in the relations between the socialist movement as a whole and militants inside the labor movement? If we make no sharp demands upon socialists themselves we can make no such demands upon labor militants. We cannot demand at election time that they choose between the candidates endorsed by their unions and the socialist candidates. It means thrusting them away from the movement, not bringing them to it.

A case study

Let us try to imagine how a revived movement might handle itself during elections in Michigan. Early in its development, it would undoubtedly have branches in several cities and enough strength, from an organizational standpoint, to try to run its own candidates.

Election day draws near, the branch and its members campaign in their unions for an independent labor slate but the labor movement, the UAW in particular, goes ahead to endorse Mennen Williams for governor, preparing to run its customary left-laborite election campaign, rallying its PAC committees, distributing handbills at plant gates, arousing the workers as widely as possible.

What shall the socialist branch do? It is proposed to run a socialist candidate for governor. Deliberating on the question as branch members are union activists -- stewards, committeemen, local officers, local presidents -- all active union men, most of them leaders of workers in their plants, and with different ideas on political action policy. They would all like to see a Labor Party as soon as possible. Meanwhile, however, some think that it is advisable to support liberals in the Democratic party; others are less enthusiastic for liberals, but go along only because the labor movement is for them; others are for supporting only independent candidates; other want to run socialist candidates. Here, then, is the full gamut of socialist opinion.

If a candidate for governor, who shall it be? Shall we pick the prominent president of a large UAW local? Remember, he is known as a socialist; there is no special problem of "caution"; correct policy must determine the decision. This is no artificially concocted "stumper"; precisely such a man headed the Socialist Party ticket in Detroit in the mid-40's. Obviously, such a man would make a fine standard bearer for auto workers. But there is a difficulty. The militants who look to him and have ranged themselves beside him in the union will be campaigning for Mennen Williams at the behest of their union. Now, in competition with them he will have to go before the same unionists and say: don't vote for the candidate our union has endorsed; don't go out and work for him, Mennen Williams, as our union asks; work for me and my party instead." Isn't it clear that for only trivial possible advantages he would be compelled to drive a wedge between himself and his friends.

Let us, then, run someone who is unknown, or a party functionary, or a white-collar man. In that case, wouldn't it be obvious that the branch cannot choose its most effective representative because he, a union leader, cannot apply its policy in the labor movement without undermining his position as a union activist.

But even by choosing some other candidate, nothing has been solved. Part of the branch will favor supporting union-endorsed Williams. Remember now that we have decided against forcing all members to go along by disciplinary motions. Are those who are for Williams to be free to support him while the branch campaigns for its own socialist candidate? Or, are they asked to remain neutral -- or silent? Whatever the formula, the branch is instantly and sharply divided between those who are campaigning for the socialist candidate and those who feel impelled to go along with their union. In any case, the branch makes it impossible for a section of its unionist membership to support it wholeheartedly; it becomes difficult for some union militants to combine a full and loyal membership in the organized socialist movement with a full and loyal membership in their union.

There are times when such antagonistic and divisive factors cannot be overcome and the movement must go ahead nonetheless. But why now? Why must we thrust ourselves into the most difficult

position? Why insist upon meeting the prejudices of loyal unionists head-on; why insist upon a policy that tends to push sections of the socialist movement apart just when it must reunify? Running socialist candidates is not an end in itself; it is an instrument of socialist propaganda; it should serve as a means of reaching the workingclass. Where it stands in the way, it would be folly to persist.

A last word of caution. Nothing here is intended as a fixed guide to socialist policy or as a statement of eternal verities. We are addressing ourselves to the tasks of our day as we can see them now. Now, socialism is a small propaganda movement. It addresses itself to a workingclass which is organized and politically active as a class. Under these conditions it is vital to avoid every inclination toward sectarianism which means utter stagnation.

We are now in the first stage of socialist unity. We must bring together all democratic socialist currents. We must recruit widely among the socialistic militants in and around the labor movement who have shunned affiliation with any of the scattered small groups. We must try to inspire, educate, and create a socialist, democratic, militant tendency within the labor movement not in theory but in reality. That's not a small order. Once it is truly under way, it will be time to take another look; see where the organized socialist movement stands; and reconsider the problem of political action in the light of our accomplishments. That is for tomorrow.

SOCIALIST PARTICIPATION IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT

By A. Winters

The discussion on Socialists in the labor movement has only begun to bring out into the open two fundamentally opposing points of view. What have appeared so long to be questions of poor organization, sloppiness and emphases, are in reality, political estimates and opinions. The decline of socialists in the labor movement has too long been almost exclusively blamed on the objective conditions. Yet, if objective conditions are solely the reason for the decline of socialists in the labor movement, with subjective factors having no role, then all socialist tendencies should have disappeared. The fact that despite everything, socialism remains, as an organized force, simply again emphasizes the role of the subjective factor, the political idea, and the movement that organizes around it.

The Hall-Shachtman PC Majority resolution, which could not pass at the last convention, and was referred back for more discussion, did not openly say what was on its mind. Only after some prodding by its opponents, did Hall and Shachtman at the end of the convention, come out with their real position.

As Hall himself put it, it runs like this. The socialist movement of the future, will not be oppositionist in the labor movement. Its main emphasis would be for an example, supporting Reuther as against the racketeers. He is, however, against the organization of the rank and file against all of its enemies, which might include at times a Reuther, or for that matter, a McDonald, or any other labor bureaucrat. Socialists should not be in the position of opposing what the majority of organized labor led by its officialdom wants, especially on the electoral plane. This was best shown by the Shachtman-Hall resolution, which advocated that Socialists should not run candidates against a Stevenson, because a Stevenson had the support of the official labor movement.

And Shachtman, at the very end, dealing with the Newark opposition to his position, made it amply clear that he was against any attempt on a serious basis to build socialist cadres in the labor movement. He labeled the Newark position as a left deviation. As he put it, "if anybody thinks that from New York to Frisco we are going to proletarianize..." he would oppose it.

So then some things are getting clearer. The PC majority doesn't give leadership to our Socialist cadres in the labor movement, not solely because Hall and Shachtman are too busy, as they only recently claimed, but because giving leadership to our socialist cadres in the labor movement, is almost always a form of oppositionism. Anybody who has been in the labor movement for more than 2 days understands that socialists are followed and win support from workers who are discontented with the bosses and the labor officialdom. When they are contented they don't need socialists to lead them. The official labor leadership can and does offer them far more and this accounts for the fact that so many socialists have been sucked up into the labor bureaucracy, when these socialists have joined the ranks of the contented.

When you are against building socialist groups to lead discontented workers against the bosses and the do nothing union leadership, wiry then it logically follows, that you don't do too much about proletarianizing the socialist movement. As a matter of fact, you look at proletarianization today as a hopeless task. Proletarianization a la Hall & Shachtman must lead to demoralization and has done precisely that.

The Hall Shachtman position is full of advice on how not to antagonize the labor officialdom. It lays down the absolutely utopian idea that socialism can grow in a sort of alliance with these people. The only thing that can grow from such an alliance is the bureaucracy, a little to be sure, and at the expense of socialism losing its cadres to the officialdom.

Workers looking for someone to help them out of the morass of speedups, insecurity, etc. will not turn to pseudo socialists who tell them not to become oppositionists.

Oppositionism, is the heart of socialist participation in the labor movement. The socialist movement that abandons this conception of oppositionism, abandons any hope of winning the American working class to socialism.

The socialist movement which does not attempt to build socialist cadres in the labor movement, traditionally referred to as proletarianization, dooms itself in advance to a sterile, petty bourgeois sectarian existence.

No one can long oppose this basic conception and remain a socialist. This whole question takes on added importance precisely because of the fact that unity with the S.P., if consummated, offers socialists a chance to meet new, fresh currents of the working class. If socialists do not give oppositional leadership, then somebody else will. The C.P. supplied this leadership in 1935 in the C.I.O. upsurge. Non-Stalinist socialists, bogged down by a petty bourgeois way of life, completely missed the boat.

We dare not repeat such a tragic error. The Hall-Shachtman conception of non oppositionism and non-proletarianization, as a method for socialist participation in the labor movement, must be thoroughly defeated, and replaced by the conception of socialist opposition, and socialist proletarianization.

NATIONAL COMMUNISM IN TRANSITION - A DISCUSSION
ON RIGHT TRENDS IN GOMULKA'S POLAND

by Paul Germain

"What is the difference between Yugoslavia and Poland? In Yugoslavia you can criticize the Soviet Union but not the government; in Poland, you can criticize the government but not the Soviet Union."

--- A current Polish political "joke".

It is our contention that the social system now prevailing in Poland, under Gomulka, is a unique form of National Communism. The Polish nation is going through an unprecedented period of transition at the present time - on the economic, political, social, and cultural fronts. Poland is not a totalitarian state, it is not a National Communist state of the Titoist variety, and the United Workers' Party (UWP) is not a totalitarian party.

These premises offer, in our opinion, the fundamental clues necessary for a coherent picture and understanding of Polish events since last October. They are premises, moreover, that are strongly buttressed by the following facts:

1. Gomulka, and his associates in the party and government apparatus - as Milovan Djilas has cogently pointed out - were raised to positions of power by the active, forceful will and revolutionary participation of the vast majority of workers, students, and intellectuals, both Party and non-Party in their affiliations.
2. The very social foundations of the Gomulkaist elements in the government, and the UWP, are not based upon the existence of a privileged bureaucratic class set apart from the Polish masses; on the contrary, both in the party and regime the Gomulkaists are dependent upon the willingly - or grudgingly - supportive shoulders of these revolutionary elements, most particularly those of the working class.
3. Because of this phenomenon, Gomulka and Co. cannot act - and survive politically - such a way as to utilize the methods, tactics, and alignments of a bureaucratic collectivist regime. Any attempt by Gomulka to crush these forces and render them uncritically submissive in the old style - to re-totalitarianize or re-Stalinize - would ultimately be politically and/or physically suicidal.

Before long, such a policy would render Gomulka and his assistants politically "extraneous." It would consistently whittle away at their only defense against a counter-attack by the Natolinist-Stalinist

Taking this into account, we contend that any discernable trend by Gomulka toward political and ideological re-alignment with the Natolinists must be short-lived, for the time being granting - for discussion's sake - the fact that such is the trend or tendency in the first place. We shall deal with this simplistic analysis of Gomulka's recent tactics in another section of this discussion article.

Gomulka and his economist brain-trusters, we have said in the past, have spoken innumerable times of the imperative need for non-

coercion, voluntarism, and genuine cooperative forms in town and country, i.e., democratic participation from below - no matter how modified from the ultimate socialist goal - as a basic economic necessity. Such participation by workers and peasants is considered a necessary commitment to industrial and agricultural solvency, and the maintenance of national sovereignty and independence. These leading Gomulkaists have offered living proof of the serious error inherent in analytical attempts to artificially compartmentalize economic and political phenomena, most particularly in a nation with a highly stratified economy.

Since Gomulka's rise to power last October, the question of critical support at this time to his regime in the present period has been unavoidably posed - most particularly to democratic socialists and members of the anti-Stalinist and anti-Titoist Left. The question has been discussed, analyzed, and answered in the affirmative by numerous representatives of these political tendencies.

Prominent in their ranks are the Polish socialists-in-exile Adam Ciolkosz (whose views have been set forth in the New Leader and Socialist Call, and have been echoed by many other contributors to these publications), Lucjan Blit (New Leader and Commentary), Czeslaw Miloxa (author of "The Captive Mind"), K.A. Jelenki (Partisan Review, Encounter), and, of course, our own A. Rudzienski. Comrade Rudzienski, you will recall, was strangely singled out and castigated as a "slanderer" of the Polish "revolutionary democratic opposition" by Hal Draper in the pages of Labor Action.

(We have been informed, by a member of L.'s editorial board and the I.S.L. Political Committee, that Draper's articles on Poland, though individually by-lined, have been published in conjunction with the fullest discussion in the P.C. Our informant assured us that such would naturally be the case with an important topic like Poland.)

(Draper, we were told, would not be allowed to use Labor Action as his personal house organ; his articles should be considered as representative of the collective opinion of the P.C.)

Be that as it may, we take our place with these Polish socialist comrades and reiterate their contention that critical support for Gomulka at the present time is the only alternative to the "Kadarization" of that valiant nation.

Lucjan Blit has stated their case most forcefully (New Leader, March 25):

"The Poles know that only the fear of a real war...forced the top Soviet leaders to rush back to Moscow... to accept the heretic Gomulka as the Polish leader, and to acquiesce in the expulsion of Marshal Rokossovsky..."

"But the Hungarian tragedy has also taught the Poles two painful lessons. One is concerned with the limits which the Soviet leaders have evidently set to freedom movements in the satellite countries. They will crush with great brutality any movement... which aims to break the military links with Russia and which could develop (in a neutralist but essentially pro-Western fashion akin to that of Austria.) The replacing of Communists as the ruling group by a combination of democratic parties is tantamount, in Soviet eyes, to such a development. Moscow is determined to keep its empire intact, by whatever means."

"The second lesson stems from the West's attitude to the Hungarian revolution. The Poles know that they would be fighting alone. Sympathy is no substitute for physical power."

Nationalistic Forces and Oppositional Currents

Over the last six months our press has offered a most simplistic and distorted picture of Gomulka's policies, and the social and political composition of the opposition to those policies.

1. Labor Action has indiscriminately portrayed as manifestations of a revolutionary-democratic internal opposition all demands for the removal - from Party and government ranks - of those "hangover" elements of the pre-Poznan and pre-October period. Also included in this so-called revolutionary-democratic grouping, without any exceptions publicly expressed, were those who volubly cast aspersions on the sincerity and reliability of Gomulka and his leading adherents, because of their Party and governmental positions in past years.

2. We have been assured that Gomulka and Co. (since November-December, 1956) have been attempting to re-Stalinize Poland, and turn the clock back on democratization and liberalization of Polish life-tendencies which, it was previously maintained, were only non-existent myths in the first place. (See Young Socialist Review, March 4, 1957 issue.)

Gomulka, so the line now goes, doesn't want any genuine democratization, prudently achieved or otherwise; he should be condemned for his strictures against "spontaneity in mass action - this in the land of Rosa Luxemburg." (sic!)

This latter point was followed by caustic remarks about Rudzinski's retention of erroneous Luxemburgist concepts! More on this further on.

3. In line with the above, LA has continuously attacked Gomulka for his attempt to "reconcile the people to continued Russian occupation." Our press specifically stated, On December 24, that we should support and encourage the "spontaneous mass action" against Russian troops, embassies consulates, and other Soviet personnel, as manifested in the riots in Bydgoszcz, Stettin, Wroclaw, etc. These demonstrations were also depicted as the laudable work of a revolutionary-democratic opposition to Gomulka's policy of moderation.

4. This opposition, and the general population at large, we were informed, had a long and violent history of national and cultural subjugation from their "Neighbor in the East." This explains why the Polish people are steeped in a virulent anti-Russian nationalism, nationalism that is a bed-rock foundation supporting the activities and aspirations of the opposition. Therefore, continued LA, this can be considered a progressive nationalism, and to the political advantage of these democratic forces.

L.A.'s conclusion: we should support this opposition in its aim to sweep Gomulka and Co. aside, and oust Russian troops immediately. Gomulka is just trying to scare the revolutionists with the threat of a Russian massacre.

And finally - almost in the same breath - a veiled and guarded disclaimed of any attempt to legislate revolutionary tactics and strategy to the Polish masses from afar!

Unaccustomed as we are to such political double-talk from our press, or to double standards of political morality, we feel inclined to regard such a shameless disclaimer of intellectual and political responsibility - despite all previous emphases - in much the same negative light as our attitude toward Radio Free Europe's attempt to absolve itself from charges of "overzealously" raising false hopes of Western aid for the Hungarian revolutionaries.

Before going any further in our somewhat tortuous re-tracing of LA's view of post-October Polish events, we believe that a pause is necessary at this point. Let's take a long, hard look at the actualities.

In so doing, the uncomfortable discrepancy between the unique world comprehended by the members of LA's editorial board, and the real world, should be only too apparent to those of our comrades who are not emotionally preoccupied with an attempt to cram their view of current events into the secure mold of a pre-conceived theoretical line.

As Comrade Shachtman liked to quote on occasion: "The Sabbath was made for Man, not Man for the Sabbath."

Grist to WHOSE Political Mill?

"For myself, (wrote Comrade Rudzinski) the first driving force of Gomulka's coup was not so much Polish nationalism as the spontaneous social and economic fight of the Polish working class... While the Spontaneity of the Polish upsurge played the most important role, one should not underestimate the political experience, discipline, and organizational capacity of the working class which threw off the control of the party and the state and imposed its class instincts and its policy on the Politburo... It is true that the people... were dissatisfied with Gomulka's call to order and discipline, but they obeyed him, because they understood that any imprudence could signify the defeat of the revolution and massacre by Russian troops... The Russians could calmly massacre any nationalist uprising in Poland but they feared to challenge the entire Polish proletariat... backed by the entire Polish nation...

"If the spontaneous movement of the working class is the real victor and saviour of the Polish nation, then the spontaneous Left of the party organization is the architect of this victory... For the first time in history the Russians have been defeated in occupied Poland... thanks to the discipline and political capacity of the Polish workers, who know how to control Polish nationalism..." (emphasis added).

Despite our reservations over some of his Luxemburgist conceptions and terminology - which he simultaneously contradicts - we believe extensive quotations from Rudzinski is merited at this time. He has proven himself to be a most accurate and necessary aid in any attempt at a serious critical evaluation of the alleged "progressive political advantage" to be derived, by the so-called democratic opposition, in the utilization and manifestation of vehement nationalist and anti-Russian traits.

In the time that has elapsed since the publication of his discussion piece, there has been a deluge of documented information and commentary that has substantiated Rudzinski's thesis to the hilt:

1. We have been afforded abundant proof of the "old reactionary" nature of most of the ultra-nationalists praised by Labor Action. There has come, from numerous incontrovertible sources, documentation proving that the rioting activities of these elements have been permeated with the vilest anti-Semitic tirades and violence, and chauvinist oppression and denigration of many national minority groups.

2. The Natolinist-Stalinists have, by their overt and covert demagogic activities, made it crystal clear that this sort of ultra-nationalist opposition to Gomulka was politically advantageous to them.

Demagogic cries of suspicion about the genuine sincerity of Gomulka and his aids have reeked with anti-Semitic overtones, and have been part and parcel of nationalist strategy in the U.W.P., the government apparatus, and the country at large.

3. Documentation on this is abundantly offered by Lucjan Blit in the March issue of Commentary. Blit utilizes, as his major source, the verbatim report and official minutes of the Eighth Plenary Meeting of the U W P, as published in the Party's theoretical organ Lowe Droge last November. Also used, in addition to his own first-hand observations, are the numerous reports in Po Prostu.

Blit, we should add, was formerly a member of the Jewish Socialist Bund in Poland, and is presently an editor of the British Laborite publication Socialist Commentary.

For further elaboration, documentation and commentary supportive to our point of view on this matter, comrades are referred to Ciolkosz's New Leader articles; the back issues of News From Behind the Iron Curtain, and its successor, East Europe, from October 1956 to the present. The latter publications give extensive quotations from Po Prostu, Trybuna Ludu (chief party organ), Radio Warsaw, and numerous other primary sources. Also most helpful are the documented reports to the N.Y. Times - March 19 to 21 inclusive - and K.A. Jelensky's excellent essay on "The Dilemma of the Polish Intellectuals" in the Spring 1957 number of Partisan Review. In addition, see the reprint of the Soviet Survey article by L. Szabedz in the Spring 1957 Dissent together with Irving Howe's initiation of a discussion on "the problems of 'National Communism'."

4. For material supporting Labor Action's contention that Polish anti-Semitism and reactionary-chauvinism has emanated solely from the ranks of the Natolinists, comrades are referred to the editors of Labor Action, though not too hopefully.

Despite the many justifiable complaints of the Polish people against the Gomulka regime, they have behaved, apart from a few riots, with commendable restraint. The bona fide democratic elements had enough political sense to legislate unto themselves a realistic "oppositional" course within the necessary confines of critical support to Gomulka in the present period.

We are in agreement with the wise choice made by these true Polish revolutionary democrats. We deny that those who clamored and rioted for immediate and definitive action against the Russians were representative of the best interests of the Polish masses. We also contend that last January's national election - to be discussed in the following pages - offered sufficient evidence that the Polish people, however grudgingly, realized the absolute necessity of following the "Gomulka way," at least for the time being.

THE NATIONAL ELECTIONS

On the Polish elections, our press really went off the deep end. We were offered extensive quotations from the American and French bourgeois press - giving eye-witness accounts of coercion at the polls - to prove the point that this was a typically Stalinist, fraudulent electoral farce.

At the time, we confronted LA with the contrary evidence of a representative portion of those 100 foreign journalists on the scene, and political analysts and commentators from abroad. These people were from all points of the political spectrum, including the anti-Stalinist, anti-Titoist Left, and the previously mentioned Polish socialists-in-exile.

The general consensus, practically to a man, was that cases of coercion - premeditated or otherwise - were isolated exceptions in an election that allowed a genuine, though admittedly limited range of choice within a plebiscitary format.

(Most perplexing and disturbing to us was the fact that LA's quotations from N.Y. herald-Tribune correspondent Barret McGurn - taken out of context by LA and presented to support its view of the election -- were, when placed in the entire context of McGurn's report, in line with the description generally agreed upon by the rest of the international press.)

After a hassel with LA and the ISL's Political Committee - in which our views on the election, among other points, were at first refused publication unless they were cut to 500 words - we were, after approximately six weeks passage, finally granted half a page in the paper. Our somewhat abbreviated discussion article, on this particular point, was "answered" in the following manner:

"First, we were chided for relying on the bourgeois press in any attempt to learn revolutionary politics.

Secondly, we were instructed that the election could be understood as a grudging concession from Gomulka forced by revolutionary pressure from below!

In other words - as far as we can make out - the revolutionary-democratic opposition was successful in pressuring Gomulka to conduct a rigged, typically Stalinist, totalitarian farce of an election!

To date, there has been no further elucidation from LA on the political and intellectual intricacies of this line of analysis.

Be that as it may, we offer next an on-the-spot report on the election that is quite representative of all the other sources we have mentioned.

From David Floyd in the London Daily Telegraph (Jan 21, 1957):

"Voters were free to register their votes in secrecy, and to eliminate the name of any candidates. There was no evidence inside or outside the polling stations of ... pressure or intimidation... About 100 foreign journalists were issued with permits enabling them to enter freely polling booths of their own choice in any part of the country (Stettin, Krakow, Lublin, etc.). The general opinion was that the elections were conducted in conditions of freedom and secrecy.

"I observed the voting in a dozen polling centers in different parts of Warsaw. In no case did I see any pressure being exerted on voters not to make use of the secrecy of the voting cabins.

"In a part of the Praga borough of Warsaw, where the majority of the electors were students, most of them went inside the cabin. In other working and middle-class boroughs people were more disposed to avoid the cabin and vote openly for the whole (National Unity Front) list.

"Reports from the provinces indicated that the polling followed much the same pattern in the main cities and ... rural areas."

The London Times (Jan 22) offers a detailed account of how the electorate did not always accept the individual candidates of the National Unity Front in the order of preference presented to it on the official Front list, but made full use of the important, though limited element of choice available for the first time.

POST-ELECTION EVENTS

The parliamentary result of the elections has been ably summed up by Hugh Seton-Watson:

"... The new Sejm (parliament), though composed of persons approved by the government, is certainly quite different from its predecessor and includes persons of very varied views. It is quite likely that the People's (peasant) and Democratic parties, hitherto helpless satellites of the Communists, will be able to exert some real influence. (Recent dispatches to the N.Y. Times have described an unprecedented independence and outspokenness in the activities and pronouncements of these organizations.)

A number of independent Catholic intellectuals have been elected on the government list. Above all, (the UW P) ... is changing into something new. If he is to resist the ... Stalinists within the party, Gomulka cannot do without the support of the former Social Democrats. Nor can he ignore the pressure from the workers, who are now demanding genuine industrial self-government..."

(The question of the workers' councils, trade unions, and the general economic situation in Poland are dealt with in a forthcoming article.)

It appeared, during the latter part of February, that Labor Action more or less agreed with this description of the new Polish Parliament. A few, guarded, hesitant words were published that indicated abandonment of previous allegations about the totalitarian nature of the election. Quite optimistic remarks were made about the new opportunities afforded the revolutionary-democratic elements in the Sejm, a parliamentary body - it was ever so carefully hinted that finally presented a decent forum for genuine revolutionary criticism and debate.

Moreover, a few hypothetical lines were slipped in about an ultimate showdown in government and party ranks -- split between Natolinists and Gomulka men -- in which a division would be formed between "Nagys and Kadars." It is our presumption that LA was referring to the realistic possibility that Gomulka and his colleagues would, in such a situation, play the role of the "Nagys."

Given LA's previous fulminations about Gomulka, this tempting little bit appeared, for an instant, to herald a long overdue "modification" of former analyses.

However, all this was completely forgotten when, on March 18, we were told of a "turning point" in the Polish Revolution -- Gomulka was beginning his long-awaited crackdown against the democratic opposition. Re-Stalinization was now the order of the day, with Gomulka and the Natolinists united against the revolutionary workers, students, and intellectuals.

This was accompanied by voluminous quotations from press clippings collected and stored away for the past few months, reporting portentous incidents that supposedly foreshadowed Gomulka's new course.

The implication was fairly obvious: LA knew it would happen all along, unlike the international assortment of journalistic dupes, Deutscherites, and just plain mush-heads.

On this so-called turning point - one that we had previously been assured, by LA, had taken place over half a year ago -- we would like to dwell for a while.

GOMULKA AND THE GOMULKISTS

Events to date appear to justify our dubious attitude toward any analysis predicated on the assumption that Gomulka is dead set in following a politically suicidal course of action. The latest information confirms our contention that, at the very least, one should take pause before the definitive adoption of a line alleging that Gomulka and his colleagues in the party and government are prepared to kick the social foundations of their positions and power out from under themselves, so as to enable the Natolinists to throw many of them back into the prisons and disgrace from whence they came.

The superficiality of Labor Action's argumentation was exposed by the reports emanating from Poland immediately on the heels of those first announcing Gomulka's restrictions on the press, the imposition of a stricter press censorship, strictures against "liberal" Communists and "revisionism", the retention in the UWP and government quarters of such notorious Natolinists as Zenon Nowak, etc.

One report is cause enough to warrant a most discriminating examination of Labor Action's approach. Namely, the fact that the bulk of the top leadership of the opposition to many aspects of Gomulka's latest course is composed of the nation's most prominent parliamentarians, top party and government officers and functionaries, the leading ministers, economists, journalists and intellectuals. In other words, the leading Gomulkaists both in the party and the regime.

In addition, we have been witness to the following events:

1. A forceful reassertion of independent Polish Communist ideology was made in the name of the UWP's Warsaw Executive Committee - the most powerful and influential in the country below the national level. Presenting the executive committee's unanimous report to a plenary session, Witold Jarosinski, newly appointed First Secretary, bitterly denounced the neo-Stalinist elements within the party. He described as "dogmatic and vulgar" the idea that "all the evils existing in Poland and all the conflicts within the Communist camp are the result of plotting by the world bourgeoisie .../Partisans of this idea/only facilitate the work of the counter-revolution."

2. Latest reports - at the time of writing - indicate a most serious division of opinion over policy, strategy and tactics among leading party and government Gomulkaists

From the N.Y. Times Warsaw correspondent:

"In Nowe Droge ... a Politburo member asserted that 'reactionary circles' within Poland were using democratization to 'prepare conditions' for the overthrow of Communism here. This was a major justification by Jerzy Morawski for the crackdown on intellectuals.

"...M. Morawski dismissed the fight against neo-Stalinists ... as already won. He bombarded the left-wing revisionists ... as unwitting helpers of unidentified 'reactionary circles.'

"The tone and content of Jarosinski's report could hardly have been more different. He left little doubt that he was aiming at the 'conservatives' /Natolinist-Stalinists/ when he said that a strong hand would be used if necessary to frustrate attempts to undermine the party from within ..."

Jarosinski also described Stalinism as the greatest danger to the unity of the UWP and warned against the breaking of links between the working class and state authority. He warned that any strengthening of "conservative" tendencies would lead to the party's deep and dangerous isolation from the aspirations of the nation.

This report, then, is a most noteworthy critique of many of Gomulka's recent steps. It indicates that there is as yet no definitive line of direction agreed to by the leading Gomulkaists, no precise, clearly hewed path toward uncontrolled democratization, or a full-blown trend toward re-Stalinization. Or also the activities of Jarosinski and other leading Gomulkaists become completely incomprehensible.

At a recent ISL meeting in New York, Hal Draper offered as an "example" of Gomulka's re-Stalinization efforts, the replacement of the former anti-Stalinist First Secretary of the Warsaw UWP (Staszewski) by an un-named newer man, whom Draper identified, without further elaboration, as a "more moderate anti-Stalinist." "This gentleman, of course, is none other than Jarosinski! (In the May 6 L.A. we are told that this replacement is part of the decisive turn by the Gomulka leadership toward Stalinist re-alignment.)

(From this we can only conclude that Draper considers Jarosinski's "moderate anti-Stalinism" to be, in effect, some sort of disguised pro-Stalinist maneuver on Gomulka's part! For wasn't this man awarded his new and powerful position in the midst of Gomulka's alleged drive toward re-totalitarianization of the party and regime, and re-alignment with the Natolinists? Do not Jarosinski and his Warsaw party executive constitute an integral part of the highest echelons of the party officialdom? Are not these leading apparatus men--many of them hold-overs from the Bierut and Ochab-Cyrankiewicz days--opposed to the democratic demands of the people?)

For the maintenance of at least a semblance of a grip on reality, we suggest the following, more compelling picture of these events:

1. Recent moves by Gomulka--to severely restrict the activities of the liberal "revisionists" and compromise with the Natolinists--were aimed to gain a breathing spell by taming dangerous Natolinist opposition on all fronts. The opposition was given a most appreciable boost by the recent ominous step-up in Russian and satellite propaganda against Poland and "National Communism" in general. (Kudzienski reports that the Polish emigre press told of Russian troop movements in Silesia at the same time that Gomulka made his pro-Kadar pronouncements.)

2. Gomulka most likely wanted to enable his regime to maintain its relative freedom of action on the most pressing domestic economic problems at hand--steps toward whose solution Gomulka and others believe to be fundamental, and a necessary prerequisite before any lasting progress can be realistically envisaged on other fronts.

3. This approach is proving most difficult. Without support from the "revisionists" and "liberal Communists", let alone the politically un-affiliated masses, Gomulka would be prey to the Stalinist wolves. He cannot afford to alienate his democratic allies for any appreciable length of time.

4. Precisely because Gomulka has found it most difficult to attempt to separate and artificially compartmentalize his approach to economic and political matters of state--because of the "inextricable fusion of politics and economics in a rigid structure," in a National Communist state--we find these contradictions of policy.

The reality in Poland today is neither a definitive nor an apparent "turning point" toward re-Stalinization by Gomulka. Rather, for many months now we have been witness to a historically unprecedented period of "frozen dual power." It is a political state of affairs that gives every appearance of maintaining itself for some time to come.

The backing for Gomulka's program, outside of the comparative handful of Party intellectuals, comes from the masses of workers and peasants. These elements make up the latent revolutionary power behind Gomulka's program and demands for an independent road toward the goal of genuine cooperative forms of factory and farm, democratization in political and cultural life, etc.

Within the upper ranks of the UWP, only a minority really supports Gomulka's program. Here, the influential and powerful Natolinists, and their allies, do more than hold their own. Their power, out of all proportion to their numbers, is obviously based on Russian troops.

Gomulka has apparently based his present tactics on the assumption that, given present political, economic, and military conditions, which are further exacerbated by Poland's impossible geographical situation, his position in the UWP can only be maintained, let alone strengthened, by compromise with the Natolinists at the present time. Though this is a far cry from surrender, or re-alignment with them, it nevertheless invites the dangerous risk, for Gomulka, of alienation of his mass support. As we have already indicated, his co-workers at the top are already divided.

Hence, Gomulka is caught between the pressures brought to bear by the latent and simmering revolutionary masses, and the Red-Army's Natolinist quislings. To prevent an explosion, both of these groups must be assuaged, according to Gomulka's present calculations.

Most probably, the success or failure of these maneuverings - from the point of view of the maintenance and furtherance of Polish independence of action and democratization in all fields - will depend upon the extent to which Gomulka et. al. will be able to tackle the critical economic situation. This in turn should depend in large part upon the extent to which Poland's increasing overtures to the West and the U.S., for trade and loans, will be met. Moderate success in this area should enable at least a larger extent of Polish economic independence from Russia and the East European satellites.

Gomulka's return to power last October, and his subsequent program, raises the question of the precise nature of the conceptions that caused Gomulka and his co-thinkers to fall from Stalinist grace in the first place. Upon examination, we find that the intellectual and political seeds of the Polish movement for independence, sovereignty, and democratization were planted and were already sprouting among Gomulka's entourage years before the advent of Titoism in Yugoslavia.

Conflicts between Gomulka's group, and native foreign Stalinists, can be traced to the days when Gomulka was a minor trade union official. We see in these conflicts the harbingers of some of the basic precepts of the October program.

(For an account of these portentous earlier controversies, see M. K. Dziewanowski's article in the January-February, 1957 number of Problems of Communism, and Ciolkoss's piece in the November, 1956 Socialist Call.)

These earlier, formative debates enabled Gomulka to formulate a fairly clear long-range programmatic concept of where he wanted to go,, an achievement that was of utmost importance to him, and his colleagues, when they were raised to power on a revolutionary wave last October.

The importance, in a revolutionary situation, of a Party leadership with a coherent program, was most tragically illustrated by the Hungarian events, where "spontaneous mass action" prevailed.

POSTSCRIPT:

The April 1957 issue of East Europe reports the publication of a number of new or previously suppressed periodicals, including "...a Catholic publication suppressed in 1953.... a newspaper representing the United Peasant's Party... a Posnan paper said to have a policy similar to that of... Pe Prostu."

Finally, a few words about one Leck Gozdzik, U W P Party Secretary at the Zeran Motor Works, the spearhead of the workers' council movement in Poland.

It was the Zeran workers' militia, under young Gozdzik's leadership, that was largely instrumental in saving Warsaw and Poland from a Hungarian-style massacre by the Russians. During the height of the "October days", with Warsaw rimmed by Russian troops and armaments, Gozdzik led truckloads of unarmed workers from Zeran in a successful attempt - by pushing, shoving, persuading, begging, and explaining - to dissuade the already simmering masses in the streets from anti-Russian riots and mob action.

Together with the rise of Gomulka, this manifestation of the "Gomulka way", says Melchior Wankowics, can be considered a second victory for the Polish people - "a victory over self."

For a stirring eye-witness account of these and related events, and Gozdzik's role in them, see Wankowics's New Leader article (April 22).

Incidentally, Lucjan Blit rebuts the fact that Gozdzik was also a target of those so-called "revolutionary-democratic oppositionists" who cast aspersions on the sincerity of many leading Gomulka adherents.

Gozdzik's attitudes on the workers' council movement, and the relationship between central planning and decentralized plant and workers' autonomy are revealed in an interview he granted to Leo Huberman (Monthly Review for January 1957). His concepts are akin to those of Oscar Lange, Jedrychowsky, et. al., which are discussed at length in a forthcoming discussion article on the problems of Polish democratization in the economic and industrial field..

(March-April, 1957)

PPS (May 6):

Our economic and political analysis of the "frozen" state of the October revolution, and Gomulka's centrist position and tactics, were predominantly re-iterated by Rudzienski in the May 6 issue of Labor Action.

To this, Rudzienski added the necessary re-minder that, if Gomułka does not ultimately alter his policy of compromise with the Stalinists (a policy whose length and degree is largely determined by the extent of aid from the West), then there will be an open and definitive fight between the Polish masses and the Gomułka regime.

If such a future situation should occur, Rudzienski cogently remarks, the party Left would side with the masses, as would all true democratic socialists and libertarians.

How Labor Action, from this, divines the fact that Rudzienski; the Polish masses, and the organized party Left, are for the overthrow of the Gomułka regime now, have abandoned their policy of necessary critical support for Gomułka now, is completely uncomprehensible to us.