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WILL THE LABOR PARTY HELP THE WORKERS ?

Common sense tells the workers that they should not support something unless they obtain some benefits from it. And in all too many cases they are penny-wise and pound foolish, because they give up their class interest for some small opportunist concession that is washed out before they gain by it. This is not the case with the Labor Party. Even common sense does not reveal any immediate gains for the individual by his support of the Labor Party.

It is not the ordinary worker who agitates for the Labor Party. The driving force for the Labor Party comes from half-baked radicals, the reformists and centrists, the opportunists who take the path of least resistance. Those who want to be "radical" but at the same time want to be "safe" and sane.

From a class point of view the Labor Party will not be of benefit to the working class. Rather, the Labor Party in the United States will be a hinderance and a power to hold the worker in check from his own class solutions. It will be a stumbling bloc against further class advancements on the elementary economic field as well as on the broad political field. Let us analyse the question of the Labor Party and see what it really is and what it really does.

WILL THE LABOR PARTY GROW ?

If capitalism is in decay and the Labor Party will not grow we should not even waste time discussing it. But that is not the case. Capitalism is in decay, but it does not follow that the Labor Party will not grow. It does follow that the Labor Party will not have a long period of historical development as it had in Europe. In the past, with the development of capitalism, the growth of the Labor Party had a material base in the form of small concessions to the working class as reforms which an expanding mode of production could give. But this economic period is over. And with it the real economic concessions to the class are likewise over. But in spite of this there will be a growth of the Labor Party. Its foundation will not be firmly entrenched in the economic structure, but even so it will be just as deadly in its effects against the working class.

The Labor Party will have a twilight growth, a mushroom growth of short duration. Its foundation will rest in the pressure of the working class against the system of exploitation. To the degree that the class struggles develop, to the degree that the

old forms of control of the exploited break down, to that degree NEW forms of control of the class will have to be built. And it is much better to allow the exploited to build their own prisons, just as the Fascists allow the condemned to dig their own graves. Let them (and help them) build Labor Parties which will canalize the class struggle into safe parliamentary channels away from the point of production.

We do not contradict ourselves when we add that to the degree that the class struggle develops to that degree REFORMS will be granted through the Labor Party in some cases, and as long as possible through the BOURGEOIS reformist channels. These concessions are not based upon an expanding mode of production. These kind of concessions are based upon the fear of the proletarian revolution and the policy of the exploiters; that it is cheaper to give a few crumbs than to give up the right of private property -- give a few crumbs until we have lulled the workers to sleep -- to enable the reactionary, and fascist wing of the exploiters to finish the job.

WHAT WILL THE LABOR PARTY LOOK LIKE ?

In the past we have had the outstanding model and example, of a stage of development, represented by the Farmer Labor Party of Minnesota. Today, after the depression of the 30's we have the next stage of development, the American Labor Party of New York. The former represented the agrarian reforms with a labor alliance; while the latter represents a trade union domination under the control of liberal and radical capitalist elements with the farmer as the ally. Between these two different forms will be a variety of other forms throughout the 48 states. In some states where the election laws are difficult to hurdle, the Labor Party will have to use the state machinery of other parties, such as the Socialists, the Independents, the Townsend structure, etc.

In all states there will be both individual and collective membership. But on a national scale the collective membership of the trade unions will dominate its organizational forms.

EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN FORMS

The new recruits to Trotskyism, who have not taken time to check on the historical development of the Labor Parties in Europe and America tell us that in America the Labor Party will take on progressive forms and will not evolve through the mess that developed in Europe. And that the Labor Party in America will be different from the developments in Europe.

Yes, the Labor Party in the United States will be different, as compared to the Labor Parties of Europe, both in form and organizational structure, but in CLASS CONTENT THERE WILL BE NO DIFFERENCE.

In Europe the political parties of the working class took on two different roads of development, such as the Labor Party of England with its collective trade union base, and the socialist party as an educational parallel structure; while in Germany and other places it developed on the basis of individual membership and branches, such as the Social-Democratic Party. But it must be clearly understood that although different in form and structure, the trade unions of Germany were the real foundation and support of the political party. And even more important, it was not the political leaders of the party, that controlled the trade unions -- it was the trade union leaders who controlled the political party. In this latter respect, when we speak of control, the present twilight development in United States will also reveal the trade union bureaucrats controlling the Labor Party.

WHAT KIND OF A PARTY IS THE LABOR PARTY ?

When we speak of the trade union leaders as the group that controls the political party we are using the word control to mean the control of the structure, the apparatus and the conventions. This does not equal the term -domination or whose class interest it serves. The organizational structure is more important than the form, but organizational structure and form do not exhaust the problem until we settle the more important question of content. Form, organizational structure and content are parts of one problem. And these aspects of the problem cannot mechanically be separated. But organizational structure in itself does not settle the question of content. For example, we agree that the industrial structure is superior to the craft structure in trade unions, but this organizational structure, although very important, does not settle or exhaust the problem of content. The craft A.F. of L. unions are class collaborationist and so are the C.I.O. Industrial unions. Both are social-patriotic in the present imperialist war.

This same problem of content confronts us in the question of the Labor Party, no matter what its FORM OR ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE may be. Even though the collective membership of trade union affiliation gives the centrists a bigger and free pond to swim in.

The Trade Union leaders who often dominate the Labor Party do not play an independent role in the Labor Party and a subordinated

role in the Unions. In the Unions the Labor Leaders (who are not marxists or class struggle element) are AGENTS OF THE CAPITALISTS WITHIN THE WORKERS' RANKS. This is true even if they are not conscious agents. And even the class struggle element, who do not find their way to Marxism, sooner or later in critical situations capitulate to the pressure of the exploiters power.

Therefore, as agents of the exploiters, not only in the trade unions but also in the Labor Party, this political party, even though DOMINATED by trade union leaders is CONTROLLED AND SERVES THE INTERESTS OF A SECTION OF THE LIBERAL EXPLOITERS. In other words the Liberal section of the Capitalists DOMINATES its policy, even though they may not directly control the apparatus.

Let us follow these class relations one more step. Every student of imperialism knows that in the present stage of capitalism it is the financier, the big imperialist, who has the real control of the decisive section of the state apparatus. In this situation if liberals are elected instead of conservatives, the same imperialists dominate, even though the personell is changed. THE SAME IS TRUE WITH THE LABOR PARTY, no matter what its form or structure.

It is well known to students of politics that the lower sections of the capitalists, and middle class elements, with large masses of trade unionists and agrarian masses pulled along, no matter if the party be a Labor Party, or a Huey Long reactionary Party, be it Labor or Fascist -- that this leadership once it takes over state power does not serve its middle class interest. Instead its true color is then revealed. This type of a party serves the

INTEREST OF THE DOMINANT IMPERIALISTS OF THE NATION.

So too with the Labor Party.

A Labor Party is only A THIRD PARTY OF CAPITALISM.

A Labor Party can only serve the INTERESTS of the big capitalists of the nation. But we are told that if this is so, why is it that the big capitalists oppose the Labor Party? Why do they even oppose the New Deal and favor the reactionary Republican Party? If you don't understand this simple problem you still have much to learn about politics.

The big capitalists not only prefer the "democratic" method to the Fascists' method because it is cheaper in the long run,

they not only prefer peace to war, but they also prefer a safe and sane conservative party to a liberal party and a liberal party is desired in relation to a labor party. But what the big capitalists prefer and what they are forced to use because of conditions beyond their control are two different things. When the economic difficulties and the heightening class relations get out of bounds they must, in order to MAINTAIN THEIR CONTROL OF THE FACTORIES AND THE STATE POWER, use those forms of state rule and forms of political parties, etc., that reflect the class pressure, more and more to the left - until they wear the workers out and prepare them through reformism for a decisive defeat at the hands of Fascism.

SHALL WE HELP BUILD A LABOR PARTY ?

From our standpoint it is obvious that since the Labor Party is a third capitalist Party we do not take the lead in organizing a Labor Party, nor do we help others organize a Labor Party. Marxists do not organize reformist, centrist or capitalist parties. Marxists organize only the PARTY THAT REPRESENTS THE INTEREST OF THE WORKING CLASS.

There is another question that we must settle. Even if we are opposed to building a Labor Party, shall we work in the Labor Party if it is built? This question is answered to the class interest by pointing out that Marxists build their own party, and carry on opponents work in other reformist and centrist parties of the working class. In the Labor Party we do the same thing. In many cases the union of which you are a member affiliates. You now become a member of the Labor Party whether you like it or not. As a member you carry on fraction work for the class struggle and against the Labor Party. Don't be a tactical blunderbus and abstractly come out against the Labor Party when you are doing fraction work in it. You do not support it, as this would be capitulation; but you oppose it in the CONCRETE, on policy to expose its class collaboration and anti-working class acts. Those that you win over to your position you can give the "whole-hog". Furthermore, other members of the Marxian Party on the outside come around to the Labor Party and give them the "whole works".

STRUGGLE AT THE POINT OF PRODUCTION VS PARLIAMENTARY OPPORTUNISM

The reformists openly support the Labor Party as a good instrument for themselves and for labor. The centrists, such as the Trotskyites, have a different argument. At least those who

came through the school of the Left Opposition, who had the benefit of its left wing that opposed the Labor Party, take a different position. In the Left Opposition the left wing was strong enough to make the national committee oppose the Labor Party but was not strong enough to obtain a Marxian position against the Labor Party at the conventions. The Cannon-Shachtman leadership would adopt resolutions that included opposition to a Labor Party but not Marxian opposition. For example, in the third period of the Stalinist regime the United States section came out against a Labor Party. They came out against a Labor Party because they said the revolution was around the corner and there was no time left for a Labor Party to develop. The Left Wing of the Left Opposition stated that to oppose the Labor Party on this false position automatically left the door open for the Stalinists tomorrow to support a Labor Party when conditions would bring forth a Labor Party. Even then when we opposed the Labor Party we stated that it WOULD have this twilight mass base in American capitalist history.

These Trotskyite centrists secretly tell you, when you push them to the wall, that they know the Labor Party is a third capitalist party and they know that it will "most likely" be led by agents of the exploiters, and they know that it will betray the workers -- but it is a place where the masses are and we must be there to win them over to "revolution". They say it is the most fertile field to do "revolutionary" work. Let us take up this argument for a minute.

In the first place you don't do "revolutionary" work by advocacy the building of a third capitalist party. In the second place you don't win workers to Marxism by tail-ending their backwardness. You win workers to the class struggle and Marxism by leading them into class battles on a correct independent class line. And thirdly, you don't join a party just because it has many workers. In many states in both the progressive Republican wing and the progressive Democratic wing you can find **MASSES OF WORKERS**. Do we conclude that we should join and build the Democratic and Republican party in those areas? You say no. But there is no difference in content between joining a third capitalist party or a first or second capitalist party. Neither does the fact that some sections of the Labor Party are based upon trade union affiliation make any difference in **CONTENT**. Opponents work, yes -- but not the Cannon-Shachtman policy of, **FOR THE LABOR PARTY and FOR THE FARMER-LABOR GOVERNMENT**.

Let us take up an even more important question. Let us deal with the Labor Party Clubs that Cannon wants to build in every

factory. On this premise of Cannon's, the Labor Party Clubs in each factory and the premise of the Revolutionary Workers League, the left wing (SHOP STEWARD GROUP) in each factory, we can see the difference between reformism and Marxism, class collaboration and class struggle.

In a shop, factory, mine or mill the left wing group must be the real center of class action to take the union out of the office and bring it back in the factory. If the Shop Stewards are to function for the class interest they must be controlled by the left wing SHOP STEWARD MOVEMENT rather than the social-patriotic war mongers of the A.F. of L. and the CIO.

Let us take an example of one militant worker who is elected Shop Steward by his department and takes advice from the progressive group (Shop Steward Movement). This progressive has a headache every day and usually for the good he does his thanks is often a kick in the face by some workers who are not class conscious, and he is discriminated against by the company. Every day he has to fight with the strawbosses, the foreman and the management. The workers bring him their troubles. One does not get the rate he is entitled to. Another was promised a raise when he learned the work and he is doing good work but still he doesn't have any raise. A girl does equal work but does not get equal pay. A worker was sent home after punching in because there is no work in his department, and the company does not want to pay him a half days pay for coming to work. A Negro worker is not promoted yet he has seniority rights and is qualified. And a thousand other grievances all the way from a refusal to buy more war bonds to the Stalinist attempt to speed-up the workers. These are the minute details of the class struggle at the point of production. The shop steward must fight them on the job, with the labor agents of the bosses, the union officials, on the union floor, and in the left wing where the workers are taught about the capitalist system.

But the Shop Steward is a little "weak" in character. He puts up a good fight and gets hell indirectly from the business agent. He is discriminated against. Others who sit back and do nothing get all the good posts in the union and in the Plant. The company discriminates against him. His wife kicks because he always has a restaurant or saloon or hall meeting with union members over shop conditions. His spare time is taken up and he sees no "rewards" while others take life easy and live on the "fat of the land".

He has a "weak" character, but he is still firmly convinced that the class struggle is correct. He is honest and doesn't

want to go back on his fellow workers. In fact he can prove that he was even offered a straw-boss job when he was the Shop Steward. The management attempted to buy him off. And he refuses.

Like all human beings he often falls for the path of least resistance if his "revolutionary" Leadership gives him the opening. And that is just what Cannon gives these comrades.

He discovers a magic formula. How to be a "revolutionist" and escape the day to day hard grind of a struggle at the point of production. How to be in good standing with the management and still be a "revolutionist".

He shifts his work from the Shop Steward movement to the Labor Party Club. To be sure, he remains a member of the Shop Steward left wing, and says there is no conflict and he will do work in both fields.

But FACTS prove that step by step, he is TRANSFERING THE STRUGGLE from the point of production to the parliamentary field. In the past he kept after grievances until they were settled or led to a strike, but now he cannalizes them into the Labor Party. "Just wait -- we will elect representatives and change that damn law". "We will fix them." That is his line of reasoning. The intelligent company representatives smile to themselves, are happy to hear this, but usually act "frightened" so the workers will continue to leave them alone at the point of production and fool around in parliamentary actions.

THE LABOR PARTY AS THE UNITED STATES FORM OF THE PEOPLES FRONT.

The Peoples Front reached its highest forms in France and Spain. In these countries it was a bloc of the left capitalists, the radical section, the trade union leaders, and their political parties such as the Stalinists and Socialists and some agrarian forces. In other words, the Stalinists, Socialists and liberal capitalists got together and brought with them all organizations and forces they controlled. The more names as affiliates they could get the broader the bloc seemed to be, the less of a bloc it seemed to be and the more of an "impartial" united front. In both countries we are in a position to witness its full evolution to state power. And in both cases these blocs served the interest of the dominant imperialists. In the case of Spain it was the agency of the "appeasement" nations: England, France and Stalinism.

And now we may ask our Cannon-Shachtman Labor Partyites: What do you think will be the difference in content (not in form and organizational structure) of the Labor Party in the United States that will have the American Labor Party in New York, the Farmer-Labor Party in Minnesota, the Socialist Party in other States, the Liberal Party in another, and so on? Will this United States Labor Party be a bloc of the liberal capitalists, the reformists, the centrists and naturally the layers of the bourgeois-reformist agents in the trade unions who go along with the liberals? Yes it will. And in content it is the same and will play the same hangman's role as the Peoples Front. It will help pave the way for Fascism. Is that the kind of party you want to build?

The Trotskyites give the workers their choice. They offer them either a cheap commodity, the Labor Party, or a "better" party, the "revolutionary" party.

CANNON LETS THE CAT OUT OF THE BAG.

In the Internal Bulletin of the Cannon group, in Volume five, number one, dated March 1943, Cannon says the following: "I can even conceive of the existence of two kinds of labor parties for a certain time -- a labor party with a revolutionary program and a labor party with a reformist program -- which would engage in election contests against each other."

There are two questions involved in this reformist quotation. The theoretical question of a revolutionary labor party and the labor party in a revolutionary situation.

Cannon conceives of a third capitalist party that is revolutionary. I suppose that this third capitalist revolutionary party will lead the third revolution in America? Will this third revolutionary labor party lead the revolution to complete the bourgeois revolution which 1775 and 1864 failed to complete? Or will this revolutionary (third capitalist party) lead the proletarian revolution?

Cannon uses the term "revolutionary program" and then stops. What does he mean by a revolutionary program. He claims he is a Marxist. And when Marxists speak of a revolutionary program they mean a Marxian program. Marxists do not say first we present a "revolutionary program -- and then -- then we present a Marxian program. This would be a form of the Stalinist two-revolution concept.

No there can be no third capitalist party, no Labor Party with a revolutionary PROGRAM.

Now the second question. What about a labor party in the period of revolutionary developments? Most assuredly, when revolutionary developments take place the reformist and centrist parties take on revolutionary phraseology. Not only will the third capitalist party, the Labor Party, talk revolutionary but so will the socialists, stalinists and other opportunists. Most likely the BOURGEOIS reformists will TALK more revolutionary than the SOCIAL reformists. But there is an unbridgeable gulf between revolutionary phraseology and talk and a revolutionary program, that is a SOLUTION OF THE CLASS INTEREST OF THE WORKERS.

Naturally Cannon goes into a party to capture it. He wants to get rich quick, politically. But these bourgeois reformists whipped along by the Stalinist Red Baiting will no doubt throw out the Trotskyites long before they even get to first base. If they have a base in any city or state they will call a convention and organize a Labor Party with a "revolutionary PROGRAM" (??) that will "engage in election contests" with the other labor party.

As for the French turn, Trotsky at least covered up his opportunism with political phrases. Not so with Cannon, he is "honest" and blunt, and to the point. He says the following in the same internal bulletin on page 19: "That is what is contemplated in this proposal (Build the Labor Party,). We are going to try, once again, to build our party through another party. We will be inside of it for a long duration, although not in the same technical and precise way as in the other two maneuvers. This time there will be no fusion and no entry."

In other words, the unification of the Left Opposition and the American Workers Party (fusion) and the liquidation into the Socialist Party (entry) were merely two other maneuvers of a different TECHNICAL nature. Cannon's orientation is not INDEPENDENT CLASS ACTION, not the leadership of the political and organizational independent revolutionary Marxian organization. On the contrary, it is the opposition orientation, first (and still) an anti-Stalinist orientation, and then through different organizational forms an opposition in other parties. In Marxian organizational problems we must have an ANTICAPITALIST, PROCOMMUNIST ORIENTATION. Opposition to this or that reformist party or this or that group of labor agents in our ranks is auxiliary and subordinated to this general orientation.

Our opportunist friends of a centrist tinge have all kinds of arguments as to the reasons necessary to help build a Labor Party. But those who openly admit it is a third capitalist party, and unlike Cannon who claims the labor party can have a revolutionary program, these people must answer the following questions. Since this support of the Labor Party is given, not in the developing stage of capitalism, but in the decay stage; not in a period of long peaceful developments, but in a period of IMPERIALIST WAR and revolutions; what do you say to the question of UNITY with the opportunists?

The program of building a Labor Party, of working in a Labor Party, is political and organizational support to the third capitalist party.

This is what Lenin said about this question in the first imperialist war:

"Unity with the opportunists is an alliance of the workers with "their" national bourgeoisie and a split in the international revolutionary working class, ... The war has proven the inadmissibility of this combination IN THE FUTURE." (my emphasis) To keep united with the opportunists at the present time means practically to subject the working class to "its" bourgeoisie, to make an alliance with it for the oppression of other nations and for the struggle for the privileges of a great nation; at the same time it means splitting the revolutionary proletariat of all countries."

Yes the Labor Party is political and organizational UNITY with the opportunists. It is an alliance with the capitalist class, it is an alliance against the working class. It is splitting the ranks of the working class. Such is the policy of the Labor Party. Such is the policy of Cannon and Shachtman and their two centrist swamps.

WHAT WILL BE THE ROLE OF THE LABOR PARTY AND ITS GOVERNMENT.

The Labor Party can only play a reformist role, as agents of imperialism when the class struggles develop to a higher level and will no longer allow the exploiters' rule in the old forms. The Labor Party Clubs will direct the class struggle away from the point of production to the class collaborationist parliamentary field.

If it reaches the stage of state power, as in Europe, it will play the same role as MacDonald, Scheidemann, Blum, Caballero

played in their respective countries. It will repeat on a larger scale all of the class collaboration deeds that such a party plays leading up to state power.

THE WORKERS INTEREST VS THE LABOR PARTY.

Marxists must not just abstractly oppose the Labor Party. They must show something more effective in its place. True they must expose the Labor Party and its leaders and its program.

Today we counterpose the Shop Steward organization in class struggle at the point of production in every plant vs the Labor Party Clubs. The Revolutionary Workers League directly through its own members, and in the proper distribution of its own literature presents the organization of a revolutionary Marxian Party in the United States vs the Labor Party.

July 1 1943.

THE COMING REVOLUTION IN GERMANY

Imperialist wars and social revolutions are two integral parts of capitalist decay. Imperialist wars breed social revolutions just as economic crises breed imperialist wars. One can in fact simplify the question and state that the exploitation of man by man (instead of man's COLLECTIVE exploitation of nature) inevitably leads to economic crises, wars and revolutions.

The present imperialist war is running true to form. The gigantic class events in India are not belittled by the distance nor the tight censorship. Nor are the Italian events that removed Mussolini the end -- they are but a beginning. Bigwigs who defend American might, try to explain the Italian revolution as a result of the pressure of the United Nations armies. But that is only partly true. Internal decay of Italian capitalism plus the defeats in Ethiopia and other parts of Africa facilitated the class struggle within Italy. In time these internal social upheavals played a deciding role in the victories of the Allied Armies in Sicily. Just as similar conditions in France made possible the North African American campaign and similar events that flowed out of this. Maturing revolutionary developments are the basis of the military strategy of both imperialist camps.

THE EXTENSION OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

The role of the Red Army and the fate of the Soviet Union thus becomes the question of the day, because as a Workers State (warped though it may be) it represents the main pole of antagonism for the imperialists. The extension of the October Revolution was the key question and IS the key question in the present imperialist war. The Soviet Union and its fate therefore holds the key position, militarily, geographically, socially and economically in the present war plans and post war peace plans of all powers.

Next to the Soviet Union however the most important question in Germany.

THE GERMAN REVOLUTION

Any revolution in Europe, including counter-revolutionary restoration of capitalism in Russia, or a political revolution to re-establish Worker's democracy CANNOT bypass Germany. Any revolution in Europe is bound up with social changes in Germany. To understand the coming revolution in Germany is to understand the coming revolutions in Europe, including the present Italian revolution.

Likewise, if workers' councils (Soviets) are able to gain state power in Germany or even a high stage of dual power, this revolution will spread rapidly to other parts of Europe. The Fascist

prison camps throughout Europe, the five million European wage slaves brought into Germany, and the war destruction, has laid the foundation for such a rapid tempo once it gets started. Fascism has negatively tied the economy together, and has "internationalized" the European working class through slave methods. This can be untied in a positive sense only through the socialization of European economy, the establishment of the United Socialist Soviet Republics of Europe.

THE TEMPO OF REVOLUTION

Events are moving so fast that we may forget the gigantic events this war has let loose from the very first day of its destruction. In the last war it took almost three years for the weak link of capitalism to break. In the first couple of years of the war little real signs of unrest could be seen and the impending revolution looked like a dream. But the February revolution in Russia dispelled any such dreams, and let loose a whole series of upheavals. Some people may argue that this war's tempo is slower because we don't yet have such an event as Russia. But such reasoning is false. The dynamics are different because the events are more gigantic. Nevertheless, the tempo is FASTER in this war than in the last war. One cannot compare the maturing of a 21 day chick with the nine month human embryo and claim that one is "slower" than the other. The changes taking place in the nine month embryo are greater and faster than the changes in a 21 day embryo, even though the total time element is longer. That is the real essence of time in its dynamic sense, and not "time" considered static.

So too with this war and "its" revolutions. The war is lasting longer and the period when dual power is being established is taking longer to develop, but the changes which already have taken place and will take place are greater. The war of 1914 was called a "world" war but this one is a WORLD war of greater dimensions. And the social revolutions that are maturing will even surpass in magnitude the imperialist war.

CIVIL WAR AND IMPERIALIST WAR

Let us consider a few of the outstanding class events that have broken the lie of "national unity" and have revealed that the main antagonism remains the class struggle even though the imperialists and their war momentarily dominate the arena.

One month after the German invasion of Poland the workers and soldiers of that nation, deserted by their civil and military leaders established their own defense. Hitler rolled over Poland with ease until he reached Warsaw and here he was stopped dead in his tracks for some time. It was not military might that stopped Hitler; it was the might of the workers in arms, social forces far greater than the armies of the dictators, (Il Duce has learned and others soon will learn this lesson).

We all remember the Red Army invasion of the border countries. This was a new class event in history. Most groups and organizations as well as "learned" commentators broke their necks on this question. The ICC and the RWL can be proud of its analysis. The workers and peasants in these countries, aided by the Red Army, expropriated the landlords and capitalists and set up soviets. The fact that Stalinism immediately warped these developments does not change their basic class character.

We recall, too, the role of the United States Ambassador to France who openly stated that he negotiated the peaceful entry of the German troops into Paris because he feared a social revolution. Yes, unity of bourgeois democracy and Fascism to keep down the proletarian revolution.

No one can write the history of this war without dealing with the militant fights of the rank and file of the British Isles, in spite of their social-patriotic leaders, the Shop Steward movement, strikes, May Day demonstrations, etc.

The intense partisan and imperialist conflict in Yugo-Slavia likewise reveals the class struggle breaking through the surface of the imperialist war. It is not only "nationalism" fighting against Fascism. It is not only Stalinism against the Anglo-American forces. It is basically the class struggle against both camps of imperialists, warped by the role Stalinism plays and the role of pro-allied leaders. This same three cornered STRATEGICAL line-up can be seen in every country of Europe as an expression of the independent class struggle against both imperialist camps.

The Fascist invasion of the Soviet Union and its world shaking events is another mountain of testimony regarding revolutionary war interwoven with the imperialist war.

The continued resistance and independent action of the Chinese Red Army, in spite of Stalinism, against the Chinese nationalist agents of the Anglo-American imperialists, (a struggle preceding the present imperialist war by more than a decade), also reveals this class conflict.

America's entry into the war did not bring the desired national unity in the U.S. either. The strikes and opposition from the left as well as the powerful semi-fascist opposition from the right clearly indicates the dynamics of the class struggle. All signs point to struggles of the American working class.

And last but not least the Indian Revolution -- and now the Italian Revolution. The Indian Revolution we have dealt with extensively separately and the Italian Revolution will be dealt with in the same manner.

What we want to stress is the fact that the present imperialist war is interwoven from the very first day with the CLASS STRUGGLE, the social revolution; that the tempo of the class dynamics has been greater and more rapid in this war than the imperialist war of 1914-18; that the maturing of these conflicts and the increasing opposition of the underground movements against Fascism -- and also against the United Nation imperialists, are developing into social upheavals that will destroy capitalism in Europe; that these underground class developments and social conflicts are maturing toward a general European uprising, in which GERMANY IS THE KEY, within the framework of the first question already mentioned, i.e., the extension of the October Revolution.

AFTER FASCISM WHAT ?

Let us consider some of the special problems confronting us in Germany :

Some people have the impression that once Fascism is overthrown there will be no organized power that can hold in check the workers from "automatically" taking over. This is a very dangerous idea because it is false and it lays the basis for many traps. This idea, that when Hitler or Mussolini is overthrown and the fascists are driven from power the workers are the only ones left to take power has many false roots. One of its basic false roots is the concept that Fascism is not capitalism, or that Fascism is a state form ABOVE capitalism. From a Marxian point of view Fascism is only a FORM of the rule of decay capitalism in advanced capitalist countries in which the proletariat has been defeated.

The long years of defeat of the proletariat and the long years of revival of capitalism (through organized starvation) enables the capitalists to have a number of alternative plans when they are forced to kick out the Duce or the Fuehrer. Such alternatives include military dictatorships, such as the Badoglio government, "liberal" governments, and in extreme emergency governments of reformist and centrist coalitions (Caballero - CNT, or "Worker and Farmer governments", i.e. left capitalist Peoples Front governments). Even more important must be the consideration of the United Nations plans - Anglo-American puppet governments for these countries, governments composed of hand-picked stooges from representatives of the Pope to Stalinist representatives, from reactionary semi-fascist governments to liberal governments -- which ever will keep the people in control.

THE TROTSKYITES' POLEMICS

J.R. Johnson of the Schachtman Trotsky group has the false idea indicated above and expresses it in the May issue of their theoretical organ. He says, "The fascists have destroyed every vestige of semblance of authority except their own." In other words, there are no capitalists ruling in Germany, only Fascists. The Fascists have destroyed the liberals, religious and capitalist authority.

"If and when, for what ever reason, the Hitler power collapses, then there is no social force left in Germany to hold the nation together except the working class in workers' and soldiers' councils." This is false. It is true that the objective conditions favor the workers' councils, but it is not true that with Fascism swept away no power is left. Nothing is more dangerous than to lull the workers to sleep with ideas of an "automatic" Revolution or to lead them into bourgeois-democratic chains.

Once a worker or a group accepts this false concept and Fascism is overthrown and they move forward toward power thinking that the path is clear for their power, they fall easy prey for the Kerensky governments, the Stalinist-Socialist governments, the Caballero Spanish Government, and similar set-ups.

DANGER OF BOURGEOIS DEMOCRACY

Between the fall of the Fascist governments and the establishment of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, there will be most LIKELY several governments of the exploiters, such as we witnessed in Russia in 1917 and as we are witnessing in Italy today.

Not only will the national capitalists in Germany and Italy bargain for semi-fascist governments all the way to "Peoples" and "Worker" governments such as Kerensky and Caballero, but these national exploiters will have the full backing of the Anglo-American imperialists, and they will have the full backing of the Socialists and Stalinists to further confuse the issue. We have witnessed already the POUM and the Trotskyites and Anarchists in Spain. They DID NOT learn the lesson in Spain. Johnson repeats some of the errors again.

Johnson's article dwells on this theme. And he adds more errors constantly. He says, "In the historical circumstances in Europe today, April 1943, the national question must be posed as the combined liberation of the occupied countries and the enslaved proletariat of Germany from their common oppressor : German Fascism. It cannot be posed in any other way." In arguing against the muddle heads of the Trotsky group who are for nationalism (as "progressive") and the two revolution concept vs the correct concept of a proletarian revolution with a nationalist phase in some European countries, Johnson falls into another trap. Against these "nationalists" Johnson is "correct". But why leave the back door wide open after you have thrown them out of the front door.

According to Johnson the ONLY way one can pose the question is against the German fascists. What about the Anglo-American imperialists and their Stalinist and Socialist agents, to say nothing about their bourgeois-reformist agents who will do plenty of damage. No, the "national question must be posed as the combination of liberation of the occupied countries and the enslaved proletariat of Germany from their common oppressor : German fascism." AND THE ANGLO-AMERICAN IMPERIALISTS AND THEIR AGENTS AND GOVERNMENTS IN WAITING. "It cannot be posed in any other way".

The second front of the Allies is based upon this class concept, not upon the defeat of Germany. The Trotskyites still have to learn this.

When one does not understand Fascism as a form of capitalism, when one does not understand the fact that nationalism in different European nations is by itself impotent and weak -- but IS PROPPED UP with the Pound and the Dollar and the armed might of these imperialists and their Stalinist-Socialist agents, when one does not understand that their left form of rule to hold in check the workers is the Peoples Front, and in United States the Labor Party and the Workers and Farmers Government, then one does not understand the coming revolution in Germany or in Europe. Italy is one of our European testing grounds.

NATIONAL LIBERATION

Let us leave Johnson and see what Alber Gates the giant killer has to say. Gates has learned the form and terminology of dialectics but in the whole period of the Left Opposition and today, like the other Trotskyites he does not understand the content.

Gates takes Johnson to task. Gates sees the "new" situation in Europe. He criticizes Johnson for the one good point Johnson really presents -- the slogan of the United States of Socialist Europe. Gates says, "This 'unification' of the continent by German arms has reintroduced the problem of national liberation as a burning question and need for the national oppressed European masses." Gates argues for the official Trotsky position on this question. (N.I. June 1943)

Gates places on the same level the "national question" of 1943 in the extreme decay stage of capitalism with the national question of the European movement in the days of Marx and Engels. Even Marx and Engels clearly revealed the impotency and the reactionary character of the national movement even though in THAT period of developing capitalism it did have SOME progressive features. But as Lenin clearly showed in his whole works the national bourgeoisie in developed countries and backward countries is of a reactionary character. And for Marxists, after the Russian revolution, the bourgeois-democratic revolution took on new meaning. It was outdated. The national question from then on had its limitations even in those backward Asiatic countries where the bourgeois democratic revolution had not yet matured. In European countries where these revolutions were long in the past, the forms of nationalism brought up in DECAY capitalism under Fascism are altogether different. To exploit them, yes. But to base our strategy on this myth -- no. Nationalism in all forms is REACTIONARY. It can solve nothing. It can merely act as a prop for capitalism.

"NATIONAL MOVEMENT PROGRESSIVE"

Gates, speaking in 1943, in the midst of the second imperialist war says,

"...these nationalist movements ;... are plebian movements which, in context of the European situation, are basically progressive ; that national liberation, when and if (you notice that "If") realized, no matter if only for a few days, or a few months, can only pose the question of workers' power;"

The idea that these nationalist movements in Decay European countries are progressive (not to speak of backward Asia) is false. Even in backward Asia history has passed beyond this stage. These nationalist movements are reactionary. We exploit them in an AUXILIARY way to win masses from REACTION. We do not support them even in backward countries. But that is not the only error of Gates.

He says if national liberation is realized it will pave the way for workers power. That is like the Stalinist policy in Germany in 1933. First Hitler, - let him expose himself - and then six months later we will take power. Gates says, first the national liberation -- and then, then we will take power. Gates has the problem upside down. It is the SOCIAL UPRISAL that brings on a twilight phase of "national liberation", not the national liberation movement that opens up the social revolution. The national liberation that Gates speaks of is an attempt to return to bourgeois democracy -- from Fascism, to turn the wheels of history backward. This cannot be progressive under any label, no more than back to 1776 against the "Trust" can be progressive under the Progressive Party of La Follette.

The actual dynamics of the class struggle in Europe (and Germany) is the development of the proletarian revolution to smash the rule of capital and its Fascist form. But because of three factors this pressure of the proletariat is warped. First there is the natural lagging or backwardness of large sections of the masses that do not understand the socialist solution and think in terms of the past-bourgeois democracy, nationalism.

Second, there are the shrewd capitalists who usually use the military force to exploit this "nationalism against fascism" (as in Italy) in order to stem the tide of social revolution. And third there is the natural desire of the agents of the Anglo-American imperialists, open and underground, to offer some form of nationalism.

This nationalism is offered in the name of "liberty" against Fascism ; but in reality is presented against the PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION. Gates muddle-headed policy mixes up two things. Take

Italy, the defeat of Fascism by the SOCIAL REVOLUTION momentarily settles that problem. Once Fascism is defeated (as a form of the rule of capitalism) the NEW and immediate danger for the capitalists is not Fascism but the proletarian revolution. That is what nationalism is offered against. Gates the centrist, like all centrists, falls into this trap.

FASCISM OR COMMUNISM

In Europe we have before us a proletarian revolution. No other social revolution confronts us. The support of the national liberation movement can only be filled with the content of bourgeois-democracy, return to a twilight period of bourgeois-democracy between the social revolution that is now destroying Fascism and until the CAPITALIST through bourgeois democracy can disarm the proletariat -- and THEN AGAIN re-establish dictatorship in Fascist forms. Either Fascism or Communism! Either a United States of Socialist Europe TODAY or the rule of Europe by Fascism. We are not concerned with Hitler or Mussolini. There are plenty of other Fascists in every country, including United States and England.

The principled line and strategical aspects laid down by the International Contact Commission in opposition to the Socialists, in opposition to the Stalinists, in opposition to the Trotskyites and other centrists, is the line of march for the workers' power in Italy, Germany and Europe. We realize there will be difficult sharp turns and ebbs and flows in the Revolutions unfolding on the heels of India and now Italy -- but these revolutions are leading to the victorious extension of the October Revolution before the war is over.

August 10, 1943.