

INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN

VOL. III

JUNE, 1944

No. 1

CONTENTS

THE FUSION OF THE BRITISH TROTSKYISTS;
THE ATTACK AGAINST THE NEW PARTY;
IMMEDIATE PERSPECTIVES AND TASKS.

(A Report)

Issued by the
SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

PRICE 10/-

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(A Report)

I. GENERAL BACKGROUND

The fusion of the British Trotskyists into the Revolutionary Communist Party coincides with a mounting crisis of the ruling class. However, this is far from being a mere coincidence. The lusty representative of the new class grows and gains cohesion in proportion to the disintegration of the old stratum of rulers. To set the unification and its attendant events into proper perspective, at least a sketch of the general background is necessary.

England is on the verge of great revolutionary events. Its economic system, long the pride of the capitalist world, is shot through with the gangrene of failure. War, which puts economies to the supreme test, has proved British capitalism to be inefficient and wasteful to the point of collapse. Lacking the tremendous resources of the United States, the ruling class has not been able to cover up its bankruptcy by the same sort of forced marches in production.

The Coal Crisis

The key to this economic crisis is the coal situation. Production fails to meet quotas set by war demands, even the imposing demands of the approaching invasion. The bosses and their government even risk the great miners strikes, which means a further drop in production, rather than grant the basic demand of the miners: nationalization of the pits. The rulers are faced by the dilemma: endanger the military situation or open the sluices of nationalization -- which threatens their whole system of private property. The issue is too "controversial" for parliament to deal with, says Churchill...

For the miners, and for the rest of the workers as well, real improvement in their miserable, ever-falling standard of living is directly tied up -- in this declining economy -- with outright nationalization of the means of production.

The negligible wage "concessions" are inadequate to the needs. Strikes are bound to increase. The struggle is bound to sharpen. Just as its uncertain international position has created rifts in the ruling stratum (the pro-German Cliveden set; the pro-"Russian" London Times tendency; the pro-American Churchill group) so the deteriorating domestic situation will create further schism at the top.

The Education Bill

The issue of "mine nationalization" was too "controversial" for the government to act on, said Churchill, postponing it to some future general election when, he hopes, its acuteness will not be so

illuminated for the masses as in the glaring light of the war flames. He preferred to have his labor lackies handle it by betraying the miners from within and by "nationalizing" labor from other industries for the coal pits (the "Bevin boys") -- only nationalization of mine property is "controversial" apparently.

However, the domestic crisis found another means of obtaining parliamentary expression. In March an apparently harmless Education Bill came before the House of Commons. It contained a provision to equalize the pay of women educational workers to that of the male teachers. The Government opposed the provision. But a majority of the Commons, including a sizable section of the Prime Minister's own Tory party, passed it.

No one paid much attention to this minor set-back of the Cabinet. But Churchill made it a first rate issue. He demanded a reversal of the vote as a matter of expressing confidence in his government. The whole country rang with the controversy. Finally, the Prime Minister got what he wanted.

Equal pay for women -- and only in a White Collar segment of the working class at that -- became an issue on which the government of British imperialism demonstratively made its war leadership dependent. Not a single sluice of social progress must be left open, the British rulers announced thereby. So great is their fear of the threatening social avalanche.

Churchill got his vote, to be sure. But the result was such a swell of resentment in the masses that for the first time since 1940, the Tory-Labor coalition was seriously shaken.

Crisis in the Labor Party

Under pressure from below, the Labor party executive announced in April that "it recognizes that the Coalition government cannot function for post-war reconstruction and will end it when divergencies with the Tories on social legislation become sharply clear," (sic) and further, that while the Coalition continues to function for war purposes, it will contest by-elections on its "own social program."

The immediate cause for this step was the incident with the Education Bill. But a mass demand for labor to break the coalition has swept the trade unions for the past two years.

The Labor party which before 1939 was gaining by-elections steadily from the Tories, has seen by-election after by-election go to independents and to the newly formed, "radical", middle-class Commonwealth party.

The leadership has so compromised itself that posters issued by petty-bourgeois outfits like the "Free Trade League" can appear with impunity in Labor strongholds in London, denouncing "Labor-Fascism."

Nor has the fact that the hated fascist Oswald Mosley gained

his release from prison through the instrumentality of the Labor minister Morrison, helped to halt the decline of popularity of the Labor party among the masses.

This reluctant first step to appease the mass demand that it break the coalition merely means that even the myopic traitors in the Labor party leadership can see the handwriting on the wall. The crisis is rotten-ripe.

The Treachery of the Trade Union Officials

While the first indication of a crack in the political coalition becomes apparent, on the economic field the trade union fakers intensify their craven subservience to the bosses. There the masses directly burst through the shackles of national unity. Not sham opposition is the task the fakers set themselves here, but a blindly fierce mending of the shackles. With hundreds of thousands of miners out on spontaneous strikes, with the strike fever growing, they take desperate measures. Their pie-cards are directly at stake.

History will record, to their ever-lasting shame, that the trade union officialdom of Great Britain requested the ruling class to impose a new law against strikes and the support of strikes.

History will also record that the ruling-class entrusted this task to Ernest Bevin, Minister of Labor and erstwhile "leader" of the General Strike of 1926.

Under the new "Bevin Law," as it is called, the outrage of forbidding sympathy strikes -- the infamous Trades Dispute Act of 1927 which sealed the defeat of the General Strike -- is multiplied over and over again. Imposing penalties up to five years' imprisonment, the law makes it a crime to talk in favor of a strike anywhere outside of an official union meeting in the industry or plant affected. A crime, to support an "unofficial" strike in the press. A crime, to send financial aid to such a strike. The papers openly gloat that the trade union officials called on the government to hold in line the union members whom they can no longer control.

A few days after the promulgation of the "Bevin Law," thousands of members of Bevin's own union, the General Transport Workers Union, responded by going out and tying up all bus traffic in the busiest districts of London. The same week thousands of workers in the municipal gas plant walked out in Manchester, leaving that city without gas for seven days.

The "Communist" Party

In all these developments the Stalinist party plays the auxiliary strike-breaking role. The main job, of course, is left to the trade union and Labor party fakers. Its appeals against strikes are flavored with pious references to the needs of supporting the military effort of the Soviet Union. It demagogically opposes the crasser of the anti-labor acts, which have aroused the overwhelming wrath of the workers. Thus, for instance, it

advises Bevin that there are already sufficient laws to deal with "Trotskyist strike instigators" without resorting to a new law such as the "Labor" minister espouses. Like all mass organizations in England and unlike its American counterpart, it is constrained to use socialist phraseology as a concession to the deep-rooted traditions in the country.

Among the trade union bureaucracy, particularly in the mining and engineering industry, a strong section tends to lean to the newer, more energetic and more polished methods of betrayal that the C.P. espouses. It is among them that the Stalinists have obtained weighty support for their projected entry into the Labor party -- which the leaders of the latter still oppose -- as well as for their "Left Unity" campaign, designed to revive and form the basis of a more "solid" popular front project. They strain every effort to help in the betrayal of the workers, but are not yet appreciated or trusted by the powers that be, sufficiently to be given a leading place. Among the miners, where they once had their strongest base, their influence is steadily declining.

The Labor "Lefts"

The so-called Labor "Lefts" -- Aneurin Bevan, Laski and Co. -- call every shot in the treachery of the bureaucrats and in the nefarious plans of the bourgeoisie. But -- their support of the war leads them to cowardly submission every time, nevertheless. Bevan goes to his mine district, speaks to strikers, agrees that all their demands are just and correct, castigates the coal barons and the government for their crimes -- and winds up by urging the miners to go back to the pits... because the strike hurts the war conducted by the very scoundrels he castigates. In spite of his old popularity with them, the miners wave him aside no less lustily than the Stalinist Horner or the old-line bureaucrat Lawther.

Nevertheless, this very discreditment among his constituents pushes Bevan and his ilk into more vigorous collision with the Labor Party heads. So much so and with such impetus that not only does the party bureaucracy want to "discipline" him but -- finds that very difficult. In a recent parliamentary caucus such an attempt failed by a considerable margin.

It is safe to say that this group, despite all its gyrations, will remain what it intrinsically is -- the "Left" face of the rascally bureaucracy.

The I.L.P.

As against all the other old and established working class organizations, only the I.L.P. has held its prestige and even grown. The secret of its success is not hard to guess; It maintains an anti-war position although with typical centrist trappings, and not too loudly or clearly.

However, it dissociates itself whenever it can from the Trotskyist firebrands. Its leaders hobnob politely with the

parliamentary crowd. Half of them are really pacifists. They are always ready for a jolly get-together with the scoundrelly bureaucrats. In short, no one takes them seriously as a revolutionary threat. As a matter of fact, the ruling circles "value" them as parliamentary colleagues, perhaps with a view to the future.

Trotskyism as the Target

It is no wonder then that, made frantic by the growing domestic crisis and impotent to deal with the rapid succession of sporadic strikes, the ruling class and its bureaucratic partners-in-crime should take their revenge -- by pouncing with might and main upon the consistent revolutionists, the "numerically insignificant" Trotskyists.

The Trotskyists spend their time, not in apologizing for anybody or anything in the twists of official politics, nor in hobnobbing with traitors. They go ringing the tocsin around the country, exposing the fraud perpetrated by the imperialist war upon the masses; denouncing the hypocritical treachery of "Labor" lackeys of capitalism; baring the manifold ways devised for the cheating of the workers; and aiding to the best of their ability every effort of the toiling masses to improve their lot and to awaken to their historic destiny.

The Labor "Lefts" -- alleged friends -- only see the "numerically insignificant" group. They treat the attacks, the raids, the arrests (against which they protest, to be sure) as a farce. The bureaucrats, the Will Lawthers, the Bevin, in the wake of the bosses, are more circumspect. They see the powerful ideas of the Trotskyists. They see a serious menace in the prospect of a convergence of these ideas and the great stirring mass of miners, ship-builders, engineers. They can't see the joke. They are in dead earnest.

The British Tribune of April 14 reports: "Mr. Lawther, the leader of the miners, is said to have stated in a speech that the Trotskyist organization must be taken seriously and that the amendment of the law under consideration (the "Bevin Law") is on the request of the miners' leaders themselves."

The growth of the British Trotskyists; the unification of several groups into a single, centralized section of the Fourth International, is an event that this enemy cannot help but note. And, with apprehension.

II. THE FUSION CONFERENCE

In the middle of March the Workers International League and the Revolutionary Socialist League held a joint convention at which these two organizations fused and took the name Revolutionary Communist Party.

The groups had previously been divided by tactical differences. Originally, these differences centered around the question of

entry into the Labor party. Subsequently organizational differences superseded even the tactical. In 1938 a unification was attempted by the International on the basis of a compromise of the disputed questions, on which no clear majority had been evident. One group refused to accept this compromise and remained outside the formal framework of the then constituted British Section of the Fourth International. This group later became the WIL. The official section became known as the RSL.

Under the impact of the war and long cut off from the vitalizing influence of International connections, the two British groups underwent a unique development. In the official section a strong sectarian current developed which threatened to destroy the organization by inaction as well as ultra-left policy (expressed mainly in the outright rejection of our military policy as "chauvinist"). In the WIL, on the other hand, the transition program and military policy developed by the International found a ready response and became the basis of a mass agitation.

The minority of the RSL which held the position of the Fourth International, correctly saw a solution only in the fusion of the two organizations. Neither the sectarian majority of the RSL, nor the WIL, would at first countenance such a solution. With the aid of the International, a two-year struggle for fusion -- gaining ground steadily in both organizations -- finally achieved its purpose. Joint negotiations resulted in a conference to bring about fusion of the two organizations.

On the one hand, the successes of the WIL and its growth attracted the forces of the RSL, which had long been dissatisfied with the stagnation of the official section. On the other hand, the lack of official status and the fact of division itself became an obstacle which the WIL increasingly felt as it saw its growth impeded.

The fusion resolution, adopted by the conference, places the new Revolutionary Communist Party squarely on the basis of the principles and statutes of the Fourth International. That is, the united organization becomes the British Section in policy as well as in discipline, resolving the whole previous anomalous situation.

The fusion, coming at the end of a bitter internal struggle in both organizations, has of course left some wound scars. But the attractive power of the united organization has at once made itself felt and we can assume a healing of the scars in the not too distant future.

Numerous people who had previously dropped out of the movement are returning to the united party. Others, who had already become convinced Trotskyists in their ideas, propagating them in the organizations in which they worked but puzzled by the organizational split, are likewise turning in increasing number to the new party. Within the party itself, the interchange of influence between infectious activism (characteristic of the former WIL) and serious attention to theory (stronger in the former RSL) is producing beneficial results in the rank and file. Finally, the

assault of the ruling class on the new party cannot help but cement the unity and invest the membership with a strong sense of party loyalty and party patriotism from the very first. All reports from the branches indicate that the fusion is an accomplished fact and not merely a formal decision.

The name Revolutionary Communist Party, adopted with some misgivings as an experiment, has turned out to be highly successful. The bulk of the party's new recruits comes from the Stalinized C.P. and its periphery. The Stalinists are trading on a name with which they have nothing in common politically, but one that is ever more popular with the masses in Great Britain. The new party has thus seized the banner which is rightly ours from the hands of the usurpers who besmirch it.

Needless to say, the Stalinists have reacted with wild fury to the new party name. They even have large posters in front of their headquarters calling attention to the situation, setting forth in huge letters that they are "the Communist Party." This frenzied indignation is indirectly a good measure of the wisdom of the RCP name. Of course, the RCP is no less anxious to distinguish its identity from that of the Stalinists, to whom they refer only as "His Majesty's Loyal Communist Party."

Political Results of the Conference

The fusion conference represented about 400 members from 30 different branches. The vote was on the basis of political resolutions. An overwhelming majority of the delegates supported a position in full accord with International policy. A small group, the "Left" of the former RSL, supported a sectarian position on revolutionary defeatism and opposed the military policy. This group was granted the right to exist as an organized faction within the RCP, but, of course, on the basis of its pledge to carry out party decisions in public activity and to submit to party discipline.

The leadership elected is composed in its preponderant majority of the former WIL leaders; there is a representative each of the three former factions of the RSL (the "Militant" group, the "Trotskyist Opposition" and the sectarian "Lefts"). No representation was given to the former WIL minority, whose position coincided more or less with that of the T.O., with which it had long collaborated in pro-fusion activity. At the conference all former groups with the exception of the "Lefts" announced their dissolution as factions.

Naturally, the leadership carries over with it into the RCP all of the positive as well as negative characteristics that attached to it in the WIL. But the fact of the fusion itself is a sign of its growing maturity and a correction of that negative feature which led it previously to approach work with other organized groups in a mechanical, somewhat sectarian spirit; join us or else! The need for political persuasion of sections of the party with different backgrounds will put the leadership further to a test of maturity. To develop, it will have to learn how to learn

from the membership, as well as how to teach it.

The conference revealed two political pitfalls facing the new party.

(1) One is ultra-leftism. This is represented by the "Left" faction, which is fully organized, with a crystallized sectarian program and leadership. It publishes internal literature of its own, has its own dues system and its own three paid "theoreticians." This group considers the party and the International as centrist organizations which they are at present working to reform by winning a majority. On the other hand, they give indication that they consider unity possible in one International with the unprincipled Shachtmanites!

Formally, its strict adherence to democratic centralism as a principle makes the "Left" loyal to party decisions, and, in fact, averse to splitting at present. More than anything else, the International's strict observance of democracy and thoroughly correct and patient organization procedure can be credited with discouraging a split on their part.

The composition of the group also merits patience. It has a number of miners and has conducted with them an active trade union policy that does not seem to be at all tinged with the ultra-leftism that otherwise characterizes the group. In matters of organizational caution, it even goes to extremes. This group, more than any of the others, held on to the tactic of entry into the Labor Party as its exclusive political activity.

Political struggle, by means of education and persuasion -- and accompanied with the greatest care in handling organization questions -- can unquestionably prevent ultra-leftism from growing in the party and isolate the faction into a harmless corner if its re-orientation and integration proves to be impossible for the present.

(2) Another tendency, and merely of symptomatic significance at present, is a deviation of national coloration. But potentially, in view of the maturing social crisis, this embryonic danger can become serious. Within the party frame-work it is not at all crystallized ideologically nor vested with any organized strength whatsoever. Nevertheless, it must be indicated for what it presents.

In defense of the resolution on military policy, a leader of the majority in the new central committee made some remarks that called forth astonishment and protest, particularly among those in agreement with the resolution, which is by and large a correct statement of the International policy. Characteristic of these remarks was a reference to Montgomery's Eighth Army as "Our Eighth Army." The protests only brought reiterations from the speaker, with a stronger emphasis than before; he spoke with pride of "our Eighth Army."

Another view that aroused similar controversy was expressed by the same leader; namely, that the liberation of the European

peoples from fascism was to be accomplished. (not inspired, aided or furthered) by a socialist Britain in arms. This view even crept into an earlier draft of the resolution, but was corrected after a heated discussion.

Thus far, no other manifestations are recorded. It is quite possible that what may be involved is merely some careless thinking, unthought-out ideas, mistakes of the moment. As yet, not a fragment of a single document has crystallized such a point of view. However, the fact that such ideas gain expression consciously, are insisted on at a national convention after being pointed out and are given expression by an accepted party spokesman--all this lends the incidents an aspect of seriousness which would not otherwise be the case.

If these are, indeed, chance mistakes, then their accidental character will be revealed by a failure to repeat in the future. It is to be hoped that they are indeed accidental and that the heat of factional struggle exaggerated their importance.

III. THE ATTACK ON THE R.C.P.

The more basic roots of the attack on the Revolutionary Communist Party were indicated in the first section of this report. Here we shall only deal with the immediate cause and with the developments ensuing.

The actual charges against Jock Haston, Roy Tearse and the others are; violation of the Trades Dispute Act (of 1926) in connection with the great strike of engineering apprentices in Scotland.

The WIL mass activity laid greatest emphasis on getting in touch with every strike or pre-strike situation, covering it in the Socialist Appeal, and lending the strikers every form of support possible. In most cases support had been confined to the work of the Socialist Appeal. This activity, of course, continued as before in the new RCP.

In the case of the apprentices, mass resentment grew against the Bevin order drafting these young men -- many of whom had nearly completed their 4-year apprenticeship acquiring the mechanic's skill for a life-long trade -- into pits, where they saw no future for themselves and only another obstacle to the miners' fight for nationalization, with which they sympathized.

"We refuse to carry the burden imposed on the industry by the lust for profit and inefficiency of the coal-owners. Since they are directly responsible for the coal crisis it is against them that compulsion must be directed," says the Statement of Tyne Apprentices Guild, January 1944.

Open defiance swept the ranks of the youngsters. They were ready to go to extremes to forego becoming "Bevin Boys." When one of their number received the draft order, the Tyneside Apprentices Guild sent a letter to Bevin demanding exemption from compulsory

mine labor for all apprentices in the "industrial engineering trades." The Minister of Labor failed to reply. Thereupon the Guild called out its 5,000 members on strike. A few days later they were joined by 20,000 others in Glasgow and elsewhere. (The various local machinists unions, expressed support; even the Executive of the national Amalgamated Engineers Union expressed sympathy with their cause; although organizational relations between the latter and the Guild were strained).

The strike was rather wide-spread and appeared well organized and coordinated. It gave the ruling class a particularly bad scare, because it came from a new and unfamiliar quarter of the working class.

Now, in this strike, the RCP was able to contribute more than its usual share of support. The traditional machinery of the old trade unions in Britain is hard to penetrate. Organizational conservatism makes new trade union projects, such as the RCP-sponsored Militant Workers Federation, largely a propaganda rather than an action movement, confined to the sidelines in its first stages. RCP influence in the established trade unions, though growing, is still too weak to make itself directly felt there on any appreciable scale. The apprentices guild, on the other hand, is a new organization. It grew up, as a matter of fact, in conflict with the established trade union machine which, in its complacency, refused to organize the youngsters or take them under their wing -- leaving them pretty much to their own devices. The RCP leadership, anxious to test itself in mass struggle, saw an unusual opportunity. It gave direct organizational assistance through a number of members right on the spot and by centralized direction did much to give the strike the character of a national demonstration that so scared the powers to be.

However, it must be pointed out that all this assistance was given from the outside- (the party had no fraction of any size within the guild)- through individuals whose connections with the party were not known to the apprentices. The party had not previously carried out sustained activity in this field.

The raids conducted by Scotland Yard netted correspondence and documents which dealt with the apprentices' strike, among other things.

In view of the onerous character and the sweeping provisions of the law, our comrades face great legal difficulties in their court fight. But -- their's is the first case to be tried under the Trades Dispute Act of 1927 and this in itself is an indication of the unpopularity of that Act among the masses.

Furthermore, the new, implementing Bevin Act -- openly proclaimed as directed against the Trotskyists -- is, if anything, even more unpopular. Their defense, therefore, is tied up with popular agitation against what would amount here to the "unconstitutionality" of the laws under which they are being prosecuted.

A broad defense committee is indeed being organized along

these lines with the participation of the ILP and the Labor "Lefts." Lack of experience in defense work will probably result in inevitable errors. The party will, however, see to it that the court-room defense shall be in its own hands and conducted along Bolshevik lines.

Meanwhile, the RCP is having difficulties in obtaining the release on bail of the arrested comrades. Meeting halls for defense rallies -- due to Stalinist interference mainly -- have been barred to the RCP and it has had to hold its initial London meetings in the open, at Hyde Park.

Ways and means of making our solidarity with our British co-thinkers felt will have to be probed.

Meantime the comrades of the RCP have responded in a splendid spirit to the attack on their leaders and by means of sacrifices on their own part as well as by wide canvassing, are bringing a full measure of aid to the hard-pressed national office of the party.

IV. PERSPECTIVES OF RCP GROWTH

Immediate Effects of Attack

The attack on the young party, fraught as it is with great danger to its existence, has other sides by way of compensation.

The new Revolutionary Communist Party has at once become a factor of first importance in the political consciousness of the country. The press, the radio, are teeming with news of it.

Great sympathy has been aroused for Trotskyism among masses of miners and other workers who for the first time have heard of this party and who have heard it identified with their own snow-balling, eruptive, militant action.

In the organized labor movement, workers moving leftward have a new dramatic banner before their eyes as a likely rallying point.

Thousands of communist workers, betrayed and disillusioned with Stalinism, see the cherished communist ideal reborn in new form, awakening glorious memories.

In the ILP, among the Labor "Lefts", the rank and file evince immediately, spontaneous solidarity with the persecuted Trotskyists. The leaders, forced to go along, make uneasy jests, try to avoid mentioning the new party and its papers in their own meetings and press, in ostrich-like fashion.

The cohesion of the RCP itself is greatly enhanced. The ranks are serried in the face of the attack.

Great opportunities open up for further advance. The key to that advance, however, is a correct estimation of what has

transpired and a correct posing of the next tasks.

A Necessary Evaluation of the Past

The outstanding feature of the movement up to now has been its emphasis on mass agitation, with the Socialist Appeal as the main instrument.

This feature has had its strength as well as its weaknesses.

Its strength: It has made Trotskyism known far and wide. It has given the party a mass of contacts in the working class. It has given workers in great numbers the impression of a vigorous, wide-awake movement.

Its weaknesses: Lack of organizational gain commensurate with publicity; lack of campaign activity with objectives and plans set and achieved; dispersal of forces in general activity instead of concentration on a series of limited tasks; danger of activism pure and simple as against activity tempered with theoretical understanding; risk without adequate precautions and preparation.

In the party, which has thrived on the strength of this type of activity, the attack has unquestionably brought a sobering consciousness of the weaknesses, a desire to overcome them.

The Needed Strategy Ahead

For this, it is first of all necessary to understand that the new development requires of the RCP conscious reorientation. The emphasis must be shifted from the type of mass agitation carried on heretofore, to a different type of party activity.

The popularity of the "Socialist Appeal" is a great asset and must, of course, continue to be exploited. But, in conformity with the new conditions imposed by the government attack.

The defense of the arrested leaders can and must serve as the strategic vehicle on which to shift the burden of the party's work of mass agitation.

The RCP is not in a position to challenge the government to further head-on combat. The revolutionary road requires a detour. To ignore this would mean to fall into the trap of adventurism.

What is needed is to regroup, to retrain, to reequip the forces of the party; to lead it in a number of flanking moves that will clear obstacles and bring the party on the revolutionary high-road with increased ranks, with members tempered and trained in minor action, with a morale and theoretical equipment that will be invincible in the greater battles to come.

To this end the leadership has before it proposals for a few measures to implement the main work, the defense campaign.

1. A Recruitment Campaign: Adopt the campaign principle of the revolutionary combat organization. Set the objective. Assign quotas. Arouse friendly -- socialist -- competition. Check and review and improve results by centralized direction.

The most immediate form for such a campaign in the RCP is a recruiting campaign to capitalize on the vast publicity, on the mass of contacts, on the growing attractive power of the party.

Recruiting up to now, although highly encouraging, has been altogether sporadic and not at all in line with the opportunities. What is needed is an organized recruiting campaign with the entirely realizable objective of doubling the ranks of the party in the next six months.

2. Organized Party Education: Not only must the activism of the previous period be tempered with Marxist education, but the new recruits too must be developed into educated revolutionists. For a party facing a period of rapid growth, Marxist education becomes an indispensable prerequisite in maintaining its revolutionary proletarian character. Only systematic, organized Marxist schooling can prevent deviations toward, if not direct degeneration into, centrism. The party is preparing to lead masses. Every party member must strive to become an educated Marxist leader. Only in this way, too, can the party protect itself effectively against the ravages of government persecution.

Under the central Leninist slogan "No revolutionary practice without revolutionary theory," party schools and educational institutions must be centrally organized and fostered in every locality. The education of the membership must not be left to chance, it must be the daily concern of the leaders.

3. Campaign in the I.L.P.: The fusion of the two organizations and the establishment of a single unified section was the first pressing task of British Trotskyism. Now consolidation of the fused party is on the order of the day.

The next great political task is the elimination of the centrist ILP as an obstacle on the road to the revolutionary masses.

The ILP has grown considerably. Its tradition gives this growth even greater importance. It is the only old, known and established organization to which workers disgusted with the Labor Party and even the Stalinists naturally turn, particularly when they are not familiar with Trotskyism.

Moreover, the leadership finds itself in growing conflict with the rank and file. Sensing the oncoming social crisis, the centrist leaders, as is their wont in all countries, grope to attach themselves to organizations to the right of them in order to escape direct leadership of the masses in conflict with all other forces of the old society.

While they show their hostility on every occasion to the revolutionary Trotskyists, they carry on joint political activity

("united fronts") with the pro-war, middle-class Commonwealth party. Having for years refused to work for revolutionary ends in the Labor party, they are now seeking to reaffiliate with it under any conditions, in their anxiety to escape the responsibility of leading the masses in independent revolutionary action in the future.

The party rank and file, for its part, also senses the approaching crisis. Instinctively, they suspect the opportunist intentions of the leaders.

At the Easter Conference of the ILP, the rank and file clashed with the leadership on both of these issues, and in the vote, defeated them decisively on both and -- voted a rousing resolution of solidarity with the attacked Trotskyists, to boot.

The ILP is facing a crisis of its own. It is entirely possible for the Trotskyists to intervene, and successfully, in this crisis.

An as yet uncentralized and unorganized Left Wing prevails in the rank and file of the ILP. There is a fraction of Trotskyists in close relations with the RCP. A larger fraction of "non-party Trotskyists," so to speak, is moving closer to the RCP. This is the Dewar-Sara group. A still larger indigenous Left Wing, containing a good many former CP members -- particularly in the mine areas -- works with the Trotskyists in close harmony at the conference, but is otherwise independent.

Up to the present, the RCP has carried on only haphazard work in the ILP, mainly literary. It is hard to say with what perspective, since leading forces have from time to time been withdrawn. (For example, Comrade Tearse, the arrested industrial organizer of the RCP was originally recruited from the ILP.)

What is needed, however, is a perspective and an organized plan of work.

It is entirely feasible to set as a formal perspective the winning of a majority of the ILP for Trotskyism.

Organizationally, this can result in one of two alternatives: (1) A direct fusion of the ILP and the RCP in one form or another, in the most optimistic case; (2) A bureaucratic expulsion and the fusion of the ILP left wing with the RCP. In either case Trotskyism stands to gain greatly by the elimination from the field of a great centrist obstacle.

The situation inside the ILP is so favorable at present that this whole perspective can be effected without any resort to the entry tactic.

The forces to accomplish the task are already at hand, in ample number inside the ILP. What is needed is to concentrate attention on the objective, to give centralized direction to the Left Wing, beginning with the Trotskyist faction.

The policy of sporadic withdrawals must be replaced by a policy of building the Left Wing for a struggle toward winning over the party. The party fraction must at once be fused with broader, non-party Trotskyist faction. The fused faction must be guided toward unity with the "natives" in a nationally organized, centralized Left Wing. The program is not at issue. With minor concessions, the basic position of the Fourth International is already acceptable to the "native" Left Wing.

Here too the campaign method of the combat organization is necessary.

The opportunity is ripe.

The work in the ILP will provide the next great test of the RCP. It will show the degree to which it is maturing as the revolutionary party of the British workers.

The success of the fusion gives us the right to be optimistic about this future test as well.

The importance of the development of the RCP is not confined to Great Britain. The fusion is an international victory. It is a vindication of the long and patient labor of the International to consolidate the forces of British Trotskyism. The further successful growth of the RCP will be an achievement of international scope. For the RCP is not merely British Trotskyism. It is the organized outpost of the coming European revolution.

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