

INTERNAL BULLETIN

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Issued by
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116 University Place
New York 3, N. Y.

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SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY
116 University Place
New York 3, N. Y.

October 6, 1944

TO ALL N.C. MEMBERS, LOCALS AND BRANCHES;

Dear Comrades,

CONVENTION ARRANGEMENTS

1. Four-Day Convention: We have become convinced that the manifold problems to be considered at the convention make it necessary to extend the convention an extra day. We have, therefore, decided to hold a four-day convention as against the three-day convention previously announced. The convention will be held Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, November 16, 17, 18 and 19.

This extension of the convention time should make it possible for us to deal properly with the political questions before the party, with the work accomplished and with the tasks ahead, as well as with the questions in dispute.

2. Place: All sessions of the convention will be held at the Capitol Hotel, 8th Avenue and 51st Street, New York. The convention will be preceded by a plenary meeting of the National Committee on Wednesday, November 15.

3. Time Schedule:

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|---------------------------------------|--|
| <u>Wednesday, November 15, 8 P.M.</u> | - Plenary session of the National Committee. |
| <u>Thursday, November 16, 12 noon</u> | - Opening session of the convention; Oak Room, 4th floor of hotel. |
| <u>Thursday afternoon</u> | - Convention session. |
| <u>Thursday night</u> | - Convention session. |
| <u>Friday, November 17, 10 A.M.</u> | - National fraction meetings. |
| <u>Friday afternoon</u> | - Convention session. |
| <u>Friday night</u> | - Convention session. |
| <u>Saturday, November 18, 10 A.M.</u> | - Convention session. |
| <u>Saturday afternoon</u> | - Convention session. |

Saturday night - Banquet at Capitol Hotel.

Sunday, November 19, 10 AM. - Convention session.

Sunday afternoon - Closing session of convention.

4. Finances: All delegates must be prepared to pay for their transportation and expenses. We have secured rooms at the hotel to accommodate delegates and visitors at \$3.00 per night.

We expect to conclude arrangements for meals to be secured in the hotel restaurant, which is located on the same floor as the convention hall. Lunches range from 60¢ to 90¢; dinners from 85¢ to \$1.25. The payment for meals will be made by each individual comrade directly to the hotel cashier. The restaurant is not open for breakfast but there are a number of restaurants and luncheonettes in the hotel vicinity where breakfast can be obtained.

Delegates who may desire lodging on Wednesday night or Sunday night may secure it for the payment of \$3.00 per night additional. This entire arrangement is open to convention visitors as well as to credentialed delegates and alternates.

Hotel guests will be housed two and three in a room. The main convention hall is very large, well-lighted with windows on all sides, and will be available for all convention sessions. In addition to the large hall, we will have two smaller rooms for committee meetings and conferences.

5. Where to Report: All delegates, alternates and visitors should report immediately on arrival to the Convention Arrangements Committee of the S.W.P. at its room in the Capitol Hotel, where registration will be made and rooms assigned. Do not register at the hotel desk before reporting to the Convention Arrangements Committee. You must have a registration card, issued by the SWP Convention Arrangements Committee in order to make your hotel reservation.

Comrades arriving before Thursday morning, November 16, are to report to the National Office at 116 University Place immediately upon arrival.

6. Convention Attendance: We urge all branches to send their full quota of delegates. The attendance of alternates and of individual branch members as guests, in addition to the regular delegates, should be encouraged by all branches. It is highly desirable that we have the fullest possible attendance of party members which circumstances and financial conditions will permit. Following the procedure established at our past conventions,

close sympathizers vouched for by party organizations may be permitted to attend the convention as guests, provided they have the approval of the National Committee.

The branches should be mindful of the difficulty in getting train reservations on short notice. All arrangements for round-trip train fares should be made sufficiently in advance to make sure that the delegates get here in time for the convention. Such reservations do not have to be made in the names of the delegates. They can be made in any name and there is no need of waiting for such arrangements until delegations have been elected.

7. National Fraction Meetings: You will notice from the time schedule that we are not planning to have any convention session Friday morning, November 17. This time has been set aside for national fraction meetings. We are planning to hold meetings of all the larger fractions in the party and we will provide the necessary time for fraction reports to the convention.
8. Banquet: The Convention Arrangements Committee is making plans for a banquet and evening of entertainment on Saturday night, November 18.
9. Advance Registrations: In order for us to conclude our contract with the hotel, we have to know definitely how many delegates, alternates and visitors desire hotel reservations. We are enclosing herewith an information blank which all local secretaries should fill out and send in as soon as possible. In view of the present shortage of hotel accommodations and the extraordinary good fortune we have had in finding a hotel willing to make such reservations for us, it is essential that we have this information on all reservations as soon as possible. The deadline is November 1st.

Fraternally yours,

M. Stein

Acting National Secretary

LETTER FROM M. MORRISON

It is good to see the party make a turn which recognizes the importance and necessity of Marxist learning and education. Since the split in 1940 it has been the vogue among some leading comrades to send every member to the factories. Any suggestion that some members should devote their time to the study of Marxism was frowned upon. The fundamental principle that our party is based on a theory which it is necessary to study and apply seemed to escape the attention of some comrades.

The attitude of exaggerated proletarianization was a natural reaction to the interminable theoretical discussions carried on by many of those who constituted the minority fraction. Emphasis on proletarianization as a corrective to the spirit animating many of the minorityites was justified. Carrying that emphasis to a point where no recognition was given to the necessity of developing theoreticians and educated propagandists represented a serious danger to our movement. Theoreticians and educated propagandists cannot be developed, as a rule, in a factory. Working in a factory should be considered part of the education of potential teachers and writers, but we should understand that it would be very inefficient, to say the least, to take a member who can be developed to write a good article and make a very poor trade-unionist out of him. And vice versa.

No special justification or motivation is necessary for any general educational proposal. Dedicated to the task of leading the working masses in the struggle for emancipation, our party must of necessity attempt to educate every member in the fundamental principles of revolutionary Marxism. For such a colossal task cannot be accomplished by a party composed of simple followers. It requires a party of members who understand the basic premises of our movement.

I deem it necessary to take advantage of the educational proposal to touch on certain aspects of Marxist education, which must be constantly emphasized. These aspects are intangible; they deal with an attitude and a spirit rather than with a definite doctrine. But they are exceedingly important.

It is essential, for instance, to understand that Marxism is not a dogma. It is a method of social analysis; it is a guide to revolutionary action. What does this observation, made so frequently by Lenin and Trotsky, mean? It means that the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky are not to be studied in the same way that religious people study the Bible--to find and memorize articles of faith. It means that it is necessary to acquire the method used by great Marxists for the purpose of analyzing every situation as it arises, to take all factors of a given situation into consideration, and determine, on the basis of that analysis, the strategy or tactic best fitted to further the interests of the working class. Sectarians are generally very good at quoting Marx.

What they fail to understand is that a quotation is insufficient to solve a concrete problem.

The defeat of Hitler will, in all probability, be followed by great social upheavals in Europe and bring complicated problems to our movement. A dogmatist will offer a solution on the basis merely of a general principle found in the writings of any one of our great teachers; a Marxist will analyze all the factors of the situation to see how that general principle can be applied with the greatest effectiveness. Dogmatism and Marxism cannot get along well together.

It must also be remembered that the education of our party members, and especially of those who are capable of assuming places of leadership, is not simply a question of taking formal courses in Marxism, either by correspondence or at a school. Our party is constantly confronted with new problems, and differences of opinion on the best method of solving those problems are bound to arise. A free and thorough discussion on any problem arousing different viewpoints can do more to educate our members in the application of the principles of Marxism than a dozen formal lessons.

At the plenum of our party, last October, a serious discussion arose on the question of a proper resolution on the European situation. A resolution was finally adopted, acceptable to all except one member of the National Committee. That member, as was his right, wanted a discussion on the question in the ranks of the party. His proposal for a discussion was met with great hostility and was voted down. So great was the clamor that I, always in favor of letting the ranks discuss important questions, did not insist vehemently that his proposal be accepted.

It is true that there was a special factor which would interfere with an adequate discussion--the fact that some of those who could participate actively in the discussion were about to go to jail. But even that was not a sufficient objection to having all the records of the plenum dealing with the resolution given to the party membership. The discussion would have been far more educational than all the formal lectures given to party members on the European situation. Anyone who in the least discourages discussion retards the education of the membership. I accept a share of the blame for keeping the records of the plenum from the membership.

Another aspect of Marxist education that must never be forgotten is its critical, independent spirit. Being revolutionary to the core the Marxist movement is necessarily pervaded by that spirit. It has produced the greatest iconoclasts in history. No Marxist movement can long remain revolutionary if it does not train its membership and especially its potential leaders in the spirit of intellectual independence and integrity.

I recall that Trotsky, on the basis of a re-examination of his concept of Thermidor (political counter-revolution), concluded that his first contention that the Thermidorian counter-revolution had not yet occurred in the Soviet Union was incorrect. His correction did not alter in the least his basic analysis of the nature of the Soviet Union. Trotsky had a critical attitude to his own writings and to those of everybody else.

Had he not made that minor correction before he was struck down by Stalin's assassin, and had someone in or outside of our party been acute enough to see the necessity for the correction, after Trotsky's death, I am quite certain that some leading people in our own ranks would have held up their hands in horror and fought the correction tooth and nail. I am compelled to say this because I have heard so many arguments based merely on the idea that Trotsky or Lenin or Marx said such and such a thing and that, apparently, should end the controversy.

Since the terrible Stalinist degeneration, every serious person in the Marxist movement fears and thinks of possible degeneration. Can Marxist education prevent degeneration? To give an affirmative answer to this question would mean to accept an idealistic interpretation of history. Trotsky showed that the basic causes of the Stalinist degeneration are social in character. On the other hand, it would be contrary to Marxism and altogether wrong, were we to contend that ideas and attitudes play no role at all in retarding or furthering the process of degeneration.

When we consider the Stalinist degeneration we are struck by this fact, that the most critical, the most intellectually independent spirits in the Bolshevik Party were the best fighters against Stalinism. Amongst those who readily succumbed to Stalinism were outstanding Marxist scholars, those who know all the principles found in the books written by Marx and Engels. Those who were most militant in the defense of all the laws of the Hegelian dialectic found no difficulty in accepting Stalin's leadership. What they lacked was critical independence; what they lacked was intellectual integrity!

Without a knowledge of the principles of Marxism, members of a party can succumb to degeneration because of ignorance. Without a critical, independent approach members who know and believe in all the principles of Marxism and all the laws of the Hegelian dialectic may also succumb to degeneration. (Degeneration, by the way, may be either of the Stalinist type or the social-democratic type.)

Let us foster both the knowledge of Marxism and an independent critical spirit. Let us destroy every germ of degeneration that enters our ranks. The spirit of the article in "How the Trotskyists Went to Jail" is a germ of degeneration. Let us destroy it. The spirit of those who insisted

on publishing this article in a pamphlet after a substantial minority objected to the article is a germ of degeneration. Let us destroy it. The spirit of those who organized the New York membership meeting to make our members feel that they cannot discuss political questions with W.P. members is, consciously or unconsciously, one that constitutes a germ of Stalinist degeneration. Let us destroy it.

Every proposal to educate our members in the principles of Marxism must be tried. But let us never forget that a free discussion on all questions upon which different viewpoints are expressed is one of the best means to educate our members in the principles of Marxism. We must therefore encourage and not discourage such discussions. Let us never forget that in addition to the doctrines of Marxism there is also the spirit, critical, scientific, independent--in a word, revolutionary. Revolutionary Marxist education must inculcate that spirit.

M. Morrison

* * *

COMMENTS ON THE HANSEN ARTICLE

By J. Michaels

When I first read the article How the Trotskyists Went to Jail, I experienced a certain distaste which remained with me and continued to trouble me increasingly as I found more and more difficulty in defining precisely what there was about the article that I didn't like. Objections that it was too sentimental, lush or adulatory came to mind. As these are largely, although not entirely, personal criteria--matters of taste--and considering that the author had perhaps missed the literary spark that an article of this kind demands, I put the matter to one side. The reappearance of the article in the pamphlet Why We Are In Prison compelled me however to re-examine the article more closely. As considerable criticism of the article had been expressed, its republication must be taken as conscious approval of it on the part of at least sufficient leading comrades to effect its reprinting. This makes the matter even more worth discussing.

I start with the proposition that an article dealing with the human aspects of the case and of the prisoners has not only a place but also a real value among the material we publish on the case. Such an article can sometimes have greater propagandistic and agitational value than an exclusively political article. One does not exclude the other. It is a question of emphasis and proportion. Even in the more restricted field of the direct work of the Party human interest and sentiment can play very effective roles. Certainly in this case which produced Socialism on Trial, In Defense of Socialism and other writings of a predominantly political character we cannot be accused of over-indulging in sentimentality. On the contrary, the general tone of our material has been that of political austerity.

The article, however, plays so heavily on the strings of sentiment that its tone has too much of adulation, self-praise and hero-worship. A few examples: "So steeped is Jim in the movement that everything about him brings to mind some phase of party life. That gold watch was a present from comrades of Local New York of the

Socialist Workers Party, the Webster's New International Dictionary near his elbow a present from a class he taught on the history of Trotskyism; even his cigar was a present from sea-going Trotskyists."

It is obvious that the main point of this paragraph is not Comrade Cannon's identity with the party but is rather the gifts. In fact on a casual reading one's mind almost slurs over the introductory sentence, "so steeped is Jim in the movement that everything about him brings to mind some phase of party life," and necessarily dwells on the three gifts mentioned; the watch, the dictionary and the cigars. What then, is supposed to be proved by the recitation of these gifts? If it is that the members esteem Comrade Cannon so highly that they make him many gifts, I think it is an extremely bad lesson for the party and a practice, the excessive exercise of which is to be discouraged. Or if it is that Comrade Cannon is compelled to live so frugally that he cannot afford to buy these things for himself, it strikes me as a rather tawdry appeal for sympathy on grounds that we should shun.

In describing the ride along the Hudson, the author writes; "As the crack train gathered speed along the banks of the river, the man soon to be locked in a cell because of his beliefs leaned back in his seat watching the barren trees and the ice-fringed water skim by. The pillars of a famous geologic formation moved in stately procession into the past -- scenes of the Hudson warmed by the winter sun for this socialist fighter to remember in the hard days ahead. The sun fell on his hair as the train leaned around a curve and the iron gray waves lighted up luminously. Jim's lips moved, 'The Palisades are beautiful.'"

What a build-up! To what? Apparently the writer is attempting to convey that Comrade Cannon appreciates the beauties of nature; that there is a softer side to this seemingly hardened revolutionist. There can be no objection either to Comrade Cannon being so or to Comrade Hansen's telling of it, but to write it as this is written, to build up as if to a powerful climax and reach the sentence "Jim's lips moved, 'The Palisades are beautiful'", leaves no other impression than of exalting and glorifying every word of a leader. Not only is the impression on the reader bad but the practice is one which we must not permit in the party.

A somewhat similar illustration is found in connection with the relating of the incident of how Comrade Cannon got John Dewey to serve on the Commission of Inquiry. After leading the reader to expect the disclosure of some remarkable method, he is decidedly let down by the statement that Comrade Cannon told Dewey that he had to do something for the cause of justice and that Dewey then agreed. Now I do not mean to say that if Cannon did not use some remarkable technique the incident should not have been told; but what I do mean to say is that by attempting (and incidentally, failing) to make a climactic point out of a not unusual conversation as in this case or of a commonplace remark as in the case of the Palisades, the article cannot help but give the impression of adulation and hero-worship.

And in telling how Comrade Cannon was compelled to unlearn his early mispronunciation of words, is written "but no matter, defying all obstacles, by sheer main force he muscled through" (p. 42). One is startled! Did I overlook something? Did I misread the sentence? "Defying all obstacles," "sheer main force." True, the task was probably difficult, but the brush here is applied a bit too thick. Such exaggeration only makes the reader smile and question the objectivity of the author.

These are illustrations of serious defects in the article, instances which put together give an objectionable tone and character to the whole article. They are serious enough that they should have prevented the republication of the article as it is, particularly after objection to it had been voiced in the party.

Other parts of the article are good. And while I mention other parts I want to point out that nine pages of the article are devoted almost exclusively to Comrade Cannon's trip and seven pages to all the remaining defendants and to the march to jail. It would have been more appropriate to entitle the pamphlet How Comrade Cannon and the Others Went to Jail.

The section of the article on the march to jail and the happenings in the Federal building is a good illustration of how the "human approach" can be employed effectively and without the defects I have alluded to. If these defects were merely matters of literary style or a bit of overemphasis I would say nothing. But when these defects give the whole article the character of adulation, self-praise and hero-worship, it is not only the article but the party that suffers.

May 10, 1944

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WHY WE PUBLISH JAMES T. FARRELL'S LETTER IN THE INTERNAL BULLETIN

We are herewith publishing a letter from James T. Farrell addressed to the Fourth International. We would have printed this letter in the press together with our reply except for the fact that the issues Farrell raises in his letter had previously been raised by party comrades for discussion within the party.

We decided not to publish Farrell's letter in our public press, along with the reply which it would necessitate, before these disputed questions had been discussed and resolved within the party. Otherwise this might have been interpreted by those comrades in the party holding a point of view similar to that expressed by Farrell as a public attack upon their views.

It is our responsibility when confronted with questions in dispute to first resolve such disputed questions within the party itself through the proper channels, that is, through discussion in the internal bulletins, in the branches, and ultimately through pre-convention discussion and decision by the convention itself.

While it is not our practice to permit individuals who are not members of the party to participate in pre-convention discussions in an attempt to influence party opinion and party decisions, we are publishing James T. Farrell's letter in this internal bulletin upon the insistence of Comrade Morrison.

Political Committee

LETTERS FROM M. MORRISON

September 3, 1944

The following information has reached me: Jim Farrell wrote a letter to the F.I. criticizing the Hansen article and Frankel's review of The New Course. For about a month Jim received no word as to whether or not his letter would be published. Then someone told him that the questions raised in his letter would be discussed in the pre-convention period. It was not made clear whether Jim's letter would be published in toto even in the bulletin. I gather that Jim is disturbed at the refusal of the F.I. to publish his letter and would like my advice.

I must, in the first place, state that from the excerpts I have read, I consider the letter as one from a loyal friend of the party, whose main interest in writing it is to call attention to a type of article which he disapproves and considers harmful to the party.

As a friend of the party there is nothing for him to do except to bring the matter to the attention of the party membership. In this way he will act, as he should, as a party member whose right and duty it is to bring to the membership any decision of a higher body, which he considers to be a serious error and hope that the error will be corrected. You can tell him that I shall try my best to get the whole question before the membership.

* * *

September 4, 1944

The membership should carefully consider the significance of the Political Committee's refusal to publish James T. Farrell's letter to the F.I., in which he criticizes the Hansen article and Frankel's review of The New Course. A valuable lesson can be learned from the refusal to publish Farrell's letter. Once a mistake is made and obstinately adhered to, other mistakes are almost certain to follow; a problem not solved correctly is almost certain to lead to further problems. A mistake was made when Hansen's article was published. That mistake could have been easily rectified if Morrison's letter answering Macdonald had been published. The refusal to publish Morrison's letter, which, in all probability, would have ended the discussion on the Hansen article, has now placed us in an absurd position of refusing to publish a letter of criticism from a friend of the party.

The mere fact that a problem has arisen by virtue of Farrell's sending the F.I. a friendly letter criticizing two articles, shows that there is something wrong in the attitude of the people who make the decisions as to what to publish and what not to publish. A party would never be confronted with a problem because of the receipt of a letter of criticism from a friend if the people in

charge of the publications would make correct decisions as to the material that should or should not be published. Such a letter would be published as a matter of course. If the author is wrong an answer would be forthcoming showing wherein he is wrong; if he is correct an admission of his correctness would end the matter.

Are we dealing here with a situation where an opponent of the party disagreeing with its basic principles writes a letter or an article against party policy? Are we, in other words, dealing with a situation where an opponent wants to utilize our press for the presentation of his views, which are antagonistic to ours? The answer must of course be an unhesitating and emphatic "No"!

We are confronted by an altogether different situation -- where a friend of the party writes a letter of criticism with reference to articles that do not involve party policy. There can be no doubt whatever amongst those who know Farrell and his attitude to our party that he is friendly to the party. It is clear from the letter itself that it is written by a friend who does not approve the contents and tone of two articles, who thinks that these articles are harmful to the party and wants to call attention to that fact. To designate such a letter as unfriendly to the party is completely arbitrary and can convince no reasoning person.

For the party it is not primarily a question of what Farrell and others will think of our refusal to publish a critical letter from a friend. It is a question of correct procedure to follow in such cases. It is a question of creating confidence in our own ranks that we fear no criticism because we can answer any adverse criticism or admit its correctness. The membership should demand the publication of Farrell's letter.

* * *

LETTER FROM JAMES T. FARRELL

July 30, 1944

The Editors
The Fourth International
116 University Place
New York City

Dear Friends and Comrades:

For some time, I have been disturbed by two articles which have appeared in your pages, "How the Trotskyists Went to Jail" by Joseph Hansen (February, 1944) and "A Defamer of Marxism" by Harry Frankel (May, 1944). I have decided to send you this public protest against them.

What is most lamentable in Joseph Hansen's article is the gross emotional reaction to events which it reveals. Such an attitude must be condemned. There are fine models of Marxist writing; there are other fine models of writing such as the letters of Vanzetti. Instead of learning from these, it seems as if Hansen imitated the very worst of bourgeois journalism, the sob sisters. I cannot escape the conclusion that Hansen used the Marxist conception of history and the Marxist conception of morality as a means of mere sentimental personalization. If such is not adulation of leadership, I do not know what it is. I admire the fine example which the 18 showed during the trial; I admire them for the way in which they have preserved their morale while in jail. But this does not mean that I should adulate them, no more than that I should hope for them or anyone else to adulate me for any reason whatsoever. I also wish strongly to object to the assertion that only the Trotskyists are moral. When party leaders and leading party journalists make such assertions in public, the time has come for such a party to turn a sharp lense of criticism on itself. Hansen's attitude can only create distorted images of reality. I consider it dangerous. The other criticisms of Hansen's article -- his bad taste, his sloppiness, his bathos -- which one can make -- these are secondary to its dangerous orientation. I deem it absolutely necessary to criticize that -- the emotional reaction to events, and with it, the emotional conceit of history

I reject the theory of bureaucratic collectivism. But I consider that Harry Frankel's review of Max Shachtman can well be described as literary apache work. It was not principled in its arguments. It substituted vituperation for argument and analysis. In consequence, it destroyed the effect of the good points which it made. For instance, Frankel indicated that during the Finnish War, Max Shachtman used the low morale of the Red Army as one argument substantiating his position. Thereby, he established morale as a criterion of argument. In consequence, it should be obligatory for him to explain the high morale of the Red Army in repulsing the Nazi invasion. But the fact that I agree with some of the points made by Frankel does not mean that I should defend his unfairness, his uncouth efforts to strip his adversary of all dignity, all honor, all sincerity. I consider it highly objectionable to polemicize with shabby arguments. And that is precisely what Frankel did in this article. For instance, he wrote that Shachtman had issued "a new edition" of Trotsky's "The New Course." Here is an innuendo which helps Frankel to discredit Shachtman, to call him, in the manner of a fishwife, a black market charlatan. Now, where is the old edition of "The New Course"? Who sells it? When has it been advertised in your press? When I read this book, I immediately regretted that it had not been available sooner: I regretted, in particular, that it was not available during the period of the struggle against the Moscow Trials. Among other things, this book contains a brilliant description of the methods of Leninism, one which I hope will be widely read. I hope Harry Frankel will read it again. For I am convinced that he has much to learn from it. Also: Harry Frankel asked an empty question as a means of discrediting his opponent. Issuing a challenge, he asked why Max Shachtman did not re-publish "The Revolution Betrayed"? First of all, there is easy access to this book for all who want to read it. Second, it is a known fact that the publication rights to this book are owned by Doubleday Doran & Co..

If Max Shachtman published it, he would, undoubtedly, be faced with a lawsuit. And if that happened, I am rather sure that Frankel, or one of his comrades who is equally rigid in attitude, would then write of this lawsuit in order to prove the low morals of Max Shachtman. When one indulges in such cheap argument, what moral right has one to call anybody a black market merchant in tripe? Why ask empty questions as a means of destroying the character of an adversary? Also, Harry Frankel would have us believe that in the United States, Max Shachtman has abandoned the Marxist conception of a trade union; in other words, that he is a scab and a strike breaker. I wonder who will believe that? And while he indulges in such miserable means of refutation, Frankel is, at the same time, guilty of one serious omission. Trotsky conceded that it might happen that history will prove Bruno to have been correct, and that if this turns out to be the case, then Marxists will have to re-orientate themselves totally. But, Trotsky added, he was not convinced that events had, as yet, justified Bruno, and that therefore, it was wrong for Marxists to abandon their programme. This concession was a very important one. Frankel should have discussed it. It would have been more important to have discussed it than to have wasted space in the cheapest of abuse. ~~The fact that I reject Max Shachtman's acceptance of the theory of bureaucratic collectivism does not, in my eyes, justify me in approving of unfair, unprincipled, utterly unjust attacks upon him and his character. I consider such methods to be unworthy of Marxism.~~

I am, as is well known, not a member of your party. But I have collaborated with you on defense cases. I have expressed sympathy with you. On more than one occasion, I have made it clear to Max Shachtman and his collaborators that I did not agree with the theory of bureaucratic collectivism. The fact that I have done this causes me to feel all the more imperatively that it is my duty to send you this protest. Also; I admire the organized will which your party has shown. I admire your spirit of optimism and confidence. I admire the many examples of dedication to ideals and sacrifice for super-personal loyalties which your party has displayed. But none of these virtues can, in any way, excuse the Frankel attack.

I am fearful that if articles such as these two continue to appear, their only effect will be that of working harm, not good. Gross sentimentality, unbending rigidity, unfair attacks on opponents -- these are all dangerous. I hold them to be indefensible.

Fraternally yours,

James T. Farrell

* * *

LETTER FROM M. MORRISON

June 9, 1944

I read the excerpt from Politics, written by Dwight MacDonald, dealing with Comrade Hanson's article "How the Trotskyists Went to Jail." The task is to attack and shatter MacDonald's conclusion: that the symptoms of leader-worship revealed in the article "grow from the Bolshevik organizational tradition." Of course, one must first decide whether Hanson's article shows this symptom. On the basis of the excerpts my judgment is that Hanson's article contains third-rate sob-sister stuff and some stupidities. It is disgraceful that the people responsible for the editorship should permit such stuff.

Do the excerpts indicate a leader-worship complex? An affirmative answer may be too sweeping a conclusion. However, I have detected the beginnings of such a tendency on other occasions and Hanson's article does nothing to indicate that the tendency has disappeared. It can do no harm and might do a lot of good if, in connection with the article, a warning against such a tendency be sounded.

But assuming that Hanson's article is as bad as MacDonald indicates, how does it follow that such evils can be attributed to Bolshevik organizational traditions? A history of the Bolshevik movement under Lenin disproves that theory conclusively. It is my contention that Bolshevism demands the greatest intellectual integrity; it demands that we say what is; it demands no surrender of one's opinions except if convinced by argument. No leader-worship complex existed under Lenin. The bitter struggles in the party prove that conclusively. Naturally, that does not exclude an evaluation of a leader's ideas and actions even during his lifetime.

The most effective answer to MacDonald is to admit Hanson's stupidities and to tackle MacDonald on his conclusion. If, as MacDonald indicates, there has been a reaction to Hanson's article within the party, that should be stressed as an indication that the members are sensitive to any suggestion of leader-worship.

It may be argued that there are people (like the editors) who see nothing wrong in Hanson's article. My proposal would be to have two criticisms of MacDonald's article published in the press. One by someone who agrees with me on Hanson's article, and one by someone who thinks that there is really nothing wrong with it--both articles attacking MacDonald's conclusion. This in itself would be the most devastating annihilation of MacDonald's thesis.

Undoubtedly an answer to MacDonald is contemplated. If such an answer contends that Hanson is correct, or if it

takes issue with some factual or irrelevant question, such as "What Dewey said" or the superiority of our morals to Dewey's morals, and if no answer is made from my viewpoint, then it will help to prove MacDonald's incorrect conclusion.

ARTICLE SUBMITTED BY COMRADE MORRISON FOR PUBLICATION IN THE MILITANT OR FOURTH INTERNATIONAL:

July 3, 1944

My attention has been called to a criticism by Dwight MacDonald, appearing in his magazine Politics, of Joe Hansen's article, "How the Trotskyists Went to Jail," published in the February issue of Fourth International. MacDonald, on the basis of excerpts cited from Hansen's article, characterizes it as sob-sisterish, with an attitude of leader-worship. At the end of his criticism he offers the general conclusion that the "pathological symptoms" revealed in Hansen's article "grow from the Bolshevik organizational traditions." The critic does not undertake to prove this proposition but simply states that "that is another and larger story," implying an attempt on his part to prove his assertion at a later date. I have not had a chance to read Hansen's article, but the excerpts cited by MacDonald convince me that these, at least, lend color to MacDonald's criticism. I feel chagrined that such expressions should appear in our press.

But the important question involved in MacDonald's criticism is his assertion that Hansen's attitude is a result of Bolshevik organizational methods. Since MacDonald does not take the trouble to illustrate and prove his general conclusion, I can only undertake to state a counter-proposition.

It should be clear to anyone in the least acquainted with the history of Bolshevism that not a trace of sob-sister stuff or of leader-worship can be found in the movement that led the Russian masses in the greatest revolution in history. A spirit of intellectual independence and integrity pervades that movement, and such a spirit is irreconcilable with any leader-worship attitude. Lenin would have been the last man in the world to permit fawning and sentimental hero-worship. And of the same mold was Trotsky. During the lifetime of Bolshevik leaders there appeared evaluations of their ideas and roles but without the slightest suggestion of leader-worship. If nothing else, the fierce intellectual struggles that were part of the Bolshevik party at all times and the freedom with which they were conducted, conclusively show the existence of intellectual independence and integrity.

The question will have to be discussed further if and when MacDonald carries out his implied promise to prove his proposition. For the present I can only add to what I have said above that, like all other opponents of Trotskyism, MacDonald confuses Stalinism with Bolshevism.

How did it happen, one may ask, that the expressions used by Hansen, could find room in the Trotskyist press? My explanation is that the poison of leader-worship, prevailing in society at the present moment, can infect some very good revolutionists, under special circumstances. The particular situation of having Trotskyists go to jail plus the particular literary inclinations of Hansen adequately explain the expressions cited by MacDonald. One can also readily see that, in my opinion, the editors were not sufficiently careful in this particular instance.

* * *

LETTER FROM M. MORRISON

August 20, 1944

The refusal to publish, in The Militant or Fourth International, Morrison's letter answering Dwight MacDonald's criticism of Hansen's article is justified by the contention that the letter contains a criticism of the Hansen article and that such a criticism must be limited to an internal party bulletin. One is permitted, of course, to attack MacDonald, but only on the basis of defending Hansen's article or of evading the question of Hansen's article altogether. According to the Political Committee two questions are involved in the MacDonald-Hansen controversy: one, an answer to MacDonald and two, a criticism of Hansen. The first can be published in our public organs; the second is only for party members. This reasoning is nothing but sophistry and not so clever that it is difficult to answer.

It must, in the first instance, be recognized that the Hansen article does not deal with a question of party policy; it does not assume to defend a policy adopted by the party. No official body of the party adopted the article, prior to its publication, as a statement of and for the party. It is an article expressing certain views of an individual party member and, presumably, had the approval of the editorial staff.

The general question as to whether or not disagreements on political questions that are before the party for a decision, should be discussed in the public press of the party is not involved in this matter. Hansen did not begin any discussion on any question of party policy. If he did, then an opponent of his, I presume, should have an equal right of presenting opposing views in the public press. But I can hardly conceive that anyone will contend that Hansen dealt with any question of party policy.

Not even the more narrow question of the propriety of publishing, in the party press, articles presenting different viewpoints on dialectics or on the correctness or incorrectness of certain slogans for the European revolution, is involved here. A lot of nonsense has been uttered about the alleged Bolshevik practice of confining a discussion of different viewpoints to internal bulletins of the party. It

is obviously necessary to make an attempt to bring some clarity into this question but this is not the occasion for such an attempt. I must limit myself to the question raised by the refusal to publish Morrison's letter answering MacDonald's conclusion in his criticism of Hansen's article.

As the matter stands, Hansen wrote an article containing statements which, in my opinion, are not only foolish but a discredit to the Trotskyist movement. (I am informed that our British comrades refused to reprint the article in their press. If that is so, they show good taste and the finest type of Trotskyism). This article appeared in the party press and MacDonald utilized it in an attempt to discredit the Bolshevik movement. An answer to MacDonald is called for. Some will say that MacDonald is not important enough to answer. Utter nonsense! Even if MacDonald's magazine had one-fifth of the circulation he claims to have his attack on Bolshevism, based on Hansen's article, demands a reply. It is the kind of an attack which, by a failure to answer, acquires considerable effectiveness, because there is a tendency for that type of an attack to circulate widely by means of conversation. On the other hand an effective reply strengthens our movement in the eyes of many whose faith would be shaken by MacDonald's criticism. In fact, a copy of the letter which Morrison wrote for our press should have been forwarded immediately to MacDonald's magazine. If any attack may possibly do some harm, do not leave it unanswered, is a good rule to follow.

To defend Bolshevism against MacDonald, Morrison finds it necessary to make, what is in fact, a mild criticism of Hansen's article. In reality the article is every bit as nauseating as MacDonald claims it is. But, says the Political Committee, no criticism of Hansen is permitted in the open press. His article can be criticized only in an internal bulletin. (By the way, I am given to understand that the P.C. requested someone, who wrote an article for the internal bulletin, criticizing Hansen's article, to withdraw it -- an indication to me that the P.C. was very touchy on the subject).

What does this attitude of the P.C. really mean? Actually it has this terrible significance. That every party member is bound, as far as the public is concerned, not only by policies adopted by official bodies of the party, but by all possible nonsense that a party member may write and an editorial board publish! And regardless of whether the foolishness has anything to do with party policy or not. Carry it a step further and it means that when asked, in conversation with some non-party member, what I think of Hansen's article I must defend it. I can only say that this is not Bolshevism; it is a travesty on Bolshevism. I can only say that if any non-party person asks me, in any conversation, what I think about Hansen's article I shall not hesitate to give him my real opinion. I advise every other party member to do the same -- unless the highest body of the party specifically forbids any party member from doing so. And woe to our party if such a monstrous decision is ever made.

All that Bolshevick practice demands is not to oppose, in public, a policy adopted by the party or not to defend, in public, a policy rejected by the party. To broaden this sound principle to a point where it includes a prohibition to disagree publicly with what another member writes in the press on a matter not pertaining to party policy is characteristic not of Bolshevism but of its antithesis Stalinism.

MacDonald wrote a criticism in which, on the basis of certain statements made by Hansen, he draws a completely false conclusion as to the nature of Bolshevism. An effective reply to MacDonald can be made either (1) by defending Hansen's statements by showing that there is not the slightest tendency to leader-worship in the statements made by Hansen and that, therefore, MacDonald's conclusion is without basis in fact. Or (2) by admitting, partially or wholly, MacDonald's interpretation of Hansen's assertions and showing that his conclusion is still false.

Any reply to MacDonald which does not deal with Hansen's statements from the point of view as to whether or not they can be considered as showing a tendency to leader-worship, cannot possibly be effective in the eyes of an intelligent reader. One can argue from now till doomsday whether Dewey is less moral than Trotskyists, but that is a question which, while it may be important, has absolutely no bearing on the main issue. To discuss that question exclusively is an intentional or unintentional evasion of the main issue.

It appears that thus far no one has dared to defend Hansen's statements with reference to the question of leader-worship. The P.C. will not permit a defense of Bolshevism in which Hansen is criticized. Hence no effective reply has as yet been written.

Aside from the fact that an effective reply to MacDonald can be made only along the lines of Morrison's letter, the very appearance of the letter in our press would have, in and of itself, annihilated MacDonald's contention. That simple method would have shown that Bolshevism, as it exists in our party, is capable of permitting the widest differences of opinion and that under such conditions, no tendency to leader-worship can possibly have any chance for development. The harm that Hansen's article brought to the party would have been immediately remedied.

By its refusal to publish Morrison's letter against MacDonald and in defense of Bolshevism, the P.C. has strengthened the hands of all the enemies of our party. That is why it is essential for the convention to direct the publication of Morrison's letter and undo the damage caused by Hansen and the Political Committee.

TWO CONCEPTIONS OF OUR TASKS

By Joseph Hansen

It is apparent that a period of stormy development faces the American labor movement today. With the correct orientation, our party can forge swiftly ahead.

On the organizational side, we must tighten discipline, strengthen centralism. A sharp turn in this direction is not required as our party made the decisive reorientation more than four years ago. Ever since the petty-bourgeois opposition of 1939-1940 headed off for a "third camp" under the guidance of Burnham, our party has steadily improved its discipline. By and large branches today are streamlined, efficient, smooth-working -- a gratifying contrast to the insufferable anarchism that prevailed before the petty-bourgeois opposition of 1939-1940 split away. A considerable degree of centralization has likewise been achieved. In the old days the standing grievance was lack of attention from the center. Now the party is well coordinated through a center that is alive to branch needs and able to offer considerable guidance in handling local problems. Not even the imprisonment of our leadership could disrupt the smooth functioning of the National Office. This is proof that we are on the right road.

As in organization, so in our press in the coming period we must more and more turn in the direction of the most oppressed levels of the masses. This means propagandizing the condition and problems of the working class in terms these levels will understand and appreciate. It means doing the same for the program of Trotskyism, its party and leadership. Articles in our press will thus tend to diverge in form -- some more or less abstract and rigorously scientific, directed largely to the cadres; some more plastic and emotional directed to the raw circles where we are probing for contacts.

Our press has already been turning in this direction. The columns of Kovalsky, V. Grey and Jackson -- "Diary of a Steel Worker", "Shop Talks on Socialism" and "The Negro Struggle" -- are only the most conspicuous examples of the orientation. That this turn expresses a need felt by every field worker is attested by the letters commenting on the steady improvement of the Militant. By "steady improvement" they are not referring so much to their own subjective reaction to this or that article as to the increasingly sympathetic response to the Militant on the part of raw workers. They are thus objective in their judgment.

Already we can note important gains resulting from this improvement in the party organization and press. (Not improvement so much as consciously turning toward the more oppressed layers of the working class). Workers are attracted to our headquarters. They are impressed by the business-like way we function. The bulk of recent recruits are workers who have had no previous political affiliation. This is a most important symptom. Despite war time difficulties our trade union fractions have managed to hold their own, consolidate themselves, attract contacts, and in places win important recruits. The almost 8,000 trial subscriptions, most of them taken by politically inexperienced workers, should have opened the eyes of the blind

as to what is coming next.

Our orientation for the coming period must thus be based on the expectation of a wave of recruitment of workers without previous political affiliation -- workers who will learn the ABC's of politics in the school of Trotskyism.

However, as we have thus approached closer to the raw workers and prepared ourselves for the important task of integrating these newcomers into Bolshevism, an opposition tendency has arisen in the party. Instead of throwing themselves into the new tasks, a few people are drawing back, turning their attention inwardly to the production of criticism of the party regime. They are apparently rationalizing their activity as vigilance against the danger of Stalinist methods arising in our party.

This tendency is extremely suspicious of the leadership, believing apparently that it has succumbed to the poison of Stalinism. They place every proposal and action of the leadership under a microscope, searching for traces of the virus of Stalinism. To virtually every positive proposal, they react negatively, warning at the same time about Stalinism. They search frantically for some sure-fire prophylaxis against Stalinism -- and seek it not in the program of the party or the teachings of the Marxist masters which are available for study by every party member, but in some mystic and intangible subjective attitude which they label revolutionary "spirit."

This tendency, now fairly cohesive, has begun to come out into the open. Although as yet they have had difficulty finding any political differences with the party leadership, they have a program of action. They seem to visualize the main task of the party in the coming period to be sharp self-criticism and turning upon itself to destroy Stalinist germs. They constitute a brake on the party, holding it back from plunging wholeheartedly into the new tasks precisely when it is possible to begin reaping big returns on our policy of proletarianization.

Their Central Thesis

In his letter of July 23, M. Morrison, ideological leader of this tendency, hints at the central thesis that binds these people together. To new members he advises:

"You, who are young in the movement and have not had a chance to study the history of Bolshevism, do not take for granted that whatever someone in authority claims to be Bolshevik practice, is actually such. . .

"I know how dangerous it is to follow a general rule, but I think you will be quite safe to abide by the following general rule: whenever any organizational procedure has a resemblance to Stalinist procedure, hesitate a thousand times before accepting it as Bolshevik procedure."

It is really remarkable that such a monstrous insinuation concerning our party could be couched in such mild words.

Let us examine this insinuation more closely. Why did Morrison choose precisely "resemblance to Stalinist procedure?" Why not something with which our new members are more familiar, such as fascist procedure, Democratic procedure, Republican procedure, even bureaucratic trade union procedure? Why Stalinist?

Consider the monstrousness of the advice. A new recruit who has joined Trotsky's party of the World Socialist Revolution must take as his general rule to "hesitate a thousand times" before accepting as Bolshevik any organizational procedure that "has a resemblance to Stalinist procedure."

Wouldn't it be a bit disconcerting to a recruit from the Stalinists that he should take as his general rule such an insinuation about the party which he has just joined on the grounds of its very antithesis to Stalinism?

Consider the task of branch organizers who must justify a thousand times for each new recruit any organizational procedure that resembles Stalinist procedure. How is the new recruit to know that the branch organizer is telling the truth about what constitutes Stalinist procedure? Doesn't Morrison's advice therefore instil in the minds of new recruits a poisonous suspicion of the party leadership?

Still more important, aren't new recruits going to wonder why certain leaders like Morrison are so concerned about the appearance of anything resembling Stalinism in our party? Is Stalinism perhaps inherent in Bolshevism?

Would they not be justified in puzzling over this question since it is precisely Stalinist procedure against which the warning is issued? How can they be sure even that Morrison himself is not utilizing Stalinist methods? What guarantee can be given that Morrison will never utilize -- not even unconsciously -- organizational procedures that resemble Stalinist procedures?

However, we must conclude, despite the monstrous character of the insinuation, that Morrison has thought this question through. He is a party leader who advocates choosing words carefully, not only with an eye to "style" but also with due regard for their scientific meaning. We are justified, therefore, in my opinion to conclude from these excerpts that after long and thorough pondering, Morrison believes that Stalinist methods -- none other but Stalinist methods -- are indeed growing in our party and that the main task of the coming period is to fight to eliminate them.

The Application of the Thesis

A thesis is no good unless it corresponds to reality. Those who believe in Morrison's thesis have therefore set out assiduously to test whether their chosen leader has made a correct analysis. They do not hesitate at mistaking a distortion of reality for truth, if the distortion happens to bolster up the pronouncements of their leader. We have therefore heard some remarkable versions of some simple happenings.

(1) If Stalinist methods have appeared in Trotsky's party, then we can expect sooner or later false trials and purges. Sure enough, Morrison's thesis is borne out. Four comrades violate Bolshevik organizational procedure by organizing a discussion group with an enemy party and failing to give the party leadership the opportunity to decide whether to continue or discontinue their discussions. After careful investigation, in which the comrades enjoyed every democratic right of a party member, they were found guilty, given a vote of censure and a general membership meeting was called to inform everyone of the results.

Ergo. Morrison writes July 30: "What the New York membership has done is something entirely new in our party and, as I have indicated in my first letter, contrary to the proud and confident spirit of Bolshevism."

It is clear to everyone who was present at the meeting and familiar with the case that Morrison reached this judgment not as a result of objective regard for the facts. Obviously Morrison was hunting for verification of his thesis.

Ergo. Lydia Bennett writes August 21: "I know of only one working-class organization which has forbidden its members to discuss political matters with members of other parties; the Stalinite organization."

Comrade Bennett even wrings her hands in amazement over the "spectacle of a mass trial" in which a young comrade has to go through the "horror" of defending herself before a membership "whipped into a fever of denunciation by the party leadership." She even compares it to the ordeal she experienced upon being expelled from the Communist Party by the Stalinists for the crime of advocating Trotskyism! Does Comrade Bennett now believe our organization has become Stalinized?

We are amazed ourselves at the spectacle of people who whip themselves into such a fever to prove a thesis.

(2) If Stalinist methods have appeared in Trotsky's party, then we can expect sooner or later development of a leadership cult. Sure enough, Morrison's thesis is borne out. Hansen is assigned to cover the imprisonment of the Trotskyist leadership, his particular task being to give a personal and human touch to these leaders in order to appeal to workers who might remain cold to all the other approaches. Said report to constitute one part of a pamphlet in which the speeches of the defendants handle the other aspects of the case. The report undoubtedly appeared to be a departure into a field largely untried by our party -- maybe because it is not every day our leaders are imprisoned or because we addressed our propaganda for so many years to the politically initiated cadres of the Communist Party that we became habituated to writing in an abstract way. Hansen likewise took the liberty of cutting through technical difficulties, such as picturing 18 prisoners bound for three different prisons, by choosing as main protagonist the prisoner presumably representative of all, Comrade Cannon.

But Morrison has a thesis.

Ergo. Hansen exhibits "a leader-worship complex." If Hansen mentions a personal detail about the leaders, it is not because he is trying to build a concrete picture of them easily visualized. Morrison's conclusion is as automatic as a reflex -- "leader-worship complex." Morrison did not ask Hansen what he tried to do. Morrison did not even ask for the reaction of the audience for whom Hansen was writing. Morrison read excerpts re-printed by a deadly enemy of Trotskyism with his own axe to grind, and on the basis of these excerpts reacted without further ado; "Do the excerpts indicate a leader-worship complex? An affirmative answer may be too sweeping a conclusion. However, I have detected the beginnings of such a tendency on other occasions and Hansen's article does nothing to indicate that the tendency has disappeared. It can do no harm and might do a lot of good if, in connection with the article, a warning against such a tendency be sounded."

Before Hansen's article appeared, Morrison had detected in our party nothing less than a tendency to leader-worship! Did Morrison seize on Hansen's article merely as one instance of this tendency? An instance he hoped to utilize as a whipping boy to emphasize the correctness of his thesis? Isn't it wonderful to have a thesis that is confirmed in such remarkable detail by the reality of our party regime?

(3) If Stalinist methods have appeared in Trotsky's party, then we can expect sooner or later false methods of argument with opponent groups and an unjustifiable ruthlessness in relations with them. Sure enough, Morrison's thesis is borne out. Comrade Frankel writes an article such as has appeared dozens if not hundreds of times in our press -- a really excellent article that is far milder in tone than that employed by Shachtman in his polemics against the genuine followers of Trotsky.

But Morrison's thesis . . .

Ergo. James T. Farrell writes July 30; "I consider that Harry Frankel's review of Max Shachtman can well be described as literary apache work. It was not principled in its arguments. It substituted vituperation for argument and analysis." Doesn't Farrell suggest that Stalinist methods have appeared in our party?

(4) If Stalinist methods have appeared in Trotsky's party, then we can expect sooner or later that its educational system will be perverted to the dissemination of Stalinist poison. Sure enough, Morrison's thesis is borne out. Comrade Martin proposes a comprehensive educational plan for the party which is adopted by the Political Committee. The essential point developed by Martin in his accompanying remarks is that the education of the party ranks which up to now has been carried on more or less unsystematically, should be systematized and regulated according to an over-all plan with certain definite methods and objectives. Comrade Martin wanted to bring the "element of consciousness" into party education. This plan which was worked out in some detail and thoroughly motivated was greeted with enthusiasm by virtually every one in the party.

Morrison's thesis, however . . .

Ergo. Morrison comments: "I deem it necessary to take advantage of the educational proposal to touch on certain aspects of Marxist education, which must be constantly emphasized. These aspects are intangible; they deal with an attitude and a spirit rather than with a definite doctrine. . . . Since the terrible **Stalinist** degeneration, every serious person in the Marxist movement fears and thinks of possible degeneration. . . ."

Developing his monstrous insinuation that the proposed educational plan will be utilized to further Stalinist procedures in Trotsky's party, Morrison continues:

"When we consider the Stalinist degeneration we are struck by this fact that the most critical, the most intellectually independent spirits in the Bolshevik Party were the best fighters against Stalinism. Amongst those who readily succumbed to Stalinism were outstanding Marxist scholars, those who knew all the principles found in the books written by Marx and Engels. Those who were most militant in the defense of all the laws of the Hegelian dialectic found no difficulty in accepting Stalin's leadership. What they lacked was critical independence; what they lacked was intellectual integrity!"

Isn't this argument a variation of Shachtman's argument in his 1939-1940 struggle against Trotsky that some good revolutionaries were not dialecticians while some bad revolutionaries supported dialectics, therefore dialectics is of no use?

Doesn't Morrison even carry Shachtman's argument a step further? Some Marxist scholars "readily succumbed to Stalinism"; some independent spirits fought Stalinism, so Marxist scholarship is no guarantee against the infiltration of the Stalinist virus in Trotsky's party.

And what does Morrison offer us as substitute for the dialectic and scholarship? What is this "intangible" subjective mood that will save our party from Stalinist degeneration -- nothing less than Stalinist degeneration?

Here is Morrison's formula: "Let us never forget that in addition to the doctrines of Marxism there is also the spirit, critical, scientific, independent -- in a word, revolutionary. Revolutionary Marxist education must inculcate that spirit."

If we remove the verbiage that clothes this spirit, we cannot help seeing that its features are familiar.

All the revisionists of Marxism began their inroads upon the revolutionary program under the banner of this intangible spirit. From Bernstein to Burnham all followed this will-of-the-wisp into the swamp. Wasn't Stalin himself an "independent" thinker? Wasn't he an "iconoclast"? Wasn't his theory of socialism in one country a prize example of "independent" thinking? Didn't Stalin strike out on a path of his own instead of adhering to the established leadership of Lenin and Trotsky? In the realm of ideology what was

the whole battle of Trotskyism against Stalinism in essence but a battle between "independent thinking" and Marxist orthodoxy?

In Morrison's attack upon the educational plan we have probably the most remarkable example of the strange compulsion which forces him to find Stalinist degeneration dirtying Trotsky's party. A strange compulsion which he strangely enough calls the "spirit of intellectual independence and integrity."

We have considered only four instances of the application of Morrison's thesis. Other applications can be supplied in abundance by everyone who has discussed with members of this tendency: their fears that discipline will lead to grave abuses, that the party leadership misinterprets and misapplies Bolshevik centralism, that the leadership stifles independent thinking, that the leadership of this or that branch or fraction has usurped the rights of the rank and file, etc., etc., etc.

All the members of this tendency try to operate to the best of their ability on the advice expressed in Morrison's letter of July 23: "Let not one single Stalinist germ penetrate into our ranks." But Morrison even drives them on, fearing perhaps that the time is short and that his followers are not thoroughly enough imbued with the critical spirit. In his letter ostensibly commenting on the educational plan he insists vehemently they carry out a program of action: "Let us destroy every germ of degeneration that enters our ranks. The spirit of the article in 'How the Trotskyists Went to Jail' is a germ of degeneration. Let us destroy it. The spirit of those who insisted on publishing this article in a pamphlet after a substantial minority objected to the article is a germ of degeneration. Let us destroy it. The spirit of those who organized the New York membership meeting to make our members feel that they cannot discuss political questions with WP members is, consciously or unconsciously, one that constitutes a germ of Stalinist degeneration. Let us destroy it."

Stalinism, spirits, germs, degeneration, destruction! Morrison's conclusions about Trotsky's party of the World Socialist Revolution will scarcely inspire new recruits.

The Stalinist Germ -- One Theory of Its Source

But where does this Stalinist germ in Trotsky's party come from? the new member beginning to study dialectics is bound to ask Morrison insistently. Is it inherent in the very nature of Bolshevism? And if you can't trust the Trotskyist leadership how can you hope to distinguish Bolshevik procedure from Stalinist procedure in situations different from those experienced by the Bolsheviks? It's all very puzzling.

Those who believe that Stalinism is inherent in Bolshevik organizational procedure, argue their conclusion follows from the character of Bolshevik morals. The end does not always justify the means, they claim. That is, a successful revolution does not necessarily justify certain methods in making that revolution. Even more, if certain methods are utilized, those very methods will reappear in

the successful revolution and cause it to degenerate. This is their explanation of the origin of Stalinism. Their case clearly rests on their views of Bolshevik morality and that is why they always start talking about Bolshevik "amoralism" when they seek in Trotsky's party of today the seeds that would lead to degeneration of a successful American revolution.

They are by no means rigid in terminology, "amoralism" being only one of the labels they apply to the character of Bolshevik morals. Thus Trotsky notes in "The Moralists and Sycophants Against Marxism": "Victor Serge has disclosed in passing what caused the collapse of the Bolshevik party: excessive centralism, mistrust of ideological struggle, lack of freedom-loving ("libertaire," in reality anarchist) spirit." This lack of exactness in terminology is a decided handicap to independent thinkers since it precludes the possibility, for instance, of Morrison making a clear and unmistakable distinction between his "proud and emancipating spirit" and Victor Serge's "freedom-loving spirit."

None of these people such as Serge, Souvarine, MacDonald, etc. understand that the Stalinist degeneration of the first workers state in history was and is a unique phenomenon. It could occur only in a workers state bequeathed a backward economy and left isolated in imperialist encirclement. None of these people understand the economic and political conditions which gave rise to Stalinism, but ascribe it to lack of independent thinking among the Bolsheviks, bad organizational procedures, absence of the intangible moral spirit possessed by the critic.

Both Farrell and Dwight MacDonald therefore object to that part of Hansen's report which refers to the Trotskyists as the most moral people. I am not sure about Farrell's views on the subject, but the theory to which MacDonald adheres is well known. According to this theory Trotsky's party does carry out Bolshevik practice, but this practice, say the critics, is not moral and if the Trotskyists do win a revolution it will surely degenerate precisely because it was won with Lenin's methods. MacDonald curiously enough believes the degeneration is already developing in the party. It is not known how he squares this with the fact that all previous degeneration of revolutionary parties prior to revolution were social patriotic degenerations which began under the banner of independent thinking. Lenin's party did not degenerate before the revolution. Only tremendous economic and social pressures were able to destroy it after the revolution. To try to find seeds of degeneration that will flower after the party gains power is the most futile and useless occupation imaginable. A degeneration before the revolution will not lead to success at all but to failure as in the case of the German social democracy.

Farrell's views on this matter, I repeat, are largely unknown to me. I am not familiar with his writings in this field. However, it seems to me he does indicate a line of thought similar to that of MacDonald in the criticism he addresses to the party. Thus he declares that while he dislikes and protests Hansen's mannerisms in the report "How the Trotskyists Went to Jail" -- ". . . these are secondary to its dangerous orientation." In a previous

sentence he specifies, "I also wish strongly to object to the assertion that only the Trotskyists are moral."

Truth is, I am not sure that Comrade Cannon, whose remarks I reported, really deserves credit as first in making the observation that only the Trotskyists are truly moral. Leon Trotsky wrote two articles on precisely this question to which I am glad to refer Farrell, "Their Morals and Ours," and "The Moralists and Sycophants Against Marxism." Trotsky's opinion is quite unequivocal.

A few paragraphs will indicate his reasoning:

"Let us note in justice that the most sincere and at the same time the most limited petty-bourgeois moralists still live even today in the idealized memories of yesterday and hope for its return. They do not understand that morality is a function of the class struggle; that democratic morality corresponds to the epoch of liberal and progressive capitalism; that the sharpening of the class struggle in passing through its latest phase definitively and irrevocably destroyed this morality; that in its place came the morality of fascism on one side, on the other the morality of proletarian revolution."

John Dewey's morality, for instance, is not the morality of the proletarian revolution. He is a supporter of "democratic" capitalism.

"A revolutionary Marxist cannot begin to approach his historical mission without having broken morally from bourgeois public opinion and its agencies in the proletariat," declares Trotsky. "For this, moral courage of a different calibre is required from that of opening wide one's mouth at meetings and yelling, 'Down with Hitler!' 'Down with Franco!' It is precisely this resolute, completely-thought-out, inflexible rupture of the Bolsheviks from conservative moral philosophy not only of the big but of the petty bourgeoisie which mortally terrorizes democratic phrase-mongers, drawing-room prophets and lobbying heroes. From this derive their complaints about the 'amoralism' of the Bolsheviks."

This seems clear enough. Our morality requires an inflexible rupture from the conservative moral philosophy of Dewey and his spokesmen.

"The 'amoralism' of Lenin, that is, his rejection of supra-class morals, did not hinder him from remaining faithful to one and the same ideal throughout his whole life; from devoting his whole being to the cause of the oppressed; from displaying the highest conscientiousness in the sphere of ideas and the highest fearlessness in the sphere of action; from maintaining an attitude untainted by the least superiority to an 'ordinary' worker, to a defenseless woman, to a child. Does it not seem that 'amoralism' in the given case is only a pseudonym for higher human morality?"

Higher human morality did not vanish from the earth with the death of Lenin. In the final paragraph of his essay, Trotsky writes:

"In these immense events the 'Trotskyists' learned the rhythm of history, that is, the dialectics of the class struggle. They also learned, it seems, and to a certain degree successfully, how to subordinate their subjective plans and programs to this objective rhythm. They learned not to fall into despair over the fact that the laws of history do not depend upon their individual tastes and are not subordinated to their own moral criteria. They learned to subordinate their individual tastes to the laws of history. They learned not to become frightened by the most powerful enemies if their power is in contradiction to the needs of historical development. They know how to swim against the stream in the deep conviction that the new historic flood will carry them to the other shore. Not all will reach that shore, many will drown. But to participate in this movement with open eyes and with an intense will -- only this can give the highest moral satisfaction to a thinking being!"

If Farrell still wishes "strongly to object to the assertion that only the Trotskyists are moral," it would seem that his quarrel is primarily not with Hansen but with Trotsky.

On the particular point involved, the question as to whether John Dewey, probably the outstanding moralist still left among the ideological apologists of capitalism, did not depart from the strict path of rectitude in presenting his own political views when announcing the verdict of the Commission of Inquiry into the Charges Made Against Leon Trotsky in the Moscow Trials, I can report that Trotsky had an opinion on this too. I was in Coyoacan when the verdict of "Not Guilty" was announced. Trotsky was greatly pleased -- the long delay in the announcement had aroused fears that perhaps GPU money or terror was affecting the Commission. He immediately prepared a press conference. But Dewey's injection of his own views into the announcement of the verdict was a bitter pill. Despite his admiration of Dewey, Trotsky was quite irritated and thought of answering his judge immediately in the press. We discussed the question in L.D.'s secretariat. Trotsky decided not to answer for the time being. Nevertheless the Old Man reserved the right to answer Dewey on a propitious occasion. It is not without interest that Dewey probably had some inkling of Trotsky's views since he took the trouble to answer "Their Morals and Ours," with an article published in the August 1938 New Internationalist. Cannon naturally was aware of Trotsky's opinion.

MacDonald is more explicit than Farrell on the question of Trotskyist morals. This Greenwich Village skeptic who has demonstrated for years by his sentimentality over the "victims of Kronstadt" that his emotions congenitally form along class lines, does not like Hansen's style any more than does Farrell, but that is not his main point of difference. (MacDonald for one certainly must have understood that had Hansen been assigned to write for his circle of squeezed lemons he would have chosen a more acid style.) MacDonald affirms, ". . . some of the worst parts of his article are direct quotations from Cannon, the main leader." He specifies that "high point" of these "worst parts" is Cannon's observation: "When the history of this epoch is written. . . they'll discover that the only really moral people were the Trotskyists." Then he concludes without showing the necessary connection -- that is a task beyond MacDonald's capacities -- "These symptoms are not new, of

course, and grow from the Bolshevik organizational tradition -- but that is another and larger story."

Now it is true that Morrison is careful to claim that he disagrees with MacDonald's conclusions. He is only willing to agree with MacDonald's "minor" point that a leadership cult has appeared in Trotsky's party. Presumably he will try to argue that this flesh and blood leadership cult did not result from Bolshevik organizational procedure as alleged by MacDonald. Just how Morrison would explain the appearance of this alleged cult remains a mystery -- it is not just Hansen's or Frankel's idiosyncracies that require explanation, we emphasize, but the appearance of the entire tendency "detected" by Morrison himself long before MacDonald wrote his article.

But still more compromising to Morrison's position is the fact that MacDonald bases his conclusion principally not on Hansen's alleged adulation of Cannon, which Morrison makes out to be MacDonald's only springboard, but on declarations of Comrade Dunne and Comrade Cannon, the main point being about Trotskyist morality. "From what I know of Cannon and his followers," declares MacDonald, "which is considerable, and from what I know of Dewey's public behavior, which is less but sufficient, it is not Cannon who has the right to talk about morality."

MacDonald refers to Cannon not Hansen and ultimately not Cannon but Trotsky. Does Morrison then agree or disagree with the declarations of Cannon and Dunne which were taken down, some of them in shorthand, some recorded from memory the same day they were uttered? As Farrell and MacDonald specify, it is a certain orientation, certain ideas which are decisive and not Hansen's good or bad manner of writing of the trip to prison. Not that I at all advocate Morrison should abandon his independent thinking merely to OK whatever the leadership says -- I am merely asking for the results of his independent thinking on the ideas that were expressed by Cannon and Dunne.

If Morrison has understood MacDonald's criticisms and still wishes to concede their correctness while denying the conclusion MacDonald draws from them, then he concedes what seem to me are some very important conceptions. He would thereby deny that the program of Trotskyism is the highest moral, that our party is destined to fulfill the greatest historic mission since the October revolution, that future historians will be more interested in our party of today than the bourgeois parties, just as people now are more interested in Lenin than the Kaiser. These are some of the "stupidities", the evidences of "political pathology", which Morrison is willing to grant MacDonald.

In selecting the question of morality as the key question, MacDonald was only being logical and consistent. He thereby placed his views in the open for discussion and action. What are we to think of a party leader who goes a step further than MacDonald, warning new members to "hesitate a thousand times" before accepting "any organizational procedure" that "has a resemblance to Stalinist procedure," and who even calls on his followers to "destroy" this intangible "germ," but who refuses to admit MacDonald's premise for

such a warning?

Surely he must have some other good and valid premise?

The Hidden Premise

Let us accept at face value Morrison's declaration: "The task is to attack and shatter MacDonald's conclusion," and look elsewhere for the hidden premise that explains to him the appearance of Stalinist tendencies in Trotsky's party.

There is only one other premise that I have ever heard advanced and that is the explanation offered by Shachtman in 1939-1940. True it is not exactly "Stalinist" procedure that Shachtman referred to, and if we presume that Morrison believes Shachtman was correct, then Morrison used the word "Stalinist" not in a scientific sense, but in an inexcusably lax manner that could only disorient the membership.

A few sentences from "The War and Bureaucratic Conservatism" which was signed by Abern, Bern, Burnham and Shachtman will give the gist of this position: "When we call the Cannon faction 'bureaucratic conservative,' we are giving a political characterization. But this particular political tendency manifests itself at one and the same time as conservative in its politics, and bureaucratic in its regime -- these are the two sides of the same coin . . . the Cannon group is in a state of development. Its bureaucratic conservatism is not the product of a day or a year. It has become crystallized, become a system, only gradually, over a long period. . . . The Cannon faction is a bureaucratic conservative clique, not a group built on a commonly accepted political platform. But what then, holds it together, if not a political platform? It, like all such groupings, if it is to endure, has only one resort: to group itself around an individual, a leader. The 'platform' of the grouping becomes -- the leader. It could not be otherwise."

Rank and file members of Morrison's tendency who whisper among themselves that the petty bourgeois opposition of 1939-1940 was right on the organizational question have probably been advised by their leader not to state openly their views about the source of infection but to confine themselves simply to stamping out Stalinist germs whenever they become manifest. They are supposed to fight typhoid by boiling their drinking water rather than hunting down the carriers and the source of contamination. We ask Morrison directly, since you do not agree with MacDonald's explanation of how Stalinist procedure can appear in Trotsky's party, do you then agree with the explanation advanced by Abern, Bern, Burnham and Shachtman? Isn't it Bolshevik procedure to say what is?

Why not bring out in the open the premise which forces you and your followers and sympathizers to accuse Trotsky's party of fostering a "fawning" attitude to leaders and sponsoring a "leader-worship complex"; of turning the "membership of the party . . . into a prosecuting body, whipped to a frenzy"; of organizing "literary apache work"; of utilizing the party educational system to culture the "germ of Stalinist degeneration" You call on the party to

"destroy" this germ of Stalinist degeneration. You call on the party to follow an "intangible" spirit. Isn't an explanation in order?

Our party is in no mood today to hear monstrous insinuations that its leadership employs the methods of Stalinism. We reached a conclusion on that subject some time ago. Anyone today hardened or factional enough to make such insinuations had best be prepared to develop his full views in the eyes of the membership.

"Our Program Founded on Bolshevism"

In his letter of July 23 Morrison mentions that "This year marks the end of a quarter of a century since I came into the revolutionary movement and during all this time I have never heard nor read of any case where responsible Bolsheviks have even discussed such a question as was raised at the New York membership meeting."

Because of this appeal to the authority of his 25 years in the labor movement, Morrison's advice may have influenced some of the youth who respect seasoned leadership. Surely one who has served the working class that long must know what he is talking about! Perhaps Morrison knows from a wealth of experience unavailable to us that the best way to build the party is to beware of Stalinist procedures and to seek an intangible revolutionary spirit.

However, Leon Trotsky, the founder of our world party, had something to say on the type of party he was building. In 1940 he wrote a Manifesto wherein his conception of what must be done to strengthen and prepare the party for its tasks varies considerably from the conception advanced by Morrison. The new member is thus fortunately able to choose between the authority of Trotsky and the authority to which Morrison appeals.

Here is how Trotsky views the problem now bothering Morrison:

"The Fourth International stands completely and wholeheartedly on the foundation of the revolutionary tradition of Bolshevism and its organizational methods. Let the petty-bourgeois radicals whine against centralism. A worker who has participated even once in a strike knows that no struggle is possible without discipline and a firm leadership. Our entire epoch is permeated with the spirit of centralism. Monopoly capitalism has brought economic centralization to its ultimate limits. State centralism in the guise of fascism assumed a totalitarian character. The democracies more and more attempt to emulate this pattern. The trade union bureaucracy is ruthlessly defending its powerful machine. The Second and Third Internationals are brazenly utilizing the state apparatus in their struggle against the revolution. Under these conditions the elementary guarantee of success is the counterposing of revolutionary centralism to the centralism of reaction. It is indispensable to have an organization of the proletarian vanguard welded together by iron discipline, a genuine selection of tempered revolutionists ready for self-sacrifice and inspired by an unconquerable will to victory. To prepare the offensive systematically and painstakingly, and when the decisive hour strikes to throw the entire strength of

the class on to the field of battle without faltering -- only a centralized party which does not falter itself is capable of teaching this to the workers.

"Shallow skeptics delight in citing the degeneration of Bolshevik centralism into bureaucratism. As though the entire course of history depended on the structure of a party! As a matter of fact it is the fate of the party that depends on the course of the class struggle. But in any case the Bolshevik party was the only party which proved in action its capacity for accomplishing the proletarian revolution. It is precisely such a party that is needed now by the international proletariat. If the bourgeois regime comes out of the war with impunity, every revolutionary party will suffer degeneration. If the proletarian revolution conquers, those conditions which produce degeneration will disappear."

Which Perspective?

Let us summarize the two perspectives at issue. Our orientation, in my opinion, must be based on the expectation of a wave of recruitment of workers without previous political affiliation. Consequently our entire organization, press and all, must be geared to this perspective.

In contrast to this realistic view, the new opposition tendency conceives that the main task is eternal vigilance against the danger of Stalinist germs in our party. They want to arm new recruits against the leadership. They want to warn of the dangers inherent in discipline and centralism in order that new recruits shall not be "misled" into losing "sight of the proud and emancipating spirit which is part and parcel of Bolshevism."

It takes little imagination to picture what type of branches we would have were the monstrous insinuations of these soul sick individuals taken at face value -- and the type of press and the type of discipline. As against our methods and our morality, which holds that the success of the revolution justifies everything necessary to that success, they advance their fetish about the "proud and emancipating spirit." Should their views prevail, we could not recruit workers or expect to hold them if we did get them in the party. Our party would face stagnation and eventually degeneration.

It is necessary sharply to oppose the debilitating methods and pernicious insinuations of these people. The party must reject their orientation in order to plunge without any hindrance into the new tasks that face us. Only in that way can the party surmount the obstacles standing between it and political hegemony of the working class, including the obstacle of the Stalinist machine.

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WHY THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE RESCINDED THE CENSURE
OF FOUR NEW YORK MEMBERS FOUND GUILTY OF VIOLATING DISCIPLINE

On September 25, 1944, the Political Committee passed the following motion: "That the Committee rescind the censure of the four New York members found guilty of violating discipline; that the Committee make it clear that it acted correctly in the case and that in rescinding the censure it merely wishes to make an organization concession in order to clear the atmosphere for a fruitful discussion in the pre-convention period of the basic issues involved, i.e., the question of democratic centralism, and particularly the conduct of comrades in relation to opponent organizations."

In rescinding the censure the Political Committee has not changed its mind as to the correctness of the censure. The action of the Political Committee in imposing the censure was taken in order to safeguard the centralized functioning of the party. We are of the firm opinion that in all relations with opponent groups comrades must not act in anarchistic fashion but carry on their activities with the full knowledge and under the direction of the party leadership. To depart from this practice would mean departing from democratic centralism and could only harm our objective of building a disciplined, revolutionary combat party.

We have voted to rescind the censure at this time because, in the pre-convention discussion, it is the main task to clarify the fundamental principled questions of organization which have been raised in the party. This action will serve, we hope, to clear the atmosphere of any extraneous issues, to remove any grievances which may tend to obscure the important political questions involved and thus to steer the discussion toward a solution of the major political problems before the party. The political issues which are now before the party for discussion are contained in the internal bulletins published and those yet to be published. The question of the censure, as well as the other organizational questions raised in the pre-convention discussion, have already revealed a divergence of viewpoint on the type of party we are to build and on the relationship between democracy and centralism in our party.

Questions of organizational method flow from the political program. Although subordinate to the political program, they constitute the indispensable instrument for its realization. Our party is a voluntary organization. Its discipline, its solidarity in action, its centralized direction, can be enforced only if there is understanding and agreement on our political and organizational principles. We feel that by removing the censure we will help facilitate a discussion of the basic, underlying concepts of democratic centralism which motivated the censure.

Our organizational concepts flow from our program and the needs of our program. These concepts are embodied in the resolution on "Organizational Principles upon which the Party is Founded." (See The Struggle for a Proletarian Party, page 227). The need

for revolutionary centralism is stressed by Comrade Trotsky in the following paragraphs from the Manifesto of the Fourth International on the Imperialist War and the Proletarian Revolution:

"The Fourth International stands completely and wholeheartedly on the foundation of the revolutionary tradition of Bolshevism and its organizational methods. Let the petty-bourgeois radicals whine against centralism. A worker who has participated even once in a strike knows that no struggle is possible without discipline and a firm leadership. Our entire epoch is permeated with the spirit of centralism. Monopoly capitalism has brought economic centralization to its ultimate limits. State centralism in the guise of fascism assumed a totalitarian character. The democracies more and more attempt to emulate this pattern. The trade union bureaucracy is ruthlessly defending its powerful machine. The Second and Third Internationals are brazenly utilizing the state apparatus in their struggle against the revolution. Under these conditions the elementary guarantee of success is the counterposing of revolutionary centralism to the centralism of reaction. It is indispensable to have an organization of the proletarian vanguard welded together by iron discipline, a genuine selection of tempered revolutionists ready for self-sacrifice and inspired by an unconquerable will to victory. To prepare the offensive systematically and painstakingly, and when the decisive hour strikes to throw the entire strength of the class on to the field of battle without faltering -- only a centralized party which does not falter itself is capable of teaching this to the workers.

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Political Committee