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## IS THERE A STALINIST DANGER IN THE S.W.P.?

By J. Lyons

Comrade Goldman, in recent months, has raised rather seriously the question of bureaucratic developments within the Socialist Workers Party. He has charged that bureaucratic acts of a Stalinist character have been committed by our leadership. We assume that the danger of repeated acts of a bureaucratic character lies, above all, in the possibility of the development of a bureaucratic apparatus and the usurpation of the democratic rights of the membership. If this were not the danger, there would be little value in discussing the acts in themselves. Comrade Goldman even goes so far as to picture for us the embryo of such an apparatus, but it appears that his picture resembles an inverted pyramid.

The "hero cult", the worship of the leader, and the ready submission to the political views of Cannon without discussion and "critical thinking": these are some of the charges upon which Comrade Goldman seeks to establish the existence of a bureaucratic danger within our party. What is most amazing in this contention, is that this embryo apparatus begins at the bottom and proceeds upward. If this is the character of bureaucracy, then it is an entirely new type, totally different from all others, including the Stalinist bureaucracy.

All bureaucracies have one thing in common: namely, material gain for the individual bureaucrats. In the trade unions in the United States, to shout hosannahs for Phil Murray and John L. Lewis means to make the job secure, and to receive a high salary together with support against any revolt in the ranks. To the Fascist bureaucrat, support of the leader means partaking in the spoils and vast privileges; it means the wielding of considerable power over the masses. To the Stalinist bureaucrat, support of Stalin means a greater share of the material wealth of production.

Although all of the privileges mentioned above present a rather impressive picture, they give us only one side of the story. Let us add that in these very same bureaucracies, failure to support the leader means exactly the opposite; for example, terror, insecurity, prison, isolation, infamy, and in some cases death. The strain that runs through all bureaucracies from the highest commander down to the lowest administrator is the existence of a "power from above", the compulsive factor which guarantees security and privilege for support, or terrible consequences for lack of support or opposition to the leader. This factor is the common denominator of all bureaucracies.

Let us ask of what privileges can a "hero worshipper" or a "hand raiser" in our party partake in return for support of the leader? Is it not true that to become a functionary in our party means that one must accept a very modest salary, lower than that of unskilled labor? Is it not also true that our functionary is saddled

down to hard routine work, the monotony of which is periodically broken by a jail sentence? Those who are fortunate enough to avoid the latter "privilege" can enjoy the "prestige" of leading a relatively small group of workers whose organization is universally despised. Indeed, to become a functionary in our party usually means to forego material advantage and to make a personal sacrifice. Is it possible that a "power from above" could exist and be respected in return for such "privileges"? If it is, then a new genus of bureaucracy has been discovered.

To give a scientific hue to his claims, Comrade Goldman charges that these bureaucratic acts have their social roots in the "political backwardness of the American workers, a backwardness that naturally tends to cross party borders and penetrate into our ranks". This is a rather broad statement which requires much thought; as a matter of fact, it requires "critical thinking".

Let us point out first of all that we do not necessarily demand social roots in support of charges of separate bureaucratic acts, but rather in support of charges of the existence of a bureaucracy or at least a bureaucratic tendency. Although Comrade Goldman states that he is not charging the existence of a bureaucracy, he bases himself, nevertheless, upon what is an argument in support of the charge that a bureaucracy does exist. In other words, he implies the existence of a bureaucracy or a tendency toward one although he avoids saying it directly.

Is the political backwardness of the American worker responsible for the occurrence of bureaucratic acts on the part of the leadership? If it is then why are these acts Stalinist in character? Does this imply that Stalinism arose because of the political backwardness of the Russian worker? If it does, then Comrade Goldman confesses an astounding lack of understanding of the rise and growth of Stalinism.

Misconceptions of the nature of the Stalinist phenomenon are amply demonstrated in Comrade Goldman's article, "It is New, But Not True". Here, he says, "What are some outstanding characteristics of a Stalinist party on the organizational level? Blind obedience of the ranks to the party leaders; a total absence of critical thinking and therefore of real discussion; hostility to anyone who raises objections to party policy; build up of leaders; exaggerated emphasis on activity as against discussion; blind and unreasoning animosity to conscious political opponents."

Why, we ask, must we stop here? There are more characteristics which are deserving of notice; for example, the outlawing of regular conferences and conventions representative of the membership, complete intolerance by the leadership of any criticism of itself or its policy, prohibition by decree of any discussion whether internal, external or otherwise, suppression and expulsion of any minority or critical member.

To say that the Stalinist parties are characterized by a total "absence" of discussion and critical thinking is to present a false picture. It is not the negative factor of absence which is outstanding in a Stalinist party, but rather the more positive factors

of suppression and prohibition of criticism and discussion. Blind obedience of the ranks to the leaders is not a characteristic make up of the ranks, but it is rather the result of the compulsion and terror of the apparatus. This is the key to understanding not only Stalinist bureaucracy, but all bureaucracies without exception.

Let us take another one of the Stalinist characteristics given by Comrade Goldman: "blind and unreasoning animosity to conscious political opponents". Again we have a generalization which is only partly true. History shows that animosity is characteristic of a Stalinist party only at such times as this attitude fulfills the conjunctural needs of the apparatus. There have been times when Stalinism showed unreasoning friendliness toward conscious political opponents. Did not the Left Opposition in the Soviet Union conduct a long and bitter struggle against the Stalinists for their stupidly loose attitude of friendliness toward Chiang-Kai-Shek and the Kuomintang in China? Can we apply the animosity characteristic in describing the Stalinist parties of the People's Front period? Or are we to assume that Chiang-Kai-Shek, Azana, and Blum were not "conscious political opponents"?

We might even add that there is absolutely no evidence to show that a single Stalinist is being persecuted for friendliness toward Henry Wallace or any small time politician of the Democratic machine. Stalinists are perfectly free not only to talk to these people, but even to dine, drink, and dance with them. Recently, Molotoff himself toured the Kaiser shipyards walking arm in arm with none other than Henry J. Kaiser. This is indeed a unique application of "blind and unreasoning animosity".

One who takes up the task of hurling at our leadership the charges about Stalinist acts must make it his business to give us a well rounded picture of Stalinism as it really is, its moving forces, and its development. Goldman has given us only the apparent features of Stalinism without bothering to give us an analysis of its real nature.

### The Rise and Growth of Stalinism

There can be only one way to examine the charge that the alleged bureaucratic acts are of a Stalinist character. It is necessary to examine the causes for the growth and development of the Stalinist bureaucracy and to compare them with the causes or social roots given by Goldman for the alleged bureaucratic, Stalinist acts in our party.

The Souvarines, Eastmans, and Hooks, the champions of anti-Bolshevik half-thinking, continually howl about Stalinism being the inevitable outgrowth of Bolshevism; for, they say, is it not true that the Stalinists came out of the Bolshevik party? Let us correct them. Let us say that Bolshevism carried within itself some Stalinist germs, if no where else, at least in the person of Stalin himself. They are insistent upon stopping here, but we are equally insistent in carrying the thought through. Not only were the germs of Stalinism present, but also present were the germs of the opposite tendency, the tendency which later crystallized around the Left Opposition of the

Communist Party of the Soviet Union. This is what the petty bourgeois cynics always forget. For them the presence of half a thing is the presence of the whole thing if it fits into their petty bourgeois pattern.

As we go along the bacteriological analysis becomes increasingly more difficult to follow. Now we had the presence of the Stalinist germ and also its counter germ, Trotskyism. This analysis leads us nowhere. To get out of the blind alley we must cast aside petty bourgeois bacteriology and apply the Marxist method. What is important in our analysis is not the presence or absence of the germ alone, but the existence of a fertile field in which one of the two tendencies could grow, develop, and gain supremacy over its opponent as well as over the whole organism. That is the crux of it all. Stalinism had the necessary environment in which it could carry on a successful fight against the Left Opposition and become the master of the Third International. Any analysis of Stalinism which fails to grant that Stalinism is also the expression of the defeat of the Left Opposition is inherently barren, false, and one sided.

Trotsky led the fight against Stalinism in its early stages. Let us consult him on some of the aspects of that struggle. In the Criticism of the Draft Program he said:

"The Left proletarian wing of the party . . . has been subjected beginning with the Fall of 1923 to systematic, organizational campaigns of extermination. The methods of repression were conditioned upon the character of the internal regime which became more bureaucratic to the degree that the pressure exerted by the non-proletarian classes upon the proletariat grew stronger." Thus, it is here shown that the Stalinist apparatus needed and had a fertile environment in order to carry on its dirty work. Trotsky told us more specifically in the same book what that fertile field was:

"The possibilities for the success of such methods (that is, the Stalinist methods) were created by the general political character of the period in which the proletariat suffered the greatest defeats, the Social Democracy came to life again . . . The first onslaught against the Opposition was perpetrated immediately after the defeat of the German revolution and served, as it were, as a supplement of this defeat." Then follows the other side of the story which the anti-Bolsheviks never take into consideration:

"This onslaught would have been utterly impossible with a victory of the German proletariat which would have raised extraordinarily the self confidence of the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. and therefore, also its power of resistance to the pressure of the bourgeois classes, internally, and to the party bureaucracy which transmits this pressure."

Elsewhere, Trotsky summarized the whole analysis in the statement: "The cause for the growth of bureaucratism is to be sought only in the growth of class influences alien to the proletariat". Let us take careful notice that he places emphasis on the growth of bureaucratism and the growth of alien class influences. He described the defeat of the Opposition and the Victory of the bureaucracy as

being the result of a rightward swing of the working class internationally. Trotsky, the Marxist, insisted upon examining Stalinism not in any formal sense, but in its development and in its movement. This is precisely what Goldman fails to do when he simply asserts that the alleged bureaucratic acts of a Stalinist character have their "social roots" in the political backwardness of the American worker.

### Political Backwardness of the American Worker

Let us carry Comrade Goldman's assertion a little further. If our party today is being victimized by bureaucratic acts because of the political backwardness of the American worker, then our party of ten or twelve years ago should have been the victim of still greater bureaucratic perversions; for, if the American workers are politically backward today, they were immeasurably more backward in those days. Yet, our history shows that in those years of the past our party was characterized by a much greater internal looseness, and our greatest problem was to establish the concept that the party was not an arena for free lance radicals, and petty bourgeois intellectuals to carry on incessant debate and discussion. A great part of our history is a history of struggle against a false concept of party democracy. Why did not the backwardness of the American worker make possible then the occurrence of even more bureaucratic acts of a Stalinist character? Let Comrade Goldman explain why his alleged Stalinist germs were unable to flourish in that period of political backwardness, and why those germs insist instead, upon doing their mischief in the present period.

We maintain that it is insufficient to base the charges upon the categorical statement that the American worker is politically backward. The question must be posed correctly: backward in relation to what; is he becoming more backward or is he moving away from his backwardness; if he is moving away from his backwardness, at what nodal point will his backwardness change to its opposite? All of these considerations are of vital importance in any analysis of the effect of political backwardness of the American worker upon our party. In the light of this method, let us now glance at the recent history of the American labor movement and see how much support there is for Comrade Goldman's argument.

In 1929 the American workers were almost completely under domination of the idea that the United States was the land of unlimited opportunity -- the land of milk and honey. Far from considering the need for a revolutionary change, they considered such simple steps as unionism in mass industry as unnecessary. The crisis of 1932 blasted the intestines out of this bourgeois notion. The workers came out of that crisis bitterly disillusioned. The first industrial upturn in 1933 and 1934 posed the question of unionism on the order of the day. In 1937 a mass strike wave came to life, and its far reaching implications frightened the wits out of the bourgeoisie, its political agents, and its labor lieutenants. There can be no doubt of the general implication of this gigantic strike wave: it was the act of drawing the class lines in the United States on an unprecedented scale.

This mood of the workers was slightly dampened by the 1938 recession, but in 1941 it burst out again with renewed vitality. It continued on up to Pearl Harbor, and although it has since been refracted, distorted, and forcibly restrained, it has not been arrested. Even during the war, the working class has periodically broken the bourgeois front and asserted itself.

Of decisive significance are the developments in the last two years. The "politically backward" coal miners turned down the appeal of the politician Roosevelt and stood by the leadership of their class organization by continuing to shut down the pits until their demands were met, even if only partially. The conservative railroad workers voted overwhelmingly to strike for their demands in the face of government threats. Strike votes under the Smith Connally Act, though the ballots are worked in the most unfavorable way, have in the overwhelming number of cases been in favor of strike. Moreover, the labor leaders everywhere are feeling the rising tide of pressure from the ranks for a struggle against the whole war program of restriction and suppression of labor's rights.

From the above we cannot escape the unquestionable conclusion that the American workers are moving leftward. For the last twelve years, the American workers have been moving away from the influence of the bourgeoisie and in the direction of the proletarian revolution. It must be remembered that the growth of alien class influences upon the proletariat was the cause for the growth of Stalinism. Yet, Comrade Goldman is trying to convince us that Stalinism is rearing its head in our party in a period when the alien class influences upon the American proletariat are shrinking at an ever greater tempo.

#### What About the International Situation?

We refuse to make any concessions to Comrade Goldman's position. Even if his formula of political backwardness could be applied, it would not give the final answer; for, in the present epoch of international connections and entanglements it is false to assume that a proletarian party can be decisively influenced only by the situation of the proletariat in one country. Never did we attempt to analyse the Stalinist bureaucracy on the basis of the Russian proletariat alone. At all times we took into consideration the international working class as an important factor; in fact, we took it as the decisive factor. The defeat of the Left Opposition was possible, said Trotsky, because the political character of that time was one in which the proletariat internationally had suffered colossal defeats, the result of which was a rightward swing of the working class.

Today, the international situation clearly shows that we are in a process of a gigantic swing leftward. The struggles in Italy, the developments in France and Great Britain, the reawakening in the United States, and scores of other developments point to the incontestable conclusion that the revolutionary dawn is again approaching. Our party, as well as our co-thinkers are now faced with the greatest opportunity they have ever had in the struggle for influence over the masses. This is the worst situation for the development of Stalinist germs. On the other hand, it is indeed the best situation for the growth of the proletarian tendencies everywhere. When placed under

the light of present political developments of the working class internationally, Comrade Goldman's theory of Stalinist dangers within our party fails to stand the test.

May 15, 1945.

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### SOME FACTS ABOUT THE SHACHTMANITES

By Milton Alvin

Having gone through the fight with the petty bourgeois opposition twice, once on each side, I thought I was entitled to retirement on this question. However, Goldman's analysis of the Workers Party makes it necessary to bring forth some facts regarding their political development which he entirely ignores or misrepresents.

I had the opportunity to observe the Shachtmanites very closely for about one and a half years after the split. During that period and since they have moved consistently further away from us and our program. There are more than half a dozen important political questions upon which they disagree with us. I will take up some of these.

On the defense of the Soviet Union as a Workers State against imperialism the differences are obvious. What is not generally known, however, is that there remain in the Workers Party three factions on this question. Shachtman heads one group which calls the USSR a Bureaucratic Collectivist State. Carter heads another that uses the same designation. However, while Shachtman promises to defend the Soviet Union some day, Carter holds that defense is impermissible under any circumstances. The third faction is led by Johnson who believes the Soviet Union to be a Fascist State.

Goldman breathes a sigh of relief because Burnham and Macdonald left the Workers Party. In vain! Carter remains with their program and, for the Workers Party, a good-sized faction. In addition Shachtman adopted and even extended Burnham's 1937 position on the Soviet Union. One would find it impossible to find any practical distinctions between the Shachtman and Burnham-Carter positions. The spectacle of Johnson in our party holding the Soviet Union to be a Fascist State with monopoly capitalists at its head is too nightmarish to require comment.

Goldman gives some undeserved credit to the Workers Party for advocating a Labor Party. Formally, they do call for a Labor Party. But in actual practice there is not a single instance of the Workers Party supporting an independent labor candidate for office. Their position on this question differs profoundly from ours. They do not use the class criterion but decide solely on a programmatic basis. Naturally, this eliminates the necessity of ever giving support to



any independent labor candidate or party whose program disagrees with theirs. Moreover, a sizeable group in the Workers Party is opposed even to advocating a Labor Party. Actually the Workers Party carries out the policy of this group.

Our differences with the Workers Party on the Proletarian Military Policy reveals that here too, we approach the question from totally different sides. Our method is the class analysis, theirs is eclectic. They rejected our policy because today the unions are under the control of Murray and Green.

The differences on China, Europe and other questions reveal the different methods employed. The petty bourgeois politicians employ one method today, another tomorrow and return to the first the next day.

If Goldman were to do a serious job of evaluating the political development of the former minority in the last six years, he could only come to the conclusion that they have travelled very far from us and our program. Indeed, it is difficult to find where we agree on any important questions. There are deep-going differences all up and down the line.

These differences are not only on political programmatic questions but also on tactical, trade union and organizational activities. Goldman ignores these but they deserve an important place. The Workers Party concept of a Party resembles the Norman Thomas type far more than a Bolshevik combat organization. Endless debating with no conclusions arrived at is the rule in the Workers Party. Violation of convention decisions are common and winked at by the unprincipled leadership.

Goldman has observed that the Workers Party carried out a policy of proletarianization after the split. True, but why? Undoubtedly the principal reason was the pounding they took on this question during the faction fight. Goldman says the type of trade union activity of the Workers Party is not important, the mere fact that they are trade unionists is. This is completely false. Anyone can become a trade union activist today. No credit whatever is due for that. What is revealing here is that the Workers Party entered the unions and in typically petty bourgeois style told the workers what to do and how to do it even before they had got their feet wet in the union movement. It was, therefore, not surprising to hear from one end of the country to another that they were being shown the door.

I don't know where Goldman gets his membership figure on the Workers Party. The following figures of mine are verifiable. At the time of the split, 1940, the minority faction plus the youth that supported it had about 600. Exactly 18 months later at a national convention there were 31 delegates elected on the basis of 1 for 10 or major fraction. They represented approximately 200 members. Delegates reported wholesale desertions from the party. These defections began on the day following the split in April, 1940. About one-third of the faction never turned up to help launch the new party. About another third subsequently dropped away after Burnham

and Macdonald left. Two entire groups formally left the Workers Party before its 1941 convention. One, a youth group in Akron, another an anti-Marxist group of national composition that went to the S.P.

The political and organizational changes experienced by the Workers Party since the split lead to the conclusion that it is a dwindling, petty bourgeois sect moving to the right. As long as it remains in existence it represents an obstacle to our growth and must be removed. The past five years experience proves that our method of dealing with them has been entirely correct. We have prospered where-as they have disintegrated. There is no reason whatsoever to change our policy towards them. Goldman's proposal to achieve unity with this group which is steadily moving away from us is completely unrealistic and must be firmly rejected. His proposal for collaboration, based upon his estimate of them, must be equally firmly rejected. We must continue our policy of intransigent hostility to this group of petty bourgeois charlatans who deserted our program and split our party. Along this road we will win over only serious revolutionaries in the Workers Party. Along the road of Goldman, the issues can be glossed over and obscured with fatal results.

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### LOS ANGELES ANTI-FASCIST CAMPAIGN

June 23, 1945

Dear Comrade Stein;

Murry and Myra were both ill this week, so I have been asked to inform you of our current discussions of a proposal for an anti-fascist campaign.

The immediate incidents which have called our attention to this problem as one for a campaign now, are two meetings of Gerald K. Smith. One was held a few weeks ago, at the Embassy Auditorium to an overflow crowd of several thousands. Another is scheduled for the Philharmonic Auditorium here Monday night, June 25.

The WP sent us a communication addressed also to the SIP, SP and IWW, proposing a united front demonstration at the Philharmonic Smith meeting -- picketing, etc.

We discussed the matter at length, called a special meeting of the SEC Thursday night to consider the matter. The committee passed a motion adopting Murry and Myra's proposal for an anti-fascist campaign along the lines of the statement of the proposal submitted to the committee. (Proposal enclosed.) There was a difference of opinion on whether we should participate in or call a demonstration for Monday night. The motion that passed was that we endorse the policy on participation Monday night as outlined by Murry; or, in other words, that we do not call a party demonstration for Monday

night and do not participate in the picket line there unless the labor movement or CP should do so. At this time both have decided not to.

Yesterday we sent the enclosed wire to the Los Angeles Central Labor Council (AFL) and the Los Angeles CIO Council.

This weekend we plan to send a press release out quoting the wire, and to send a communication to the CP proposing we discuss united front action against the fascists...united front action of all working-class and minority groups.

We want to report all this to the PC and are anxious to know how our proposals strike you. Also, turn over the copy of the wire to The Militant for a news story.

Comradely,

J. Blake

Acting Organizer

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### Proposal for an Anti-Fascist Campaign

1. Fascist organizations have been establishing a concentration point in Los Angeles. The tour of Gerald K. Smith, with the publicity around it, has established this as a public fact. "They boast of their intention of establishing national headquarters in Los Angeles."

The post-war upheavals, with its returning veterans, unemployment, middle-class discontent, are the factors which fascists count upon to win a mass base for their movement.

2. The Los Angeles local of the party should immediately open an anti-fascist campaign. We must give the alarm signal and raise the slogan of the united front of action to stamp out the fascist vermin before they can establish a stronghold here. We must call on the working-class to take heed of the danger to their organizations, to organize united front committees, and launch mass picket demonstrations against any attempts of fascists to meet and plot attacks on the labor movement, and their incitation of race hatred. "No headquarters for Smith in L.A." "Down with the fascists." These must become the slogans of the L.A. labor movement.

3. A plan of action of the proposed campaign is as follows:

a. Telegrams to all the labor bodies, AFL, CIO, Railroad Brotherhoods, presenting the problem and raising our slogan.

b. Issue model resolution to be circulated among all our sympathizers and contacts in the unions, summarizing the task of the

labor movement in the face of the threat and calling for united front action.

c. We immediately take steps to pass such resolutions through unions or labor bodies where we have special influence.

d. We address an appeal to all Negro organizations along the same line as the wire to the trade unions with reference to the Negro stake in the struggle against fascism.

e. Utilize our friendly contacts with the Negro press to urge them to champion the idea of a broad united front of action against the fascist threat.

f. We address an open letter to the C.P.A. proposing the united front of action against the fascists and analyzing the situation. In immediate conjunction with this we press a vigorous contact campaign with Stalinist workers agitating for our proposal, taking advantage of their general confusion on their change of line to introduce "the Trotskyist anti-fascist program among them."

g. Call a general membership meeting of the party to motivate and outline the campaign and to raise the necessary money to carry it through.

h. All the above actions can be given varying degrees of publicity, such as press releases, written up in The Militant, and leaflets.

i. We must immediately establish a responsible committee of research to gather up all the available facts concerning fascist activities in L.A. to be used as ammunition in the campaign.

4. Gerald K. Smith proposes to hold a meeting in the Philharmonic Auditorium this coming Monday, June 25th. This brazen and provocative challenge to the labor movement should be referred to in all of our statements. Can we, however organize an effective picket demonstration in the available time as the Shachtmanites have proposed? We do not exclude the variant of the party calling upon the workers in its own name to act against the fascists, as we did in Madison Square Garden and in L.A., etc. It is necessary to weigh each action with great care and on its own merits. Under the present circumstances the main line of our campaign should be to get the labor movement to act. We are dealing here with a threat of a sustained campaign on the part of the fascists, not with a single meeting. It would be very advantageous and effective to have the united labor picket demonstration against the Monday meeting, but under the present circumstances this is apparently not possible. The time is too short to prepare an effective demonstration of our own.

Our attitude should be -- we reject the proposal to call a demonstration for Monday in the name of the party or in united front with the Shachtmanites. However, if the CP or the trade unions take any action Monday, we will certainly participate.

Does this mean that we should appeal to the labor movement to demonstrate Monday? In all our statements and letters we should use Monday as an example of this threat and point out what a united front of action should do against such meetings. But we do not occupy the position in the labor movement at this time to be able to realistically propose the exact date and place of action in our formal declarations.

If in any union or labor body we could take the initiative of calling a demonstration in the name of the union under certain circumstances we would certainly take advantage of it. Right now we should confine ourselves to pointing out:

"Fascists dare to plan a public meeting in Los Angeles on Monday. A united front of action of the whole labor movement would not permit such an atrocity."

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THE R.C.P. AND THE I.L.P. LEFT WING

By J. B. Stuart

The question of the policy of the Revolutionary Communist Party toward the Left Wing of the Independent Labor Party is of immediate importance to the further progress of British Trotskyism.

My views on this question, put forward sketchily in my "Report" to the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party -- published in the Internal Bulletin of the S.W.P., June 1944 -- can be summarized as follows:

1) The next great political task facing the R.C.P. after the fusion "is the elimination of the centrist I.L.P. as an obstacle on the road to the masses."

2) An analysis of the I.L.P. shows that the situation is ripe for an active policy along this line.

3) The first premise for success in this policy is the organization of an effective, centralized, broad left wing in the I.L.P.

4) The objective we should set ourselves is one that requires a long perspective: the winning over of a majority in the centrist party and fusion with this majority.

5) The method of struggle should be: coalition with other groups and tendencies on the basis of program.

In line with these views, which set forth a policy, I made the critical remarks that the R.C.P. leadership has carried on "only haphazard work in the I.L.P.", that "what is needed" is a "perspective", that the "policy of sporadic withdrawals must be replaced by a policy of building the left wing" etc. In their Reply (printed in the Internal Bulletin of the R.C.P., January 1945) the Political Bureau of the R.C.P. attacked these incidental remarks without really coming to grips with the question at issue. This makes it necessary that the whole question of the I.L.P., which is now of such burning importance for the development of the Fourth International in Great Britain be elucidated more fully and at greater length\*.

When, soon after the fusion last year, I discussed with comrade Grant, Lee and Roy the proposals I outlined in my "Report" I thought we had general agreement. That is, agreement also on the "next great political task". And, in fact, the "Reply" indicates that there was good ground for my thinking so.

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\*In their "Reply" the British comrades dealt with several questions raised in my "Report" and, in addition, made a number of personal accusations. In this document I confine myself to the question of the I.L.P., since it is by far the most important question at the moment, reserving the other points in dispute for subsequent articles. - J.B.S

"We can fully agree with Stuart," the comrades say in their document, "that it is possible to set a formal perspective of winning the majority of the I.L.P. Indeed such a formal perspective has long been discussed in our ranks."

So far, so good.

"But," they add, "what we are directly guided by on this tactical issue are the general relationships in the movement and the concrete possibilities of the material at hand."

The "perspective" is "fully agreed" to, "has long been discussed in our ranks" but . . . but, apparently, objections of a "general" as well as a "concrete" character arose in connection with it. What was the outcome of the discussion? Later on in their document the comrades inform us:

"After discussion over a period of months by our Political Bureau, it (this perspective - S.) was rejected, because it would not compensate for the withdrawal from other more favorable fields of work -- even if successful".

In between the premise quoted above and this conclusion, and elsewhere in their document, are scattered the "general" and "concrete" arguments of the comrades in objection to the perspective.

At one point in their document, they say:

"The situation in the I.L.P. is very different from that portrayed by Stuart. There has not yet grown the Left Wing or the ferment, thus the time is not yet ripe."

This is clearly a concrete objection and entirely in order when we examine the question: Is the situation in the I.L.P. ripe? But the comrades add to it in the immediately following sentence this argument:

"And even if it were ripe, it would not be worth diverting the efforts of our members from more favorable fields of activity at the present stage of the struggle."

Here we have clearly a "general" objection: There are more favorable fields of activity.

The same objection is emphasized again in a passage already quoted. The perspective (in my "Report") was rejected "because it would not compensate for the withdrawal from other more favorable fields of work -- even if successful."

The tactic is rejected, then, in general, on two grounds: it would not be worthwhile, even if the situation were ripe, even if the tactic were successful, and furthermore there are other more favorable fields of activity.

### Is It Worthwhile?

Why would it not be worthwhile? The comrades explain to us, again in scattered passages throughout their document:

"As a 'principled' turn, fusion could only exaggerate the revolutionary potential of the I.L.P., would run counter to its present evolution, would conflict with our general perspective and confuse our sympathizers on a national scale."

If this were really so, if the tactic could only strengthen the centrists and weaken us, it is incomprehensible why the R.C.P. comrades countenance it -- not only "at this stage," but even at a later stage. This kind of an argument is a timeless argument, against all "maneuvers", "compromises" etc., etc.

Another argument used by the comrades runs as follows:

"The present phase of the struggle in Britain and the relation of forces makes it impossible to effectively shatter the I.L.P. and remove it as an obstacle in our path at this stage."

The comrades do not tell us very precisely what in the "present phase" or in the "relation of forces" it is that obstructs our aim. But they make up for their haziness in respect to analysis by being categorical in respect to their conclusion: Not difficult, not even difficult, but impossible! However, they add again as a modifying afterthought: "at this stage." Impossible, at this stage, but at the next? Let's hear what the comrades have to say on that:

"The Labour Party leaders are seeking a left cover and they are finding it in the I.L.P. Bereft of the Trotskyists and its own Left Wing, the I.L.P. will still be an attractive force for the leftward moving Labour workers when it is inside the Labour Party."

But, the "Reply" reassures us:

"Inside the Labour Party, when fresh forces, moving to the left, seek expression through the I.L.P., the whole problem of fusion and split will be posed on a different plane. But that is the music of the future . . ."

Thus the problem of a leftward-moving I.L.P. at present is regarded as a fit object of solution only in the "music of the future! Clearly, it is a case of mixing up one's tenses.

But the right tense is of the utmost importance, in politics no less than in grammar. With that in mind, let's turn our attention once more to the other grounds given for rejecting the policy proposed in the "Report". Summing them up we get the following specifications:

- a) It will "exaggerate the revolutionary potential of the I.L.P.";
- b) "Confuse our sympathizers on a national scale";



- c) It is "impossible to effectively shatter the I.L.P. and remove it as an obstacle in our path at this stage."
- d) Even if we succeed, "the I.L.P. will still be an attractive force for the leftward moving Labour workers when it is inside the Labour Party."

In one form or another, these arguments have been used since the beginning of the Bolshevik movement by opponents of the tactics that fall into the category of "maneuvers". Lenin wrote a whole book "Left Wing Communism" on the subject, devoting a section to England, among other countries. The comrades in their "Reply" as well as in their whole press and literature show that they have learned the specific lessons that Lenin taught there -- the necessity of working in the Labour Party, in the reformist trade unions, in the parliamentary arena -- exceedingly well. That is why it is all the more inconsistent for them to make the general objection to the proposed tactic -- a "maneuver" -- that it would strengthen the opportunist leadership and confuse our ranks.

Is this objection in any way qualitatively different from the objections raised by the "Left Wing Communists" in 1919-20 that participation in parliament, and work in the Labor Party would strengthen Henderson and Co.? Or that this maneuver would disorient the masses?

Lenin answered the first objection at that time as follows:

Such strengthening, or "support" as the misleaders receive from our maneuver is only temporary, entirely superficial. In actuality it pushes them up against the dilemma: how to reconcile the "radical" phrases (by means of which they fool the masses into following them) with their opportunist aims (which coincide with those of the ruling class and not of the masses). That is what proves to be their undoing in the long run. That's what results in the conclusive isolation of the fakers and the strengthening of the mass support of the revolutionists. Our "support" proves to be the kind which the hanged man gets from the noose.

As for the second, here is what he actually said:

"And if the objection is raised that these tactics are too 'subtle' or too complicated, that the masses will not understand them, that they will split up and scatter our forces, will prevent us from concentrating on the Soviet revolution, etc., I will reply to the 'Lefts' who raise this objection: don't ascribe your dogmatism to the masses! The masses in Russia are probably no better educated than the masses in England; if anything they are less so. Yet the masses understood the Bolsheviks . . ."

To be sure these are old lessons for Trotskyists. We had to learn them again in new circumstances at the time of the "French Turn" in the United States, in particular, we had to go over them in connection with our work in the Socialist Party. They are recorded in Comrade Cannon's "History of American Trotskyism". In each case the Leninist teachings have been confirmed and vindicated in their full

correctness. It appears that these lessons have to be learned all over again now. In the same pamphlet Lenin explains why:

"But a theoretical, abstract recognition of these truths does not at all free revolutionary parties from old mistakes, which always crop up at unexpected moments, in a somewhat new form, in hitherto unknown vestments or surroundings, in peculiar -- more or less peculiar circumstances."

It is necessary to absorb these lessons in actual experience. Lenin stresses that

"the whole point lies in knowing how to apply these tactics in such a way as to raise and not to lower the general level of proletarian class consciousness, revolutionary spirit, and ability to fight and conquer."

That is, indeed, the whole point. If we do not apply the tactic correctly, then naturally it can defeat its purpose. Then it can strengthen the opportunists, weaken us and make our task impossible of achievement.

It is possible to assume that what we have before us are really disagreements on how to apply a tactic that we agree on as correct. There is always the phrase "at this stage" which accompanies the objections of the R.C.P. comrades. But in that case, it is not clear why the comrades put forward these general objections. They should then state unambiguously what concrete measures wrongly apply the tactic, so as to strengthen our opponents, weaken and confuse our ranks and make the task set impossible of achievement. The bare generalities "it would increase the revolutionary potential of the I.L.P.", "it would confuse our sympathizers", "it is impossible", -- are meaningless in that case.

Nor is the objection that we will in the future have the problem of dealing with the I.L.P. in a new form a valid reason why we should not tackle the problem in its present form.

#### "Other More Favorable Fields"

We have already seen that the comrades in their "Reply" give still another general reason for rejecting the policy of orientation toward the I.L.P. as follows:

"There are other more favorable fields of activity."

Let's examine the various passages in their documents which specify this. They say:

"At this particular stage it is in the factories and the unions that the main forces of Trotskyism are being recruited."

And they add:

"But we have not neglected the I.L.P."

At first glance, this seems to contradict the orientation towards the I.L.P. which the comrades quote from their conference resolution. There we read that "the I.L.P. has grown in numerical strength and influence among the workers", so much so that a previous tactic in the Labor Party "must therefore be abandoned in favor of our factional entry into an affiliated I.L.P." And, indeed, there is a contradiction there. But this contradiction also exists in the conference resolution itself. Only the subsequent discussion has revealed this contradiction in sharp outline and the two opposite interpretations that have been placed on it. Side by side with the I.L.P. orientation cited above, the comrades refer to the Conference resolution as the one "turning the face of the R.C.P. to independent work". This gives us a clue to the contradiction. When we examine the resolution in question, we see it in full.

The Resolution referred to carries the heading "Resolution on the Entrist Tactic." After devoting the first three quarters of the document to the problem of the Labor Party and the I.L.P. and stating that "these perspectives must be continually before our organization", the authors then make a sharp turn and conclude the resolution with points like the following:

"the main field of revolutionary activity at the present period lies on the industrial front;"

"the main axis of our activities demands the raising of the independent banner of the Fourth International and the recruitment of the revolutionary industrial militants, many of whom have already passed through the Labour and Communist Parties and the I.L.P. directly into the British section of the Fourth International."

". . . thousands can be won directly into the party . . . "

"whereas the existing political organizations of the working class are all fields for guerilla faction work on the part of the British section of the F.I., the Labour party is the least favorable field at present and immediate period ahead and that the I.L.P. is the most fruitful, our forces must be directed therefore, on the basis of this appraisal;

"Conference, therefore resolves that the main task and the main tactic of the R.C.P. in the immediate period is to build the independent revolutionary party of the British working class; to directly raise our banner before the British workers; to direct the maximum energy for the achievement of this task, and to subordinate all factional work in the existing political organizations of the working class to that end." (All emphasis mine -- S.)

In the light of the subsequent "Reply" it is clear how the comrades interpret this resolution: while recognizing in words as "most fruitful" the orientation towards the I.L.P., "which must be continually before our organization", they turn in fact towards the building of "the independent revolutionary party of the British working class," as the "main task and the main tactic." All this of course, with the qualification: "in the immediate period."

But it is precisely the qualifications that muddle up the issue, that heap up the contradictions.

Building the "independent revolutionary party of the British working class" is not a tactic. It is a process. It is our task, not only in the "immediate period", but at all times. It cannot be counterposed to maneuvers with the Labor Party and the I.L.P. These maneuvers are tactics used to accelerate the process of building the "independent revolutionary party of the British working class."

What, then, can the resolution mean? If we did not scrutinize it so carefully, if we were not already enlightened by the further interpretation in the "Reply," we could say: While the resolution is not flawless, while it has a number of faulty and even contradictory formulations, it is acceptable because we glean from it the following orientation: 1) The I.L.P. is looming up as the "most fruitful" field of activity for us; 2) We must concentrate on this task; 3) Meanwhile we are going to consolidate the fusion, carry on our independent agitation and industrial work in preparation for the next step; 4) By this work, by our I.L.P. work and by our work in the Labor Party we will speed the building of the independent workers party.

That is, indeed, how the resolution looked to us after the fusion. But the subsequent developments show that the R.C.P. comrades either had something else in mind when they wrote it or that they are now interpreting it differently.

The interpretation by the R.C.P. comrades shows that their line is fundamentally different from ours.

- a) They set up "Independent work" as a "main tactic" opposed to the I.L.P. tactic.
- b) They reject the latter because "the main axis of our activities demands the raising of the independent banner";
- c) Because "such a tactic, even in the most favorable circumstances, must take up a great deal of time and energy of the party whose forces should be concentrated at the point of attack."

These arguments, too, sound like an echo of the past. Lenin quotes from a British "Left Wing Communist" in his pamphlet:

"We must not dissipate our energy in adding to the strength of the Labour Party; its rise to power is inevitable. We must concentrate on making a Communist movement that will vanquish it . . . The Communist party must keep its doctrine pure, and its independence of reformism inviolate; its mission is to lead the way, without stopping or turning, by the direct road to Communism."

The comrades are too well acquainted with Lenin's answer for us to have to repeat it here. They themselves know how to castigate the error when it takes the same form with the sectarians in the

I.L.P. Can they not recognize a trace of similar false politics in their own arguments with regard to the I.L.P.? Won't they "stop" and "turn" to re-examine their position?

### Why is the I.L.P. Our Next Task?

The general line of the R.C.P. comrades has been submitted to a sufficiently detailed examination for it to be absolutely clear why it is different from ours, why we think it is false and wherein we detect its falsity. Our own line, however, requires a more ample re-statement before we proceed to examine and discuss the concrete objections to it. Here it is:

1) The I.L.P. has been a centrist organization peculiar to British working class politics. It started out as a socialist vanguard party of the British workers without first establishing a Marxist program at its base -- a peculiarity which history ascribes to the empiricism characteristic of the British and American people, and which is in turn due to their privileged position in modern capitalist society.

2) In striving to organize British labor politically, on a class basis, the I.L.P. ran into continual conflict with the trade union bureaucracy, which leaned on British imperialism and its Liberal politicians for support in maintaining its privileges within the working class.

3) The irrepressible force of the class struggle, however, pushed relentlessly towards the establishment of the Labor Party, as the organized political expression of the workers, based on the unions. The establishment of the Labor Party and its first successes redounded tremendously to the prestige of the I.L.P., advanced workers flocking to it as the protagonist of their class party and its initiator and organizer.

4) Within the Labor Party, the old antagonism between the I.L.P. centrists and the trade union bureaucracy took on new form. Opportunism within the I.L.P. continually brought new reinforcements to the bureaucrats in the parliamentary field, but after the outbreak of the first World War, this clash took on the shape of pacifism against social-patriotism. Pacifism was the distorted expression given by the I.L.P. centrists to the pressure of the advanced workers in its ranks who opposed the imperialist war.

5) The outbreak of the Russian Revolution and the founding of the Comintern gave a tremendous impetus to Marxism in England as elsewhere. Marxist politics made its first serious appearance in the British working class. The I.L.P. was submitted to this pressure. From then on, it has continually been faced with the dilemma: towards Marxist politics (Bolshevism) or towards complete identification with the trade union bureaucracy (social reformism).

6) The ultra-left mistakes of the British communists -- at the most propitious time for a solution -- saved the I.L.P. from being obliterated as a centrist phenomenon in a revolutionary direction

in the years after the first World War. The continued weakness of the British C.P., its corruption by Stalinism, permitted the I.L.P. to maintain a centrist position, although leaning heavily in the direction of social reformism and furnishing the latter with some of its outstanding parliamentary protagonists,

7) The crisis following the crash of 1929 had immediate repercussions in the I.L.P. The most prominent of the parliamentary leaders it furnished the Labor Party, under this impact went over directly to the bourgeoisie (Macdonald, Snowden, etc.) The party, shaken up, broke loose from the reformist Labor Party and undertook an "independent" course in a revolutionary direction. Under the pressure of events and of the advanced workers in its ranks, it veered more and more from pacifism to Marxism.

8) For a time, the degenerated Stalinist party became its closest ally, the centrist leaders looking toward fusion with it as a solution. The counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism (Spain, People's Front) and the intervention of the youthful Trotskyist movement (which had entered the I.L.P.) prevented this disastrous solution.

9) But the Trotskyist movement in England, while preventing a Stalinist strangulation of the I.L.P., was as yet too weak to solve the whole problem in a revolutionary sense. Beset by splits in their own ranks, the Trotskyists left the I.L.P. on its own and before the war the I.L.P. appeared to face slow disintegration.

10) The war gave the I.L.P. a new lease on life. Taking a fairly consistent anti-war position, combatting the chauvinist poison with internationalist propaganda, supporting strikes in wartime, opposing British imperialism in India, Greece, etc., it served anew as a rallying center for advanced workers. At the same time its centrist leaders continued to look backward, toward ties with the social patriots in the Labor Party, fearful of the prospect of facing the responsibility of revolutionary mass struggle.

11) Meanwhile, the Trotskyist movement in Britain has grown and matured and become unified into a single party.

All the factors that previously prevented a settling of accounts with centrism in England have been extremely weakened. The factors favoring it, strengthened.

From the foregoing, it is obvious that both objectively and subjectively the situation is ripe for a tactic aimed at fusing with the revolutionary wing of this party and at liquidating the I.L.P. as a serious centrist competitor to Trotskyism in Great Britain.

The problem is posed precisely by the growth and consolidation of the Trotskyist movement. Before the fusion, the advanced class conscious worker seeking his party was confronted not only with the question: Trotskyism or the I.L.P., but also with the question: which Trotskyists? The centrists in the I.L.P. leadership knew how to make use of this complication to their advantage, in approaching the broader question. Now, the complication so useful to the centrists is gone. There is a single, united Trotskyist party. But the

question, I.L.P. or Trotskyism, still confronts the advanced worker.

Stalinism, with its social patriotic record and line, is discredited in the eyes of the most advanced workers. The Labour Party leadership is hopelessly compromised. For the advanced worker the question of party shapes up as follows: In program the I.L.P. and the Trotskyists appear to be similar. In action the Trotskyists have a clear cut line, an inspiring revolutionary temper; the I.L.P., on the other hand, while wanting in these respects, has an established place in the consciousness of the British workers and a good tradition. There are other good points on either side. It would be best, if the good sides of both could be combined, that would be the quickest and most preferable way to build the revolutionary party of the British working class. Can it be done? Are the differences irreconcilable?

That is the question which at this stage is holding up serious further progress for the R.C.P. among the advanced workers in Britain. Only by winning over, decisively the advanced workers can the British Trotskyists clear the road for the further great advances to leadership of the masses. But these can be won over decisively only by testing the question posed, in their own experience. It is the duty of the British Trotskyists to help them find the correct answer, to find their way through actual experience. That is why the next task of the R.C.P. is a main orientation toward the I.L.P. That is why fusion with the Left Wing in the I.L.P. is the main tactic in the immediate period.

What do the comrades of the British leadership answer to this formulation of the question? They say:

"The situation in the I.L.P. is very different from that portrayed by Stuart. There is not yet grown the left wing or the ferment, thus the time is not yet ripe."

Here we have a contention that deals with a concrete analysis. It is entirely possible to discuss it on its own merit.

The first question in this connection that strikes us is: how does this contention jibe with the estimate the comrades themselves quote from their conference resolution. That reads:

"In fact, the I.L.P. has grown in numerical strength and influence among the workers and is attracting fresh support from growing sections of the left labour and socialist conscious workers, and therefore offers an important field for factional work on the part of the Fourth International."

Wouldn't that indicate . . . "ferment?" Wouldn't that in itself show that the objective base for a left wing exists?

In a document entitled "The I.L.P. and Affiliation to the Labor Party", issued by the R.C.P. leadership, there is an even more specific indication. Speaking of the possibilities of future affiliation of the I.L.P. with the Labor Party, they say:

"Within the I.L.P. itself changes would rapidly take place.

Under the influence of the war and the growth of the I.L.P. as an anti-war opposition organization, this process has already proceeded to a certain extent. The Left Wing which was virtually non-existent has developed in definite opposition to the reformism of the leadership."

Was this just another careless formulation? Or have the authors changed their opinion? Of course, the above was written in July, 1944, before they saw the Stuart "Report." Can it be that the latter, by making the same analysis, thereby rendered it false?

An even sharper "revision" of this analysis appears still further on in the "Reply". The comrades write:

"The I.L.P., which evolved to the left from 1931 to 1934, has made a steady progression to the right since that date. In the last three years, particularly, that process has been speeded up." (Our emphasis.)

Do the comrades really believe that? Of course, they have a perfect right to revise their opinion. But in that case they should cite some facts to substantiate the change of view. It appears to us, however, that the facts support a different estimate. Was the I.L.P. stand against the imperialist war, under fire, a move to the left or to the right? Did it strengthen the influence of the left wing workers in it or that of the opportunist, semi-pacifists in the leadership?

Was the I.L.P. stand in support of the strike struggles in wartime -- with us and against the reformists and Stalinists -- part of a "progression" to the right, or to the left?

Similarly, with its stand against British imperialism in India. What was that?

Or its clear-cut denunciation of the British white terror in Greece. What was that?

Or its attitude towards the coalition?

Or, towards the Stalinist betrayals and the Soviet Union?

Or, towards our slogan, the Socialist United States of Europe?

The comrades need only to ask themselves these questions to recognize how false their analysis is.

But, the comrades may interject, what about the opportunist shenanigans of the I.L.P. leaders in Parliament? What about the right orientation of the leadership? What about the I.L.P.'s ambiguous position on the question of the International?

To these we can only say: Quite correct! As long as the parliamentary leaders can play tiddliwinks with party policy, you cannot have a serious revolutionary organization. As long as the party maintains its ambiguous position on the International, as long as it does not affiliate with the revolutionists of all countries in the Fourth International, it cannot avoid falling into national opportunism. This shows that the I.L.P. is not at all a revolutionary



party as yet. This shows that we must help the Left Wing to fight on these issues -- for a disciplined party based on democratic centralism, for affiliation to the Fourth International.

But, it does not in any way detract from the facts that point to a left trend, to an increasing strength of the Left Wing in the rank and file.

The right orientation of the leadership and the left orientation in the ranks clash. To be sure, but that is precisely what creates the best conditions for fruitful intervention on our part. Let's see some examples of this clash and what they reveal. There are two outstanding issues on which the clash has recently hinged. One, the question of affiliation to the Labor Party. The other, "united front" activity with the new middle class Commonwealth Party. Let's see what happened in each case.

#### The Affiliation Vote

There is general agreement that the motivation of the I.L.P. leadership in proposing reaffiliation to the Labor Party is thoroughly opportunist. The reasons are amply explained in the documents of the R.C.P. comrades as well as in my report. It is, therefore, an outstanding example of the right orientation of the I.L.P. leadership.

In my "Report" I said that at the 1944 Conference, the I.L.P. leadership suffered a defeat on this issue. The comrades challenge this statement. Here is how I interpret the action that took place. The leadership came in with a proposal for immediate reaffiliation. The rank and file reacted in force against it. To avoid a showdown, the leadership then beat a retreat and moved a resolution, to call a special conference on this question when and if the Labor Party breaks its bloc with the Tories, which was carried. I regard that as a defeat for the right orientation of the leadership. To me it indicated that the Left Wing, opposing the opportunist intentions of the leaders, gave them a set-back. The comrades dispute that? Let them consider subsequent developments on this issue.

At the following annual Conference, in April, 1945, the affiliation resolution was finally moved, subject to a break-up of the government coalition. The vote was: 89 for and 72 against.

89 to 72! Nearly half the party voted against affiliation! We know that the right wing leaders and their supporters were for the resolution. Is it wrong to attribute the bulk of the 89 votes -- let's say 50 -- to them? If we subtract these, we can say that of the remainder, the bulk, were votes cast against affiliation -- let's say 72 out of 111. The comrades closest to the R.C.P. supported affiliation, but "for revolutionary reasons". Can they seriously believe that all those who opposed the I.L.P. leadership on this issue were "largely pacifists, sectarians and a small number of confused lefts"?

How did the "growing sections of left labour and socialist conscious workers", attracted recently to the I.L.P. according to the "Reply", express themselves on this issue? Through the right wing? Through the pacifists? Isn't the trouble with the comrades' estimate

rather that they simply refuse to recognize as left wingers those who do not see eye to eye with them on their own specific position regarding the question of affiliation? It is just this which blinds them to the distinctly leftward trend expressed in the anti-affiliation vote, a vote whose size cannot be explained otherwise than as a revolutionary expression of the hostility of the workers to the opportunist machinations of the leaders.

A perusal of the speeches of the delegates opposing affiliation as printed in the I.L.P.'s "New Leader" -- only emphasizes the point. The argument revolved mainly on accepting the condition of abiding by the "Standing Orders" of the Labor Party, which would require I.L.P. members in Parliament to vote for the imperialist policy in Greece, for example, and shut off their advocacy of "International Socialism". Not entirely valid arguments, when you face a revolutionary leadership whose record entitles them to trust, but hardly "pacifist" or even sectarian, when you face the opportunist leadership in the I.L.P.

In the given circumstances, the vote on affiliation cannot be considered otherwise than as a distinct sign of a "progression" to the left in the I.L.P.

#### The Vote on Commonwealth

The vote against "United Front" action with the pro-war, middle class Commonwealth was an even clearer sign. If, on the question of affiliation the issue is somewhat blurred by the differences between the I.L.P. members closest to the R.C.P. and the rest of the left wing, on this question there was not the slightest ambiguity.

I pointed to the vote on this question in my "Report" as evidence of the trend. The comrades in reply merely stress the fact that "the resolution on Commonwealth was moved by Trotskyists . . . All the credit can go to the R.C.P."

It goes without saying that no one wants to deprive them of the credit. It was a good job. But, in their concern with establishing their rightful reputation, they overlook a little fact:

By giving leadership to the left wing on this question, they were able to carry the whole convention against the right wing administration!

It should have taught them something on what could be done about the affiliation issue, too. They missed that. But how can they miss the unmistakable trend? When a Trotskyist can move a resolution -- in direct clash with the right wing leadership -- and win the overwhelming support of the highest body, representing the rank and file of the I.L.P., can that be correctly interpreted as a sign of a "progression to the right"?

I am afraid that the concrete objections of the comrades are not any more solidly based than their general objections to the orientation towards the I.L.P.

### How to Organize the Left Wing

The conclusions I draw from my conception of the tactic and from my analysis of the I.L.P. are: (1) That the first task is the organization and centralization of the left wing by means of uniting the fraction closest to us with others on the basis of a common program. (2) This united left wing should fight for a majority in the I.L.P. and for fusion with the R.C.P.

The R.C.P. comrades draw different conclusions from their premises as we can see from their experience as well as from their "Reply."

### "Guerilla Faction Work"

They succeed in the really magnificent job of swinging an I.L.P. convention on a highly important resolution against the entire leadership? "All the credit can go to the R.C.P." That's that!

They win over a few excellent people from the Dewar-Wicks faction? Good enough!

The Dewar-Wicks faction is forced to dissolve? Another victory!

And so forth and so on.

Perhaps this kind of activity -- among others -- is what the comrades refer to in their conference resolution when they say "the existing political organizations of the working class are all fields of guerilla faction work on the part of the British section of the Fourth International."

It certainly does not reveal a plan, nor a perspective.

In my estimation, Bolsheviks resort to guerilla tactics only when they are forced to, not by choice.

As an organized political army, we plan our objectives. We determine the position it is necessary and possible for us to take. We deploy our forces and approach the position chosen in such a manner as to take it in the best order and with the greatest assurance of success. The right moment, the right form of attack, the fullest intelligence, the best coordination with allies -- these are all essential ingredients of the successful tactic.

It is possible to overdraw and exaggerate the military analogy. But it is offered here only as a general illustration of what we have in mind by organized political warfare as against guerilla "tactics".

### Correct Faction Work

Such a conception requires first and foremost a concentration of all forces who are fundamentally with us, against the principal force we are seeking to defeat, the force fundamentally opposed to us,

in this case, the concentration of all left wing forces against the centrist I.L.P. leadership.

But observe what happens: On the one hand, the R.C.P. wins "victories" from the Dewar-Wicks faction, which then dissolves. On the other, the delegates "close to the R.C.P." join with the I.L.P. leaders at the conference in voting to affiliate with the Labor Party, including the acceptance of the "standing orders". Willy-nilly, the position of the I.L.P. leadership, is thus strengthened.

What have we here? Examine it closely. In the first case, we have a group, big or small, important or unimportant, which forms part of the left wing. The R.C.P. comrades do not tell us if there are any fundamental, programmatic differences with this group. The main question on which there is a difference is a tactical question: affiliation or no affiliation to the Labor Party -- so the "Reply" tells us. Assume that the R.C.P. comrades are completely right and the other faction completely wrong on this question. The larger consideration -- the common aim to build a party of the Fourth International -- obviously takes precedence when you consider an alignment of forces in the I.L.P. as a whole. You strive to settle the secondary difference by patient discussion and on the basis of joint work on the main objective: winning the party over to the programmatic position of Trotskyism. The R.C.P. comrades once realized this very well and even expressed it as follows in one of their documents:

"From the point of view of the Trotskyists, the main difficulty consists in the fact that the revolutionary left wing elements are very confused and hostile toward the Labor Party as a reformist organization from a relatively progressive point of view. To these elements it will be necessary to explain in as conciliatory and friendly a way as possible, the necessity first of all for a clear revolutionary policy free from all centrist and reformist oscillations. They are already critical of the present leadership of the I.L.P. We must show them its congenital incapacity to find the revolutionary road. Once having understood this and the necessity for a Marxist programme, they should be shown the necessity to draw close to the masses, especially their advanced elements. ("The I.L.P. and Affiliation to the Labor Party", July, 1944).

The Dewar-Wicks group is, of course, only used as an example. In its broader aspects, this holds true for the whole, still unorganized left wing. But how did the R.C.P. comrades act? Fight to annihilation against a political ally!

In the second case, we have the opportunist leadership of the I.L.P. taking a step that, we are all agreed, is entirely in line with its right wing orientation. The rank and file, turning left, is opposed to it. One would assume that under the circumstances, revolutionary politicians would pause, weigh the abstract correctness of affiliation with these concrete circumstances. How did the R.C.P. comrades act: Regardless of how it may affect the possible left wing allies, full and unconditional support to the resolution of the principal political enemy!

This is how "guerilla faction work" looks in practice.

## Two Aspects of the "Affiliation Question"

Looking deeper into the whole question of the I.L.P. and affiliation to the Labor Party, two aspects present themselves. One deals with the R.C.P.'s approach to the question as regards the left wing in the I.L.P. The other, with the importance of the question itself. Let's take the second aspect first.

As we have already seen, in practice the R.C.P. comrades make the question of affiliation to the Labor Party the touch-stone of cooperation or non-cooperation with the rest of the left wing opposing the I.L.P. leadership. This is a false approach.

Ever since the foundation of the international movement in 1919 and the absorption of Lenin's teachings on ultra-leftism, communists all over the world have accepted work in the mass organizations of the working class as a sine qua non for revolutionary activity. In Great Britain, that has meant, not only the organization of fractions in the trade unions, but specifically, work in the Labor Party -- and consequently, affiliation of the whole party if possible.

This is the basic view on which we are all agreed. Wherein, then, do we differ?

We are agreed that a comparatively small revolutionary Marxist party should strive to affiliate to the mass labor party. Our differences arise, when we apply this entirely correct view to the I.L.P.

The first question that confronts us is: Is the I.L.P. a revolutionary Marxist party?

If it were, the entire matter would be simple. We would be in it, or fused with it, and then the question of affiliation to the Labor Party would be of prime importance. If sectarians arose to oppose it then, we would join wholeheartedly with our R.C.P. comrades to combat them. The problem would be entirely clear.

The whole trouble, however, is that the I.L.P. is still a centrist party and not a revolutionary Marxist party. It is a party whose rank and file are moving left, toward Marxism, while the leadership is moving right, away from Marxism.

Can the question of affiliation to the Labor Party be applied to this centrist party in the same way as to a revolutionary communist party?

Obviously not. It is a tactical question, which gains decisive importance only when the question of program, of principles is settled. Just as it would be wrong to permit "tactics" to supersede programmatic questions in the revolutionary propaganda group, it is equally wrong to permit it to take first place in the struggle for a revolutionary solution in a centrist party. It cannot be divorced from the question of program, it has to be subordinated to it and applied flexibly taking into account concrete trends and developments -- in line with program.

Here we may hear an objection: Did not Comrade Trotsky raise the same question with regard to the I.L.P. in 1935-36?

To be sure he did. But let's see how Trotsky raised it.

"From pacifism to proletarian revolution -- such has indubitably been the general tendency of the evolution of the I.L.P.," he wrote (New International, December, 1935). "But this development has far from reached a rounded-out-program as yet . . . the leaders of the I.L.P. have apparently halted in the midway, and keep marking time."

Thereupon he launches into a criticism of their half-way program; on the question of the General Strike and the fight against war, on the question of workers councils, on the question of international affiliation (Fourth International). Brockway and Company supplemented their half-way program tactically with a "united front" orientation towards the Stalinist C.P. and the Comintern, as a means of building a "mass party". Trotsky then launches into the tactic. You break with the genuine mass Labor Party, he says, because it is "social patriotic" and then you go ahead and have "united fronts" with the C.P. which is turning just as "social patriotic"! What a farce! Instead of your half-way program and this caricature of mass action, you should develop to a full Marxist program, join the Fourth International, and turning your backs upon the discredited and insignificant C.P., face the real masses in the Labor Party!

That's the way Trotsky posed the question in his great article, "The I.L.P. and the Fourth International". If the party is to become revolutionary, it must not stop half-way, but adopt a Marxist program in full. A revolutionary party "must learn to turn its back on the C.P. and towards the working masses." The I.L.P. leaders wanted neither and for the same opportunist reasons. They wanted no Marxist program, and being unprincipled, sought a way to the masses in what seemed to them at the time the easiest direction -- through the Comintern.

Trotsky confronted them with the opposite course: First, clarity on principles, and then, a turn toward the real masses. He raised the tactical question against the opportunist leaders as an important but subsidiary question to that of principle. Never by itself and divorced from principle. That was the theme, not only of the article mentioned, but of his whole line with regard to the I.L.P. In a subsequent article, published as an interview, the same theme is discernible with particular sharpness:

"Question: Should the I.L.P. seek entry into the Labor Party?

"Answer: At the moment the question is not posed this way. What the I.L.P. must do, if it is to become a revolutionary party, is to turn its back on the C.P. and face the mass organizations . . . But for all its activity, an absolutely clear program is the first condition. A small axe can fell a large tree only if it is sharp enough."

The line cannot be mistaken; The turn toward the Labor Party is posed in opposition to the leaders' turn to the C.P. The tactical

turn is predicated on a Marxist program as a "first condition." The whole line is proposed for the I.L.P., "if it is to become a revolutionary party."

Nowhere is "affiliation to the Labor Party" raised as decisive in itself. Nowhere, as applicable to a centrist party.

The R.C.P. comrades, on the other hand, raise the question of "affiliation" almost to the stature of a principle -- on which it is permissible to line up with opportunist foes and to ignore revolutionary allies. And they apply it, not as a condition for a revolutionary party, but as something for revolutionists to fight at all costs to have adopted by a centrist party.

But, when applied to a centrist party, this tactic runs counter to, and not in line with, the traditional policy of Bolshevism. For a revolutionary party, work in the reformist organizations, on the basis of a principled line, is obligatory. The attachment of a centrist party to a reformist organization is based, not on revolutionary principles, but on opportunism. That's precisely why Bolsheviks have time and again fought to break the bonds between the centrists and the opportunists. That is, in relation to centrists, they have pursued an entirely opposite policy with regard to the reformist mass organization than has been the case with revolutionists. The reasons ought to be clear to any thoughtful student of the history of the movement. In one country after another, following the founding of the C.I., the Bolsheviks posed the question before the centrists: break with the social patriots. That was the case with the Independent Socialist Party and the social democrats in Germany, with Serrati and the Italian social patriots, etc., etc.

In their "Reply," the R.C.P. comrades not only propose a new tactic in this respect, but also a new theory.

"Affiliation" (of the I.L.P. to the Labor Party), they say, "is entirely correct and in line with the historical trend and tasks. From every point of view affiliation would be advantageous to us. It would clarify the position of the I.L.P. leadership as out and out reformist, not to be distinguished from the 'left' Labor bureaucrats; it would intensify the differentiation within the I.L.P. and help crystallize the revolutionary wing; the I.L.P. would act as a medium for organizing the leftward movement of labour workers who can be won for Trotskyism through our faction."

Again, the comrades seem to have run away with themselves. "From every point of view affiliation would be advantageous to us." If the comrades could only consider seriously the information they themselves furnish us with, the obvious fallacy of their theory would become apparent to them. The Labor Party bureaucrats are seeking a "left" cover in the I.L.P. On the other hand, "the opportunist leadership of the I.L.P. . . ., hoping to avoid the responsibility of leadership in the great battles ahead, want to climb back into the Labor Party and a safe milieu of work." Brockway and Transport House (the headquarters of the Labor Party bureaucracy) are already alleged to be in cahoots about the conditions of affiliation. Isn't it obvious that there may be one or two "points of view" from which affiliation

would not be so "advantageous" to us? Isn't it obvious that under these conditions, the winning over of leftward moving workers may become doubly difficult for us? That, the greater obstacles which the I.L.P. leadership, hand in hand with the Labor Party bureaucrats, would put in our way inside the mass organization, could make it much more difficult for us to expose the perfidy of both? Why would aiding the future collusion between these two political foes against us be an easier road to the masses than winning over now our allies against the leadership in the I.L.P.?

The exposure of opportunists is not an automatic process, "in line with the historical trend". It is not brought about by the various opportunists getting together. It is our task to expose them. If we cannot "clarify the position of the I.L.P. leadership" before the left wing workers in the I.L.P. now and win them over in their majority to our side today, this task is bound to be twice as hard tomorrow.

The "differentiation within the I.L.P." and the need to "crystallize the revolutionary wing" cannot be left to objective developments tomorrow; the job of preparing the I.L.P. to "act as a medium for organizing the leftward movement of labor workers" is one that must be seriously begun today. But that means taking immediate steps to organize the left wing in the I.L.P. itself. And in that connection the second aspect of the affiliation question, that of how it was handled in relation to the left wing that already exists, is of interest to us.

#### Principled Politics in the I.L.P.

By placing an entirely false emphasis on the question of affiliation to the Labor Party, by raising it to the status of a principle, by refusing to take into account the concrete conditions surrounding it (the I.L.P. leaders favoring affiliation for opportunist reasons; the rank and file opposed for revolutionary reasons) in determining their attitude to it, the R.C.P. comrades fell into the trap of unprincipled politics. At the last I.L.P. conference they lined up with the opportunist leaders on this question, thus strengthening them. At the same time, this stand undoubtedly weakened their bonds with the unorganized left wing and at any rate permitted the revolutionary aspirations of the latter to be exploited by charlatans like Ridley, whose sectarianism on this question is only one side of a coin, the other side of which is cowardly opportunism.

How would the question have been approached from the point of view of principled politics?

In the first place, the whole question of affiliation to the Labor Party would have been placed in the background. Like Trotsky in 1935-6, we would have posed the programmatic questions first before the left wing.

In my "Report" I said that with minor tactical exceptions the basic position of the Fourth International is already acceptable to the native left wing. That's the conclusion I arrived at from examining the trend in the I.L.P. since the outbreak of the war, on each of



the questions enumerated above. In reply, the R.C.P. comrades say:

"If by 'native left wing' Stuart means I.L.P.'ers moving to the left and at loggerheads with the leadership (and not the few renegades from Trotskyism) he is very much mistaken in the belief that there is programmatic agreement. The 'native left wing' are largely left reformists, still very far from the position of the Fourth International. Here it is not a matter of minor concessions on questions of tactics, but an education in revolutionary policy which must guide our actions."

The comrades here say a good deal that's correct alongside of much that is confused. To be sure, we must be guided by "education in revolutionary policy." But how have the comrades followed this excellent precept? By falsely raising a tactical question which beclouds the programmatic issues?

How do you determine "programmatic agreement"? There is no other way than that of putting forward a program for the left wing and making adherence to the program the basis of an organized left wing.

On what specific issues are the left wingers "largely left reformists"? Let the comrades name them. The only issue of difference they raise in their "Reply" is on affiliation -- not a programmatic, but a tactical question.

In what respect are the so-called "Ex-Trotskyists" to be considered "renegades"? On what basic questions have they moved away from us? If the comrades mean the Dewar-Wicks group, they mention only the difference on affiliation. Again a tactical question.

To be sure, there are renegades from Trotskyism and left reformist leaders who try to win the left wing for their treacherous policy. How are they to be exposed, except by posing the question of program first? Certainly, it cannot be done by turning over to them leadership of the left wing on the highly explosive affiliation issue, while questions of program are ignored.

On the contrary, principled politics would have required a different course in the left wing: Let's first see if we have agreement in program: on a consistent revolutionary anti-war policy, let's join in lining up the party against Maxton, and Co. for a showdown; on the treachery of the "people's front" -- let's line the party up against Brockway and Co. for a condemnation of the P.O.U.M.; of Pivert and all the other centrist proponents of it; on internationalism -- let's join in a fight for affiliation to the Fourth International against the ambiguity which is really an expression of the centrists' lack of internationalism.

If we have agreement on all these, on program, the comrades closest to R.C.P. could then say, let's form a single, united, organized left wing and together determine the tactic to pursue on the question of affiliation to the Labor Party.

The I.L.P. comrades closest to the R.C.P. can say in the united left wing: We both want the same program, the same kind of a Bolshevik party. You, however, are opposed to working in the mass reformist Labor Party. We, on the other hand, are for it. Very well, we will endeavor to convince you that to be consistent Bolsheviks, work in the mass organizations, including the Labor Party, is obligatory. Let's study and discuss together what the history of Bolshevism teaches us on this subject. Let's learn from Lenin's "Left Wing Communism."

Meantime, the question is posed concretely: the I.L.P. leaders propose immediate affiliation. You suspect their move as opportunist? We agree with you. Neither of us wants to strengthen the opportunists. Let's see if we can agree, and win the majority of the party to an agreement between us, that at least such conditions shall be placed by the I.L.P. for affiliation as would weaken the hand of the opportunist leaders and strengthen us, the left wing -- such conditions as freedom of organization and press, of voice and vote in parliament, etc. In any case, we will not permit this secondary question to divide our forces and we propose that the whole left wing, subordinating tactics to principles, shall act in a disciplined fashion on whatever line is adopted, inside the I.L.P. at conferences, conventions, etc.

This is how the question would have been approached with principled politics. This is how it should have been applied to the small Dewar-Wicks group as well as the larger, amorphous left wing. Countless examples from the history of Bolshevism can be adduced to show how such principled politics can be applied and have been applied successfully. I refer the comrades only to the experiences of the American Trotskyists in the fusion with the Musteite American Workers Party as one example. As students of that experience know, the A.W.P. was opposed to our "French Turn", opposed to having anything to do with Norman Thomas' Socialist Party. In our proposals for fusion, we left aside this whole tactical question, even went so far as to make the concession of leaving the fused party unaffiliated to the Trotskyist international organization temporarily, and made the fusion dependent solely on programmatic agreement. After the fusion, we were able, on the basis of this principled position, to win over the whole fused party not only to affiliation with the Fourth International against the centrists -- but also the overwhelming majority to entry into the S.P. -- against the sectarians.

It is an example well worth studying, along with the many other examples from the history of Bolshevism. It is an illustration of principled politics, carried out with a planned strategy, and based on a clear perspective (setting first tasks first) to which the tactic was applied flexibly. That is its clear line, irrespective of incidental errors that may have and undoubtedly were committed in the course of its application. The line proved its correctness in the test of experience. It was highly successful, both practically and in the strengthening of our principled position. (For greater detail, the reader is referred to Comrade Cannon's highly instructive "History of American Trotskyism" Lectures X, XI, and XII.)

The line of the R.C.P. comrades with regard to the I.L.P. is an example of an entirely opposite course: "Guerilla faction work"

carried out without any clear perspective, with tactics applied rigidly and leading, as we have seen, into the trap of unprincipled politics.

### Contradiction Between Policy and Practice

The lack of perspective makes for a contradiction in their policy itself: The I.L.P. is the "most fruitful field" and we should work in it, but there are "other more favorable fields" which make it more important to carry on "independent" work; we are not for even concentrating on let alone entering into the I.L.P., but the left wing in the I.L.P. must not only orient toward, but immediately vote for, affiliation to the Labor Party. But this contradictory policy -- which, one could say, at least envisions a correct policy toward the I.L.P. in the future, though under no conditions today is itself contradicted in practice by the "guerilla faction work."

Describing the danger of prematurely splitting the I.L.P. by the line pursued by the sectarians, the comrades remark gratuitously,

"It is apparently this split perspective which intrigues Stuart."

I am concerned with the problem of uniting the left wing on program today. To which the R.C.P. comrades oppose the danger of splitting the I.L.P. tomorrow. I propose to win a majority by uniting the left wing. The comrades, in effect, answer: the majority may not be a unanimity -- the opportunist leaders may resort to bureaucratic expulsion. The comrades do not see the problem in perspective first tasks first; in this instance, winning the left wing and a majority. Consequently they direct their "guerilla faction work," not only at the opportunist leaders, but also at the left wing!

They don't realize that even if their policy of concentrating on the I.L.P. is meant for tomorrow, the task of winning over, not of splitting, the left wing, is posed today.

As an example of their "guerilla faction work" (I called it "haphazard work" and a "policy of sporadic withdrawals"), I cited in the "Report" the case of Comrade Tearse. It appeared to me to be symptomatic. Here was a first rate leader in the I.L.P., where Trotskyist leaders are as yet very scarce. Instead of being assigned to intensify his activities there, he is not only permitted to lapse in this work, but is withdrawn altogether from it and assigned to the post of industrial (Trade Union) organizer in the R.C.P.

What do the comrades answer? I am interfering in "minute organizational details" of the R.C.P.! But this is the only instance I cited. And it is far from "minute." An outstanding comrade is involved. Is it symptomatic or not? -- that is the question. What was the reason for his withdrawal? Wasn't it that there are "more favorable fields of work"? Isn't that in line with the comrades' "perspective" of "independent work" first? Isn't that part of their "guerilla faction work?"

Naturally, if they took seriously even their own asserted "perspective" of concentrating on the I.L.P. . . . tomorrow, they would not have withdrawn Tearse, whose value as an experienced leading Trotskyist could only increase there with time.

Tearse's is an isolated incident, runs another argument, show us others! I have not, of course, had the opportunity of following the practical application of R.C.P. policy day by day. I can only take an instance that comes to my attention more or less by accident and indicate what is symptomatic in it.

But, since the publication of both the "Reply" and the "Report" another outstanding instance has come to my attention. In North-East England (Newcastle) several comrades, having been won over to the Trotskyist program, have for a long time carried on excellent work in the I.L.P. The Brockway-McNair Leadership trapped them into expulsion of a minor organizational issue. By their fine work, our comrades have gained the support of numerous I.L.P.'ers in their section of the country who demand their reinstatement and want to fight the I.L.P. leadership in the whole party for it. At the last national I.L.P. conference, delegates from many different parts of Great Britain expressed sympathy with these comrades and similar sentiments for their reinstatement.

Now, then, what do the R.C.P. leaders propose? Isn't it a fact that they propose to pull all these comrades out, like Tearse, for "more favorable fields of work"? Isn't it a fact that they argue that a campaign for reinstatement is not worthwhile, because twelve months would be lost in which these comrades could do "independent" work in the North-East? That building up the "Socialist Appeal", there, etc., etc. is more important than work in the I.L.P.?

I hope that the comrades will not again resort to the argument that I am "interfering in minute organization details."

This is clearly a much more emphatic symptom of the policy of "sporadic withdrawals." It is based on a tactic which is false to the core. It is a piece of "guerilla faction work" which can only undermine even their own perspective of a future orientation to the I.L.P., if this perspective is at all seriously meant.

### Conclusions

In my "Report" I made a few critical remarks which merely raised the question of the I.L.P. policy of our British comrades and outlined sketchily my conception of a correct policy. In their "Reply", the R.C.P. comrades revealed a sharp difference on the whole line of policy in respect to the I.L.P.

They remark in their document that "Stuart divorces the I.L.P. from the political situation as a whole, in particular with the perspectives of the Labor Party and the relationship of the I.L.P. to the Labor Party." As a matter of fact, the bulk of my "Report" was devoted to just these questions. In regard to I.L.P. policy specifically, the direct question that called forth my critical remarks was that of the relations of the R.C.P. to the left wing in the I.L.P.

It's on this question that our differences center. On this question our whole difference in line and in perspective becomes revealed.

Under examination, their perspective and their line of policy proves clearly to be beset by contradictions that require resolution. "Guerilla faction work" must give way to a full course toward the planned, organized winning over of the left wing and the majority of the I.L.P. The tactic of "affiliation to the Labor Party" must be subordinated to the struggle to unite the left wing on the program of Marxism. Only in this way can the contradiction in perspective and policy be resolved.

The I.L.P. is at the crossroads. In concentrated form, it poses today the question of the future for Britain: towards revolution or towards reaction. The solution of the present crisis in the I.L.P. will not, of course, solve all problems for the British Bolsheviks. It will not even remove the obstacle of centrism once and for all. But it can deliver a powerful blow at this disease, shatter it in its present form and thereby make it all the weaker and less effective in any future reincarnation. The Stalinists, to which the I.L.P. centrists previously leaned for support, are for the present discredited. The Labor Party bureaucracy, from which the I.L.P. has been separated since 1932, is still suspicious and not too anxious for a deal, for the centrists to get serious support as yet on that side. The I.L.P. today stands between the advanced workers moving to revolutionary internationalism and the Bolshevik party which alone represents it. No more favorable situation for a revolutionary assault on centrism can be expected.

Not only the Labor bureaucrats look for a left cover in the opportunists of the I.L.P. The imperialist ruling class is also interested in the problem. In the periodical "Newsweek" we read that even in his busiest moments at the Quebec Conference, the arch-imperialist Churchill anxiously took time out to read the daily bulletins concerning the then sick James Maxton, the "revolutionary" leader of the small I.L.P. At first glance, this seems astonishing. Is it? Not at all! It is symptomatic. The arch-imperialist, fearful of the future, looks for help against the coming storm-tide from his parliamentary friend, the opportunist leader of the centrist I.L.P.

The Bolsheviks, too, have a stake in the I.L.P. Their anxiety must be over the health of the left wing in that party. Full of hope for the future, the British Trotskyists must look to these advanced workers as their cohorts and with them prepare to ride the crest of that storm-tide which will sweep over both Maxton and Churchill, over both centrism and imperialism.

Full course toward the left wing and the winning of a majority of the I.L.P.!

That's the order of the day for the British combat party of world Trotskyism!

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THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE'S MOTION ON THE BELGIAN CRISIS

By Felix Morrow

At the Political Committee meeting of June 21, I introduced the following motion:

"That in our analysis of the Belgian working class struggle against the return of King Leopold, we condemn the Socialist and Communist parties for having failed to take the following steps:

1. Expulsion from the government of the bourgeois ministers, who are favorable to Leopold's return. Thereby the government would be transformed into a Socialist-Communist government.

2. Arrest of the royal family, including the Regent, and other reactionaries and industrialists who are plotting with Leopold for his return.

3. Immediate proclamation of the democratic republic.

4. Authorization of election of soldiers' committees by the Belgian regiments.

5. Arming of the workers. Control of production by elected factory committees to assure continued production for the needs of the workers.

My motivation for the motion, briefly, was that the problem of problems for the Trotskyist movement is to tear away the masses from the Socialist and Communist parties. This is not to be done by propaganda for the virtues of socialism, of which the socialist-minded proletariat of Belgium is well aware, nor by equally abstract propaganda for a proletarian revolution, which the Communist party workers and many of the Socialist party workers believe their parties stand for. Our task is to contrast what their parties obviously should do with what the Socialist and Communist parties actually do in the concrete critical situations which arise. One such situation was the attempt of Leopold to return. The obvious answer of the workers' parties should have been to transform the dispute into one involving the fate of the monarchy, arresting the royal family and proclaiming immediate establishment of the democratic republic. To those workers who follow the Socialist and Communist parties, we say: Your parties refuse even to break with the monarchy, at a moment when it is clear they could have gotten rid of it once for all; when such parties will not even proclaim a democratic republic when it can be done, how can you expect them to lead you to socialism?

The Political Committee majority rejected my motion. I leave to them to explain why, since it is a waste of time to answer their verbal arguments; I prefer to wait until they put them in writing (I am still waiting for them to put their arguments against the Italian party's slogan of the republic in writing).

As against my motion, the Political Committee majority adopted one by M. Stein, as follows:

"That in exposing the role of the Social-Democrats and their sham fight against Leopold, we base ourselves on the program of the Belgian co-thinkers and especially emphasize the demand for the withdrawal of Allied troops."

The "Program of the Belgian co-thinkers" to which this motion refers was one issued some months ago as a program of action; it had in it no reference to the monarchy.

The question at issue was the monarchy. That was what the Belgian crisis was about, and that was what my motion was about. My answer was the democratic republic. What is the answer of the Political Committee? A motion which evades the question. It does not have the courage of the conviction of most of the Political Committee majority, who in their verbal arguments against me showed they consider the slogan of the democratic republic as wrong in principle. Verbally they castigate Goldman, Logan and me as deviationists. But when it comes to put something in cold print, M. Stein and Cannon, after letting the others talk, always duck the issue. They have a healthy suspicion that the ultra-left arguments of their colleagues are nonsense which is fine against the minority but which should not be recorded in writing.

So they adopt a motion which says exactly nothing about the question in dispute. To make it seem less absurd they hang it on the Belgian program of action of months ago. (In the case of Italy, however where the monarchy has remained a burning issue for two and a half years, they do not follow our Italian party's program.)

Let us hope that our Belgian comrades didn't also look up a program of action written at a different time and with other situations in view. Let us hope that our Belgian comrades answered the actual question with which life had confronted them. If they did so, however, they followed a very different method than our political Committee, which is erecting into a veritable system this absurd trick of evading answers to the questions posed by the unfolding political situation.

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