

# Bulletin

OF THE WORKERS PARTY

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	
RESOLUTION ON THE JEWISH QUESTION. By Ed Findley, Al Findley	1
THE JEWISH QUESTION AND PALESTINE.	11
TWO SLOGANS: WAGE INCREASES WITHOUT PRICE INCREASES AND THE SLIDING SCALE OF WAGES.	14
A SOURCE BOOK OF POLITICS: A REVIEW OF A REVIEW.	19

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## INTRODUCTION

With this issue of the Party Bulletin we begin the publication of material on the "Jewish Question," as provided for by the Convention and the post-Convention of the Political Committee. Comrades will remember that a resolution was presented to the Convention by the outgoing National Committee. This resolution was not voted on by the Convention which decided that before the Party adopted a definitive position on this question, a discussion should be held in the Party of a more extended sort than was possible at the Convention.

In this Party Bulletin we publish a resolution by Comrades Ed and Al Findlay. The resolution which was presented to the Convention from the National Committee is in the hands of comrades who were in attendance at the Convention. The resolution will be republished in the volume of Convention resolutions as soon as these are prepared.

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### WARNING

It is necessary to warn comrades that articles for publication in the Party Bulletin, should be no longer than is necessary to present what is relevant in the point of view being argued. On the whole articles are far too long. The Party has neither the office force nor finances adequate to the regular publication of big Bulletins resulting from the submission of long articles. The Party is now publishing two bulletins: The Party Builder and the Party Bulletin. Comrade Barsh edits the Builder in the midst of performing other activities. Comrade Warren does the technical work on the Party Bulletin along with many other office tasks. The labor in connection with the cutting of stencils and running off the material on the mimeograph is tremendous. Also it must be emphasized that supplies for the bulletins are not only exorbitantly expensive today but paper is difficult to get.

No limit is being set at present on the length of articles but this may become necessary. It is requested however that articles be confined to approximately 2,000 words. This means about 4 pages single space in the Bulletin. At present we have one article of 5,000 words, one 2,300 and another 2,400.

As a rule articles will be published in the order they are received and without change in the copy. At times however, in the past it has been necessary to make deletions or changes. Such deletions or changes will be made where indicated, in the interest of Party security.

Since the Party Bulletin is primarily for theoretical discussion, contributions should be carefully prepared and well thought out. This is the only way that any decent intellectual can be maintained for the Bulletin. The Bulletin should not become a mere catch-all

for any and all ill-digested opinion or for the publication of trivia. We do not want the Bulletin to be merely a publication for self-expression but rather a place where comrades who have serious theoretical or semi-theoretical contributions to make can give expression to them.

E.R. McKinney

## RESOLUTION ON THE JEWISH QUESTION

by: Ed Findley  
Al Findley

Modern anti-semitism, flourishing in the rotten soil of decaying capitalism, is a new phenomenon differing radically from previous forms of anti-semitism and from almost all other forms of national or colonial oppression.

In the past, the anti-semitic program called for the extinction of the Jews as a separate national or religious community and their forced dissolution into the surrounding national or religious community. It offered the Jews a real alternative--expulsion or the adoption of the dominant faith and culture.

Capitalist totalitarian anti-semitism, however, plans and executes an annihilatory policy--the complete and total physical extermination of the Jews. Whether it employs the "cold pogrom" technique of the Polish Endeks, whereby the Jewish population is completely frozen out of the economic life and slowly starved to death, or the more rapid and scientific Nazi process of gas chamber murder, the goal is the same. The arena of annihilation is today no longer limited to single countries. It is continental and worldwide.

The most brutal imperialism on the other hand, generally seeks only the subjugation and exploitation of the peoples it rules and not their full destruction. In non-colonial countries, national oppression seeks only the subjugation and degradation of the oppressed and their extinction only as a national community. Anti-negroism in the U.S. and South Africa seldom goes beyond the desire to exploit and keep the Negro in his place as a servile, second class citizen, to be more easily and cruelly exploited. These subjected peoples are then offered the real alternatives of DEATH OR SLAVERY.

The distinguishing feature of totalitarian capitalist forms of anti-semitism is the total rejection of the Jews even as the most abject slaves.

Thus in a fundamental sense and in a very real personal sense the survival of the Jews is dependent upon the overthrow of capitalism. "The Jewish proletariat is in need of revolution more than any other." The correct use of this concept in our propaganda to the Jewish masses will make the program of the revolutionary party real and vital to Jewish workers and petty-bourgeoisie as the only effective way of defending their own lives.

The cause of anti-semitism is to be found in the nature of capitalist class relationships. The fundamental solution of the Jewish problem lies, therefore in the participation of the Jewish masses in the working class struggle for the abolition of capitalism, and the creation of a free socialist society. This, by itself, is not, however, an immediate nor a sufficient answer to the needs of the homeless, uprooted European Jewry which finds itself in a worse plight than all war torn peoples of Europe.

For the overwhelming majority of these gas chamber escapees, with no real future in their former homelands, the question of uninterrupted and free immigration has become a LIFE AND DEATH question.

The working class movement in every country has the duty to demand the general right of unrestricted emigration and immigration. This principle, long recognized in the international socialist movement as one of the elementary and genuinely democratic rights to be defended by the working class, must be specifically and vigorously fought for in the case of the homeless Jews of Europe. All barriers against their immigration to the countries they chose must be broken down.

For socialists in the United States, the richest nation in the world and one having industrial and agricultural resources for a population many times the present size, this means in the first place, the struggle against the exclusion of Europe's Jews from this country. WE must fight for the realization of the slogan "OPEN THE DOORS OF THE UNITED STATES."

As part of the general desire to emigrate to safe haven, there exists an extremely powerful and spontaneous desire to go to Palestine and participate there in the building of a national territorial center. This fact must play a key role in determining the attitude of socialists towards the DIRECTION of Jewish emigration. In addition to fighting for opening the doors in the U.S., we must join in the struggle, to the extent we are able, to open the doors of Palestine.

The Workers Party recognizes the strong sentiment for a Jewish territorial center and the struggle for its realization as legitimate and progressive in the same sense that revolutionary Marxists thus characterize other national struggles for self-determination.

The Workers Party rejects the old Comintern formulae which failed to distinguish between the legitimate national aspirations of the Jewish masses for survival as a national community and the reactionary and reformist parties that presume to represent them.

Whether this desire for continued national existence is to take the path of national cultural autonomy (as advocated by the Jewish Bund for the Jews of Poland and West Russia with their compact, mass centers of viable Jewish cultural life), or the path of acquiring a territorial, economic strategic base for group survival (territorialism and zionism), is a matter for self determination by the Jewish masses.

The demand for national cultural autonomy is reactionary and anti-democratic only when raised as an alternative to full political independence; to deny an oppressed minority its right to secession (ex. Renner's program of cultural autonomy for the oppressed Slavic peoples of Austria-Hungary).

When, however, an oppressed nationality does not possess a basis for territorial autonomy and political secession by reason of geographical dispersion, it is anti-democratic and false internationalism to deny that people self-direction and self-determination of its cultural and social life in the name of an international fusion of peoples.

As revolutionary socialists we cannot but reject the attempt to impose an assimilationist perspective on the Jewish masses as cultural imperialism. Whether or not the Jews should submerge their identity into the surrounding peoples in whose midst they live or seek to preserve themselves as a nation, it is for them to decide.

Revolutionary marxists recognize that the perspective of assimilation under capitalism is utopian and can only lead the Jewish masses to underestimate the catastrophic weakness of their position in bourgeois and Stalinist society.

The Workers Party condemns the old "propaganda of indifference" with respect to the national aspirations of the Jewish masses. It is patently wrong and anti-democratic to fight for the right of all other oppressed nationalities to self-determination, even under capitalism, and at the same time deny this basic democratic right to the most oppressed Jews.

Those who argue that any organized struggle for a Jewish territorial center or other form of self-determination is utopian and reactionary because unrealizable under capitalism, are repeating the false and objectively anti-democratic thesis of Bukharin-Piatikov, who claimed that "the self-determination of nations is first of all utopian (it cannot be realized within the limits of capitalism) and harmful as a slogan that disseminates illusions." This thesis is just as erroneous when applied to the struggle for a Jewish territorial center as when applied to the national question as a whole.

"It would be a fundamental error to think that a struggle for democracy would be capable of diverting the proletariat from a socialist revolution, or of obscuring, or overshadowing such a revolution. On the contrary, just as victorious socialism is impossible unless it achieves complete democracy, so the proletariat cannot prepare for a victory over the bourgeoisie if it does not lead a broad, consistent and revolutionary struggle for democracy. The elimination of one of the paragraphs of the democratic program-- for example, the paragraph about self-determination of nations -- supposedly for the reason of its "impracticability" under imperialism would be no less an error." (Lenin)

It is our task to correctly apply the Leninist program on the national question to the struggle of the Jews for national self-determination, to use this struggle as a lever towards the socialist revolution.

The Jewish struggle must be recognized for what it really is-- a part of the national struggle, and not merely a struggle for civil rights and equality (although it is that too).

Lenin himself erred in this respect by uncritically following Kautsky in considering the Jews a social caste and not a socially heterogeneous nationality. A step forward was made by Trotsky when he came out in favor of a territorial center for the Jews in a socialist world. By implication he thereby rejected the concept of the Jews as a caste but rather considered them a nationality.

We must draw the full implications and make clear that the Jewish question is a national question.

For revolutionary socialists there is no need to set up hard and fast criteria before we permit a group to be considered a nationality. Such tasks we leave to the metaphysicians. For us it is sufficient that the material and historical conditions have created such a strong feeling that the human beings involved think of themselves as a nation or nationality.

The Workers Party rejects as absolutely invalid today the old formulae which proclaimed that "idea of a Jewish 'nationality' has a definitely reactionary character"; that "the idea of a Jewish nationality is a denial of the interests of the Jewish proletariat, introducing within it directly or indirectly a feeling which is hostile to assimilation, a Ghetto feeling."

While supporting the struggle for Jewish self-determination, we must impart a revolutionary socialist direction to that struggle. Revolutionary socialists do not fail to point out to the nationally conscious Jewish masses that their aspirations cannot be fully achieved within the framework of decadent capitalism; that the struggle for their democratic and just national demands can find its only true expression in the struggle for liberating Socialism against both capitalist and stalinist imperialism.

The Workers Party warns the Jewish masses against the danger of a despairing attitude towards the defense of Jewish and other democratic rights outside of Palestine. In countries where an independent labor movement exists such an attitude is not only cowardly but plays into the hands of the reactionary capitalists and can only hasten the development of capitalist totalitarianism. Such an attitude makes the job of the exterminators easier by removing one obstacle in their path, the force of a highly politically developed group --the Jews. Such an attitude will also defeat the territorial desires of the Jews, since there can be no freedom and independence in Palestine in a world dominated by imperialist England and America or by Russian imperialism.

The world character of the Jewish problem and the world wide arena in which the struggle for its solution is fought must lead to a sharp rejection of the false counterposing in practice (by Zionists and anti-Zionists alike) of the struggle for Jewish rights outside of Palestine as against their fight for national rights within that country. To permit one struggle to divert attention and energy from the other, signifies the abandonment of key battle positions in the war against national oppression.

The Jews must and will learn to understand, what many of them already sense; that the Big Three imperialist world is their mortal enemy; that the struggle against anti-semitism and for Jewish national liberation cannot be conducted apart from the struggle for all democratic rights and apart from the fight of the world proletariat for a socialist society.

- The Palestine Problem -

For the Jewish masses, freedom in Palestine means above all the right to free immigration into Palestine. This need has thus far been thwarted by a de facto alliance between British imperialism and the reactionary leaders of the Arab nationalist movement.

British imperialism, in order to retain control in the crucial area of the Near and Middle East, which is a bridge between three continents and a gigantic and relatively unexplored reservoir of oil, deliberately fosters Arab-Jewish hostility. It courts the Arab world by closing the gates of Palestine to Jewish immigrants and deliberately contrives to present the coming of the Jews as the spearhead of a hated foreign invasion. It courts the Jews by pointing to the Balfour declaration and blaming all attempts at restriction of Jewish rights on the necessity of placating the Arab and Moslem world.

The struggle for free immigration into Palestine means, in the first place, a militant struggle against the restrictive barriers imposed by the British colonial office. It also means exposing the lying propaganda of British and Stalinist imperialism and reactionary Arab nationalism that the Jewish movement into Palestine is an imperialist invasion; that the peaceful settlement of the Jews has taken place at the expense of Arab peasantry.

We, revolutionary Marxists, must vigorously champion the demand to "Open the gates to Palestine." We must give critical but unambiguous support to the Jewish Resistance movement in its efforts to break the immigration barriers by constructing an illegal underground railroad and by armed resistance to all police efforts to end illegal immigration.

At the same time we must condemn in the clearest and sharpest terms the reactionary political program of official Zionism which prevents the Jewish masses from becoming "part and parcel of the anti-imperialist revolution which will shape the future of Asia" and condemns the Palestinian and Near Eastern Jews to the "fate of other historic Levantine peoples (the Armenians and Assyrians) who permitted themselves to become the tools of imperialist protectors."

The bankruptcy of all Zionist parties--bourgeois, reformist and semi-Stalinist-- is most clearly demonstrated by their failure to work out a concrete program for international unity of the Arab Jewish masses in Palestine.

Responsibility for the lack of unity between the two peoples must be shared by the Histadruth (General Federation of Labor in Palestine) with the Arab-Jewish reactionaries, and the British colonial office. The organized labor movement follows a short-sighted, ruinous policy of pushing the working masses of the farms and cities into two separate economies (Kibbush Avodah - capture of jobs.).

The organizational consequences of this policy--the formation of separate national unions by Jewish and Arab workers to function



in their separate national economic sectors-- was and is a major obstacle in the path of genuine Arab-Jewish unity/

Only where Arab and Jewish workers work side by side can and does proletarian class struggle succeed in cutting through nationalist barriers as was demonstrated by the exemplary unity of action displayed by Arab and Jewish workers in the recent railroad and postal strikes. "Long live Jewish and Arab cooperation" was a main slogan shouted by the pickets.

These strikes only highlight the need for UNITED trade unions and workers organizations encompassing both Arab and Jewish workers. The revolutionary socialist party of Palestine must place in the forefront the fight against the separation of Palestinian workers into national trade unions and parties. Formation of separate national locals within the same general union would not be an advance over the present--it can only highlight the exclusiveness and bring conflict within the formal arena of an organization.

The demagoguery of the laborites who defend the practice of exclusion on the grounds that the organized Jewish workers with their higher standards would otherwise suffer from the unregulated competition of the backward, low-paid Arab fellaheen must be exposed as false "progressive" camouflage for anti-democratic nationalist politics little different from the open chauvinism of the Arab trade unions.

The defense of this policy that bases itself on the necessity to provide work in Palestine for immigrant Jews is both economically and politically wrong. The inevitable, long-run economic consequences of a policy that splits a small country into two artificial economies is to limit its expansion and absorptive capacity. It is politically self-defeating because it tends to provoke fear and hostility on the part of the Arab workers and fellaheen the only potential allies of the Jews in Palestine. The fact that Jews cannot find employment in the Arab sector (partly as a result of Kibbush Ayode policy) can hardly make reasonable the adoption of a suicidal policy leading to the destruction of all basis for Arab-Jewish unity.

First adruith convention resolutions in favor of Jewish-Arab unity are worse than meaningless as long as that labor federation continues to exclude Arab labor from the Jewish economy and support joint action only for Arab and Jewish workers in the employ of the government or offoreign corporations. The fact that the Arab nationalists are even more guilty of national exclusivism cannot justify this short-sighted practice which destroys the very foundation of unity between the Arab and Jewish proletariat.

The undoubted reactionary character of the official Zionist movement's support of the British mandate -- or a new U.N. trusteeship--must, however, not be permitted to obscure for us the fact that the long run, interests of Jewish nationalism are incompatible with British or other imperialist rule of Palestine.

To cling to the outdated, oversimplified Comintern characterization of Zionism as nothing more than "an agent of British

imperialism" is to ignore the intense anti-imperialist temper and activities of the Palestinian Jewish masses and the ever-growing conflict of interests between these two forces.

It is not at all accidental that the appeal to British imperialism to create what Weitzman called "a Jewish Island outpost for British interests in an Arab sea" or the supposed "Providential basis for a permanent alliance between England and a Jewish Palestine" (Jabotinsky) has failed utterly and proved illusory. Imperialist realities in the Middle East have always favored, and continue to favor, an alliance between British imperialism and the ruling classes of the Arab world.

The Workers Party warns all supporters of Palestinian freedom of the treacherous role of Russia in the struggles for national liberation everywhere and reminds them of the infamous role of the Stalinists in the Palestine pogroms of 1937. During the war Russia attempted to appear as a champion of the Jews in order to enlist their support in the war. This did not induce her to give asylum then or now to the millions who could have found refuge in her vast territories. Her doors remained closed.

Palestine's strategic location between the Iranian oil fields and the Mediterranean makes it a natural object of imperialist struggle and of special interest to Russian imperialism. Russia seeks to exploit the differences in Palestine in order to strengthen her own reactionary influence in that part of the world.

Today, Russia seeks to curry favor with the reactionary nationalist leaders of the Arabs by appearing as their champion against British and American imperialism. Nothing but disaster will result from either Jews or Arabs placing the slightest confidence in Russia's role in the Middle East.

The Workers Party likewise warns all supporters of Palestinian freedom against any faith in the "democratic" intentions of American imperialism in the Middle East. As with other great powers, the United States is motivated by its economic interests--above all by the oil in this part of the world. The somewhat obscure dealings of Roosevelt with King Ibn Saud of Arabia are an indication of the American role of playing both sides--the pro-Arab and the pro-Jewish side in this game, in the interests of American political and economic domination. The hypocrisy of Truman's request for admission of Jews to Palestine is clear when contrasted with his failure to permit entry of Jews into the U.S.

Neither Great Britain nor Russia nor the U.S. nor the Arab League nor the official Zionist organizations can be relied on to conduct a real fight for the interests of the Palestinian masses. The struggle must rest entirely on the hands of the masses. Their only real allies are to be found in the world struggle of the working classes and the colonial peoples.

The struggle for a free democratic Palestine can be fought only on the basis of Jewish-Arab unity. Every national and religious issue over which the Jews and the Arabs permit themselves to be divided, is another prop for British rule.

The slogan for a free Palestine finds concrete political expression in the demand for the immediate convocation of a constituent assembly elected by direct secret universal suffrage of all men and women over 18. This demand must be a key slogan of a genuinely democratic program for Palestine today.

The reactionary character of the Zionist parties is seen precisely in their opposition to this slogan. From extreme right wing to the most left all Zionist tendencies stand united in opposition to a constituent assembly until a Jewish majority exists. Not only is this position undemocratic, it makes the Zionists dependent on imperialist support with all the evil consequences we are now witnessing, betrayal, etc. It also plays into the hands of the most reactionary Arab nationalist elements. The latter use this role of Zionism as a means of assuring their own reactionary domination over the Arab masses and thereby to undermine all tendencies toward Arab-Jewish unity.

The question of a constituent assembly cannot however, be posed in the abstract, separate from the legitimate fears of the Jewish population, who are well aware that the cardinal demand of all Arab nationalists from the Arab feudal lords to the Arab Stalinists, is the stoppage of all Jewish immigration and that the extreme Arab Nationalists (Istaklil Party) favor the repatriation of all Jews who came to Palestine after World War I.

Revolutionary Socialism cannot and does not ask the Jewish masses to make a unilateral sacrifice of their democratic and national rights.

Similarly, we must understand that the opposition of the Arab masses to the continued Jewish immigration stems from their just fears of becoming denationalized minority in a Jewish state, with nothing more than civil rights as individual citizens.

Only a political program that guarantees the NATIONAL aspirations of BOTH peoples of Palestine can forge the indispensable anti-imperialist unity of the Jewish-Arab masses.

The establishment of a democratic arena (Constituent Assembly) for free resolution of the complex Palestinian issues, though basic is no more than a first step. The fundamental question of how and on what political basis to resolve the conflict between Arab and Jewish nationalism is left virtually unanswered by those for whom the call for a constituent assembly is the crowning slogan of their program for Palestine.

In the given political context, in which all Arab nationalist "parties" strongly favor the establishment of an Arab Palestine where the Jewish masses will be deprived of all national rights and be forced to content themselves with precarious civil rights similar to those accorded Jews in the Arab states of Iraq, Egypt and Syria, merely to call for a Constituent Assembly is tantamount to political support, in effect, of the Arab National state in Palestine. It means political support of the anti-democratic Arab nationalist program which stands on the same plane with that of the maximalist

Zionists who favor a Jewish state in which the Palestinian Arabs will either have to content themselves with civil rights alone or else migrate to adjacent Arab lands.

The call for a Constituent Assembly in Palestine acquires democratic content only when directly linked to a clear demand for a bi-national (Jewish-Arab) Palestine, in which the national rights of both peoples are equally acknowledged.

Palestine is a bi-national country; the home of two peoples. Any other point of departure, no matter how concealed by democratic or socialist phraseology, signifies the acceptance of the domination of one Palestinian people by the other.

The banner of bi-nationalism must be wrested from the two Zionist tendencies that purport to be its bearers. The hypocritical lip-service given to a genuinely bi-nationalist solution by the partly Stalinized, Hashomer Hatzair Party of Palestine is belied by its political practice. The Hashomer Hatzair's support of the Histadruth principle that Jews must hire only Jewish labor with its inevitable corollaries of separate national economies and separate, parallel unions for Jews and Arabs flatly contradicts its most fervent bi-nationalist protestations.

On the other hand the Ichud (Unity) Party, which favors the immediate formation of self-governing institutions in which Arab and Jews are to be represented on a parity basis and the elimination of national discriminatory practices in both communities (i.e. JNF restrictions), places its faith in a tripartite agreement between the "Notables" of both peoples and the imperialist power that controls the country. It vehemently opposes the prosecution of an anti-imperialist struggle against the mandatory power and denounces as "one-sided policy" any Jewish pro-Arab orientation which is directed against the British rulers. The Ichud (Unity) Party's pro-mandate (or trusteeship) position tears the very heart out of bi-nationalist politics, its very reason for being. The bi-nationalist unity of the Arab and Jewish masses can be welded only in the fire of revolutionary anti-imperialist struggle.

Anti-imperialism and bi-nationalism are the two sides of the Palestinian coin of national liberation.

The democratic, colonial revolutions of our epoch have demonstrated that the only class in Palestine which will prove capable of leading a thoroughgoing, bi-national struggle against British imperialism is a united Palestine proletariat. The proletarian class struggle against economic exploitation unites all toilers and serves as the bridge across all nationalist barriers between the Jewish and Arab worker.

The successful conduct of the struggle by a united Palestinian proletariat on behalf of national and social emancipation is inconceivable without the existence of a powerful revolutionary Marxist party firmly rooted amongst the Arabs and Jewish toilers. The contribution of the Fourth international movement, must, therefore begin with all assistance toward the establishment of such a Party in Palestine.

Such a party can be built only with a program specifically designed to answer the peculiar national and social questions posed by Palestine, based on the following platform:

1. Independence from British imperialism and its imperialist would-be heirs, Russia and the United States.
2. Immediate convocation of a constituent assembly.
3. For free and unrestricted immigration into Palestine.
4. For a bi-national, democratic republic--against both an Arab National state and a Jewish National state in Palestine.
5. Land to the peasantry (Arab and Jewish). For the division of the land (governmental and land-owners) to those who till it.
6. Abolition of the usury system. Free credit to the peasantry.
7. For united organs of proletarian class struggle--organize the Jewish and Arab workers into the same unions,--joint cooperatives and organizations for the farmers.
8. For an autonomous, bi-national, Socialist Palestine within a Near East Federation of socialist Republics.

The following article has been sent by one of the Party's correspondents in Palestine. It is published here for information and as a discussion article. The article does not express the position of the Party.

### THE JEWISH QUESTION AND PALESTINE

It is the viewpoint of many, that Zionism and Socialism are irreconcilable opposites. Those people however disregard the fact that Zionism is a bourgeois-national movement for liberation, which must necessarily contain reactionary elements. Yet, this fact is a long way from making Zionism into a reactionary movement. To maintain this, is to throw out the baby with the bath. It means to commit the same error as those who condemn Socialism as a whole, because the ruling strata of Russia takes many measures, allegedly in the name of Socialism, which with the best intentions cannot be reconciled with Socialism. A certain ability of abstraction is a necessary prerequisite, for any political thinking.

When workers strike for higher wages, they take the position that as long as the rulers of our present society are in power they are responsible for it. Even the class-conscious worker who does not recognize the state de jure, does recognize it de facto., for he can make his demands to it, and to it alone. Nobody has ever seen in this a reactionary position up to now.

For many years before the great misfortune which the war years had brought upon the Jewish people, and which could have been avoided with the timely execution of the Zionist program, the Jewish people, in the form of the Zionist movement, used to turn to world public opinion, with its demands for national independence for Palestine. They could not turn to anybody other than Great Britain, the actual owner of this country. As long as Palestine belongs to Great Britain, we must necessarily direct our political and economic demands to this great power. This attitude is a long way removed from acceptance, not to mention from support of British imperialism. The true owners of Palestine are without a doubt the Jewish and Arab people; and the Zionist movement as a whole, particularly its mass of rank and filers (in distinction from its leaders, who like all other bureaucratic labor leaders are tied with a thousands bonds of economic interest to the colonial power) has never held any other position.

In my opinion however, the position that this or that party takes in the Zionist movement is of very little importance. It is irrelevant whether they demand the right of self-determination (one of the basic principles of Socialism) for the purpose of establishing a Jewish national state in this bi-national country (something in itself reactionary), or whether they demand a bi-national state. Likewise, whether they fight British imperialism, to convince it of the superior advantage of cooperating with the Jews instead, (which is in effect black-mail) or whether they are really serious about driving out the oppressors, is not decisive here.

The fact remains, that the Arab camp of all gradations has so far been incapable of producing a movement that de facto fights imperialism, probably because the masses of this people are still too ignorant and the victims of religious fanaticism. The only struggle that the Arabs in Palestine were capable of waging during the three trouble periods, consisted of senseless and gruesome killing of unarmed pedestrians and bus passengers. The Jewish underground movement on the other hand fights exclusively British police and troops and destroys exclusively the property of the government, police and troops. The question arises now, with the Arabs not yet ready but the Jews prepared for the anti-imperialist struggle, whether this latter should be given up because it is partially motivated by reactionary reasons. Involved here is a certain relativity. If it were a question of the most ideal situation, we would have a Jewish-Arab workers movement here, which would jointly struggle against imperialism, until the British are driven out of the country, and then we could peacefully build up a bi-nationalist socialist society. But, things unfortunately are not like that. The only factor that can be considered in relation to the struggle against imperialism is the Jewish sector. In passing, it is interesting to note that this struggle has been regarded only with sympathy by the simple Arab folk. The Histadruth is of course a social democratic, yellow, bureaucratic labor union, the likes of which exist in every other part of the world. It condemns most of the strikes of the Jewish workers as too "wild."

And yet, Jewish Palestine is by far the most progressive country in the Middle East. Thus, a strengthening of this sector thru further immigration, - the crux of the present struggle in Palestine - means not only the deliverance of Jews who justly have the right to be rescued, but also the strengthening of all progressive forces in this part of the world. The Jewish resistance movement has long ago torn itself from its former faith in England's generosity. The despair and tragic sorrows with which the Jewish people have been afflicted, the most severe catastrophe from which a people ever had to suffer, has taught those who only a few years ago embraced England and were ready to serve as her gendarmes, that they must become their own gendarmes if they don't want to share the miserable fate of six million perished Jews. Thus, they became objectively the vanguard of the liberation movement. And there is no doubt, that the progressive Arab circles who are deprived of all influence by the ruling Chuseni party, will join with the Jewish resistance movement, when they will march one day towards the struggle against England.

The country is poor economically, but it could maintain a large part of those who are today dying in D.P. camps - and who tomorrow will no longer be able to live in England and America, and who cannot live anywhere else in Europe - if the government would not rob the country dry with its tax-price monopoly. The Jewish Agency on the other hand has developed a bureaucratic strata, which strives to dominate public life as much as possible, and which contributes as good as nothing towards the integration of the Jewish immigrants, for whom it claims to speak

The anti-imperialist struggle of the Jewish people is in the light of this, as in Indonesia, -in spite of the undeniable partially reactionary goal- a great step forward, for it opens the door to developments, which its originators may perhaps not have wanted, but which must take place nevertheless. For, the unity of the two peoples and the execution of the socialist revolution demands as its first indispensable prerequisite the complete destruction of imperialism, the force which whips up people against one another, and which doubly oppresses the workers.

J.R.



TWO SLOGANS: WAGE INCREASES WITHOUT PRICE INCREASES AND THE SLIDING SCALE OF WAGES.

We are living now in the period of the aftermath of the second imperialist world war. It is a period distinguished by the militancy of a labor movement that refuses to be trampled underfoot by big industry as it was after the last war; by growing dissatisfaction with the two old capitalist parties and the growing sentiment for an independent labor party; it is marked by the usual fake "exposes" of the penny-ante war profiteers while the big blood suckers remain untouched; it is marked by the frantic desire of the industrialists and their government to legislate the labor movement out of existence and their cringing fear to attempt it; but in an immediate sense it is marked by the skyrocketing of prices and rents, by the attempt of big business to gouge every last cent out of the workers and the fight of the workers to prevent it. From this fight there has emerged a new and vital slogan, the slogan of the General Motors Workers, "Wage increases without price increases." The Workers Party has adopted, enlarged upon and given revolutionary content to the whole GM program, the central slogan of which is the one mentioned above.

The socialist Workers Party, by way of criticism of the championing of this slogan, through certain of its functionaries, has quoted the documents of the Founding Conference of the Fourth International, to wit:

"Neither monetary inflation nor stabilization can serve as slogans for the proletariat because these are but two ends of the same stick. Against a bounding rise in prices which with the approach of the war will assume an ever more unbridled character, one can fight only under the slogan of a sliding scale of wages."

Just what are these words, (written by Trotsky prior to September 3, 1938) naively quoted, supposed to prove? That the Workers Party has "again" forsaken the word of Trotsky and to do that means, through the process of the simple Cannonite equation, straying from the revolutionary path.

They interpret the slogan of "Wage increases without price increases" to be a demand for monetary stabilization and Trotsky said such a demand cannot serve the working class. However, stabilization has traditionally meant that, for example, in this country the dollar is stabilized in relation to all things. It means that the price of all commodities would be frozen. Didn't Marx explain that labor itself is a commodity? And do we propose that the price of that commodity be stabilized when we advance the GM slogan? Obviously not. Doesn't the slogan say in essence that the price on all commodities EXCEPT the commodity of labor power be stabilized? Does that have anything in common with the traditional meaning of monetary stabilization?

But the "dialecticians" of the Cannonite Party have been unable since 1940 to apply this dialectic over which they were so excited. That is explained very simply by saying that the only dialectician

who had any influence in or on their party, Leon Trotsky, was murdered by the agents of Stalin in that year. They treat the whole period that has ensued from that time until the present as one without change. Imperialist wars may come and go, the objective situation may change from a pre-war period of mass unemployment and economic crises to a post-war period of temporary and comparative boom and great militancy in the labor movement, but not a draft from this typhoon reaches the SWP offices to disturb the golden bust of Cannon that resides there.

This whole period of tremendous change is viewed by the SWP as one which warrants no adjustment whatsoever in their approach to the problems of the working class. Any new idea or proposal in their party must first be checked against the written and recorded word of Trotsky. If Trotsky ever said it, fine. If not then the author of the proposal or idea is a petty-bourgeois renegade over whom we must, in Cannon's well-known words, "ride roughshod."

It is because of this sterility, this lack of POLITICAL leadership that the SWP could find no other answer to the war than "UNCONDITIONAL defense of the Soviet Union", one of the two great imperialist victors. It is because of this incapacity for theory that they find themselves in the ridiculous position of refusing to change one word in the Transitional Demands Program which was written in 1938 by Trotsky with the admonition that this was to serve as the beginning. Time and experience would teach us where changes and additions must be made. The Transitional Demands Program was not meant by Trotsky to represent an eternal truth. It was a beginning. The program itself is like an organ--one doesn't play all the stops with the same intensity at all times. First one combination is emphasized, then another and at times some are left out entirely.

Trotsky understood this and attempted to teach the Movement that merely to repeat by rote what had been perhaps just and necessary yesterday could only lead to political impotence and defeat for the working class. In "Lessons of October" he quotes Lenin as saying:

"It happens all too frequently that when history makes an abrupt turn, even the most advanced parties are unable for a longer or shorter period of time to adapt themselves to new conditions. They keep repeating the slogans of yesterday-----slogans which were correct yesterday----but which have lost all their meaning today, becoming devoid of meaning 'suddenly' with the self-same "suddenness" that history makes its abrupt turns." (Works, Vol xiv. 2, P, 12)

Trotsky continues this thought in his own words:

"Hence the danger arises that if the turn is too abrupt or too sudden, and if in the preceding period too many elements of inertia and conservatism have accumulated in the leading organs of the party then the party proves itself unable to fulfill its leadership at that supreme and critical moment for which it has been preparing itself in the course of years or decades. The party is ravaged by

a crisis, and the movement passes the party by---and heads towards defeat." (Lessons of October, pp26-27).

The Cannonites have no understanding, no appreciation for the real meaning of this. They can only repeat, as Trotsky said, by rote. Hence when the WP picks up the slogan of the GM workers, "Wage increases without price increases" and ties it up with our Transitional Demands program, they can only condemn the slogan because it is not in Trotsky's written works. They criticize the WP for championing this slogan, and, what is much worse from their point of view, interpreting it in a revolutionary manner. A SWP functionary said to the writer, "What you say of this slogan in your paper is not true. That is not what the General Motors Workers said. You have added to it. You have changed it."

Of course we have. We have, as Trotsky always advised, picked up the new and vital slogan of the working class and given it revolutionary content by making clear in our press its implications and making clear under what conditions such a demand is realizable. That is our revolutionary duty. That's what Lenin and Trotsky meant when they continually hammered upon the theme of the necessity for the party to base its day to day activity and slogans on the struggles of the working class. Not on the bureaucratic conservatism of the leading clique, but upon the struggle of the working class. That is what Felix Morrow, member of the Political Committee of the SWP, means when he writes in his criticism of the Cannonites policy in the recent strike wave:

"One of the main--perhaps the most important of all---methodological principles of Leninist politics is: to study attentively the course of the class struggle, seizing upon the initiative of the workers themselves, extending and generalizing it. Out of the class struggle, independently of the initiative of the revolutionary party (especially when that party is so small) there arise new methods of struggle, new types of fighting organizations, new slogans. Woe to the revolutionary party which fails or hesitates to accept what 'others' have initiated. In that case the Party's slogans, perfectly correct in theory, become irrelevant or secondary while it fails to capitalize on what is central in the given reality: the slogan of 'others'.

"such was the error which the Political Committee made in the recent strike struggles when it failed to make its own the remarkable---and new---slogan of the GM program: wage raises without price raises."

The GM slogan and the slogan of the sliding scale of wages are posed by the Cannonites as contradictory and mutually exclusive when in fact they are complementary. We fight for the escalator clause in all contracts and at the same time call for workers control over prices. But the Editor of the Militant, paper of the SWP, says that this is anti-Marxist and contrary to the position and program of the Fourth International. Let us investigate what a transitional demand is and what falls under the headings of Marxist and anti-Marxist.

Prior to the first world war the programs of the then-existing Socialist parties were divided into what was known as the "maximum" program, i.e. the program embodying the fundamental programmatic theses of scientific socialism; and the "minimum" program, i.e. the program encompassing the slogans and demands of the day to day class struggle. The minimum program was a result of the realization that a party can achieve very little if it goes among the broad sections of the working class with nothing more than a slogan for the overthrow of capitalist society and the establishment of socialism. The workers themselves are bound up in their current struggle and have very little time or sympathy for slogans and demands that do not apply directly to their problem. These parties found it necessary to have slogans germane to that problem or struggle. Slogans like the one for the eight-hour day, women's suffrage, etc.

These minimum programs were composed in their entirety of demands that were realizable within the framework of capitalist society, demands unlikely to be realized but possible of realization. The parties mentioned, (like the 2nd International) degenerated through the gradual acceptance of the minimum or reformist program as the sole program. True, they still gave lip service to the maximum program, but the whole life and activity of these parties was devoted to the struggle revolving around the minimum, that is, reformist program. They degenerated from Marxist parties to reformist parties that found it possible and did vote credits to their respective national bourgeois governments in support of the first imperialist world war.

Lenin, in 1917, developed the first transitional program to replace the old minimum program. This program was developed as the answer to the immediate problems of the working class regardless of whether or not it could be realized within the framework of capitalism. The word "transitional" itself indicates the difference between this new type of program and the old minimum program. The transitional program could be realized only during the transition between capitalism and the socialist society. This program, far from leaving the capitalist property relations untouched, formed the bridge between capitalism and socialism.

With this in mind it is correct to say that the GM slogan "wage increases without price increases" is more transitional, has more of the characteristics of a "bridge" slogan than does the slogan "sliding scale of wages"; and for the following reasons:

The sliding scale of wages slogan means that every time prices go up, there shall be a corresponding increase in wages. Naturally a Marxist doesn't limit himself to that conception but that is what the slogan says. This means that if prices are increased ten percent then wages will automatically be increased ten percent. (It should be pointed out that one of the original criticisms of this slogan was that if wages are to be tied to prices they can slide downward in time of crisis as logically as upward during inflationary periods.) That is to say that the weekly wage of the worker must be such that he can buy as much after the price hike as he could prior to it. No inroad on profits has been made. The mass of surplus value remains untouched. The status-quo in that respect has been preserved.

What is the meaning, on the otherhand, of the slogan "Wage increases without price increases"? Obviously it means that prices remain where they are while wages are increased. It means that the worker will be able to buy not simply as much as previously, but more. It means that the mass of profits suffers an absolute decline. It means that definite inroads are made on surplus value. The status-quo, rather than being maintained, is destroyed and the capitalist society is weakened to that extent.

Which of these slogans, then, is the more readily realizable under capitalism? Isn't it perfectly clear that the slogan that leaves the mass of profits untouched and does not cause a decline in surplus value is theoretically and actually more acceptable to and compatible with capitalist property relations? Isn't it also clear that the slogan which proposes inroads upon profits is the more transitional in character: that this slogan embodies the conception of a transition or bridge from the society where the disparity between wages and prices is great to a society where the two are equal? Which slogan is more transitional in character and which tends to fall under the classification of a minimum demand?

But a transitional demand is not one that is theoretically correct and nothing more. It must have popular appeal among the working class or it loses all significance. If popular mass appeal were not an integral part of the whole conception of a transitional or bridge demand then we might do just as well, perhaps better, simply to advance a slogan like "Down with capitalism." Which of these two slogans has the popular support of the working class? Are the workers in the UAW, the spearhead of the labor movement, today calling for a "sliding scale of wages and a sliding scale of hours?" Have they advanced that anywhere? Has any Cannonite fraction been able to interest a large section of the labor movement in it and make of it a popular demand? No. The exact opposite is true as far as these two slogans are concerned. The only popular slogan today, and by that is not meant that it is as popular as could be desired, is wage increases without price increases. The advanced section of the labor movement today sees in that slogan the answer to their biggest problem.

This slogan sprang from the labor movement itself. It is a valid slogan. We adopt and popularize it along with our demand for the escalator clause in union contracts. The slogan has revolutionary content. We explain this, we attempt to broaden the fight around it. That is the task of a revolutionary party. To study the class struggle day by day, "seize upon the initiative" of the working class, give the struggle revolutionary content and explain its implications. That is the way a Marxist approaches the class struggle.

July 21, 1946

George Whitney

1415

## A SOURCE BOOK OF POLITICS: A REVIEW OF A REVIEW.

It is impossible to let pass unnoticed a review of Trotsky's "First 5 Years of the Communist International" by A. Victor in the August 19th issue of Labor Action. We hold no brief for Comrade Hansen, but nowhere is it written that those who write political reviews must understand.

In a suitably modest manner Comrade Victor begins by implying that if a situation such as faced the Communist International in 1921 were to arise today, only the WP could respond in the manner of Trotsky and the CI. That situation called for the recognition of temporary capitalist stabilization in the midst of a revolutionary epoch.

The proof? That today only Victor, and apparently the WP, and let us throw in the retrogressivists, recognize a situation which Trotsky foresaw in 1921, given certain conditions. And this situation has three characteristics; 1. The U.S. is the dominant power. 2. The proletarian revolution is no longer on the order of the day because of the impoverishment of Europe 3. We are at present in a new epoch of capitalist upswing.

Let us for the moment ignore Victor's new, and rather startling addition to the positions our party holds in distinction from all others, and examine the manner in which he has emasculated the answer of the CI to the problem of capitalist stabilization.

At the recent convention of the Party, a position on the United States was adopted which held the factor of boom to be of considerable importance in the coming period. Of course the majority vigorously denied that the boom had any lasting value, denied that we were in an epoch of capitalist upswing, but that is for Victor and the party to settle.

Trotsky discussed the relationship between crisis, boom, and revolution at the Third World Congress, upon which Victor spends his entire report.

This what Trotsky says:

1. That boom today does not mean the triumph of the counterrevolution, because it does not mean an epoch of capitalist upswing, but merely a temporary oscillation as part of the death agony of capitalism. 2. That it is just as possible for the revolutionary upsurge of the masses to be touched off during a period of boom as during a crisis. That it is precisely the fluctuating character of the economic and political scene which makes the worker uneasy and restless.

There was just one question which our party position left unanswered. Just what effect will the boom in America have on the class struggle? Will it be sharpened or alleviated? Where the party leaves off, Trotsky begins.

It would have been far more to the point if Comrade Victor had mulled over the following section in the speech to the Third World Congress: "Thus the enhancement of the bourgeoisie's self assurance as a class is absolutely undeniable; and equally undeniable is the actual consolidation of the police-state apparatus after the war. But in and of itself this fact - important though it is - does not by far settle the question; and in any case, our enemies are overhasty in trying to draw from it the conclusion that our program is bankrupt. We had, of course, hoped that the bourgeoisie would be overthrown in 1919. But, of course, we were not sure of it; nor did we build and rest our program of action upon this date. When Herr Otto Bauer and other theoreticians of the second and Two and-a-Half Internationals say that our prediction has been proven bankrupt, one might think that involved here were predictions concerning some astronomical event. It is as if we have been mistaken in our mathematical calculations that a solar eclipse would occur on such and such a day, and were consequently proven to be poor astronomers. But that is not at all how the matter stands in reality. We had not predicted a solar eclipse, i.e., an event beyond our will and entirely independent of our actions. Involved is a historical event which can and will occur with our participation. When we spoke of the revolution resulting from the World War, it meant that we were and are striving to utilize the consequences of the World War in order to speed the revolution in every way possible." (pgs. 178-179)

This is what Trotsky said at the Third World Congress. The problem posed there by the Social-Democrats is not a strange one to our ears. But this too, Comrade Victor digging in the "mine of precious material", somehow failed to unearth.

And finally, basing itself upon its fundamental conception of the death agony of capitalism, of the epoch of revolution, the CI, notwithstanding its recognition of temporary capitalist stabilization, formulated its task in the famous "To power through the previous conquest of the masses." Years later the transitional program of the Fourth International was to serve as the vehicle for the conquest of the masses in the road to the seizure of power, under conditions which were soon to accentuate the death agony of capitalism under the highest tension of class differences ever seen under capitalism, assuming with ut argument a temporary capitalist stabilization.

Now let us return to the conditions Comrade Victor thinks exist today, which he thinks Comrade Trotsky foresaw in 1921, and on the basis of which he justified his manner of working in the national liberation movements in Europe, and removes the proletarian revolution from the order of the day.

We shall restate the three elements of Victor's world:

1. The US is the dominant power
2. The proletarian revolution is no longer on the order of the day because of the impoverishment of Europe.
3. We are at present in a new epoch of capitalist upswing.

The attempt to hide in the shadow and ignore the substance of Trotsky is so pathetic that it is difficult to know just where to begin.

How actually does Trotsky picture the possibility of a situation which would remove the proletarian revolution from the order of the day? "The US will be compelled to reorient itself on the world market, reconvert its industry and suffer curtailment for a considerable period. Afterwards, after a new world division of labor is thus established in agony for 15 or 20 or 25 years, a new epoch of capitalist upswing might perhaps ensue." (p.211)

But where is the new world division of labor, where the epoch of capitalist upswing? Show it to us, o warrior of the Real the Concrete world, worshipper of the statistic, prophet of the boom? Show it to us, and then I for one, would be willing to concede the removal of the proletarian revolution from the order of the day; and I will then grasp the full meaning of the Labor Party as a necessary stage in the development of the American working class, and I will understand that it has a role to play. It is not within the limits of this article to discuss the actual economic situation of American and world capitalism. We will await Victor's evaluation with interest.

If, however, we are not in an epoch of capitalist upswing, and if even we conceive of its possibility at some time in the future, which is difficult enough, let us listen to what Trotsky has to say.

"But this entire conception is exceedingly abstract and one-sided. Matters are pictured here as if the proletarian had ceased to struggle. Meanwhile there cannot be even any talk of this if only for the reason that the class contradictions have become aggravated in the extreme precisely during the recent years" (p.211) He goes on to say that in order to restore equilibrium the capitalist must accumulate capital. But to do that an intensified exploitation of the workers is necessary and therefore aggravation of social contradictions, a heightening of the class struggle.

This is the substance, the heart of revolutionary marxism, the living, concrete class struggle. And it is this which Victor ignores.

And now the Official retrogressionists (one is reminded of Kafka's "The Castle" when one tries to discover the relationship between the Theses of the IKD and our party leadership), how they must be writhing in their self-imposed graves. Here they have built up a careful structure, arriving at a political program by examining the organic process of capitalist decline - and now one who accepts their program arrives at it through the medium of an epoch of capitalist upswing. Undoubtedly a minor point.

At his point let us see upon what Trotsky based his conception



of the extreme aggravation of class contradictions during the post war years.

"What, then, has taken place in the field of relations between human beings, or, more precisely between classes? We have seen that Germany and other European countries too have been thrown back 20 or 30 years in terms of their economic level. Have they perhaps been simultaneously thrown back in social terms, in the class sense? Not at all.....National wealth and national income keep falling, but the development of classes continues therewith not to regress but to progress. More and more people are becoming proletarianized, capital is being concentrated in fewer and fewer hands, banks keep merging, industrial enterprises become concentrated in trusts. As a result, the class struggle inevitably becomes sharper on the basis of a declining national income. Herein is the whole gist of the matter. The more restricted becomes the material foundations under their feet, the more fiercely must classes fight for their share of this national income. We must not lose sight of this circumstance for a single moment. While Europe has been thrown back 30 years with regard to her national wealth this does not at all mean that she has grown thirty years younger. No, in the class sense, she has become thirty years older." (pps 212-213) And today?

Further: "The revolution has three sources which are interconnected. The revolution's first source is the decline of Europe... Today this dominant position of Europe has been completely lost, and irretrievably so. Hence the inevitability of powerful revolutionary paroxysms which can terminate either in the victory of the proletariat or in Europe's complete downfall.

"The second source of the revolutionary struggle is in the severe spasms of the entire economic organism of the United States: an unprecedented boom, elicited by the European war, and next—a cruel crisis engendered by the drawn out consequences of the war. The revolutionary movement of the American proletariat can under these conditions acquire the same tempo, unequalled in history, as the economic development of the United States in recent years.

"The third source of revolutionary struggle is the industrialization of the colonies, above all India..."

"Thus both the world situation and the future perspectives are profoundly revolutionary in character." (pps. 222-223)

"But what if in place of the crisis an improvement should come in the world economic conjuncture? What then? Would this signify that the revolutionary struggle is checked for an indefinite period?"

"From my entire report, Comrades, it follows that a new upswing which can neither be prolonged nor profound, can by no means act as a check upon the revolutionary development... In these conditions a temporary boom can only strengthen the class self assurance of the workers and fuse their ranks not only in the factories but also in struggles and it can provide the impulse not only for their economic counter-offensive but also for their revolutionary struggle for power." (pps 225-226).

What of the three sources of revolutionary struggle today?

It has been for the most part useless to comment on these quotations. They speak only too obviously for themselves in relation to the problems which our party has been facing.

As for Comrade Victor, surely the devil can quote scriptures more effectively and with surer insight than he Comrade Trotsky.

In the course of a frantic quest for a quotation, he has wandered into an epoch of capitalist upswing: the retrogressionists have their own epoch of economic, political, and social retrogression; the Johnsonites maintain the conception of Comrade Trotsky and the founding conference of the Fourth International, that this is the epoch of the death agony of capitalism, and of the proletarian revolution. But where does the Workers Party as such stand on the nature of the epoch? Is it perhaps the epoch of bureaucratic collectivism? It is high time for a position to be taken on this decisive question. All other disputes, differences—any approach to the question of the correct program for today <sup>or</sup> tomorrow, depends in the last analysis upon a conclusion as to nature of the epoch. Without this we are reduced to empiricism of the most vulgar variety. Just as the CI based its program, its strategic and tactical approach to the masses, on its conception of the epoch as one of the proletarian revolution, so must the WP root its program. To call the Fourth International bankrupt is hardly a substitute for a discussion on the nature of the period. To adopt positions on Europe, the colonies, and on the United States with on the one hand no clear perspective from which to judge, and on the other with retrogressionism, Victorism, and Garrettism running riot in the Party, has meant to leave us in a very poor political position indeed.

A, Parks