

THE BULLETIN

THE PRESENT STRIKE WAVE

—J. C. HUNTER

W. P. AND S. W. P. ACHIEVE UNITY—
IN SUPPORT OF FRENCH STALINISM

SEVENTEEN YEARS OF SELLOUTS: Part III

**THE WORK OF CANNON AND
SHACHTMAN in the TRADE UNIONS—**

The Period of the Formation of the C. I. O.

—ARTHUR BURKE

A VOTE for JOHANNES STEEL WAS A VOTE for REACTION

THE R. W. L.'S ANTI-MARXIST LINE

—THOMAS F. HARDEN

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T H E B U L L E T I N A N D I T S P U R P O S E

THE BULLETIN is devoted to crystallizing the programmatic foundation for a new proletarian party in America and a Marxist International. On the basis of the lessons of the October Revolution, of a struggle against the betrayals resulting from the Stalinist degeneration of the Comintern, against the workings of Social-democracy, as well as against the policies of imperialism in the present epoch, THE BULLETIN presents a system of ideas for the fight against capitalism.

The immediate aim of THE BULLETIN is to arm the revolutionary workers with an understanding of the pseudo-Marxist organizations now controlling the proletarian vanguard and to organize these workers into a new Marxist Party.

The role of Stalinism as the chief betrayer within the ranks of the proletariat and of the Trotsky tendency as a loyal "opposition" and main prop of Stalinism among the revolutionary anti-Stalinist workers has been established in THE BULLETIN with documentary evidence. THE BULLETIN contains the only Marxist exposure of the so-called "ultra-Left" tendencies which spread the confusion that the Stalinist bureaucratic apparatus operating the state issuing out of a proletarian revolution, is a new class.

To rally the proletarian vanguard around the program of Marxism for the struggle to liberate the toiling masses from every form of oppression - this is the purpose for which THE BULLETIN has fought from its foundation and which differentiates it from all other publications.

Address Communications to

T H E R E D S T A R P R E S S
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THE PRESENT STRIKE WAVE IN U.S.

An Analysis

and a

Policy for the Workers

We are concerned in this article with the significance of the strike wave as a total phenomenon, its meaning with respect to the class position of the proletariat as a whole. Ultimately, it is this general significance which is the fundamental factor and which is the necessary foundation of any detailed considerations.

It is an elementary and obvious fact that the present striving of the unionized workers for compensation in the face of a rising cost of living and decreasing pay checks is absolutely necessary and should be supported by the working class as a whole. But an understanding of this fact alone is far from sufficient for a grasp of the strike situation in its entirety. The antagonism between the workers and the bosses does not express itself in a direct and pure form, but through the policies which the leadership of the working class sets down. The policies followed by the workers are the key to the entire relationship of the workers to the bosses which finds its expression in such a situation as the present.

The economic setting of the current strike wave is another factor which enters into a correct evaluation of whether the present strike struggles are so conducted as to advance the class position of the proletariat. This is especially true since in the present situation there exist economic features which deserve particular attention. We begin our analysis with the latter.

For an understanding of what is involved, it is necessary to contrast the present with a situation like that of 1930-32. At that time, while the capitalists had made huge profits up to 1929, the profitability of the enterprises hit zero and even went below. Industry as a whole was operating at a deficit. Capital values were being destroyed at an unprecedented pace. Strikes for higher wages in that period necessarily came into a head-on collision with the profit requirements of the capitalist economy. Reductions in the basic rate of pay were a common occurrence.

Today, the situation is quite the opposite. The profitability of the capitalists' enterprises continues, with the accumulation of capital and capital values increasing. While the take-home pay of the workers has been decreasing due to fewer hours of work, there has been no drive by the bosses to reduce basic rates of pay. In fact, not only can the capitalists easily afford pay increases right now, but they have actually been giving them in many industries. The chief spokesmen of Wall Street hardly attempt to deny that the capitalists can afford pay increases. The statement of Truman that such raises can be made was not mere demagogy. It was an expression of the policy of the bourgeoisie at the moment. For the moment, in fact, the capitalists have no hard and determined policy against pay increases as they had in 1930-32 when they were ruthlessly resolved to slash the rates of pay.

This objective economic situation, however, by no means signifies that the capitalists have suddenly become free with their purses. Their tactic is to grant pay increases significantly below what is admitted officially to be necessary to compensate for the rise in the cost of living. The difference between the 1930-32 policy of the capitalists to slash rates of pay and their present line of granting inadequate increases, therefore, does not eliminate the need for a positive struggle by the workers to win econ-

omic protection against the rising cost of living.

It is at this point that the treacherous hand of the official A.F.L. and C.I.O. leadership shows itself directly.

The union bigwigs understand that the policy of the bourgeoisie is to grant relatively small increases in pay, increases which are significantly below what is required to compensate for the rise in cost of living. Hence, these agents of Wall Street pursue a tactic designed to bamboozle the workers into accepting these inadequate additions in pay. The trick of the union leaders is simple. First they "demand" a relatively high increase of pay, around the figure said officially to be required to make up for the rise in cost of living. Then the government offers an increase of roughly half this figure. Whereupon, the union leaders accept the sum dictated by the government. It is obvious that the workers, sick and tired of the "No Strike Pledge," which they can plainly see resulted in their being taken advantage of by the bosses, would be rebellious if in every case the inadequate pay increases concocted by the government were accepted by the union leaders without even the appearance of a fight. The workers have been expecting a fight with the bosses for a long time. The union leaders are therefore compelled to make it look as if they put up a fight. In line with this, in a considerable number of cases they called strikes. These strikes as organized by the union leaders have no other purpose than to deceive the rank-and-file into imagining that a fight has been put up. Without the strikes, the workers would have the feeling that they tamely accepted obviously inadequate pay increases. With the strikes, the workers are fooled into imagining that they won something through their own efforts. In actuality, the pay increases are settled long in advance behind the scenes, and even the strikes are made to revolve around the pay figure set by the government. Ordinarily, a strike is sold out, but now there is a new wrinkle, the strikes are used to get the workers to accept a betrayal. The energies stored up by the workers during the period of the "No Strike Pledge" are being deliberately frittered away in a game played by the bosses, the government agents of Wall Street and the trade union agents of Wall Street.

On the surface, the capitalists seem to resist the demands for pay increases. The capitalists are perfectly aware that the union leaders have perverted the strikes into a matter of getting a modest bribe for the aristocracy of labor. The process of building and reinforcing the aristocracy of labor does not generally proceed smoothly and peacefully. With one hand the capitalists give a dollar and with the other, a blow. The maneuvers of the capitalists are devised so that they get something for their money. First and foremost, the capitalists seek to enhance the political subservience of the working class. This is assured them by the opportunist leaders whose reactionary line the workers follow. In addition, the capitalists seek certain organizational advantages such as the elimination of union privileges (closed shop, seniority rights, etc) and strangulation of the ability of the workers to go out on strike (Case Bill and other measures). And finally, the capitalists seek to create an ideological atmosphere to secure economic gains in the form of price rises. The paralyzing policies of the union leaders guarantee the aims of the capitalists in every sphere.

From every indication, the onslaught against union privileges and the marked rise in prices now being engineered will utterly negate any increase in wages the workers may obtain. It is inevitable that with the strikes under their present leadership, even economic gains will ultimately dwindle to zero for the workers. There is hardly a more pernicious illusion possible than to accept the monetary gains the workers may secure in the pre-

sent strike wave as real gains in any respect. Both economically and politically, the workers are being betrayed by their leaders. As the outcome of this strike wave on its present basis, the class position of the proletariat will not have advanced one iota.

That the official A.F.L. and C.I.O. leaders, in putting the settlement of the strikes on the grounds set by the Truman administration, are steering the workers into swallowing inadequate pay increases is clear and constitutes their direct betrayal of the workers' interests in the immediately economic sphere. But there is an even more important type of betrayal being perpetrated by the union leaders. We have referred in passing to this as political betrayal. This constitutes poisoning the workers with a class-collaborationist ideology, with confidence in the Wall Street government's innumerable boards, committees, administrators, arbitrators and similar flunkys. This is political betrayal whose significance extends far beyond the dollar-and-cents losses the workers suffer through the official settlement of the strikes on the government's terms. The union leaders confine the workers' view within the capitalist system. The effort of the union leaders is to effect an adjustment of the workers to the capitalist profit system. The A.F.L. and C.I.O. bureaucrats pervert the necessary and wholesome efforts of the workers to win immediate economic protection against the rise in cost of living into a cringing plea for a bribe to produce an even greater reconciliation with the capitalist class.

* * * * *

So far we have been speaking only of that section of the workers' leadership consisting of the top C.I.O. and A.F.L. officialdom. These creatures directly dominate strata of the working class which are only trade union conscious. What is the situation among the leadership of the proletarian vanguard, the class-conscious section of the workers?

The main bulk of the proletarian vanguard is in control of the Stalinist bureaucrats first and foremost and to a secondary extent of the Social-democrats. Throughout this strike wave, the Stalinist bureaucrats have been giving vociferous support to the C.I.O. leadership. Philip Murray in particular is being pictured by the Stalinists as one of the great heroes of history. Completely concealing the fact that the entire official union leadership stifles every impulse to class-consciousness and has perverted the strikes into a treacherous tactic to trick the workers into accepting inadequate pay increases, into a method of better reconciling the workers with the capitalist class, the Stalinists are now peddling the following kind of poison: "This is a new kind of wage and strike movement for the United States. It is being conducted on a higher level than ever before in the history of this country." (Wm. Z. Foster, Political Affairs, Feb. 1946, p. 122,) The only thing which is on a higher level is the skillful demagogy of the union leaders whose rumpus about "Ability to pay" and "Opening the company books" is swallowed hook, line and sinker by the deceived workers who are not aware that the same union officials who lead this chorus are old, trained and completely loyal flunkys of the capitalists. The line of the Stalinist bureaucrats for the time being is to tie the workers openly to the union bureaucrats. On an ultra-Leftist line they achieve the same end - in an indirect, concealed fashion.

* * * * *

What the Stalinist leaders do openly is done more subtly by the Trotskyites. During the strike wave, there was a very interesting example of how the Trotskyite leaders watch like hawks for any opportunity to mis-

represent the role of the official union leaders as being in the interests of the workers. The occasion was afforded by Philip Murray's radio speech in reply to Truman's announcement of his "fact finding" trickery in the General Motors strike. The Trotskyites could hardly find words sufficiently rapturous to describe Murray's role:

"The official leadership of the CIO reacted admirably to Truman's brutal intervention in the GM strike. Philip Murray, CIO president, took to the radio and over a nationwide hook-up spoke brave and true words of defiance....MURRAY HAD BROKEN WITH THE TRUMAN ADMINISTRATION. Murray had issued to his organization the call to arms! That was the meaning of this important radio speech." (The Militant, Dec. 15, 1945, p. 2. Capitals in original.)

This is their support to the agent of Wall Street, Murray. It presents him as a proletarian warrior who issues a call to arms to the workers to battle the capitalists.

But did Murray actually attack the capitalists? Is it even possible for such a hardened, dyed-in-the-wool bureaucrat to break in any way with his Wall Street masters? The Trotskyite rank-and-file is far superior in the understanding of these matters to the average worker, and on this score is more amenable to recognizing fact concerning people like Murray, Green or Lewis. The putrid tradition of these union bureaucrats is too well known to politically advanced workers for them to swallow without any sugar-coating a yarn that Murray had become a warrior against the capitalists. Hence, in the very same article, The Militant's editors "criticize" Murray to soothe the doubts of their readers. In the course of this "criticism," the Trotskyite editors are compelled to give the lie to their picture of Murray as the proletarian warrior:

"Murray, to all appearances, hasn't broken with the Truman administration for keeps. Murray, to all appearances, is like the bride who after a tearful scene, packs her grips and rushes home to mother. But she doesn't mean it. She is sitting expectantly waiting for the phone to ring. That is Murray today. He is anxiously waiting for the White House phone call. He is ready to make up....Murray obviously hasn't the courage to give leadership at this critical moment." (Ibid.)

So - the admirable, brave, true and defiant warrior turns out to be only a whimpering bride of the Truman administration! But even more significant is the rest of the article which presents material showing that Murray had entered into a conspiracy with the Stalinists to take over control of the General Motors strike. For what purpose? Let us quote The Militant:

"There exists a strong suspicion among many of the militants that both Murray and the Stalinists as well as a section of the UAW top leadership are looking for an easy 'out' in this strike. They are getting scared by the big tough fight that looms ahead." (Ibid.)

What is this if not an unmistakable hint that Murray is preparing a sell-out of the strike. In a word, not only is the "heroic" Murray a whimpering bride, but also a strike-breaker.

The Shachtmanite leaders went the Cannonites even one better in portraying Murray's sheerly demagogic speech as a genuine call to arms to the workers. As the first step, naturally, the Shachtmanites describe Murray's fakery as a real break with the Wall Street administration:

"Philip Murray's December 4 radio address, in which he announced the first political break in the ten-year alliance between the CIO and the Democratic Party Administration, has added a new significance to the already significant battle between labor and capital." (Labor Action, Dec. 10, 1945, p. 1.)

But this is not all. The Shachtmanites feed the workers the illusory hope that Murray, the seasoned labor lieutenant of capitalism, will lead them to the formation of an independent working class political movement and the establishment of a proletarian regime - no less!

"Where are you going now, Philip Murray? We hope it is not backward to the old game of supporting a 'friendly' capitalist politician as against an 'unfriendly' one. We hope it is forward to a definitive, all-time break with capitalist politics and capitalist politicians, forward to a new and genuinely independent political organization of labor, which will usher in a workers' government." (Ibid., p. 3.)

It would be hard to find a more crass expression of opportunism than the statement we have just cited. This line amounts to nothing more than seizing on the merest demagogic phrase uttered by an old-time betrayer of the working class and puffing it up to a call to battle against the capitalists. The Shachtmanite "Independent Labor Party" concept is a refuge for the Murrays, Greens and Lewises reserved for the time when the political situation among the American workers will have moved to the Left so far that these case-hardened traitors can no longer openly support Wall Street through the official capitalist parties, but will have to take on the more subtle disguise of a "Labor Party."

The Marxist line is the direct opposite of the Stalinists and their supporters, the Trotskyites. The trade union bureaucrats and betrayers of the workers will never break with Wall Street whether they are in or out of a "Labor Party." A "Labor Party" is an opportunist trap for the working class. It can be nothing in this country but a repetition of the Labor Party of Great Britain.

The Trotskyites' line of "critical support" to the labor fakers consists of two facets:- (1) misrepresentation of the role of the labor fakers in the direction of making them seem to act on occasions in the interests of the working class. This is direct and objective support to the betrayers of the workers; (2) "Criticism" of the labor fakers designed to becloud the role of the Trotskyite leaders themselves and make them appear as fighters against the agents of Wall Street in the ranks of labor. This "criticism" is a sop thrown to their relatively advanced, but misled followers who might rebel against open, unvarnished support to the labor fakers.

* * * * *

In many cases, the workers are receiving monetary gains, with or without strikes. As a result, the atmosphere is loaded with loose talk about the workers winning victories. Some of the most basic principles of Marxism as to what constitutes a trade union victory have been completely lost sight of as a result of the deceptions spread by the opportunists. We are not talking here about the elementary question of whether the monetary gains are correspondingly reflected in gains in real wages. We have in mind something different and much more fundamental, certain political criteria of what constitutes a trade union victory. There are four aspects to the problem:-

(1) Consider a trade union led by Marxists which in a strike wins its demands. This is a genuine victory for two reasons. First and most fundamental, during the course of the strike, the Marxist leadership will impart a revolutionary education to the workers. Pursuing a line of class struggle, as opposed to the class-collaborationism of the present-day trade union leadership, the political break of the workers with the bourgeoisie is enhanced. The monetary gains, in addition, help the workers in their immediate economic resistance to the pressure of the exploitation system of capitalism.

(2) A Marxist-led trade union may be beaten in the course of a strike and win no demands. The struggle is still a gain for the workers in a political sense, for the class struggle policy of the union will still serve to heighten the separation of the workers from the bourgeoisie. The workers will thus be genuinely prepared for bigger and more important class battles. The immediate economic advantages afforded by pay increases and the like will not be won in this case, but to evaluate the strike in general on this economic criterion only is the most limited view, an opportunist view really, which is blind to the political significance of class struggles if "results" are not forthcoming in dollars and cents. In such a view that famous "strike" known in history as the Paris Commune was a worthless effort, for its immediate result was the most frightful famine among the Parisian workers. Marx and Engels, as is well known, had a very different evaluation of the Paris Commune.

(3) Consider strikes such as the present, led by agents of Wall Street. Class-collaborationism, confidence in Truman's "fact finding" boards and other governmental trumpery is the keynote of the leadership's policy. The most insidious bourgeois poisons are being spread by the C.I.O. and A.F.L. leadership, ranging from outright chauvinistic patriotism to cringing flunkeyism. The monetary gains which the workers get in this situation, politically speaking, are merely bribes for the labor aristocracy, a little extra pay to be subservient to the capitalists. Those who see only the monetary gains and overlook the rotten political line of the leadership and its deadly effects on the workers have a completely "dollars-and-cents" point of view, an opportunist slant on the situation. Even with the monetary gains, the workers are being sold out politically and therefore fundamentally.

(4) Obviously, when the workers are led by the trade union agents of Wall Street and do not get even monetary gains, then the matter is an open and shut case, a sell-out all down the line. But even here, it must be clear, the failure to get monetary gains is not the main point. Even a Marxist-led union may lose out on its demands. What is paramount in all cases is the political line on which the strikes are conducted.

A genuine class victory can be won only when the workers are led by Marxism

* * * * *

What is the way out for the workers in the trade unions? It is no different from that for the working class as a whole. The trade unions do not exist separate and apart from the world of politics. The political anatomy of the trade union workers is the same as that of the working class in general:- a large section of non-class-conscious workers and a smaller section of vanguard, class-conscious workers. The latter are composed chiefly of Stalinists, Trotskyites and Social-democrats, with odds and ends of other tendencies.

The proletarian vanguard is the key to the whole working class. This is an axiom of Marxism. Whatever the direction of the vanguard, so is the direction of the workingclass. The vast mass of workers do not even realize it, but their destiny is being determined by the chief forces in the proletarian vanguard, not just in one country, but on a world scale. For the past more than two decades, this dominant force has been counter-revolutionary Stalinism. Stalinism is greater or smaller numerically in this or that country in accordance with the development of the total proletarian vanguard and the specific historical moment. The huge size of Stalinism in France, for example, is only a reflection of the fact that the proletarian vanguard is far greater in size than in this country and that France in the last two decades has been in a recurrent revolutionary situation. In the United States, no less than in France, what constitutes the proletarian vanguard is dominated by Stalinism.

From trade union struggles themselves, the workers cannot arrive at a Marxist understanding of politics, or of trade union affairs either, for that matter. This is also an axiom of Marxism. Marxism has to be brought to the working class in general by a source whose view extends far beyond the economic struggles of the trade unions. This source can be only the class-conscious, vanguard section of the workers. But the vanguard itself must first be under the leadership of Marxism before it can impart correct guidance to the general ranks of the trade union movement.

UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS, IF THE STRIKE WAVE WERE TO RESULT IN A MARKED RADICALIZATION OF THE TRADE UNION WORKERS, THE INEVITABLE OUTCOME WOULD BE A GREAT GROWTH OF THE STALINIST PARTY. This is the teaching of the entire epoch of Stalinism. While Stalinism dominates the vanguard, every increased radicalization of the workers, producing more vanguard workers, results directly in the growth of the power and numbers of the Stalinist organizations. It is only necessary to look at Europe at this moment to see the truth of this. In France, in Italy, in Greece, in every capitalist country facing a revolutionary crisis, Stalinism is way out in front of the proletarian vanguard. The great and inspiring energy of the American workers in their struggles often blinds the class-conscious workers to the political dangers which are always present because of the control of Stalinism over the proletarian vanguard. It is a customary trick of the opportunist leaders, Stalinists, Trotskyites, etc., to pour out reams of glowing words in praise of the workers' militancy. With these devices the opportunists give themselves the air of being fighters in the interests of the exploited masses. The militancy of the workers is praised by these misleaders in the abstract. But nothing occurs in the abstract, proletarian struggles least of all. The concrete context of all proletarian struggles is the political anatomy of the working class. Under present conditions, the growing militancy of the workers is grist to the mill of Stalinism. Unless this virus is cleansed from the body of the working class, all the militancy in the world will be of no avail.

There is no more deadly illusion than the concept of an automatic growth of the workers toward Marxism through trade union struggles. A corollary of this illusion is the false concept that Marxism and Stalinism can grow simultaneously, but in such proportions that Marxism outgrows Stalinism and thus defeats it. This latter confusion is found particularly among some relatively advanced workers who would like to see Stalinism defeated, but have not the faintest idea of either what Stalinism is or how it is to be defeated. Marxism can grow to domination only through the process of directly wiping out Stalinism. The growth-relations of Marxism and Stalinism can only be an inverse proportion. Stalinism is the obstacle which stands in the way of the growth of Marxism in the proletarian vanguard. There is no getting

around this obstacle; it must be directly destroyed.

The problem of the trade union workers historically does not differ from the problem of the proletarian vanguard. The opportunist political tendencies (Stalinism, etc.) penetrate the trade unions as well as all spheres of life. But this is not the entire point. The chief feature is that only the vanguard can liberate the trade union workers from the Murrays, Greens and Lewises. When the vanguard is dominated by misleaders like the Stalinists and Trotskyists who spread a variety of poisons ranging from direct support to the Murrays to the concoction of "Labor Parties" as a future refuge for the Murrays, then the proletarian vanguard can give no Marxist guidance to the trade union workers. As long as the domination of the Stalinists, Trotskyists and other opportunists continues, the workers' doom is sealed. This holds for the proletarian vanguard, for the trade union workers, for the toiling masses as a whole.

The penetration of Marxism into the trade unions can be only through the door of politics. The problem of establishing a Marxist trade union movement is only one aspect of the problem of establishing a Marxist political movement.

J. C. Hunter
February 1946

OTHER ARTICLES PRESENTING A MARXIST ANALYSIS OF TRADE UNION PROBLEMS will be found in back issues of THE BULLETIN. Some titles are -

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W.P. AND S.W.R. ACHIEVE UNITY - IN
SUPPORT OF FRENCH STALINISM

It has often been observed of certain political groupings that while they live in different houses and turn their backs on one another when they pass in the street, their hearts beat as one on fundamental issues confronting the working class. Cannon and Shachtman lived in the same quarters for many years. When Shachtman changed his address in 1940, he achieved a good deal more privacy by moving into his own cottage, where neighbor Cannon's dominant figure is unable to barge in to tell him how to do things. But has this shift of scenery really meant any basic change in Shachtman's political line?

There is no better way to find the answer to this question than to examine the recent doings of the Shachtman Workers Party in connection with the situation confronting the French working class.

The French masses are desperate under the burden of an unprecedented degree of exploitation and misery. Stalinism has again grown to an enormous monster in France, reflecting both the revolutionary strivings of the masses and their utter and deadly confusion of Stalinism with the revolutionary Party which led the Russian workers in 1917. We have warned again and again that Stalinism is the main danger within the proletariat, not only in France, but in every country. Any policy which lends the least support to Stalinism or to Social-democracy, which enables them to achieve the least advantage, which fosters their entrance into any leading or key positions, can result only in the utmost disaster to the toilers. For the workers to be free to enter the revolutionary path concretely and not just subjectively, it is absolutely necessary that the influence of Stalinism and Social-democracy in the proletarian vanguard be crushed and replaced by Marxism.

In line with these concepts, we have consistently opposed the Trotskyite slogan of a Stalinist-Socialist coalition government. To begin with, it is a fundamental principle of Marxism that participation in a government ministry in a bourgeois state is opportunism and a betrayal of the interests of the proletariat, for in such a ministry, the representatives can serve only the interests of the bourgeoisie. This follows from the very nature of the capitalist state, and it is for this reason that only in the ministry of a proletarian state can the various officials and functionaries be loyal to the interests of the toilers. We reject participation in a ministry in the bourgeois state for ourselves, and hold it to be unprincipled to advocate it for anybody else.

Furthermore, and this is of especial significance in the matter we are discussing, it is particularly dangerous for the masses when the Stalinist bureaucrats occupy ministerial positions. The Stalinist bureaucrats, because of their hold on the vanguard section of the workers, are able to perpetrate crimes which an ordinary opportunist party could not achieve. The grip of Stalinism on this key section of the proletariat gives it an extra-ordinary command over the masses as a whole, for it enables Stalinism, under the guise of being a "Communist" force, to get the masses to accept reactionary policies which would be abruptly rejected if the bourgeoisie themselves tried to enact them. In governmental positions, the bloody hand of Stalinism is enormously strengthened, for it is able to back its ideological treachery with the power of state coercion.

Only a short while ago, it seemed that the Shachtman Workers Party also held to this Marxist position. The November 5, 1945 issue of Labor Action contains a lead editorial entitled "The Elections in France." This editorial

declared that there is only one solution to the profound crisis in which the French proletariat finds itself, namely, the overthrow of capitalism and the "building of a socialist economy which would give a tremendous impulsion to the socialist revolution on the whole European continent." Immediately following these words, the editorial stated:

"This cannot be achieved by a Blum-Thorez government, that is, a Socialist-Communist regime. Such a regime could only mean the rule of France by Stalinism, which would control the means of propaganda, justice and police to begin a reign of terror against all revolutionary elements in the country."

This statement is not only one hundred percent correct in general, but hits the exact center of the target, the kernel of the question. The elevation of Stalinism to a governmental position would let loose a reign of terror against all revolutionary elements as proved by the Stalinist terror in Spain. Stalinism would control the means of propaganda, justice and police. These are a weapon against the masses, a dagger behind the "Communist" cloak which Stalinism habitually flaunts in its victims' eyes to blind them before cutting their throat.

Thus, on November 5, 1945, it seemed that Shachtman, on this question, had not only dropped his tenancy in Cannon's abode, but had also washed his former landlord's political filth from his hands.

What is more revealing, therefore, than to find that by January 28, 1946, only three months later, Shachtman had made a complete about-face in his line on the French situation. Here is what Shachtman now declares to be his "Policy Statement on France" (editorial in Labor Action of the above date):

"No other central political slogan is possible for the revolutionary Marxists, and none corresponds better to the needs of the situation, than: a government of the Socialist Party-Stalinist Party-Confederation Generale du Travail."

Of course, it is not so easy for the Shachtmanite leaders to sneak out of their earlier statement that a Stalinist-Socialist coalition government in France "could mean only" the rule of France by Stalinism, a reign of terror against the workers. They are compelled to entangle themselves in their usual self-contradictions, giving the lie today to what they said yesterday. Thus, the week after they made their reversal, Labor Action raised the question of a Stalinist reign of terror as an "hypothesis":

"If the SP-CP-CGT slogan meant that real governmental power, i.e., control of the basic instruments of state power, the ministries of Defense and Interior, would fall into the hands of the Stalinists, we would oppose and would urge every worker to oppose such a development." (Editorial, Feb. 4, 1946.)

While previously, they declared unequivocally that a Stalinist-Socialist coalition government could mean only that Stalinism "would control the means of propaganda, justice and police to begin a reign of terror," now the Shachtmanites tell the workers the opposite:

"We do not think that such a development can occur in France today." (Ibid.)

What is the rationalization of this Shachtmanite flip-flop, so characteristic of the politics of these opportunists? That Stalin is not

in a position to "include France in his collective sphere of empire." (Ibid.) As if this is the point! Stalinism in France operates within France to prop up French capitalism. Stalinism in France is a bludgeon against the French workers regardless of whether or not Stalin is in a position to incorporate France into his "empire." The elevation of Stalinism to a governmental position through a coalition such as the Trotskyites advocate would place Stalinism in an exceptionally favorable situation to paralyze the French workers and betray them to French capitalism irrespective of any speculations as to whether Stalin can gobble up France. In their eagerness to concoct "international" rationalizations for their self-contradictions, the Shachtmanite leaders blind the workers to the role of Stalinism in guaranteeing the enslavement of the French workers to French capitalism. That counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism remains, regardless of Stalin's international machinations.

Last November, Shachtman had no "prescription" to negate the bloody effects of the rise of Stalinism to power through a coalition government with the Social-democrats. By January, on the other hand, Shachtman's rummaging in Cannon's closet netted him a neat little package full of wonderful guarantees against these results which in November were pictured as inevitable and inescapable. If only, says the three-months older Shachtman, a lot of "anti-Stalinist" noise be made in France, there will not be a Stalinist-inspired reign of terror. The matter, you see, is quite simple. When it suits your purpose to mouth Marxist phrases, you say one thing; when there's something else on the griddle, you say something completely contradictory. Anyhow, Shachtman probably figures, who will remember what was said three months before.

Three months ago, Shachtman attacked the idea that a Stalinist-Socialist coalition regime could serve as a bridge to the socialist solution which he said is the only one in the interests of the French masses. A socialist revolutionary impulsion, said Shachtman, "cannot be achieved by a Blum-Thorez, that is, a Socialist-Communist regime." But now, without the quiver of an eyelid, he asserts with equal finality the very opposite, that a Stalinist-Socialist coalition can serve as a bridge to the socialist solution of the workers' problems. That is this crass reversal if not a betrayal which he perpetrates with his eyes wide open!

Cannon and Shachtman are participants in the preparation of a ferocious bloodbath of the French toilers. The rise of Stalinism to leading positions of power can mean only one thing: a reign of terror against the masses. All of Shachtman's weasel words cannot negate this brutal fact. A Stalinist-Socialist coalition in France - even with the Socialist-Stalinist dominated CGT thrown in for a bargain - will have the same results as the one in Saxony and Thuringia in October 1923. The 1923 Stalinist-Socialist coalition in Germany perpetrated an epoch-making betrayal of the proletariat, preparing the path for the victory of Hitler a decade later. Nobody knows this better than Shachtman and Cannon. Their connivance in the building of this same trap for the French masses is an act of deliberate and conscious treachery to the working class.

The only correct policy for the French proletariat is that of struggle to wipe out the influence of the opportunist leaders so as to free the path for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. The only regime which can benefit the toilers is a government of democratically-controlled workers councils based on the overthrow of capitalism. All other regimes can lead only to the victory of a new fascist movement. There is no regime "preparatory" to a democratic proletarian state. All other regimes are obstacles on the path to a proletarian dictatorship. The advocacy of any regime which

is not a Marxist proletarian regime is treachery to the toilers.

We have repeatedly declared that Cannon and Shachtman are political wings of the Stalinist system. Their episodic flirtation with Marxist phraseology is merely a cover of this fact.

Shachtman and Cannon have achieved unity on the French situation, the only kind of unity opportunists ever achieve - unity in treachery to the working class. As a matter of fact, they have always been united in selling the workers to Stalinism and Social-democracy, ultimately to the bourgeoisie. Only to those who are politically uninformed, does Shachtman's organizational separation and his story that Stalinism is a new ruling class look as though Shachtman has broken with the traditional Trotskyite policy of supporting the forces of reaction, Stalinism, Social-democracy and the bourgeoisie,

J. C. H.
Feb. 1946

BACK ISSUES STILL AVAILABLE -

THE CLASS NATURE
OF THE
RUSSIAN STATE

by

George Marlen

A study of the new analysis presented by Max Shachtman of the Workers Party, and of the position held by the Cannonite Socialist Workers Party in the light of the Marxian teachings on the class character of a state.

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A VOTE FOR JOHANNES STEEL WAS A
VOTE FOR REACTION

One of the greatest tragedies of the working people is their fatal tendency to fall for demagogues who affix the term "Worker", "Labor," "Communist," or "Socialist" to their name. This is particularly the tragedy of that section of the working class which is subjectively opposed to the openly capitalist politicians. When these workers turn to demagogues in "Labor" disguise, they pass from the frying pan into the fire. They imagine they have broken irrevocably with the capitalist class, only to be tied right back to the exploiters through the labor-faker demagogues.

Johannes Steel is one of these demagogues. Steel has become a stooge for the Stalinists, an opportunist whom the Foster crowd picked up as a front for their American "Labor" Party which is in turn a front for their official "Communist" Party. Steel was campaigning in New York under the slogan of "Save the Roosevelt Program." This is the platform by which for the past several years the Stalinist misleaders have been chaining the American workers to the chariot of Wall Street imperialism. This is the platform by which the Stalinist traitors have helped enforce the intensified exploitation of the workers under the Roosevelt regime.

No political figure is separable from the program of the organization backing him. A worker in supporting a certain political figure may have all sorts of well-intentioned thoughts in his mind, but what he is supporting is that politician's organization and its platform.

Support to Steel, beside being support to Wall Street imperialism, was a vote for Stalinism. It was the same as a vote for any candidate of the Stalinist Party, Cacchione or Davis, for example. In the final analysis, it was the same as a vote for Stalin, because the little flunkeys are merely cogs in the huge Stalinist wheel which has been whirling in the working class for more than two decades and grinding it to bits. A worker who votes for Cacchione may imagine he is voting in the interests of the working class. In reality he is supporting the worst gang of renegades and betrayers in the long history of treachery. A worker who voted for Steel may have believed he was voting for an independent labor party or for independent working class politics. He was voting himself and his class to destruction. A vote for Steel magnified the power and prestige of Stalinism, increased its ability to prepare bloody betrayals of the toilers.

The history of politics proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that to support reactionary politicians, however much they bedeck themselves with "Labor" garments, brings the working class to inevitable destruction. In pre-Hitler Germany, millions of workers honestly thought they were forever through with capitalism when they supported the Social-democratic and Stalinist bureaucrats. These workers considered themselves Socialists and Communists. The result of their misplaced confidence was that they put their fate into the hands of the Social-democratic and Stalinist leaders who sold them out to Hitler. The worst tragedy of the workers in all history was the outcome of the misguided support given the Socialists and Stalinists by the workers.

The same is true of Spain or France or Greece or any country where the workers - with the best intentions in the world - supported the opportunist politicians.

There are many workers who, in the interests of the working class, are opposed to Stalinism, considering it a center of reaction on a world scale. These workers, ordinarily if left to themselves, would not vote for a known Stalinist agent like Steel, in fact, would not touch him with a ten foot pole. But there are political cliques in existence which "take care" of these workers also. The Trotskyite Cannon leadership of the Socialist Workers Party serves the purpose of perverting the healthy anti-Stalinist impulses of the revolutionary workers into pro-Stalinist channels. In accordance with this function, Cannon misguided his followers into voting for Johannes Steel. It was not possible for Cannon to conceal the fact that Steel is a Stalinist stooge. The Militant of Feb. 16, 1946 refers to Steel as a "rank opportunist with a shady political record, acting for the moment as the hand-picked tool for the Stalinists who dominate the ALP." Cannon was aware that if he told merely this unvarnished truth, the supporters of the S.W.P. would consider him insane if he urged them to vote for Steel. Hence, Cannon was forced to resort to a little "salesmanship" to swing the Trotskyite workers one hundred and eighty degrees around to vote for Steel and to urge other workers to vote for Steel, in the bargain. Thus, the Cannon clique piled lie upon lie, of which the following is an outstanding example:

"Despite the lack of a real labor candidate and program, the independent ALP campaign in this by-election represents a break with the boss parties and is, therefore, a step in the direction of genuine independent labor politics." (The Militant, Feb. 16, 1946, p. 1.)

What are the facts? The facts are that Johannes Steel and the ALP campaign proved so reliable a method of preventing any development of genuine independent labor politics that Steel and the ALP received the solid backing of the most confirmed foes of the proletariat, the habitual supporters of the Roosevelt machine, such as LaGuardia and Wallace. The Stalinist Daily Worker boasted about this before the election:

"Former Mayor LaGuardia's endorsement of Johannes Steel adds another major member of the old Roosevelt coalition to the backers of the ALP candidate for Congress in the 19th district by-election.

"Steel now has the support of Commerce Secretary Wallace, of the CIO, of the Citizens PAC, of the Independent Citizens Committee of the Arts, Sciences and Professions. These were the chief independent groups and individuals behind FDR." (Feb. 16, 1946)

The bureaucrats of the Daily Worker conveniently "forgot" to mention that the "independent" groups it enumerates as backing Steel in the New York election are also Stalinist-controlled stooge outfits.

The facts are the opposite of the lies spread by Cannon and Company. Because of the lack of a real labor candidate and program, the Stalinist ALP campaign represented:- (1) the drive of Stalinism for increased power over the workers; (2) the attachment of the workers by Stalinism to the bosses and their exploitation system; and (3) the frustration of any development in the direction of genuinely independent working class politics.

Observe how the Cannonite clique separated the Stalinist stooge, Steel, from his program. Over in this corner, said Cannon, was Mr. Steel, and over in that corner was his reactionary program. Vote for the disembodied, abstract Mr. Steel, said Cannon, and you would be voting for independent labor politics. Cannon would have the workers believe that in voting for Steel, they were not voting for Stalinism and its program; they

were merely voting for a noble idea, for an abstraction, independent labor politics. But independent labor politics do not exist in a vacuum or in the abstract. Independent labor politics can exist only in flesh and blood, in living human beings and the organizations they form. The Stalinist ALP does not represent any kind of noble idea or beautiful abstraction. It represents with deadly concreteness the power of Stalinism in the working class.

It was only with the crassest sophistry that Cannon could fool his subjectively anti-Stalinist followers into supporting the Stalinist agent, Johannes Steel.

Cannon lied when he said the ALP is an independent labor organization. It is completely dependent on the will of the cutthroat in the Kremlin. The trick Cannon plays on his followers is to fetishize the organizational form of the ALP, the structural separation of the ALP from other political parties. Even this organizational separation is a myth, for the ALP is part and parcel of the Stalinist organizational system. What counts is not an organization's address and phone number, but its political program which gives the content to its organizational form.

While a victory for the Foster-controlled ALP would inevitably tend to augment the Stalinist influence, Cannon, to aid reaction, turned truth inside out in the following fashion:

"...a victory of the ALP candidate would strengthen the movement for a genuine independent labor party which would run labor candidates for office on a labor program." (The Militant, cited above.)

Cannon also says he wants the workers to be for Communism. Did the support that millions of German workers gave the "Communist" Party of Germany "strengthen the movement" toward Communism? No? But the "Communist" Party was organizationally separate from the bourgeois parties. The workers thought that in supporting the "Communist" Party they were moving toward Communism. The organizational independence of the Stalinist Party of Germany was a trap for the workers, its demagogic name of Communist was an even more dangerous trap. The organizational independence of the Stalinist ALP is a trap for the workers, its name Labor is an even more dangerous trap. This is the lesson of history that Cannon conceals.

Attaching the workers to the Stalinist machine is nothing new for the Cannon clique. They are old hands at this game. Among the candidates for which Cannon and Company have electioneered are such illustrious names as William Z. Foster, Benjamin Davis and Eugene Connally.

On one occasion the Cannonite leaders made a certain promise:

"We can even whisper to our critics that if we deemed it advisable and of benefit to our party and consequently to the working class we would not hesitate to give critical support to Browder running on the Communist party ticket." (The Militant, Mar. 15, 1941.)

Alas, poor Browder! He did not last long enough to enjoy the spectacle of James P. Cannon acting as his campaign agent. How well Browder knows Cannon's eloquence. And how well he knows Cannon! How Browder would have rolled in the aisles upon hearing Cannon - with a straight face! - tell the workers that a vote for Browder is of benefit to the working class, though, of course, in public Browder would have pretended indignation. This is a pleasure such as ordinary mortals cannot enjoy. We see that

the tricks of fate sometimes prevent even great scoundrels from enjoying it. Better luck next time, gentlemen of the S.W.P. There is still Foster,

To those workers who already realize the counter-revolutionary nature of Stalinism, we say:- when you vote for "independent" Stalinist stooges, you are selling yourself to Stalinism; when you urged other workers to vote for Steel, you were helping to put them in the clutches of Stalinism, regardless of what your intentions were; when you support leaders who exhort you and other workers to back the ALP, you are supporting misleaders who are nothing but a disguised wing of the Stalinist system,

Only by building a Marxist organization which really fights Stalinism and all other forms of opportunism will the revolutionary workers take a step in the direction of genuine independent labor politics which, followed up consistently with other Marxist steps, will lead the working class toward a break with capitalism.

J.C.H.

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SEVENTEEN YEARS OF SELLOUTS

THE WORK OF CANNON AND SHACHTMAN
IN THE TRADE UNIONS

PART III - THE PERIOD OF THE FORMATION OF THE C.I.O.

THE wave of strikes during the early period of the New Deal impelled a steady stream of many thousands of previously unorganized workers into the A. F. L. unions. This movement was encouraged and fostered by the demagogues of the New Deal who established union (A.F.L.) "recognition" as an official policy. The breath of fresh air carried into the stale A.F.L. unions by the newly organized militant workers was met in typical fashion by the old line A.F.L. labor skates who frustrated the workers' forward movement by negotiating a series of paralyzing sellouts. With each sell out, widespread dissatisfaction against the policy of the A.F.L. leaders and the ossified structure of the A.F.L. craft unions grew more manifest and vocal. Particularly to those workers who were clamoring for militant organization in the mass production industries such as auto, steel and rubber, the reactionary nature of the entire craft set-up in the A.F.L. organizations became quite apparent. For many years these latter workers especially suffered under the sabotaging policy of the A.F.L. leaders whose fake organization drives and crooked agreements left these workers helpless against the onslaughts of the bosses. In the years 1934-35 organized revolts against the A.F.L. leaders took place precisely among this section of the workers.

While every trade union bureaucrat welcomes an increase in prestige and power the sweep of many hitherto unorganized workers into the A.F.L. and their militant spirit struck fear into the hearts of the old line labor fakers. In what was later to become a much publicized statement, the notorious Daniel Tobin, ruthless dictator of the Teamsters, typified the bureaucratic reaction when he characterized the newer A.F.L. members as "trash." Rather than yield an inch to the forward surge of the seething trade union militants, Green and his adjutants fought like tigers to perpetuate the outmoded craft structure of the A.F.L. machine which guaranteed their sinecures, and replied to criticism with a wave of bureaucratic suspensions, expulsions and outright charter lifting of rebellious locals. Frustrated by the A.F.L. blind alley, the militant workers raised the question of a new union Federation on industrial lines. The idea gained impetus and strength and it became clear that the days of the supreme role of the A.F.L. and its ruling clique in the union movement were coming to an end.

Parallel with this development, a significant shift in the relation of forces began to take form in the closed circle of the A.F.L. bureaucracy. The chief figure in this movement was the seasoned bureaucrat John L. Lewis, the Czar of the United Mine Workers of America. Lewis made no secret of his aspirations to the position of highest authority in the A.F.L. But the rest of the A.F.L. leaders, fearing their ambitious and astute colleague, constantly lined up behind Green to thwart Lewis' ambitions. The growth of the ever larger and vociferous rank-and-file opposition to the Green-Woll-Frey-Hutcheson leadership gave Lewis a golden opportunity which he promptly utilized in his own interests. The clamor for a new type of union organization — industrial unionism — was the ready-made issue

which Lewis needed to further his own machinations in the struggle for leadership. For one thing, Lewis had the unique advantage of heading one of the exceptions in the A.F.L. craft structure. That exception was the United Mine Workers of America which was organized on industrial lines in contradistinction to the typical A.F.L. craft unions. It was thus quite simple for Lewis to capitalize on the sentiments for industrial unionism by pointing to his own leadership of an industrial union as proof of his "principled" adherence to this form of trade union organization. Most important, the issue of industrial unionism gave Lewis an excellent cover to hide the identity in basic policy which he had in common with the rest of the A.F.L. leaders. This fundamental policy was that of class-collaborationism resting on bureaucratic gangster rule. The hullabaloo which Lewis now raised about industrial unionism gave him the appearance of being in principled opposition to the Greens and Wolls and therefore won him the sympathy and support of many misguided militants. Aided by some of the more far-sighted A. F.L. bureaucrats such as Hillman, Dubinsky, Howard, etc., Lewis set up a Committee for Industrial Organization and prepared to strike out on his own so as to head off the rank-and-file revolts against the A.F.L. leadership and keep the trade union workers tied up in the same old class collaborationist knot,

The 55th Convention of the A.F.L. held in October 1935 provided the climax in the Lewis movement and split the Federation wide open. At this convention, Charles P. Howard, one of Lewis' chief supporters, delivered the "Minority Report" for the Lewis gang. In one section of his speech, Howard blurted out precisely what was in the mind of the top leaders in the Lewis crowd. We quote Howard from the CIO pamphlet "Industrial Unionism" (November 1935) where his report is given in full:

"Now, let me say to you that the workers of this country are going to organize, and if they are not permitted to organize under the banners of the American Federation of Labor they are going to organize under some other leadership or they are going to organize without leadership. And if either of those conditions should eventuate, I submit to you that it would be a far more serious problem for our Government, for the people of this country and for the American Federation of Labor itself than if our organization policies should be so moulded that we can organize them and bring them under the leadership of this organization." (P. 10. Emphasis in original)

This remarkably frank statement from an important trade union flunkey of American imperialism revealed the real purpose behind Lewis' bait of "industrial unionism." The workers, these bureaucrats saw, were about to break the bonds of the old-line A.F.L. This tendency was construed as a danger to "our Government," i.e., the Wall Street financiers, and to the A.F.L. structure itself. Hence, the Lewises and Howards proclaimed, it was necessary to head off this incipient trade union revolt and channelize it so as to keep it in its old tracks which, however, would have to be "remoulded" somewhat. Quite patently, the forward moving militant trade union workers who were breaking from the clutches of the Greens and Wolls were faced with a terrible menace. This menace was the leadership of the Lewis gang who sought to choke off the militant anti-A.F.L. movement and keep it under the thumb of the bosses under a new "progressive" front.

THE STALINISTS SHIFT THEIR ZIGZAG

For a period of many years, the Stalinist bureaucrats, for their own opportunist reasons, carried on a campaign against Lewis and his gangster

machine. During the early part of 1933, the Browder-Foster gang began preparing the ground for a switch to a Rightist policy. However, the American Stalinists proceeded at a slower pace toward the Right zigzag than did their brethren in other countries. The years 1933-35 were really years of transition with some of the previous Leftist features maintained side by side with the new Rightist elements. The verbiage against Lewis and his movement was really one of the remnants of the previous period. At the end of the year 1933 one could still see such a headline in the Daily Worker as "Lewis Gets \$12,000 Yearly for Strike-breaking as President of the U.M.W.A." (December 28, 1933, p. 2) Indeed, right at the inception of the Lewis bloc the Stalinist leaders facetiously observed:

"The difference between Woll and Lewis is that one is reactionary and the other is reactionary." (Ibid. October 27, 1933)

The Browders and Fosters maintained their talk against Lewis right through the year 1934 when the Lewis movement was gaining ground and support. Every argument defending Lewis was thoroughly demolished in the Daily Worker, particularly that fraudulent story which held that Lewis was really interested in a "progressive" form of union organization. The Stalinist barrage extended into the year 1935 right up to the 7th Congress of the C.I. which officially rubber-stamped the new Rightist Policy. Just prior to the 7th Congress, and a few months before the October 1935 A.F.L. Convention where Green and Lewis split, the Stalinist pen prostitutes issued an extended analysis of the Lewis-led movement. The Stalinist leaders put their finger on the motivation and line of the Lewis gang.

"The crisis within the A.F. of L. Executive Council is, of course, not over policies for and against the workers. Reflecting the differences in the camp of the bourgeoisie itself, these labor lieutenants of capitalism are fighting over questions as how best to check and control the rank and file, how to prevent strikes, how to keep the masses chained to the policies of class collaboration. Moreover, people like John L. Lewis fear that the old craft union policies, applied to such industries as auto, rubber and steel, may well lead to the formation of mass industrial unions outside the A.F. of L. Furthermore, Lewis believes that through strongly centralized, national industrial unions, led by people like himself, he can convince the employers that he can offer the best guarantees against strikes through such model anti-strike agreements as he signed in the name of the coal miners." (The Communist, June 1935, p. 487)

As can be seen from the foregoing citation, the Stalinists knew exactly what was taking place in the A.F.L. Of course, Browder and Foster took pains to assure the workers that the "Left Wing" which they were allegedly building would be organized not in alliance with but in struggle against the Lewis as well as the Green gang:

"It is clear that the fight for militant industrial class trades unions is the fight of the masses and will be won, not only in the struggle against the Greens and the Wolls, but against the Lewises and Berrys as well." (Ibid.)

Obviously, the Stalinist bureaucrats never intended a single word of this to actually materialize. The line set by the 7th Congress gave the Browders and Fosters the signal to jump over to Lewis and they made the switch with their customary alacrity just prior to the 55th Convention of the A.F.L. The manner in which this somersault was manipulated is highly

instructive. The Stalinist leaders had carried on an uninterrupted verbal barrage against Lewis for a period of many years. They could not suddenly hop over to the Lewis camp without some critical equivocations so as to make the new line plausible and Marxian sounding to their followers. Thus, the Stalinists surrounded their new line with a host of reservations and swore that in reality they were only concerned with a matter of "principle" — that of "industrial unionism." That old but effective opportunist "in so far as" formula was now dusted off by the Stalin crew and utilized to jockey their trusting followers into the Lewis bloc:

"The attitude of the Communists and their sympathizers, who constituted a bloc of some 40 or 50 delegates, toward the Lewis forces was one of aiding them in every way as far as they made a genuine fight for industrial unionism and other progressive measures, as, for example, the National Civic Federation resolution. Bearing in mind the past record of Lewis, they judged him on the basis of every proposal he made, reevaluating their basic stand towards him not so much because they believed that he had changed his whole position but because the whole development in the country, in the trade union movement and the problems faced by the U.M.W.A. have placed him in a new objective role at the present moment." (The Communist, November 1935, p. 1031)

This was the "critical support" formula — Stalinist version.

CANNON AND SHACHTMAN FALL IN LINE

During the birth and growth of the Lewis-led industrial union faction an important shift took place in the Trotsky orientation in the trade unions. As we pointed out in PART ONE (The Period of Dual Unionism), from 1928 to 1932 the Cannon-Shachtman leadership supported and pushed the Stalinist dual unions as against the A.F.L. However, early in 1933 the Stalinist leaders gave indications of a forthcoming switch in trade union policy. This could be gathered from the tone of their "self-criticism." For example, it was now acknowledged that "the red trade unions have not succeeded in transforming themselves into mass organizations" (Daily Worker, February 18, 1933), a statement in sharp contrast to the flamboyant boasting of the years before. With perfectly straight faces the Browders and Fosters now declared that "work" in the A.F.L. unions had "suffered" only because some Party members had misinterpreted the Party line in the unions. In March 1933 the Stalinist publicly offered a non-aggression pact to the Social Democracy and officially served notice by this act that a Rightist zigzag was in the offing. Switching from the line of "united front from below" the Stalinist bureaucrats now gradually began to participate in united fronts from above with all sorts of "Left" labor fakers. There could be no doubt whatsoever that the "red unions" would soon be on the way out. It was at this moment that Cannon and Shachtman were suddenly struck by divine revelation that "the Left Wing's Place is in A.F. of L. Unions." (Headline in The Militant, September 2, 1933, p. 1) The Trotsky leaders then riveted the eyes of their followers on events and developments in the A.F.L.

The Lewis development in the A.F.L. caught the attention of Cannon-Shachtman and came in for close scrutiny. Naturally, Lewis' role in the union movement was quite familiar to the Trotsky leaders. It must be remembered that the entire basis of the Stalinist National Miners Union which the Trotskyites supported until 1931 and the Progressive Miners of America which Cannon-Shachtman ballyhooed from 1932 to early 1933 rested on strong anti-Lewis talk. In those years, and for some time afterward, Cannon-Shacht-

man spared no ink in portraying Lewis' perfidious role in the mine fields. Statements like the following were quite typical in The Militant:

"In order to enforce its policy of betrayal, the Lewis machine resorted to every means at its disposal to check the revolt of the miners and thereby, to successfully carry through his policy. To accomplish it, he had to steal elections; expel militants by the hundreds; kill, maim, torture; and destroy every vestige of democracy in the union." (June 24, 1933, p. 2)

The Trotsky leaders therefore arrived at the following conclusion concerning the union controlled by the Lewis machine:

"The union was no longer an organization of the coal miners. It was a place of loot for the agents of the coal operators in the union who, in carrying through this great betrayal of the miners, also proceeded to rifle its treasuries." (Ibid.)

It should be noted that the criminal activity of the Lewis leadership was carried on in an industrial union. Yet this factor did not at all prompt the Trotsky leaders to hail the U.M.W.A. as a progressive union because it had an industrial form. In other words, the Trotsky leaders agreed that it was not the form which determined the character of the U.M.W.A., but the counter-revolutionary Lewis content functioning in the capacity of union leadership. When Cannon-Shachtman denied that the U.M.W.A. was an organization of coal miners, they obviously did not mean to deny the fact that the union was physically composed of coal miners. What they meant was that the leadership and policies of the union were not in the interests of the coal miners, and in this Cannon-Shachtman were indisputably correct.

At the very first appearance of schism in the A.F.L. leadership in October 1933 at the 53rd annual A.F.L. Convention, The Militant labeled the Lewis-Green squabble as nothing but a faction fight:

"It is true that there is a faction fight in the Federation. But this is only a family quarrel over the spoils. John L. Lewis is making a bid for power. Green is solidly entrenched." (October 14, 1933)

At the very next convention of the A.F.L. in October 1934, Cannon-Shachtman correctly stated that Lewis intended only to mislead the militant workers. "Types like Lewis and Company desire to head off the real left wing," wrote The Militant on October 13, 1934.

As the Lewis-Green faction fight developed in intensity, the Cannon-Shachtman leadership reiterated its anti-Lewis stand. Just before the key convention of October 1935, The New Militant dubbed Lewis' "progressivism" and "industrial unionism" as nothing but fakes:

"Once again we say to the progressives throughout the trade union movement: Expose the fake progressivism and 'industrial unionism' of Lewis and Company!" (October 5, 1935, p. 4)

During the very month of the convention where the Lewis faction showed its intentions for organizational independence from Green and Co., the Cannon-Shachtman leadership clung to its analysis. As a matter of fact, the Trotsky leaders declared that Lewis-Hillman were even better agents of the bosses than Green-Woll and were therefore the chief danger in the unions:

"So far then from being progressive, the Lewis-Hillman outfit is to be more feared by progressives and militants today than the other elements of the A.F. of L. leadership. The old-timers cannot possibly handle the situation any longer. Their bungling attempts are bound to play into the hands of the militants. Lewis, Hillman and Company are the agents of the capitalist class who might be able to fasten a class collaboration trade unionism on the masses generally and especially the membership of the new unions, for a period. That John L. Lewis in the face of his atrocious record in his own union and his present philosophy should today be thought of by many honest workers as a progressive and as the hope of the workers in the developing crises is indeed ominous." (The New International, October 1935, p. 184. My emphasis - A.B.)

The idea that the Lewis forces were the chief danger was one which was continually stressed in the Trotskyite analysis. Cannon-Shachtman showed that they were thoroughly aware of this outstanding factor in the situation:

"No, the conservative forces in the A.F. of L. today are the Lewis-Hillman forces, the more dangerous because they masquerade as progressive and up to date." (The New Militant, October 26, 1935, p. 3)

Indeed, judging from all outward appearances, it seemed that the Trotsky leaders were seriously intent on redeeming their promise to struggle for a left wing movement in the A.F.L. For, as they themselves pointed out, such a left wing could materialize only in struggle against the Lewis-Hillman gang on the one hand and the Green forces on the other:

"Let this serve as another warning that the Lewis-Hillman-Dubinsky group in the A. F. of L. are not progressives and cannot be counted on to support progressive causes and groups. The left wing must be built against them, not as the Stalinists seek to do, by the favor of these bureaucrats." (The New Militant, September 28, 1935, p. 4. My emphasis - A.B.)

Such was the Trotsky position, a position formed during the early days of the Lewis movement and carried right through the A.F.L. convention of October 1935 which split wide open on the Lewis question.

It will be recalled that shortly before the October 1935 A.F.L. Convention, the Stalinists, in line with their unfolding ultra-Rightist zig-zag, embarked on a policy of "critical support" to Lewis. Shortly after the October 1935 A.F.L. Convention, Cannon-Shachtman suddenly performed one of their characteristic flip-flops. Without a word of repudiation, the Trotsky leaders, paralleling the Stalinist bureaucrats, buried their analysis of the Lewis faction overnight and now joined the pack whooping it up for Lewis and his henchmen. Turning their previous analysis inside out, Cannon-Shachtman pictured the sham Lewis-Green battle as a real struggle around principled issues and completely "forgot" their promise about building a Left Wing against both Green and Lewis made only two months before!

"Nevertheless, the present situation is clear to militant and to revolutionary workers in the trade unions. Around the issues that stand out today -- an aggressive policy of organization and industrial unionism -- they must make common cause and a common

struggle with the Lewis 'progressive' bloc." (New Militant, November 30, 1935, p. 5. Emphasis in original)

The Trotsky followers in the unions now were urged to tie the workers to the reactionary Lewis machine. By this act the Cannon-Shachtman leaders showed that all their previous anti-Lewis and Marxist-sounding verbiage was just so much window dressing to be shifted when factional expediency so required. A day before Cannon-Shachtman were shouting that Lewis' sponsorship of "industrial unionism" was a fake, that his new progressive talk made him an even more formidable enemy than Green, that the left wing must therefore be built not in alliance with Lewis but against him. Now all such talk quietly disappeared from the pages of their press and a new "analysis," dressed to suit the pro-Lewis line, made its appearance. The new line diverted all attention from the reactionary Lewis content to the question of the form of trade union organization and palmed the form off as the key and principled issue. The following piece by Cannon was the typical defense given for the support to Lewis. Cannon suddenly discovered that his "revolutionary" interests and Lewis' reactionary interests coincided:

"It is a curious fact that the interests of the most revolutionary and the extremely conservative tendencies coincide to a certain extent. Industrial unionism is objectively progressive. Therefore revolutionists must support it regardless who is at the head of the movement for its realization." (Speech by James P. Cannon, quoted in The New Militant, December 14, 1935, p.5)

Conveniently omitted was the fact that Lewis' own union, the U.M.W.A. was industrial in form and yet had to its record an unbroken series of sell-outs. As we pointed out, the Trotskyite leaders themselves had denied that Lewis' own industrial union was a union of coal miners. Thus, neither the fact that the U.M.W.A. was physically composed of coal miners, nor the fact that it was industrial in form had moved the Cannon-Shachtman leadership from its denunciation of this union. The Marxist criterion for determining the nature of an organization by the nature of its leadership and policies has been confirmed a hundred times over in history and admits of no exceptions. When trade unions are in the hands of opportunists they function only in the class interests of the bosses. This law applies not only to trade unions but to any workers organization which operates in class society. Soviets as a form of workers organizations are on an infinitely higher plane than trade unions. Yet history has demonstrated how Soviets have been used against the interests of the proletariat when their political line was given by opportunist leadership. Such was the case with the Menshevik-led Soviets in Russia in 1917, with the Social-Democratic-controlled Soviets in Germany in 1919, with the Stalinist-ruled Soviets in Russia, in China and elsewhere. Indeed, what actually happens is that the opportunist leaders pursue a policy which feeds and strengthens bourgeois reaction. This bourgeois reaction, at the required moment for the class enemy, utterly demolishes all workers organizations irrespective of form and content, as occurred in Germany, Italy, Spain, etc.

A workers' organization is progressive only when it is filled with a revolutionary Marxian content. No genuine struggle for progressive forms can take place separate and apart from the struggle for Marxian policy and leadership. Such a struggle implies the exposure of the opportunists and the destruction of their influence. This is the burning lesson of the entire black development since the degeneration of the leadership of the October Revolution. Under the guise of supporting a progressive form of trade union organization, the Trotsky leaders bound the revo-

lutionary workers to the perfidious Lewis labor fakers. Industrial unionism under the crooked auspices of the Lewises and Hillmans was not a boon to the workers but rather another effective agency of support to the capitalists no different from the bureaucratically-handcuffed A.F.L. Some two years later, the Cannon-Shachtman leaders themselves recorded this truth:

"In the CIO, no less than in the AFL and even more so in some of the industrial unions, the officialdom has established a basically undemocratic regime which is bureaucratically maintained against the interests of the membership and of the union generally. Hand in hand with this pernicious system, goes the practise of 'labor-employer cooperation,' which tears the very heart out of fighting unionism. The class collaboration policies of Hillman and Lewis are not one whit different or better than those of Green and Frey." (Socialist Appeal, October 23, 1937, p. 3. My emphasis - A.B.)

A most eloquent indictment of the poisoned fruits of the Lewis-led industrial unionism.

Counterposed to the Trotskyite slogan of making common cause with the Lewis gang, the correct slogan in that situation was: For industrial unionism under a Marxist leadership. Against Lewis, Green and all the "labor" agents of Wall Street.

Lewis succeeded in fastening his policy of sellouts on the neck of the CIO workers only because he was assisted into power by people like the Trotsky leaders who made "common cause and a common struggle" with the Lewis bloc.

The Trotsky line was moulded to conform to that of the Stalinists. . . . When the Stalinists cursed Lewis, Cannon and Shachtman echoed with blood and thunder against the Lewis flunkys, rejected any ideas of alliance, and even insisted that the Lewis group was a greater danger than the Green supporters. When the Stalinists vowed to build a "left wing" against both the Lewis and Green groups, the Cannon-Shachtman leadership swore likewise. But when the Stalinist bandits welched on their glib promises and swung over to Lewis in a 180 degree turn, the Trotsky leaders swallowed their own similar promises and parroted the Browders and Fosters in the new line.

THE REAL MEANING OF THE TROTSKYITE SWITCH TO SUPPORT OF LEWIS

In evaluating the real meaning of the "conversion" of Cannon-Shachtman to the Lewis bloc, one must bear in mind the sentiments of the revolutionary-minded workers. Even in the years of the Stalinist Rightist line in the unions (1924-28) the Stalinist leaders did not openly support Lewis. Rather the Stalinist Rightist line was expressed in the support of the pseudo-progressives in the mine fields who spoke of fighting Lewis. Naturally during the Leftist period (1928-32) all forces in and around the Stalinist movement intensified their anti-Lewis barrage and made it a regular stock in trade. Thus, for more than a decade the workers in and about the Stalinist system were virtually brought up in a spirit of anti-Lewisism. When the Trotsky leaders tailed the Stalinist bureaucrats in late 1935 and switched to Lewis, they had to cater to this anti-Lewis sentiment which they themselves had also helped to propagate. Therefore the whole issue in the unions had to be presented by Cannon-Shachtman as an objective and principled fight for industrial unionism and not as an endorsement of the

Lewis leadership of this movement.

However, the real meaning of The Trotskyite switch to the Lewis side can be seen precisely in the manner in which they formulated Lewis' new "objective" role in the union movement. From the knowledge of Lewis' crooked machinations among the miners and from the knowledge that Lewis was now heading the industrial union movement only to be in a position to strangle it in the coils of class-collaboration, what possibly could be concluded concerning the set-up in the Lewis-led movement? Self-evidently, since Lewis' policy was for class-collaboration and that of the workers for class-struggle, revolutionary Marxists would have shown that Lewis could enforce his policy and rule only by utilizing the same bureaucratic gangster methods which served to beat the militant miners into line. But the Trotsky leaders came forward with an entirely different prognosis. Completely blinding the workers, they predicted that Lewis would be compelled to foster Trade Union Democracy - no more, no less:

"In the course of further events it is quite likely that he (Lewis - A.B.) will be compelled to become one of the outstanding champions of trade union democracy. If so, AND THIS IS TO BE EXPECTED, it will arise out of the logic of his present position and not because of any principled adherence to the idea of trade union democracy." (New Militant, Nov. 30, 1935, p. 4. My capitals - A.B.)

Was it a fact that Lewis, as CIO chairman, could be expected to foster trade union democracy? Some years later, when millions of workers had already been caught in Lewis' net and when the CIO movement was strongly entrenched, the Trotskyite leaders found themselves compelled to show that what they had pictured as their expectation was a distortion of reality:

"The bureaucratic management of the new C.I.O. unions is notorious. The Lewis-Hillman-Murray clique, aware of the danger to their leadership and policies represented by the mass unionization of aggressive unskilled workers in the large scale industries sought to paralyze rank-and-file control in advance by establishing a bureaucratic guardianship over all the unions they organized. Neither the leadership nor the policies were voted by the union membership. No regular organization has been set up in most cases. Officials are appointed in the worst traditions of the United Mine Workers of America." (Socialist Appeal, Feb. 12, 1938, p. 2.)

This was how Lewis became a proponent of trade union democracy!

The Lewis leadership did not and could not become the medium for the pursuance of class struggle policies and for the fostering of trade union democracy. Although the Cannon-Shachtman leaders were quite aware of this fact and openly portrayed Lewis' bureaucratism as in the above-quoted statement, they still kept re-painting Lewis' fundamental role in bright colors. Thus, echoing one of Lewis' lickspittles, the Trotskyite paper stated:

"John L. Lewis deserves credit for promoting industrial unionism as C.I.O. chairman, as Stolberg pointed out." (Ibid, Feb. 5, 1938, p. 3. My emphasis - A.B.)

The crooked motivations of Lewis, his bureaucratic thug rule carried over from the miners to the new CIO unions, his class-collaborationism which tied the industrial union workers to the bosses merit the implacable hatred of

every militant worker. But to the Trotsky leaders, he deserved "credit" for leading (read: misleading) the CIO movement.

As the years passed, it became possible for the Trotsky leaders to come out openly with their real, hitherto hidden, evaluation of the Lewis gang's role in the formative days of the CIO. Cannon and Shachtman no longer needed to pretend that they were supporting a principle when in reality they supported concretely the Lewis leadership. Quite recently, the Shachtmanite paper bluntly reiterated the attitude which Shachtman had shared with Cannon on the Lewis leadership:

"John L. Lewis did fine work for the CIO." (Labor Action, Nov. 27, 1944, p. 2.)

"Fine work" deserving of "credit" - this is what the Cannon-Shachtman leadership said years afterward when it was much safer for them to blurt out their real line in evaluating the Lewis clique in the formative days of the industrial union movement. Support to Lewis himself - this was the real meaning of the Trotsky brand of "industrial unionism." The hullabaloo about the "principle" of industrial unionism was designed only for the naive so as to clothe support to Lewis under a Marxist-looking phrasology. This was the Stalinist technique, which the Trotsky leaders plagiarized, but without acknowledgements, of course.

OPPORTUNIST MANIPULATIONS WITH INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM

In late 1935 when Cannon-Shachtman decided to add their lungpower to the pro-Lewis chorus, they gave everyone the impression that industrial unionism was a principled, life-and-death question with them. It is a fact that industrial unionism is objectively progressive. Therefore, said Cannon-Shachtman, people at the head of such a movement must be supported, while people advocating and practicing the obsolete craft unionism are to be rejected. The sincerity of the Cannon-Shachtman adherence to their newly-discovered union principle can be tested not only by their "theoretical" hocus-focus, but by their concrete day-to-day work in the union movement.

In Minneapolis where the Trotskyites shared leadership with Bill Brown of Teamsters Local 574 AFL, a golden opportunity was presented for a practical application of the industrial union principle. As is well-known, the organized teamsters constituted one of the strongest forces of the craft union bloc in the AFL. Under the supervision of Dan Tobin, the teamsters were artificially separated into distinct craft locals. Thus, the milk-drivers were organized in one union, the laundry-drivers in another, and so on. Such a manner of organization divided the drivers and gave the hierarchy of union bureaucrats a basis for playing off one section of the drivers against the other, blocking an effective struggle against the bosses. This craft set-up also produced a whole host of parasitic union officials, since each local had to have its own officials. The greater the layer of this bureaucracy, the more power and revenue in the hands of the Tobins and, therefore, the more strength to the craft union faction in the AFL as a whole.

It must be borne in mind that for an uninterrupted period of many years, the Trotskyite workers had been imbued with anti-AFL feelings, particularly during the heyday of the Stalinist "Red" union period. Therefore, when the Trotsky workers learned that their party leaders in Minneapolis had gotten into positions of leadership in an AFL local, they evinced some curiosity as to the character and structure of this particular union. As if to allay any doubts on this score, The Militant played up Teamsters Local 574 and assured

the workers of the exceptional character of this union. One of its main features, according to Cannon-Shachtman, was its flexible organizational form in contradistinction to the typical craft unions. The Trotskyite-led local in Minneapolis, it would appear, welcomed all unorganized drivers and even non-drivers who were connected with street transportation in Minneapolis:

"Today the General Drivers Union is the largest and by far the most important union in the city. It numbers in its ranks thousands of militant and determined workers. It takes in as members, besides the drivers and helpers, gas and oil workers, market and food store workers, truckers, wrappers, counter and platform men etc. - in short, those workers who are daily connected with the machinery of street transportation and delivery." (The Militant, May 12, 1934, p. 1.)

Such a principle of organization of the Teamsters bore an implicit threat to the entire reactionary craft union set-up concentrated in Tobin's hands. Tobin and his supporters were well aware of this fact and declared war against Local 574. In April 1935 he revoked the charter of Local 574 and set up a new union of his own, Local 500. The militant workers in Local 574 were aroused by Tobin's bureaucratic machinations, refused to be intimidated and indicated a willingness to separate from Tobin's International altogether. But the Trotsky leaders seemed to be quite enraptured with the craft-ridden AFL structure. Against the sentiments of the union militants, the Trotsky clique pushed through a policy of working for re-instatement in Tobin's International:

"The workers were not easily convinced, but at last accepted the words of Vincent and Grant Dunne, of Wm. Brown, of F. Dobbs and others of the executive, that no effort be spared to gain the favorable vote of the delegates to the Central Labor Union and thus to prevent the expulsion of 574 from the local A.F. of L. central body." (New Militant, Apr. 27, 1935.)

After the Trotsky-Brown leadership pushed through this line of working for "re-instatement" in Tobin's International, they revealed precisely what they had in mind. To show Tobin how much they treasured being in his International, they begged him to take notice of the fact that they were voluntarily dismantling their own union so as to be in full harmony with his reactionary craft-union ideas:

"Tobin's charge that the union had overstepped its jurisdiction was answered by evidence showing that 574 has voluntarily relinquished the Ice Drivers, the Bakery Drivers, the Laundry Drivers, the Brewery Drivers, etc. etc. although such actions went against the better judgement of the union leaders." (New Militant, May 18, 1935, p. 2. My emphasis - A.B.)

Of course, the apologetic reference in the above to the "better judgment of the union leaders" was simply a shamefaced cover for their capitulation to Tobin's reactionary craft principles. Their "better judgment," that is, the Trotskyite verbal adherence to industrial unionism and the rejection of craft unionism, was a "principle" confined to the pages of the Trotsky press and advocated only when it was later necessary to bamboozle the workers into supporting Lewis. When the issue of industrial unionism confronted the Trotsky leaders directly in Local 574, they unceremoniously shoved their "principles" aside in a scramble to win the favor of the AFL potentate, Tobin.

Despite the fact that the Trotsky leaders showed they were quite agree-

able to the principle of artificially separating the drivers into crafts, Tobin was not mollified. Tobin and his agents turned a deaf ear to all pleas for "re-instatement" of Local 574; the evicted Trotsky leaders turned for succor to Lewis' CIO movement. The principle of the industrial form of organization was dusted off and new presented to the workers as a justification for some maneuvers with the Lewis crowd. On Feb. 15, 1936, the Trotsky New Militant ran a headline stating: "Minneapolis Unions Join Lewis Set-up." The body of the article revealed that at a conference of various Minneapolis unions there was set up a Continuation Committee for Industrial Organization. On a motion by the leading Trotskyite at the Conference, the pledge was made to explore further the possibilities of extending the pro-CIO work of the Conference:

"On a motion by V.R. Dunne all delegates were pledged to go back to their organizations and secure permission to sign the organization's name to a new call that will go out shortly for a broader conference on the same question." (Ibid., p.4.)

A few months later, the Trotsky leaders were actually sent as delegates of Local 574 to visit the CIO leaders. A report on the impressions of this visit was written by Farrel Dobbs for the Northwest Organizer and reprinted in the New Militant. Among other things, Dobbs reported:

"Our long conversation with John Brophy, director of the C.I.O., gave us a very comprehensive picture of the present activities of this group." (Apr. 11, 1936, p. 2.)

Obviously, the Trotsky clique was quite familiar with the activities of the CIO faction and didn't need an explanation by Lewis' hatchetman, Brophy, to learn about it. The Lewis gang was quite willing to welcome the support of the Local 574 leaders so as to push a toe in among the Teamsters. Thus, the conversations were held in a spirit of good fellowship on both sides.

Two months after this report of Dobbs, however, a significant change took place in Tobin's attitude. The CIO movement was making rapid headway and thereby shaking the hold of the old-line AFL leaders. Tobin decided to repair his fences so as to be in a position to repel the rush to the CIO movement. Accordingly, this labor-faker offered the olive branch of readmission to the Trotsky leaders who had been all set to leap into the CIO. Tobin, however, was not giving away anything for nothing. He proposed the readmission of Local 574 on the basis of gaining a direct and firm hold in the leadership. He did not admit Local 574 per se, but proposed a fusion of Local 574 with his own Local 500. It is of the utmost significance to note that Tobin's dual union (Local 500) was a purely artificial creation. It was set up in the spring of 1935 with the grand total of 26 members whom the Trotskyites labelled "finks, traitors to the true cause of labor, scabs, and strikebreakers." (See American City by C.R. Walker, p. 259). Yet Tobin's artificial creation and the character of his followers proved no obstacle to the Cannon-Shachtman clique who snapped up Tobin's crooked proposition. The combined locals became known as Local 544. The key to the character of this particular fusion can be gleaned from the nature of the leadership which emerged. We quote from the joint statement made by Bill Brown, president of Local 574, and by Smith, one of the Tobin leaders of Local 500:

"The officers of the new local will be William S. Brown, Carl Skoglund, and Farrell Dobbs from former Local 574; and L.A. Murphy, Jack Smith, and Nick Wagner, from former Local

500. The above six will be the constitutional Executive Board with P.J. Corcoran, secretary of the Local Teamsters' Joint Council, as the neutral chairman." (The Minneapolis Labor Review, July 17, 1936, p. 4.)

Thus, three of Tobin's goons were given equal status with Brown and two Trotsky leaders. And who was this P.J. Corcoran, whose position of "neutral chairman" was obviously the balance of power in the new union? Some six months before the fusion, when Tobin's agents were howling about racketeering in Local 574, Cannon-Shachtman branded Corcoran, who participated in that campaign, in no uncertain terms:

"The whole story was a tissue of lies and falsehoods, fabricated out of whole cloth by THE CHAMPION UNION BUSTERS IN THE UNITED STATES, Meyer Lewis, John Geary, PAT CORCORAN, and Cliff Hall, aided and abetted by that champion jelly-fish of politicians, Thomas E. Lattimer." (New Militant, Jan. 4, 1936, p. 1. My capitals - A.B.)

One of the "champion union busters in the United States" - this was the correct label the Trotsky leaders pinned on Corcoran when a bloc with Tobin was not yet in the offing. But when Tobin offered a piece of pie, the Trotsky gang was quite happy to unite with Tobin's strong-arm men and leave the balance of power in the hands of union-buster Corcoran.

Just as the Trotskyites obsequiously grovelled before Farmer-Laborite Brown in Local 574 when he brought them to leadership, so they now kissed the treacherous hands of Tobin's lickspittle, Corcoran. One can get an idea of the new Trotskyite behavior toward Corcoran from the way they characterized his union career less than a year and a half after the fusion:

"Pat Corcoran has led an uncompromising fight against Minneapolis employers and has unquestionably by his unswerving loyalty to the interests of the workers, incurred the enmity of a large section of Minneapolis employers and their agents." (Socialist Appeal, Nov. 27, 1937,)

Thus, from one of "the champion union busters in the United States," Corcoran was miraculously transformed by the Trotskyite magicians into a champion of the toiling masses. Naturally, the fact that he had become the boss in the new union leadership was the point which inspired the Trotsky penmen radically to change their character analysis of Corcoran. Factional expediency is quite obviously the guiding line of the Trotsky union politics.

There is one other feature of the fusion with Tobin's henchmen which is highly instructive. During the Teamsters strikes in 1934 led by the Trotskyites, Tobin viciously and publicly denounced the strikes and refused to allow any financial aid to the striking workers. One can imagine, then, what kind of creatures led Tobin's Local 500 and what kind of "contracts" they signed with the bosses. The fusion of Tobin's Local 500 with Local 574 did not at all signify the abolition of these rotten agreements. The workers, suffering under these sell-outs, were bound by the terms of the fusion to remain chained to the bosses. We quote again from the joint statement on the fusion by Brown and Smith, leaders of Locals 574 and 500, respectively:

"All contracts with the employers formerly held by the dissolved locals will be taken over and enforced by the new local." (The Minneapolis Labor Review, July 17, 1936, p. 4.)

As Cannon is so wont to boast: "the Trotskyites mean business." But this business carried on by the Trotsky clique is one of crooked back-door deals with labor-fakers. The Trotskyites' "theoretical" work consists of masking these deals with the most poisonous deceptions. First, as payment for a bloc with Tobin, the Trotsky leaders conveniently "forgot" all about their much-vaunted industrial union "principles" and voluntarily decimated their own union. Then they saddled the union workers following their leadership with a majority of Tobinite leaders and adopted as their own, Tobin's sell-out agreements. And what did the Trotsky clique gain in return? Re-admission to the craft-diseased AFL.

It should be pointed out that these Trotskyite Local 574 maneuvers took place in what all Trotskyites look to as the Mecca of revolutionary trade union activity - Minneapolis. These opportunist machinations are the concrete activities of the Trotsky clique in a trade union in which it was in positions of control and give the lie to their high-sounding phrases about principled, revolutionary trade union work.

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THE REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS LEAGUE'S
ANTI-MARXIST LINE

The crux of the disastrous class position of the proletariat today is its political attachment to the forces of reaction. The war between the latter and the proletariat is a one-sided matter because the workers are politically disarmed. This situation is not the result of some peculiar passivity on the part of the workers. It has been brought about by the opportunist tendencies within the proletariat.

Some of the opportunist groupings have a relatively crass line of deceiving the workers. For example, the Stalinist policy can be readily recognized by many revolutionary-minded workers as contrary to the interests of the toilers. In the colonial sphere, which is one of the matters considered in this article, the outstanding piece of treachery by the Stalinists in China has been for decades to divert the masses from overthrowing their oppressors, the Chinese capitalists and landlords, and the imperialist exploiters whose puppet is Chiang Kai-shek.

Other opportunist groups are more subtle. An outstanding feature of their line is the "criticism" with which they cover a policy flowing essentially along the Stalinist channels, though on the surface a million miles removed from it. If a worker were to confine his attention to the "critical" cover, he would get the impression of a fight to the death against the pro-bourgeois poisons spread by Stalinism.

Thus, in the October 1945 International News, issued by the Revolutionary Workers League, U.S.A., there is an article, "Elaboration of RWL Eighth Convention Memorandum." In this article, on page 10, we read the following:

"At the helm of every colonial country there stand today puppets for one or another imperialist power. No colonial leader, except a revolutionary Marxist can play any independent role. Support of such leaders as Chiang Kai-shek, Nehru, Gandhi, or Haile Selassie means to support the imperialist powers that stand behind them." (My emphasis - T.F.H.)

This statement is clear, unequivocal and correct. But what political line does the R.W.L. deduce from this? The following completely self-contradictory conclusion:

"We propose to strike together WITH the colonial puppet or agent of imperialism who fights for the national revolution, but we march separately from them with OUR OWN organization and instruments." (Ibid. Capitals in original, my emphasis - T.F.H.)

In the first quotation it is correctly stated that "no colonial leader, except a revolutionary Marxist can play any independent role." (My emphasis - T.F.H.) Furthermore, the R.W.L. correctly says that all other leaders are puppets of one or another imperialism. In the second quotation, however, we are blandly informed that the "colonial puppet or agent of imperialism" is "fighting for the national revolution." The R.W.L.'s "logic" leads to the conclusion, utterly self-contradictory, that the agent of imperialism, the one who carries out the policy of imperialism and who cannot carry out any other policy, is fighting for national liberation against all the im-

perialists, including the very imperialist power whose puppet he is!

The whole idea that the colonial puppets fight for national liberation against imperialism is a complete distortion of reality and plays right into the hands of these puppets and through them into the hands of imperialism. The R.W.L.'s line confuses the workers on the function of the colonial puppets, which is in reality to betray the colonial masses and strengthen imperialist oppression. The illusion spread by the R.W.L. that the colonial puppets fight for national liberation constitutes political support to the colonial puppets directly, and indirectly to imperialism. The R.W.L.'s story about marching separately (organizational independence) is only a cover for its political support to the colonial puppets of imperialism. What dominates the situation is not organizational forms, but political lines. The colonial puppets strike in only one direction - against the masses. It is possible to strike together with these agents of imperialism only against the masses. The only correct line is to strike against (not with) the colonial puppets and to lead the masses, through this line, against the imperialists.

* * * * *

Just as the R.W.L. has a self-contradictory line on the colonial puppets, (which conceals within it support to these agents of imperialism), so it has a self-contradictory line on Stalinism.

While seemingly in opposition to Stalinism, the R.W.L. actually leads the workers to support this counter-revolutionary force. Thus, on the one hand, the R.W.L. declares correctly and quite clearly that Stalinism plays only a reactionary role:

"No support, material or political to Stalinism at any time. Realize that Stalinism can only play a reactionary role. (International News, Nov. 1940, p. 3. My emphasis - T.F.H.)

"Stalinism can swing between support to one or another capitalist group but always against the working class." (Ibid., May 1941, p. 4. My emphasis - T.F.H.)

We find here generally correct statements of the invariably reactionary, anti-working class nature of Stalinism.

Naturally, the reactionary activity of Stalinism extends to every institution under its control, outside and within the Soviet Union. This, too, is quite obvious to the R.W.L. Stalin's "Red" Army, just like his "Comintern" parties, never acts in the interests of the toiling masses. It marches and strikes to secure the interests of the Stalinist bureaucracy. On this point, the R.W.L. correctly states:

"Is the Red Army marching, then, in order to help the World Revolution? No, that is the tragedy. Under Stalinism the Red Army is used (just like the 'Communist' parties everywhere) merely to defend the interests of the Stalin bureaucracy." (Fighting Worker, Oct. 15, 1939.)

If the above statement represented the actual line of the R.W.L., we would have no quarrel with that organization in so far as evaluating Stalinism as reactionary at all times, in all its aspects and policies - economic, educational, political and military - is concerned. An examination of the total R.W.L. line reveals, however, that the above statement serves

the R.W.L. as a political cover to prevent unsuspecting workers from recognizing the pro-Stalinist fakery peddled by the R.W.L. In another article that organization in attempting to refute another opportunist, adopts a thinly-veiled Stalinist line of painting up the military instrument of the Stalinist bureaucracy as a progressive force:

"The Red Army (despite the 'brilliant' theses of Shachtman and liberal friends) is the most powerful force for social revolution on the European continent." (The Fighting Worker, Mar. 15, 1943)

The above statement is a crass distortion of the role of Stalin's Army. The truth is that Stalin's "Red" Army has been and is and always will be a terrible threat to every spark of social revolution which it meets directly, and indirectly it exercises a reactionary influence on the masses of the entire world.

What is the significance of the R.W.L. line of underhanded support to the puppets of imperialism and to counter-revolutionary Stalinism?

The long and bloody history of Stalinist sell-outs has been reacting on the mind of the proletarian vanguard, and a steady stream of advanced workers has been moving subjectively away from Stalinism. The historical direction of this stream has been toward the Trotskyites, the perennial "critical" supporters of the Stalinist reaction. But even within the Trotsky camp, dissatisfaction periodically bursts forth in protest against the policy of the Trotsky leadership consisting of attaching the workers to the Fosters, Ben Davises and the Chiang Kai-sheks. These workers seek a complete break with Stalinism and all opportunism. Unfortunately, the struggle to extricate oneself from the Stalinist trap is not as simple as it seems. One of the pitfalls is the R.W.L. which, under the cover of "anti-Stalinism" and even of "anti-Trotskyism," actually spreads the subtle poison that Stalinism, in certain features, is forced, despite itself, to engage in progressive actions against the bourgeoisie. In these "progressive struggles" the R.W.L. calls for "striking together" with the Stalinists. The idea of Stalinist "progressive struggles" is a sheer concoction which is used by the R.W.L. to rationalize its line of tying the workers politically to Stalinism. Without that sheer invention, it could not talk about "striking together" with Stalinism. In the interests of the toiling masses, Stalinism is a force which can only be struck against by the revolutionary proletariat guided by a Marxist policy.

Only the exposure and smashing of all the opportunists, including the various brands of "Left"-Stalinism represented by the Trotskyites and the R.W.L., can clear the way for that indispensable instrument of independent working class action, a new Marxist International. To that task, we of the Leninist League have pledged all our efforts. To the opposite task, that of blinding the subjectively revolutionary workers to Stalinism and to imperialism, the leadership of the R.W.L. had dedicated itself. The issue is clear. If the rank-and-file of the R.W.L. want to be revolutionists, they must break with the opportunist leadership and join hands with the Leninist League.

Thomas F. Harden
February 1946

THE LENINIST LEAGUE LINE SPLITS THE R.W.L.

Introductory Note

We continue here our publication of documents and materials of the recent split in the Revolutionary Workers League, U.S.A. The previous installment will be found in the Nov.-Dec. 1945 issue of THE BULLETIN.

The first of the following two documents is a letter written by the Acting National Secretary of the R.W.L. We publish it because it is a perfect summary of the type of arguments and the methodology of the Okun-Cowan leadership of the R.W.L. Its refutation will be found in the second document, a letter by Thomas F. Harden, the leader of the minority opposition. No other type of argumentation or methodology was ever evinced by the Okun-Cowan leadership throughout the entire controversy and it stands as their definitive position.

* * * * *

January 2, 1945.

To all Units and Members at Large:

At our recent plenum the Central Committee suspended Thomas Harden from the organization for capitulation to Marlenism and various disloyal acts, such as taking internal documents outside the League membership and carrying on organizational contact with George Marlen's "Leninist" League while still a member of the CC of the RWL.

Harden's development to ultra-leftism was a repid blitzkrieg. Some weeks ago Harden and another CC member introduced a document on the question of March Separately and Strike Together, which differed from the organization's point of view on two tactical points. But five or six weeks later Harden suddenly came up with a document which posed a number of important political differences. This document was signed by two other comrades.

Even though these positions were fought out and defeated inside the RWL in our fight with Marlen 8 years ago, we nevertheless agreed to a full, thorough and comradely discussion on these points. We kept the internal bulletin open to articles and permitted discussions throughout the organization even though there was as yet no pre-convention discussion. Quite a few such discussions took place.

Instead of availing himself of the democratic processes, however, Harden decided to quit and join the Marlenites. Unknown to us he had already had a series of discussions with Marlen and through his intervention Marlen put out a 63-page mimeographed bulletin attempting to prove that the RWL was a Stalinist force.

The political clarification of the comrades of the League on the Russian question will of course continue. Two or three comrades agreed with Harden on one or another point, but none agreed with his full Marlenist program and all refused to join the Marlenites with him or to leave the League.

The essence of Harden's position is the following:

1. That this is not an imperialist war but a fake sham war. The U.S., Britain and the Axis are really JOINTLY ALLIED in a common war against the Soviet Union and are only fighting each other to "fool the workers."
2. That a state can rise above and apart from the economic roots.
3. That the state in the Soviet Union is a "counter-revolutionary Workers State," and that Stalinism is not a reformist force (which in action becomes counter-revolutionary), but a pure and simple counter-revolutionary force.
4. That we must have an "advanced workers" orientation. FIRST we concentrate on winning over advanced workers in the various political groups and we

polemize against them (particularly Stalinism which is the fountainhead of opportunism); and THEN we will do work in the class struggle.

5. We are against the defense of the Soviet Union and the Soviet Army unless and until Stalinism is removed.

Marlenism is ultra-leftism of the most infantile sort. Its whole essence is summed up in the words "First...and Then." FIRST we build cadres, THEN we work in the class struggle. FIRST Soviet workers overthrow Stalin, THEN they must fight world imperialism. FIRST the imperialists are interested in defeating the Soviet Union, THEN they will fight among each other.

Harden's position is MECHANICAL MATERIALISM of the worst sort. Most social phenomena do not occur as "first and then," but as SIMULTANEOUS ACTIONS. We are for fighting the boss and the labor faker AT THE SAME TIME. We are for fighting world capitalism and the opportunist agents of world capitalism AT THE SAME TIME. We are for working on the advanced workers in polemics and for working in the class struggle against both employer and labor faker (thus winning the raw worker to our position) - at the same time, SIMULTANEOUSLY.

It is significant that the centrists have a similar position fundamentally, as that of Marlen. They say: "First we defend rotten bourgeois democracy, then we will fight for Socialism" We exposed this Trotskyist position in Spain. OUR concept is a dialectical one. Not "first and then," but TOGETHER, although frequently with different weapons or methods.

Our positive positions are contained in our plenum reports: "The Imperialist War and the Proletarian Revolution," "The Nature of Stalinism," "Defense or Defeatism for the Soviet Union," and "March Separately and Strike Together." These documents will be published in a few days in either the INTERNATIONAL NEWS or THE INTERNAL BULLETIN. Copies of these INTERNAL BULLETINS will be available to sympathizers.

In the last two weeks the League has received, along with the bad news of the loss of Harden, some favorable news. A new unit has been organized in New York, which we hope will in a short time give us some striking power in this major metropolis. In Detroit our comrades have become a major force in the Rank and File auto workers group. In Britain we learn that the comrades of the Leninist League of Great Britain (not to be confused with the Marlenites) are about to fuse with a left force, the Communist Workers Group, in the I.C.C. program of the 14 points. Pledges for our Press fund total some \$1,500 and we hope to go over the \$2,000 top in a relatively short time.

The League regrets the loss of Harden, as we regret the loss of any comrade in this period. But we know that out of this important political discussion and the consolidation that inevitably follows political clarification we will gain much more than we have lost.

Signed
Acting National Secretary
of the R.W.L.

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ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE WILL BE FOUND THE LETTER OF
HARDEN IN REPLY TO THE ABOVE.

* * * * *

February 28, 1945

POLITICAL COMMITTEE RWL

Dear Comrades:

I find myself compelled to reply to your letter of January 31, 1945, as well as to the letter of the Acting National Secretary of January 2, 1945, contained in Internal Bulletin 97, for the reason that there are very important mis-statements of fact in both.

First of all you say in your letter of January 31 that I was suspended for "political" reasons. Later on I shall take up these alleged "political" reasons, but I first want to point out that you are changing the actual facts. In IB 97, page 8 (minutes of the 17th Plenum) we find the following: "By virtue of section 11, Article 8 of the Constitution- for certain disloyal acts and breaches of discipline and capitulation to the ultra-leftist and anti-Marxist position of the Marlen clique, otherwise known as the Leninist League USA, we suspend Comrade Harden from the CC of the RWL, from the RWL, and all committees and sub-committees thereof and in the name of this 17th plenum of the CC of the RWL, recommend the expulsion of this comrade from the RWL." I quote in full the motion that was carried so that no one can say that I have picked out anything to suit my own purpose. The italics are mine, and the italicized portions clearly show two things. First that the reasons for my "suspension" were primarily organizational. Second, that in addition to all the other violations of the RWL constitution, you committed a further unconstitutional act by "suspending" me from the RWL, the entire organization, which you can find no justification for in any section of the constitution.

So that it is plain to see that the so-called primacy of the political was an afterthought when you realized that you had violated our constitution and all principles of Bolshevik democratic centralism by failing to:

- a. Prefer written charges
- b. Notify me in writing of trial
- c. Elect a control commission
- d. Give me the elementary right to be confronted with specific accusations
- e. Give the right to me to present witnesses and be heard in my own defense.

From every organizational standpoint you acted unconstitutionally and in direct violation of all Bolshevik principles extending back more than forty years. But I am not leaving it at that, although that alone would vitiate the whole proceeding. I am perfectly willing and anxious to put this on a political plane, and I am willing to accept your own correct criterion. In the letter of January 31, you say "The League permits all sorts of differences in its ranks. But it cannot permit in its ranks individuals, for instance, who do not believe in the Proletarian Revolution. It cannot permit in its ranks people who have a CLEARLY DEFINED LINE OF RE-

VISIONISM." I absolutely agree that a disbelief in proletarian revolution and a belief in revisionism can not be permitted in the League. I wholeheartedly accept this criterion.

Now, on the basis of this criterion, which both the PC and I accept, let us take a look at the political charges against me. They are set forth in the letter of Comrade Okun of January 2, 1945. I take them up, seriatim.

CHARGE 1. "That this is not an imperialist war but a FAKE SHAM WAR. The U. S., Britain, and the Axis are really JOINTLY ALLIED in a common war against the Soviet Union and are only fighting each other to 'fool the workers'".

REPLY:

A. Even if this were a true, not a distorted statement of my position, it would not constitute a disbelief in proletarian revolution.

B. But it is not a correct statement, but a distortion of my position. In the very same issue of the IB, paragraph 8 on page 4 of the Minority thesis contains a real (not a FAKE SHAM distortion a la Okun) statement of my position:

"There still remained, however, as the basic factor in world politics, a contradiction between the economic base of the Soviet Union and the over-decaying imperialist world. There resulted from this the phenomenon of the subordination of the intra-Imperialist antagonisms to the antagonism between the Imperialist world as a whole and the Soviet Union. Hitler was groomed by world imperialism as the super-Wrangel in the attack against the Soviet Union. The line of the democratic imperialists was not a line of "appeasement" as is naively supposed, but a line of definitely furnishing the Nazis with the political and military means of smashing the Soviet Union. World Imperialism had clearly seen that another Imperialist war of the 1914-1918 type could easily lead to the overthrow of the whole capitalist system. The Spanish revolution was fresh in the memory of all the Imperialist leaders. But not only was there a species of ideological unity among the imperialists, there was also a material base for such unity in the form of the interlocking world trusts and cartels. We do not mean to say or imply that imperialist antagonisms had been abolished, but we decisively assert that they had to and did become subordinated to the common aim of all the imperialists."

C. Is the above revisionist, to take the second criterion put forth by yourself. As far back as Feb. 17, 1933 we read the following:

"A working agreement between German Fascism and American imperialism is necessary for capitalism to utilize the Fascist hordes against the working class and the Soviet Union." (My italics TFH) Who wrote this?

None other than Comrade Hugo Oehler in "The Militant."

Do you mean to say this this is too far back? Ok. I will quote from the "Fighting Worker" of December 15, 1942: "The general staff, rather than face the revolt of the masses at home, turned the nation over to the German invader." It is

true that you had written (and particularly you, Comrade Okun) about the tremendous struggle raging in France in 1940, which only existed in your own imagination, but I am not trying to prove anything at this time other than the fact that I have a right to advocate within the framework of the RWL the same things that you, the majority of the RWL, have, albeit inconsistently, advocated from time to time.

In a private conversation with the Acting National Secretary he underscored the following: "But not only was there a species of ideological unity among the imperialists, there was also a material base for such unity in the form of the interlocking world trusts and cartels." He claimed that this was the Kautskyan theory of "ultra imperialism." He repeated this at the meeting of the PC at which I was given fifteen minutes to present my entire position. To show the utter absurdity of this contention I quote from a recognized Marxist in the very work in which he assailed Kautsky's real theory of ultra-imperialism.

"Therefore 'inter-imperialist' or 'ultra-imperialist' alliances, in the realities of the capitalist system, and not in the banal philistine phantasies of English parsons or of the German 'Marxist' (it must be remembered that the writer had not had the pleasure of meeting Comrade Okun or Comrade Cowan--TFH) Kautsky, no matter what form they may assume, whether of one imperialist coalition against another, or of a general alliance embracing all the imperialist powers (my italics TFH, except that the writer italicized the word "all" in the original) are inevitably (original italics) nothing more than a 'truce' in periods between wars. Peaceful alliances prepare the ground for wars, and in their turn grow out of wars; the one is the condition for the other, giving rise to alternating forms (TFH) of peaceful and non-peaceful struggle out of the single (original italics) basis of imperialist connections and the relations between world economics (TFH) and world politics (TFH). But in order to pacify the workers and to reconcile them with the social-chauvinists who have deserted to the side of the bourgeoisie, wise Kautsky separates (original italics) one link of a single chain from the other, separates the present peaceful (and ultra-imperialist, nay ultra-ultra-imperialist) alliances of all (original italics) the powers for the 'pacification' of China (remember the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion) from the non-peaceful conflict of tomorrow, which will prepare the ground for another 'peaceful' general alliance for the partition, say, of Turkey, on the day after tomorrow, etc., etc." (Lenin's "Imperialism." Selected Works, Vol. V, p. 110).

Lenin wrote this two years before there was October, two years before there was any antagonism between the whole imperialist world and the economic base of the Soviet Union. Yes, comrades, there is "mechanical materialism" (letter of January 2, 1945), but it is not on the part of Lenin and Hardon, but on the part of the PC majority. And certainly (as shown by the quotations in page 2 of this letter) at one time not even on the part of Comrades Oehler and Okun.

Summing up on this point.

A. You falsified my views, Comrade Okun. Incidentally no one, certainly not Comrade Hardon, has ever said that "the imperialists are fighting each other to 'fool the workers!'"

This is a distortion of any theory of a "sham war" held by anyone of whom I have cognizance. In the first place the imperialists are not "fighting each other" in any usual sense of the word. They are collaborating in a planned manner to smash and carve up the Soviet Union and to fascize the world. The example of France in 1940 is an example that you yourself cited to substantiate this in the quotation given above. On no other theory can the "First Battle of France," the "Second Battle of France," Burma, Malaya, Singapore, Hong Kong, the "First Battle of the Philippines," the "Second Battle of the Philippines," Poland, Greece, Norway, be explained. Just the other day in the House of Lords the fact was brought out that not only were the Channel Islands turned over to the Nazis in 1940 (in whose hands they still remain) but that the inhabitants were deprived of all arms so that the Nazis would have no trouble at all. I am preparing a whole document on this question of the sham war. Suffice it to say that you can not possibly claim that my real (not your FAKE SHAM interpretation) position expresses either disbelief in proletarian revolution or belief in revisionism (Marx devoted the whole of his book "The Eastern Question" to the thesis that the Crimean War was a sham war so far as England and France were concerned). On the contrary it is your position that is a revision of the consistent Marxist position held ever since 1917 that the main antagonism is between the economic base of the Soviet Union as an integral part of the proletarian revolution and world imperialism.

CHARGE 2: "That a state can rise above and apart from the economic roots." I repudiate this, and I repudiate it not only now. In the Minority thesis (IB 97, page 1 of the thesis) we said: "In an important lecture on the State, contained in Vol. XI of the Selected Works of Lenin, Lenin pointed out with a wealth of detail that what determines the nature of the state is the property relationship. This concept is fundamental and is in full accord with the League concept of the Soviet Union as a degenerated workers' state. On this there is no point of difference between the present majority and minority of the Central Committee."

If I had said what you charge, Comrade Okun, this would be anti-Marxist. Unfortunately for you the record discloses that you made this up out of the whole cloth.

CHARGE 3. "That the state in the Soviet Union is a 'counter-revolutionary Workers State,' and that Stalinism is not a reformist force (which in action becomes counter-revolutionary), but a pure and simple counter-revolutionary force."

REPLY. For the first time there is an approach to a correct reproduction of my views. Even here, however, Okun does not quote but "tries" to "formulate" my views for me. Ordinarily this would not be too bad, but when one person's formulation of another's views is used as an attempted justification for suspension without trial, it becomes very grave. I would first point out that the attempt to ascribe to the Minority the characterization of Stalinism as "a pure and simple counter-revolutionary force" is another falsification. Far from describing it as "pure and simple" (by this Okun means to ascribe to me the absurdity that Stalinism is the same as, say,

Fascism) the Minority devoted three sections of its thesis (4, 5, and 6) and part of another (9) to an elaboration of that new and complex phenomenon, Stalinism. We said: To call for any marching separately and striking together with the Stalinists is to fail to understand the nature of the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union and the nature of Stalinism internationally. Stalinism is a new phenomenon. It cannot be compressed into the old form of the labor movement as analyzed by Lenin in 1915-1917. It is an expression of the interests of the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union and an extension of the expression of those interests into the capitalist countries outside." (IB 97, p. 4 of Minority thesis, Paragraph 9).

With the above correction, let us look at the charge, using your own criterion. Can anyone say that this expresses a disbelief in proletarian revolution? I do not think even Comrade Okun would say so.

B. Does it constitute revisionism? On the contrary we have here a fundamental Marxist analysis. In what sense?

1. The Minority points out that reformism is a phenomenon based upon the material interests of the labor aristocracy and bureaucracy within a capitalist structure.

2. The Minority points out that Stalinism is based upon the bureaucratic degeneration of a warped workers' state and that therefore it is a force different in quality from a force based on capitalism.

3. The Minority points out that the actions of the Stalinists flow from their material interests rooted in the material conditions, which differ from those of the reformists qualitatively. The opposite view of the PC majority, which makes Stalinism flow from the "theory of Socialism in one country" is not only contrary to fact, but is ill-disguised philosophical idealism, and constitutes a real revision of the fundament of Marxism, historical materialism. It is significant, in this connection, that here we have one of the direct carry overs of Leon Trotsky.

CHARGE 4. "That we must have an 'advanced workers' orientation, FIRST we concentrate in winning over advanced workers in the various political groups and we polemicize against them (particularly Stalinism which is the fountainhead of opportunism); and THEN we will do work in the class struggle."

REPLY.

A. Falsification. "THEN we will do work in the class struggle." Nowhere have I said this. On the contrary I have stressed that the only real work in the class struggle for Marxists, at the present time, with the present relation of forces, is connected with an advanced workers orientation.

B. Criteria.

1. Is this a disbelief in proletarian revolution? Then Lenin should never have been permitted in the Third International at the first three congresses. This is what the "disbeliever in proletarian revolution," Lenin said:

"Unless the revolutionary section of the proletariat is thoroughly and seriously trained to eject and suppress opportunism, it is absurd to think of a dictatorship of the proletariat. (Selected Works, Vol. VI., p. 468. My italics TFH)

At the Second Congress of the CI Lenin said:

"Opportunism is our principal enemy. Opportunism in the upper ranks of the working class movement is not proletarian socialism but bourgeois socialism. Practice has shown that the active people in the working class movement who adhere to the opportunist trend are better defenders of the bourgeoisie than the bourgeoisie itself. Without their leadership of the workers, the bourgeoisie could not have remained in power.... This where our principal enemy is; and we must conquer this enemy. We must leave this congress with the firm determination to carry this struggle on the very end in all parties. This is our main task." (Selected Works, Vol. X, p. 196)

2. Is this revisionism? If so listen to another "revisionist," V. I. Lenin:

"IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST WHAT ENEMIES WITHIN THE WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT DID BOLSHEVISM GROW? GAIN STRENGTH? AND BECOME HARDENED? First of all, and principally in the struggle against opportunism, which in 1914, definitely grew into social-chauvinism and definitely went over to the side of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat. Naturally this was the principal enemy of Bolshevism in the working class movement. This enemy remains the principal enemy also on an international scale. This enemy has claimed and still claims most of the attention of the Bolsheviks." (Selected Works, Vol. X, p. 70. My emphasis TFH)

And don't forget that this was written at a time of ascending revolutionary wave (just beginning to recede), for parties, not handfuls seeking the road to parties, and in a book which was a polemic against ultra-leftism.

How much more is it true today in the exactly opposite circumstances. The PC majority refuses to look at history. China, Germany, England, Austria, France, Spain present instance after instance where the bourgeoisie was only saved because the vanguard was in the hands of the opportunists, and particularly of the Stalinists.

CHARGE 5. "We are against the defense of the Soviet Union and the Soviet Army unless and until Stalinism is removed."

REPLY. Utter falsification. What is my real (not the OKUN FAKE SHAM Harden) position? Once more I quote from the Minority document:

"In view of all the above circumstances, a necessary prerequisite to the transformation of the present Stalinist bureaucratic fight against the military forces of imperialism is the overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy. This does not mean that we fall into the trap of the so-called 'revolutionary defeatism' of Mr. Shachtman. We must be for the transformation of the present war into a real extension of October, by the overthrow of the bureaucracy, the revivification of the Soviets,

a return to the 1918 policies of Lenin. We are not for surrendering positions to Nazi or any other imperialism." (IB 97 p. 5, Section 10)

"The defense of the October property relationships depends upon the rapid development of the world, and particularly, the European revolution, to which both capitalism and the Stalinist bureaucracy are enemies." (Ibid. p 5. Thesis 5)

"'March separately and strike together' with the Stalinist army is an impossibility. Historically there has never been a practical instance of this. Defense of the Soviet Union calls for striking at all times against both capitalism and Stalinism. The prerequisite to transformation of the present war into a real defense of the Soviet Union and a progressive war is the overthrow of the bureaucracy, by the proletariat led by a Marxist party." (Ibid. p 6. Thesis 6)

Comrades of the PC majority either you have not even read my position, or you have deliberately falsified, for the above theses leave no room for misunderstanding. It is not even necessary to refer to your criteria. I just simply do not have the position ascribed to me, and you know, or should know it.

If the above are the views for which I was "suspended," then the Plenum was guilty of an utter mistrial and convicted the absent defendant of crimes he never committed.

But there is one very important omission in all this. How does it happen that the PC in Okun's letter of January 2 omitted my "crime" of differing with the League's position that Trotsky was a Marxist up to 1934? Since I hold that throughout the whole epoch of Stalinism, including the period up to 1934, Trotsky was a renegade, then you should have charged that, on this point alone, I was rejecting a hell of a lot of Marxism. Is it that the PC majority does not want to be forced into the position of openly defending Trotsky's counter-revolutionary, pro-Stalinist role? You say you want a free discussion and don't fear one (letter of January 31). All right! You present proof that at the XII Congress of the RCP Trotsky did fight on Lenin's line against Stalin and Company. Prove that Trotsky did not support and spread the Stalinist line on the Stalinist-Social Democratic governments in Saxony and Thuringia in 1923. Prove that Trotsky did not support the "Workers Government" fakery at the Fourth Congress. Prove that Trotsky did not support the Lenin Levy concoction of Stalin. Prove that Trotsky did not have the line of supporting the bourgeois Kuomintang in China from 1924 on. Prove that the main work of the initiation of this line was not carried out by the Trotskyist, Joffe. Prove that Trotsky did not issue Stalinist fakery at the time of and immediately after the British General Strike concerning the Stalinist-concocted Anglo-Russian Committee. Prove that Trotsky did not repudiate the theory of the permanent Revolution during the bloc with Zinoviev and Kamenev, and in practice in Germany and China. Prove that Trotsky did not have a pro-Stalinist line up to 1933 of supporting the Comintern. In a word, just try to prove that Trotsky did not have a pro-Stalinist line up to 1934. I WILL PROVE THE EXACT OPPOSITE.

With regard to my so-called "capitulation to Marlenism." First, I have never hidden the fact that I have discussed poli-

tical matters with members of the Leninist League. Second, I have never hidden the fact that I have developed many points of similarity to the political line of the Leninist League. I had not thought that we would come to the point in the RWL that we could not gain objectively correct points from any worker. Such a view strikes at the very roots of scientific investigation, and is wholly unbecoming to a Marxist organization.

In this connection, in its anxiety about "Marlenism" and its excessive anxiety to prove that there has been a full discussion the PC tripped up a bit in its arithmetic. In Okun's letter on Harden (January 2 -- IB 97) the PC declares that the views which Harden is now defending were fought out and rejected by the RWL eight years ago in the fight against Marlen. By simple arithmetic this is an absolute impossibility. The position on the sham war did not and could not have existed eight years ago because the sham war only came into existence in September 1939, a matter of a little over five years. The position on Trotsky, which Harden defends today could not have been rejected in the fight against Marlen eight years ago because Marlen himself has publicly declared in writing (e.g. note to "Stalin, Lenin, or Trotsky" pasted in as a frontispiece, the book even having been written after Marlen had been expelled from the RWL) that at that time he did not know the real story of the role of Trotskyism in the rise of Stalinism and that at that time he was a left-Trotskyite. Now here are two of the fundamental positions which I defend today, indeed the two most fundamental, represented as having been fought out and rejected eight years ago, when they were not and could not have been discussed at that time in any form whatsoever. The PC does not show itself in a sincere light when it invents mythical discussions, or else you comrades are mighty, mighty, slipshod.

I sum up.

A. If I was suspended for "acts of organizational disloyalty and breaches of discipline" as you have charged in the motion at the 17th Plenum quoted above, then clearly I am entitled to a trial on these issues of fact, and the action of the 17th plenum was clearly unconstitutional, void, and a fundamental revision of the elementary Bolshevik principles of democratic centralism.

B. If, as the letter of January 31 (the afterthought) claims, I was suspended on political grounds, then the plenum decision was certainly illegal, for the written charges in the Okun letter of January 2, summarizing the basis of the plenum decisions, are utterly false and a misrepresentation of my views, as I have conclusively demonstrated from the record.

There is something involved in this whole thing that far transcends the question of any individual. There are two methods of trying to arrive at a line. The first is the Marxist method, seeking out the facts, discussing them in a comradely and democratic fashion. The second is the Stalinist; the bureaucratic method, too well known to need description. Let us apply this to the present.

The statement in the FW, under the infamous caption,

"Capitulation to Safety" (for which no one admits responsibility) says Harden developed his differences "only five or six weeks ago." This itself is a wholly inadequate time for a thorough discussion. On top of this you say that I did not avail myself of the opportunity for discussion. How then could there have been a full discussion? Obviously there was not. If you are sincere in your claim that a member has the right to advocate his views in a free discussion, then make your actions conform to your words and start a real discussion. You have charged that I am afraid to defend my views. I STATE UNEQUIVOCALLY THAT I AM WILLING TO ENTER ON THE FULLEST AND FREEST DISCUSSION. The PC refusal to open such a discussion reveals who it is that really is afraid of a free and full discussion. Certainly in light of the fact that even the PC in Okun's letter could not correctly state what my views are, it is clear that the CC and the general membership is far from having acquired an adequate knowledge of the issues at stake.

I conclude with the following motions:

1. That the PC immediately correct the misstatements contained in the letters of January 2 and 31 and print such correction in the FW and the IB.
2. That a special plenum be called to take up in a manner in accord with the constitution of the RWL the Harden matter. That this plenum also take up the question of the generally bureaucratic actions of Comrades Okun and Cowan in this and in other matters connected with the life of the League.

I make my position clear. If the PC works within the framework of the RWL constitution and the principles of democratic centralism, if it will send out not only its own material to the membership, but mine, and that of all other comrades, then I will not send any material directly to the membership. If not, then I shall certainly see that the membership is acquainted with the whole truth.

Fraternally

Thomas F. Harden

Member CC RWL

THE SELECTION
OF
TROTSKYITE LEADERS

The political line of an organization is formulated by the organization's leadership. If the leaders are opportunists, then the policies of the group will reflect their rottenness. Witness the case of Stalinism where, from its inception, the personal opportunism of the bureaucrats has caused them to lay down for the world proletariat a line of betrayal so that they might maintain their high positions.

Honest workers in the Stalinist camp do not, of course, realize the true nature of either their politics or of their leadership. They have been fooled into imagining that they are being given correct political guidance by people who pose as being utterly devoted to the cause of Socialism and completely disinterested in personal gain. In defense of their illusions, the Stalinist workers might produce ream upon ream of Stalinist resolutions which, in setting forth the pre-requisites for leadership, call for honest, devoted leaders and condemn bureaucracy in the harshest terms. The millions of misled Stalinist workers actually believe that these fancy-phrased patterns of leadership are followed to the letter.

A Trotskyite worker knows that the Stalinist resolutions on leadership and an organizational democracy are hollow mockery, that the Stalinist top leadership is composed of rotten bureaucrats, not elected democratically, despite the show put on for the Stalinist Party members, but appointed by Stalin; whose qualifications for their posts are servile loyalty to Stalin and constant treachery to the proletariat.

The Trotskyite worker will see these facts about the Stalinist party quite clearly. But if one were to inquire about the Trotsky organization, the reply would be that it is as different from the Stalinist party as day from night. In the Trotskyite organization, he would assure one, words coincide with deeds, the rank-and-file chooses the leadership purely on the basis of merit, no intellectual adventurer or factional bureaucrat can worm his way into the leading positions in the Trotskyite organization. And as proof, he could cite numerous resolutions to that effect, as for example, the one on leadership adopted by the convention of the Socialist Workers Party in April, 1940, which stated, in part, that "only a leadership selected from among those who demonstrate in the struggle the qualities of singleness of purpose, unconditional loyalty to the party and revolutionary firmness of character, can inspire the membership with a spirit of unswerving devotion and lead the party in its struggle for power."

Such is the sound basis, the Trotskyite worker honestly believes, upon which the leadership of his party has been chosen. Examination of concrete facts will also show what has actually been the practice in the Trotsky organization.

James P. Cannon's book, "The Struggle for a Proletarian Party," discusses the case of Abern, one of the leaders of the American Trotsky movement.

"Almost since the beginning of the Trotskyist movement in this country, more than eleven years ago, its normal development and

functioning has been impeded by an internal disease which poisoned the blood-stream of the party organism. The name of this disease is Abernism." (P. 35)

The infection of Abernism manifested itself in "subordination of principled questions to organizational and personal considerations; unprincipled combinationism in every faction fight and ideological treachery." (P. 35. Our emphasis) This story of Abernism is not written by some anti-Trotskyite who is attacking the Trotsky organization, but by the head of the Trotsky organization himself and is a frank admission that for some eleven years he and other eminent officers shared the leadership with an individual guilty, among other crimes, of ideological treachery. How was it that such a rotten person was allowed to remain in the organization itself and for such a long period of time? Cannon readily admits that "the Abern group is a permanent family clique whose interrupted existence and perfidious practices are known to all the older members of the party." (Ibid., p. 35) Instead of being expelled, Abern, the source of a disease poisoning the organization since its inception, Abern, guilty of ideological treachery, remained one of the leaders of the Trotsky group, a member of the Political Committee.

Cannon states that Abern has been guilty of all sorts of crimes, that Political Committee member "Abern has always been completely blind to the interests of the party, and even to the larger interest of the general movement, when the interests of his own petty and contemptible clique were involved." (Ibid., p. 47. Our emphasis) This hardly jibes with the Trotskyite convention resolutions calling for the leadership to display "unconditional loyalty to the party and revolutionary firmness of character."

The maneuvers which the Trotskyite Political Committee went through with Abern give a keen insight to the revolutionary morals of that body. Cannon states that Abern's complete untrustworthiness was well known to every member of the Political Committee, Rather than expose him to the membership, however, and have him removed, the Political Committee, headed by Cannon and Shachtman, had to resort to palace intrigues:

"When we had matters of an extremely confidential nature to consider, not once and not twice but repeatedly, we disposed of these matters informally without taking them before the official P.C. Reason? We did not rely on Abern to respect the confidences of the P.C. On more than one occasion when we slipped up on this precaution we had reason to regret our carelessness. Time and again confidential information was transmitted by Abern to members of his clique — that is one of the privileges enjoyed by these persecuted 'second class citizens' and then passed on to wider circles, sometimes into the hands of our enemies." (Ibid. P. 39)

Certainly the rank-and-file never knew that the Political Committee had to hold "informal" meetings to transact important, confidential matters because of the rottenness in the Political Committee! Cannon himself informs the reader of his book that the consideration upon which Abern was accepted into the Political Committee was not his revolutionary integrity and ability to serve the working class, but **FACTIONAL REASONS**:

"None of us who really knew Abern placed a very high estimation on his contributions to the leadership of the party. If we agreed to accept him as a member of the Political Committee, it was not for his political contributions; he never made a single

one. Assuredly it was not because there was 'no such thing' as an Abern group. On the contrary, IT WAS PRECISELY BECAUSE WE KNEW HE REPRESENTED A GROUP THAT WE ACCEPTED HIM INTO THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE AS A CONCESSION TO THIS GROUP, IN AN ATTEMPT TO SATISFY IT and at the same time to disarm it by showing that we did not discriminate against defeated opponents. We accepted him in the Political Committee for another reason, not because we trusted him but because we wanted to have him in a place where we could watch him most carefully." (Ibid., p. 38-39. Our capitals and emphasis.)

The two reasons for Abern's being on the Political Committee, therefore were 1-To satisfy a faction which was engaged in unprincipled combinations and was poisoning the party; 2-Because he was not to be trusted, he was placed in a leading position of the organization where he could be watched carefully. Here is an out-and-out, brazen admission by Cannon of unprincipled, bureaucratic maneuvers with Abern in the Political Committee.

Such were the crooked goings-on in the Trotskyite Political Committee. But how was Abern presented by the Trotsky leaders to the working class? On the occasion of the "founding" of the Trotsky Fourth International, the October 22, 1938 issue of the Socialist Appeal, then the organ of Cannon-Shachtman, was full of holiday articles and illustrations. On the first page is a picture of Abern, Cannon and Shachtman under the title, "The Pioneer Contingent." Underneath the picture is the following inscription: "Martin Abern, James P. Cannon, and Max Shachtman, pioneers in the Communist movement in the United States who were the first, ten years ago, to raise the banner of revolt against the degeneration of the Communist International and who today stand in the front ranks of the Fourth International." (Our emphasis.) After nine years of ideological treachery and unprincipled factionalism, Abern was presented by Cannon-Shachtman as one of those "who today stand in the front ranks of the Fourth International." A fitting figurehead for the Trotsky "International"!

* * *

James Burnham is another case in point. A bright light in the bourgeois intellectual sphere, Burnham was a good drawing card for Cannon and Shachtman. A big fuss was made over Burnham in the top circles of the Trotsky organization. Cannon in particular was at great pains to play up to Burnham whose outstanding quality was his reluctance to devote himself seriously to political work. Cannon himself, during the split in 1940, spilled some of the goings-on among the tops of the Trotsky organization:

"I proposed concretely that he make an end of the two-for-a-nickel business of instructing college students who have no intention of connecting themselves with the labor movement, and devote his energies and talents entirely to the party." ("The Struggle for a Proletarian Party," p. 25)

Naturally, Burnham had not the least intention of abandoning his comfortable stall in the bourgeois stables. He refused Cannon's proposal:

"The reason he gave was somewhat astounding: he said he was not fully convinced of the wisdom of devoting his life to a cause which might not be victorious in his life-time." (Ibid., p.25)

Burnham's flagrant negativism did not prevent Cannon and Shachtman from pushing him to the fore. He was a pretty impressive facade:

"He became a member of the National Committee without having served any apprenticeship in the class struggle. He was appointed one of the editors of our theoretical journal. All the recognition and the 'honors' of a prominent leader of the party were freely accorded to him." (Ibid., p. 20. Our emphasis).

Burnham was a rather temperamental bit of decoration and had to be considerably pampered by Cannon and Shachtman: "...as the record amply demonstrates, he has always been handled with silk gloves and given all kinds of liberties that were denied to others." (Ibid., p. 22)

The incident of Burnham's refusal to devote his life to a cause which might not be victorious within his lifetime was merely one rotten display which Cannon at the time and for a long time afterward concealed from the membership. It was only one aspect of Burnham's entire putrid activity as a high leader in the Trotskyite movement — activity of which Cannon was aware and about which he had kept quiet:

"His scandalous attitude toward the responsibilities of leadership; his consistent refusal to devote himself to party work as a profession, not as an avocation; his haughty and contemptuous attitude toward his party co-workers; his disrespect for our tradition, and even more for our international organization and its leadership — all this and more was passed over in silence by the worker elements in the party, if by no means with approval." (Ibid., pp.20-21. Our emphasis)

The so-called "worker elements in the party" which passed over Burnham's actions in silence were Cannon and his fellow leaders who knew full well just what sort of an opportunist Burnham was. The rank-and-file had never made any noise about Burnham simply because the Cannon leadership had not revealed the information.

Despite the description Cannon gives of Burnham's "scandalous attitude toward the responsibilities of leadership," Burnham was appointed to the editorial board of the Trotskyites' theoretical organ, The New International, and Cannon himself suggested to Burnham that he take the post of National Secretary of the Party. Such actions by Cannon toward Burnham, and also towards Abern, as has been previously shown, make him part and parcel of their corruption since he himself stated he had been fully aware of their true characteristics.

While behind the scenes rotten machinations were going on with such people as Abern and Burnham, out in the open, Cannon and Shachtman were spinning the most beautiful theses about how a leadership is to be chosen. At the 1937 convention of the Trotskyites, a resolution, drafted by Cannon and Shachtman, was adopted. It was titled "The Organization Principles Upon Which the Party Was Founded." The section "The Responsibilities of Leadership" reads in part as follows:

"The selection of comrades to the positions of leadership means the conferring of an extraordinary responsibility. The warrant for this position must be proved, not once, but continuously by the leadership itself. It is under obligation to set the highest example of responsibility, devotion, sacrifice and complete identification with the party itself and its daily life and action."

On paper, this resolution looks very good, but Cannon and Shachtman's actions were something different; their actions prove them demagogues and

their resolution was merely a cover-up for bureaucratic maneuvers within the leadership.

By 1940, Burnham, Shachtman and Abern, the minority clique in the Socialist Workers Party, were getting ready to move out and open shop for themselves. Despite this, the Cannon majority clique passed a resolution that this minority leadership, which they characterized with such terms as "petty-bourgeois hypocrites," "stinking office holders," "anti-Marxists" and even "traitors," be allowed to retain their leading posts in the Trotsky organization!

"The minority is to be given representation in the leading party committees and assured full opportunity to participate in all phases of party work." (Ibid., p. 240)

This is a clear indication that Cannon was not guided by Marxist principle in forming the leadership of his allegedly revolutionary organization. It explains also why for many years he covered up political crocks in his outfit. Cannon and Shachtman were schooled in the factional cesspool of the Stalinist Party, which training they amply illustrate in the Trotskyite movement, the incidents herein related being but small parts of the whole picture. Cannon and Shachtman still carry on the bureaucratic machinations they were part of in the Stalinist Party.

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