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REPORT
and
DISCUSSION

on *BREAK* with S.W.P.

1961

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OUR TEN YEARS

ROBERTS:

We represent Marxism. We are Marxists.

There are many today who claim the title of Marxism. The Stalinists, the greatest perverters of Marxism, are the loudest contenders for the title.

Trotsky broke with the Stalinists in 1928 and the American party was formed. There could be no question that he represented the revolutionary opposition to the Stalinist bureaucracy.

In 1940 came the split in the American Trotskyist movement. We were in that split. The Workers Party was formed. But at the 1941 convention we found ourselves in opposition to the majority of the Workers Party.

We said that Russia is state capitalist. This analysis was the basis for a new Russian Revolution. We said that the revolt of the workers would be on a total scale, in strict relation to the totality of their administration by state capital.

We had only one and a half votes at that convention. We were only a handful.

Being intellectuals we set ourselves to study the Russian economy and Marx's Capital. Forest wrote an analysis of the Russian economy based on primary sources. It was the first comprehensive study anywhere in the world which established the revolt of the Russian workers in the factory as the key to the need for the Stalinist police state.

Our studies of Capital were placing Capital in the center of the class struggle against the bureaucracy. These led later to our taking the initiative in the fight against the Stalinist revisions of Capital. For the first time since the death of Trotsky the revolutionary opposition to Stalinism compelled recognition from the bourgeois academic world. The debate lasted a year and everyone who was interested in the analysis of the Russian Question knew about it.

In 1943 came the resistance movements in Europe. The Workers Party said that the masses in Europe were fighting for national independence and a restoration of democracy. We said that the resistance movements were national only in appearance. In reality this mass

movement was socialism trying to establish itself on a continental scale. Socialism was nearer, not further away.

The dispute was over the alleged backwardness of the masses. We saw the monstrous barbarism everywhere as an attempt to crush the invading socialist society. The Workers Party, on the other hand, saw the barbarism as a sign of the incapacity of the masses to make the revolution without their leadership.

The conflict spread to the Negro Question. The Workers Party said that the Negro struggle had to go through the stage of unity with the labor movement before it could be revolutionary. We said that the eruptions of the Negro masses over the question of democracy were part of the American Revolution and an anticipation of it.

We were now entering the American arena. At the 1944 Convention we warned the W.P. that unless it saw the developing American revolution, we would have to fight them on this issue too, the decisive question of the life of the American party.

At that time our organization comprised only 15 or 20. But we were beginning to find our roots in the United States. We wrote Education, Propaganda and Agitation. We outlined a program for the Americanization of Bolshevism. We said:

"Every principle and practice of Bolshevism has to be translated into American terms. Historical materialism, the Marxian economic analysis, the role of the party, the relation between democracy and socialism, the relation between the trade union and the party, reformism and revolution, the role of Social-Democracy, the theory of the state, the inevitability of socialism, every single one of these can be taught, developed, demonstrated from the American economic, social, and political development. The American Revolution, the Civil War, the Knights of Labor, the Populist Movement, the Southern economy, the tremendous history of the C.I.O.; the development of the two major parties, the political and social contributions of Paine, Jefferson, the Wilson administration, the New Deal, the N.R.A., the American dollar civilization, the decline of the American Socialist Party, Eugene Debs, John L. Lewis, the Marxist analysis of all this is the material of our education, of our propaganda, of the creation of a Bolshevism which will break a path for us to the American masses. The ideas and principles of Marxism must be boldly and uncompromisingly presented to the American workers." That was 1944, seven years ago.

The Workers Party could see the American workers only as people to be agitated and led in struggles for higher wages and plenty for all. In 1945 the G.M. strike broke out. The Workers Party said that Reuther's program expressed the limit of what the workers were ready to do. We said that if Reuther called for the opening of the books, the workers were ready to take over control of production, and should establish their own rank and file factory committees to do so. Against the bureaucratic schemes of Reuther, we posed the self-organized activities of the rank and file workers.

By the 1946 Convention we had completed our opposition to the Workers Party on all questions--international, American, the Negro question, the question of Building the Bolshevik Party.

They always thought that we were going to split. Despite the difficulties we did not want to do so. They tried to drive us out of the party. We tried to stay in.

We were fighting for the unity of the two sections of the Trotskyist movement in the U. S. When the opportunity for unity came in 1947, the Workers Party refused to unify, and we split from them.

Before we entered the Socialist Workers Party we had an interim period of three months. This in itself was unprecedented. The work we accomplished set a new landmark in revolutionary mobilization of any vanguard grouping. In the few short months of our independent existence, we published:

- 1) The Balance Sheet of Trotskyism in the United States, 1940 to 1947.
- 2) The Invading Socialist Society, a statement of our opposition to orthodox Trotskyism on the Russian Question and the European revolution.
- 3) Marx's Economic-Philosophic Essays on Alienated Labor, Private Property and Communism, and Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic.
- 4) Dialectical Materialism and the Fate of Humanity. This established the mass revolt as the key to human history. It was the first time in the Marxist movement, since Lenin in 1915, that dialectical theory and the dynamics of the revolution were joined together.
- 5) The American Worker, a description by a machine production worker of life in the factory,

together with a philosophic analysis of the new social individual arising in the factory in opposition to the trade union bureaucracy. This unprecedented combination of the concrete life and philosophic theory of the American worker was subsequently independently translated into French and published in Paris.

36) Finally, we published a weekly journal. It was written primarily by our comrades and their friends in the factories and in the mines, wherever they were, on the assembly line, on the night shift, in radio or in auto. Nothing of the kind had ever before seen the light in the United States.

We went into the Socialist Workers Party to make our experiences with the workers in its ranks. We did not fight with them on the Russian Question. We did what we could to advance the ideas of the American revolution. At the 1948 Convention we came forward with a report on the Negro Question. Trotsky, from the start of the movement in the U. S., had told the American party that it did not deserve the name of revolutionary Marxist unless it could find its way to the Negro masses. The Socialist Workers Party had been able to do nothing on this question until we returned in 1948. And even after we showed them the way, they could do nothing because a revolutionary position on the Negro question requires a revolutionary position on the American Question.

We were not intellectuals. We refused to be pushed into any collegium to do academic research. We participated in the life and organization of the party. We acted as responsible members of local and national committees. We participated in mobilizations out of all proportion to our numbers.

Our fundamental political position by this time was very clear. We stated it fully in 1950 in State-Capitalism and World Revolution. This document for the first time developed the concept of the inseparability of politics, economics and philosophy. We placed at the center of all social existence the struggle of the rank and file workers against the trade union bureaucracy and the whole bureaucratic administration of capital.

Trotsky had had a class opposition to Stalinism. His basis was wrong. He thought the class lines were drawn on property lines. But for him the bureaucracy was on one side of the class lines -- the revolutionary workers and the Fourth International, on the other side.

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The Socialist Workers Party and the Fourth International refused to take class position against the trade union bureaucracy. As a result, finally in 1950, it capitulated completely to the totalitarian counter-revolutionary bureaucracy of Tito.

After that its degeneration was rapid. The Fourth International no longer had any historic reason for existence independent of the Stalinists. The Socialist Workers Party became increasingly isolated from the working class. It became a clique. Its members were preoccupied with the winning of union posts. When they were pushed out from these posts, they occupied themselves with nostalgic reminiscences of their self-sacrifice throughout the years and with their bitterness against the working class who had not recognized them as its leaders.

Everywhere that we were, few though we were in numbers, and for the last ten years functioning in the straightjacket of the politics, first of the Workers Party and then of the Socialist Workers Party, our members always found themselves closest in theory and practice to the rank and file workers. Our comrades had led strikes of sharecroppers in Missouri. In the mine areas, they were in the forefront of a rank and file struggle against John L. Lewis. In the U.A.W. one of our workers symbolized the revolutionary opposition to Reutherism. In Oakland, our comrades and not the Socialist Workers Party, were given the voluntary support of rank and file workers in the election. In the factories our comrades were finding close social ties which extended outside the factory into the whole social milieu of the workers.

In theory our comrades and our organization had rid itself completely of scepticism in regard to the proletariat and of all reliance upon the bureaucracy. They gravitated automatically therefore to the most revolutionary strata of the workers. This was true in every sphere--in the factory, among the women, among the Negroes, and among the youth.

This is the direction toward which our ten years has prepared us. Our break with the S.W.P. now frees us to make this social milieu the basis of our whole existence. This is the revolutionary politics of Marx and Lenin. More than ever it is today the only revolutionary politics.

1966

THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF OUR
BREAK FROM AMERICAN TROTSKYISM

DOUGLASS:

I. The Beginning

We are now leaving the American Trotskyist movement. Let me begin by briefly reviewing the parties of American Trotskyism.

After twelve years of existence a substantial Minority, that later assumed the name of the Workers Party, split from the parent body, the Socialist Workers Party. That was in 1940. By the time the very first convention of this newly-formed Workers Party rolled around, Johnsonism arose as a distinct tendency. Comrade Roberts has dealt with this in part. I wish to deal with the historic past from two different vantage points: (1) what is past, what is being left behind, and (2) what is new.

From our very start in 1941 there were basic features which distinguished us from the splitters of 1940:

One. In contrast to the group led by Shachtman who had split without having worked out a principled political position in opposition to Trotsky's, we had worked out a clear political line. (I shall deal with this a little later, under the Russian Question.)

Two. Despite that fact, we did not split from the Workers Party. No serious revolutionist lightmindedly breaks from what purports to be a revolutionary party.

Three. The crucial point, the new phenomenon was that both wings of Trotskyism had subordinated the question of the role of labor to the question of the form of property. We, on the other hand, had placed the working class in the center of all our thinking and all our being.

It was the workers' role in production--in the factories, in the mines, in the mills and in the fields--that defined the class character of society and thence the class nature of the state or national government.

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There can be no serious Marxism outside of this overwhelming consideration of the role of labor at the point of production.

We have never moved one inch from this concept of labor.

It is this which distinguishes us from Trotskyism and from the tendencies breaking from Trotskyism on other than basic Marxist grounds. It is this which has re-established the continuity in the Marxist movement from Marx to Lenin to present-day Marxism-Leninism.

Theoretically, this point of view is expressed in our analysis of Marx's Capital. We say that today, 1951, it becomes perfectly clear that the axis of Capital is the plan inherent in cooperative labor, on the one hand, and the despotic plan of the capitalist, on the other hand. Those are merely different terms for the creative force of socialist labor, on the one hand, and the labor bureaucracy, on the other hand.

We could not, however, have discovered this axis of Capital without the concrete struggles with orthodox Trotskyism, and its fetishism of plan as if in and by itself it meant socialism. In truth, in Stalinist Russia, where the planned economy has reached its highest point, plan is not socialism. Quite the contrary. It is the function of the totalitarian bureaucracy.

Plan today on a world scale is represented by a ubiquitous labor and administrative bureaucracy. It is precisely this bureaucracy which must be destroyed to release the creative plan inherent in the cooperative form of labor.

It became necessary to move away from these intellectual types, to go directly to the workers at the point of production, to learn from them what it is they are preparing in their fight against their present-day enemy. Our whole development shows that to do so we had to break with Trotskyism first.

From our very first article on the Russian Question in September 1941 we had put our finger on the spot. We divided what Trotsky had united: the property form and the production or class relationship. Our Russian Resolution established the following points:

One: moved the Russian Question away from its national boundaries by analysing the specific stage of world production, which we defined as state-capitalism.

1968

Two: established a continuity between Marx's analysis of the laws of motion of contemporary society in Capital and our analysis of state-capitalism.

Three: demonstrated that Marx had emphasized over and over again the indissoluble connection between the movement of capital and its opposite, labor, the only force capable of resolving the contradictions of capitalism.

Any analysis of the stage of production outside of its strict relationship to the specific stage of the revolutionary activities of the masses has no meaning. Or, to put it more precisely, since such an analysis is an abstraction, it inevitably leads one into the trap of the radical bourgeois solution: making the machine ever more perfect, and degrading the worker to an appendage of the machine.

Thus also we separated ourselves from the purely intellectual analysis of state-capitalism.

It was this type of theory--never separating the stage of production from the revolutionary activity of the workers--that prepared us the following years to translate our abstract theories into concrete practice. And, what is far more important, recognizing that the proletariat was already practicing it.

II--The Critical Year

The year is 1943. The immediate impulse is the great miners' strike which, in the midst of a world war, challenged not only the mine owners but the bourgeois state. A new, a higher stage of the class struggle had been achieved by the American proletariat. Yet all the Trotskyist parties could come up with was: "Nationalization of the mines."

That new stage of the class struggle was world-wide. It reached even into occupied France. Despite the Nazi occupation, despite the concentration-camp strangle-hold of labor, a general strike against further deportations of labor as slave laborers to Germany had broken out in Lyons. Yet within Trotskyism a tendency arose, later to be called the theory of historical retrogression. The authors of this theory said that the degeneration of bourgeois society meant also the degeneration of the proletariat.

Our conception was the exact opposite. We said that the degradation of bourgeois society was due to the maturity and power of the proletariat. That was true of the French workers as it was true of the American miners.

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The tremendous mass demonstrations by Negroes in Harlem and in Detroit at the end of that year brought fresh confirmation to our point of view. These were clearly marked off from the previous defensive struggles when attacked by whites; No one attacked them directly this time; they attacked.

Because Stalinist Russia was in alliance with American imperialism, Benjamin Davis, the Negro Communist Party representative in the New York City Council, appeared on the same platform with Mayor Fiorello La Guardia, and, like a good guardian of bourgeois law, asked the demonstrators to go home. You would have thought that the Shachtmanites, with their position of anti-Stalinism, would grab this chance not merely to side with the revolutionary masses "in general" but in the concrete when they continued to demonstrate both against American capital and Stalinist counter-revolution.

We thought so.

We wrote a front-page editorial in the party newspaper, Labor Action, hailing the demonstration, comparing it to the miners' strike of that year, exposing the Stalinists, pointing out the new high stage of development of the proletariat as a whole and the Negro masses in particular.

Not so the Workers Party leadership. Coolidge, the national labor organizer then in Detroit, was busy demanding that the Labor Action disassociate itself from this article and point out that no new stage had been reached. It was a recoil, said he, from a K.K.K. attack.

Such blindness to the significance of the revolutionary activity of the Negro masses could only stem from a conception that they were "backward".

We were smack up against the root of all our differences with the Workers Party.

It involved the road to the American proletarian revolution.

III--The Social Revolution and "the Cadre"

The line between us and the W.P. was now drawn. The General Motors strike of 1945 brought to a climax the struggle and revealed the true character of the W.P. as tail-endist to the Reuther bureaucracy. It was now clear that they had to have the position they had on the Negro Question because of their concept of the American proletariat as "backward".

1970

It is this which compelled us to look closer at the political cadre of a party that claimed to be revolutionary, but that had such a misconception of the revolutionary actions of the masses that it could not formulate concrete slogans to meet and develop the revolutionary aspirations of the masses.

1) The leaders and the "backward" workers in the WP

It was considered a funny joke in the W.P. to say that Johnsonism may get some raw, "backward" workers to join its caucus, but it never had and never would succeed in breaking up the precious cadres, that is, the leaders. It was surely true that the workers understood, but the cadre never did.

One occasion made us probe this matter further. I wish to relate the particular incident here because it shows:

(1) how a political leadership turns into a clique when its ideas do not stand the test of time,

(2) it demonstrates that after 23 years of development of Cannonite and Shachtmanite Trotskyism, there was not a soul in either party who could preserve the revolutionary aims of Leon Trotsky. It needed Natalia Trotsky to cry out: "I do not see his ideas in your politics... In the past we always considered Stalinism to be a counter-revolutionary force in every sense of the term. You no longer do so."

The particular episode about the cadre dates back to the Workers Party at a time when the theory of historical retrogression had appeared. The dissatisfaction of the membership was so great that it even seeped through to one leader--Paul Temple. He wrote an article entitled "What Are the Prospects for Socialism?" This closely approached our position on the revolutionary prospects for socialism, not centuries hence, but in our time. It lacked the concreteness of our position, but it was unmistakably opposed to the concept of historical retrogression.

Here, finally, we thought, there would be a break. The leadership thought us utopians to think so. In this one respect they were right. When Temple sensed that the development of his position would mean his association with us, he fully and completely retreated.

Yes, the leaders were right in this one respect. The important question is: Why? Why should Temple have thought it more correct to sacrifice his political principles than to break with the cadre that was playing around with this ruinous theory?

1971

The word for such unprincipled action in revolutionary politics is: cliquism. But that only labels the answer. It does not explain how a cadre, a political cadre can be transformed into its opposite, an organizational clique.

The answer is not simple. It did not become fully clear to us until after we broke with the W.P., and found the same phenomenon in the S.W.P.

2) The leaders and the "backward" workers in the SWP

The two incidents in the SWP which showed both the positive and the negative aspects of this phenomenon, the cadre, were: (1) on the Wallace issue, and (2) on Pablo.

When the Wallace movement first appeared as the new savior of capitalism, it bore a deceptive appearance because of its apparent mass base. It served to pull the SWP off base--Cannon pulled the leadership back. On this issue Cannon did not waver for a single instant, and drove through a straight class line, which succeeded in breaking up not only the open Chicago opposition, but also the more dangerous implicit opposition of the others. In driving through an irreconcilable class line Cannon served to consolidate the leadership into a solid political cadre.

But the absolute opposite occurred on the question of Pabloism. Cannon was impotent to meet the enemy within Trotskyism as he had met the challenge of Wallacism because of his incapacity to fight Stalinism as a class enemy. The result was that Pablo, the Secretary of the Fourth International, was entirely uninhibited in his exposition of the monstrous conception that the regimes in Eastern Europe, though "transitional", would last for centuries, and would remain one of the "roads to socialism".

Just as a clean, sharp, principled break with historical retrogressionism in the WP would have meant joining "Johnsism", so now the only struggle possible against the profounder pessimism of Pablo meant joining the only revolutionary opposition to state capitalism. That the leader (Cannon)--that embodiment of the old, outlived positions, and the new, degenerate line--could not do. The result was utter chaos, with half a dozen different positions on the nature of Stalinism running loose. What was worse, confusion on the nature of Stalinism hardened into utter genuflection before Stalinism in the garb of Marshall Tito. That poor land, Yugoslavia, held in the vice of a totalitarian bureaucracy whose hands are bloody from the revolutions it destroyed in its own country and in Spain, was now hailed as the greatest event in world history since the Russian Revolution.

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What followed was inescapable: The cadre that could no longer distinguish between revolution and counter-revolution had to, and did, decompose before our very eyes into an unprincipled clique.

The political and organizational degeneration could not be kept bottled up in a theoretical fight about far-away lands. It had to show itself on the American scene. It did. The counter-revolutionary climax to the November 1950 convention was reached in the speeches of Cannon: (1) in embracing Pabloism, and (2) in his reactionary concept of the American worker. It is the latter I wish to deal with here.

In my discussion on the recently concluded election campaign, I had pointed out that, despite government-inspired hysteria, witch-hunting and red-baiting, the masses retained their revolutionary outlook, as was shown (1) by the large vote for the Trotskyist anti-war candidates, particularly in California, and (2) even where there was a decline in the vote, as in Pennsylvania, the proletariat, in its own battles with the bourgeoisie, showed tremendous vitality and ingenuity. Moreover, it was constantly awakening ever new strata of the masses into the struggle, as was the case with the telephone operators. This type of analysis permeated the reports of even some Cannonites. At this point the big gun went into action.

In essence here is what Cannon said: The analysis of the American scene is wrong. We must not be dreamers and underestimate the truth, the truth being that the hysteria and red-baiting has overwhelmed the American proletariat. In fact, said Cannon with upraised fist, the American proletariat is backward, bourgeoisified. It was then that Cannon dared defile the name of Marx by attributing to him an analysis of the bourgeoisification of the British proletariat that had no relationship to the truth.

Not only is there no parallel between the British proletariat of Marx's day and the American proletariat of today, but--what is far more important--the whole essence of Marx's analysis amounted to the exact opposite of that which Cannon attributed to him. Marx said that since a stratum of the British proletariat had become bourgeoisified, we had to go lower and deeper into the ranks, stay with the unskilled proletariat like the revolutionary dockworkers who were building a new kind of unionism. Cannon, on the other hand, lumped the entire class as one bourgeoisified mass who had become the victims of bourgeois conceptions, and were thoroughly "backward".

1973

For us there is a fundamental division within the proletariat itself. Capitalism can only exist by virtue of the administration of the labor bureaucracy. There are certain strata of the proletariat who, by virtue of their special role in production, are the natural supporters of this labor bureaucracy.

We, on the other hand, stand with the revolutionary proletariat on the assembly line who is mobilizing against the labor bureaucracy and its supporters.

One hundred years of socialist convictions were left behind by the cadre when its leader Cannon spoke as Reuther does on the American scene. Its bowing and scraping before the Titoist bureaucracy and its assertion--just to be "fair", I suppose, to both aspects of Stalinism--that the Stalinised East European states were among the roads to socialism was correctly branded by Natalia as a view held only by "dehumanized brutes".

3) The cadre and Natalia Trotsky

With the authoritative voice of 50 years of Bolshevism Natalia Trotsky spoke up: "This view marks an irremediable break with the profoundest convictions always held by the movement and which I continue to share."

The banner of Bolshevism, left sullied by the Trotskyist cadre, was unfurled by the only living link to Bolshevism.

But to retain these revolutionary socialist convictions Natalia Trotsky had to break with the Fourth International Leon Trotsky founded. She re-affirmed once again that "the only way out of the present situation is the social revolution, the self-emancipation of the proletariat of the world."

"An irremediable break with the profoundest convictions always held by our movement"--that was the degeneration of the Socialist Workers Party. But the opposition to this degeneration brought about our maturity. Unanimously we decided to break with American Trotskyism.

IV--A Unanimous Decision and a New Social Milieu

How account for the unanimity of the vote--a sharp break with the traditional history of groupings that leave the parent bodies?

The answer is simple and profound.

It is that our rank and file, each in his own way, had found their best friends not among the so-called revolutionaries, but amongst their shop-mates.

The former were mouthing big phrases. But it was the latter--by their rejection of politics as they know it, by their desire for a total transformation of society, of their life in the factory and outside of it--who were the true revolutionaries.

The total transformation of society means not only the overthrow of the bourgeoisie but the construction of a new society. The proletariat is revolutionary precisely because its role in production prepares it for revolt against the conditions of labor. It does more. In the cooperative form of labor under capitalism are the elements of the creative plan which will construct and develop the new social order. This revolutionary social milieu neither the Workers Party nor the Socialist Workers Party could find.

These intellectuals go to the proletariat, but they carry with them all their prejudices. The last theoretical article addressed to the W.P. analysed the General Strike. (It was addressed as well to the S.W.P., although for the sake of unity we asked that a blank page stand where we had tied the W.P. and the S.W.P. as one.) It was once again inspired by the magnificent miners' struggle in 1946 for it was that great event that served to make our differences so concrete as to bring us to the road away from these intellectuals.

In essence this article said to the parties of American Trotskyism: "Your proletarianisation has brought you nothing because you went to the workers as you go to the factory: the minute the clock strikes to go home, you rush out not only from the plant, but away from your shop-mates. The pages of the press reflect this. Not only that: the milieu you do attract reflects this. You run an open forum and have James T. Farrell speak on literature. 200 people show up. You run another meeting for Clement Greenberg on art, and again the hall is packed. But Coolidge, after being advertised as having visited the mine area, is scheduled to speak on the mine strike, and less than 50 come to hear him. In a truly revolutionary organization with a truly proletarian milieu, such a thing could never happen."

The S.W.P. was as hostile to us as the W.P. when we tried to go toward this proletarian milieu. For four years they fought us, and finally, in order to go to the masses, we had to break with this so-called proletarian party.

We could see the work that had to be done. It wasn't only the theories with which to fight Stalinism. It was the concrete road to the rank and file proletariat. To them we will go now. We will learn more from them than they from us. It has always been so with serious Marxists. That is how Marx's greatest theories were developed.

V--Marx's Capital and the Creative Activity of the Workers

Let me give you, concretely but briefly, a resume of how Capital was written. I do this not from a pedantic point of view, but because these truths we found as a result of our concrete struggles with the S. W. P. in trying to find a road to the masses. In breaking with the party to find that road, we also found the axis of Capital.

The minute Marx, as a young man, broke with bourgeois society, he turned to the study of economics, for it is the way we work, the relations we enter into when we work, both to the means of labor and to our fellow workers, which decides everything else: the type of society, the class character of the state, the method of thinking.

Marx's great work, The Communist Manifesto, unfurled the banner of the working class and its challenge to bourgeois society. It anticipated the 1848 revolutions. The 1848 revolutions, in turn, deepened Marx's understanding. With the defeat of the 1848 revolutions Marx returned to his studies. He quickly learned to leave the emigre, sectarian groups who were fighting among themselves strictly alone. But Marx's work moved slowly while the workers for the time being were crushed and quiescent.

After a decade he produced the first chapters of what he thought would be Capital and which he called the Critique of Political Economy. Somehow it was more a work of a political economist than that of a proletarian revolutionist. The proletariat, not having actively demonstrated what form their creative energies would take next, Marx's work lacked something. In any case, he wasn't satisfied with the Critique, decided not to continue with this version, but to start afresh.

At this time the objective movement came to help him out. There were tremendous demonstrations of workers throughout Europe, and the Civil War had broken out in the United States. To Marx, writing the preface to the first edition of Capital in 1867, it had "sounded the tocsin for the European proletarian revolution."

A few years later the Parisian workers "stormed the heavens" and established the Paris Commune, the first workers' state in history. Marx called it "the political form at last discovered to work out the economic emancipation of the proletariat."

A new edition of Capital was written. Into this French edition of 1873-1875 changes of great historic importance were introduced. It was this edition which cleared up once and for all the form of value with its bourgeois fetishisms, on the one hand, and the form of the workers self-activity, on the other hand. Or, as I put it before, the axis of Capital became the opposition between the despotic plan of capital and the creative plan of the workers inherent in their cooperative form of labor.

Now no one can tell in what form this self-emancipating activity will appear. Marx did not and could not know what form the workers would create to destroy the bourgeois state, root and branch. It was not Marx, but the Parisian workers, who created the Commune. But it was Marx who incorporated it into his most abstract theories and in his Address on the Civil War in France, where he warned that even the cooperative form of production can become a "snare and a delusion" unless the workers took it "under their own control."

Lenin did not and could not know what form the workers would create to overthrow the Tsarist regime. It was not Lenin but the Russian masses who created the Soviet. But it was Lenin who incorporated it into his theory of State and Revolution, that is to say, the new type of state where the masses "to a man" would run the economy and run the state.

Now we do not know and cannot know what precise form the creative activity of the workers will now develop to destroy the present stage of state-capitalism and its indivisible labor bureaucracy. But while we do not know the precise form, we do know that the creative force of socialist labor is there where there is the revolutionary proletariat (the Negroes, the youth and the women) and, on the opposite side, is the administrative and labor bureaucracy.

We leave the S.W.P. to turn to those masses and to learn from them what it is they are preparing to destroy their present enemy, the world labor bureaucracy.

We can put it this way. If the leap from Marxism to Leninism has meant the greater precision with which the political form for economic emancipa-

tion was described as the masses "to a man" controlling production and running the state, then the leap from Marx and Lenin to present-day Marxism-Leninism has meant the discovery that within the cooperative form of the labor process under capitalism are the elements of socialist planning inherent in the workers themselves. I said that we had discovered this axis of Capital as a result of our concrete struggles with the S.W.P. But what is of far greater importance is that this discovery was made possible only because of the maturity of the American proletariat and the objective world revolutionary situation.

In conclusion. I have shown what distinguished our tendency theoretically, what distinguished it politically, and now I wish to take up some of the things which distinguish us organizationally. I do not mean in the concrete terms in which our Balance Sheet Completed dealt with the Rank and File Worker, the Negro, Youth, Women. Nor do I mean it in the sense in which it will be considered in the sessions on Program and Perspectives. Here I wish to limit myself only to the question of organization in the historic sense, in the sense in which it was originally used in Marx's day as a revolutionary body of ideas.

The young Marx, when he broke with bourgeois society, joined one of many workers democratic tendencies. But the struggle against Prussian absolutism required more than a democratic opposition and a workers educational society, and Marxism was more than just one of many workers educational societies. In the development of the class struggle and of Marx's theories rooted in this struggle there was born that body of ideas and that organizational form which identified Marxism as something entirely new in the world--a challenge to the contemporary bourgeois world and a harbinger of the future communist society.

In this original sense of the word, party, the S.W.P. cannot be called a party at all. It is in truth only a clique. We leave behind us a cliquist jungle, isolated from the proletariat and infested with bureaucratic, bourgeois conceptions.

We, on the other hand, though small, represent the Marxism of our day, distinguished from Trotskyism and from other state-capitalist tendencies. We are no more one of many state capitalist tendencies than Marx was no more than one of many democratic tendencies. We are distinguished from all others by the indissoluble way in which we connect the specific stage of production with the specific stage of the revolutionary activity of the masses.

We have made the proletariat the center of all our thinking and all our being. It is our social milieu. It is where we live, work, examine our theories and make new ones.

In that original historic sense of revolutionary party, we are the true revolutionary party.

By that I do not mean the mass revolutionary party: That the workers will build when they are ready. Nobody can build it "for" them. But we will be with them when they build it. As we put it in Education, Propaganda and Agitation, here is how we see our role:

"The American mass party will not be built by us or by the Cannonites. Groups of Virginia miners, West Coast sailors, Southern sharecroppers, Pittsburgh steelworkers, all sorts of 'left' formations will coalesce in time and hammer out a unified organization. They will bring their qualities.

"Our task is to form such a strong nucleus that the coalescence will take place around us, or even if that does not take place, our special contribution will be Marxism and the theory and practice of Bolshevism. But to do this we have to gather a nucleus of a few thousand, of whom 75% will be American workers, men and women, instinctively hostile to bourgeois society, who are workers, have been workers, and who have no other prospect in life except to be workers. They and only they can build a mass party.

"They are the only real mass propagandists and agitators day after day. They exist in tens of thousands already and capitalism will create more and more thousands. But they need to be given not prospects of a happy life and higher wages, but a method of thought, a conception of social development that makes their own lives and efforts intelligible to them in national and international terms. They need to know that in Marxism and the revolutionary party they have something, which, even if far from being completely understood, yet is theirs.

"Proletarian thought, proletarian method must be for them a challenge to the bourgeoisie at all points, defeating it in theory as the workers will one day defeat it in practice. For them it must be a theory which marks off those who adhere to it from all others, giving them pride and confidence and consciousness of great superiority to all, however influential or famous, who do not accept Marxism. That is Bolshevism. That is what Lenin in his day and with his problems from the start strove to create."

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This is what we are striving to do. But we cannot do it from outside. We must be part of the proletariat. We go to the revolutionary proletariat. With it we will stay. And to the intellectuals too we say: If you wish to find the revolutionary proletariat, join us.

DISCUSSION

JONES: I would like to say a few words about the period between the 1940 split and the entrance of the tendency into the S.W.P. in 1947. We have characterized the S.W.P. in our document as a group who saw themselves literally as the leaders of the proletariat and whose every activity is aimed in that direction. Now that was not always so, and we have to see where that stems from in order to avoid that in the future. Immediately after the split in 1940 there was a serious orientation toward proletarianization. They were through with interminable discussions. They were through with what they termed corridor gossip, and that, especially in New York, was a real plague. The corridors of the headquarters were filled with people talking, discussing day in and day out, to the extent that no work was done whatsoever. That period was over with and there was a serious orientation on the part of everybody to get down to work, to go into the proletariat, to get jobs in the factories and to orient the work of the party from that point on in that direction.

This went on for a short period--a year or so, when the leadership of the S.W.P. was arrested and the famous case of Minneapolis, Local 544, and the events that stemmed from it took place. Prior to that there was a real feeling for ending discussion--we were through discussing, now down to work. The events of the trials around Minneapolis, the sending of the leadership to jail brought up a new layer, a secondary leadership, to take over. That leadership continued the same course until the leadership was released from jail. During the period the leadership was in jail, we had the root of what turned out to be later the Goldman-Morrow split. The seeds of that were laid in discussions they had in prison and the events that flowed from it are fairly well known throughout the movement.

In looking back through the Bulletins of that period the other night we could find absolutely nothing in them of great political importance. There

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was no discussion of the proletariat, what it was doing, where it was going, merely the interminable minor points raised by Goldman and Morrow which later culminated in their split, and, as we examine their documents today, we can see they had not worked out any serious political positions.

Now at the 1940 period there were a great many good intentions expressed by the leadership of the S.W.F. There were occasions when Wright put forward in a document that he was preparing a history of Bolshevism. But not accidentally it was impossible for him to proceed beyond the 1890's and the task had to be given up. Nothing ever came of it. They produced one single book, The First Five Years of the Communist International by Trotsky. It was supposed to be followed by a companion or second volume. That never appeared. When we look back, we find they produced about five books in the past ten years. There was much talk, for example, on philosophy. We recall that one of the great struggles before the split was on the question of philosophy, Dialectical Materialism. But once that split was completed, the question was forgotten. There was no further discussion along these lines in the SWP because they had no ideas whatsoever to contribute. All they had to say had been expressed prior to 1940.

They had only one real aim, and that was to control unions, to become part and parcel of the labor bureaucracy, the left wing of it. Toward that end they exerted every effort. They had their work in Local 544. They tried, as you know only too well, in the U.A.W. to build a left-wing, to crystallize a left-wing. In maritime they exerted every effort there to seize the leadership of the union. The same way with the painters union in New York, in steel and in rubber. We find them today wiped out in every one of these efforts to which they had devoted the past 10 to 15 years. They wind up today, after 15, 20 years of Trotskyism as complete and utter failures in every field of their endeavor.

Now we have to understand the why of their failures. We understand why in the sense that they were trying to substitute themselves for the leadership of the proletariat. In that they failed. They were costly failures, publishing their papers, their magazines, their articles, all based on "We will tell you the workers what to do." The working class in the long run rejected that completely. They tried planning for the proletariat, and that was a futile effort. The discussions among the leaders were also on the same plane, utterly sterile. Any one of their local leaders from any section of the country who had to depend on that sort of information as a basis would find it utterly

useless.

As far back as 1943 Cannon himself was disturbed at the lack of any real discussion in the organization. He went around to the secondary leaders and asked them to try to stimulate discussion to some extent, to grant more freedom in discussion. But that too was a failure because of the attitude that had been instilled in the first three or four years after the split, that anybody who wanted to discuss and raise theoretical questions was only a hang-over from the petty-bourgeois opposition that had left.

They sought out Negroes. They did a great deal of work in Harlem and in Detroit. But they did it on the basis that Negroes were supposed to be pretty easy to get. They never understood why, they never understood the revolutionary feelings of the Negro people, and hence were never able to express them in a revolutionary way. And the hundreds, literally hundreds of Negroes who came into the organization left it.

I remember one Detroit comrade here that I came to talk to. He said: I have brought into the Detroit organization 125 Negroes in the last year, and a 125 have left. I talked to the Detroit organizer, Si Lerner whom you all probably know very well. He told me that the Negroes only come down there because they like to dance and have a drink on Saturday nights. Now when you have an attitude like that it's no wonder that they were never able to hold anybody, or to build anything.

Their highest point politically was their document on the Coming American Revolution. Yet the very convention which adopted the Resolution was held at a hall that barred Negroes. They held a convention at this hotel and the Negro comrades were forced to go elsewhere!

In the organization today, the top leadership is completely disoriented. Pablo has captured Cannon politically. They have become dishonest from top to bottom, failing completely to understand the situation or to make their membership understand it. Their top leadership is in the process of disintegration. National Committee members like Curtis, Terbovitch, El, Carsten have all dropped out of the organization within the last year. The secondary leaders are dropping off by ones, twos, and threes, just disappearing and no notice of them is made of these events. Take our own split. Everybody knows it took place four or five weeks ago. Nothing is said about it in the press and last week's paper announced that they're going to hold meetings and so forth in Pittsburgh, thus trying to create the impression that they still had a branch in Pittsburgh when everybody knows that they have absolutely nobody there.

Complete dishonesty from top to bottom. The organization today is characterized by nothing but cliquism. That and a mutual hopelessness and helplessness is what holds them together. As we have said, their women cry at night and wonder where they are going. Their men fear a tendency represented by ourselves as their main danger. They were united against us at the last convention where they began the process of embracing Stalinism. They were no longer afraid of that. But they were afraid of the Coming American Revolution.

We have mentioned them here today for only one purpose. And that is to end once and for all the concept that it is the small leading cadre that will organize and plan "for" the workers. Such a group is bound in advance to be a failure. The S.W.P. as such has no historic future whatsoever. The proletariat, the American worker knows what he wants. In time he will develop these demands and develop the ways and means of obtaining them. Our task is to learn from him, to concretise what up to now has been abstract. Only then can we help in the shaping of the American revolution and the fate of humanity.

DRESSER: I have been in a number of starting-out-
anew-groups since I joined the movement. Perhaps a few too many. I've been there and started anew and I've gone along. I've split from the Trotskyist movement and I've come back and am now splitting again--that is my little history. There is always a good spirit at the start, we have to get out, get started and get going. What is wrong is that it has always been on the basis of let's go out and show the worker. Let's go out and organize the worker. Let's go out and tell the worker our program.

Was there nothing there of "Let us learn from the worker"? I don't think so. I think there was some of it there. I know there was. But the program was always on the basis of: we will go and we will organize the worker, we will show the worker, we, we, we, WE. We, the small little group. We are going to do all this. It took a long, long time (it's been around a little while) to be in a new starting group, however, like our present one.

This is the first time since I've been in the movement that I've heard a speech such as Douglass's. The first time. For me a terrific speech. It took all this time before I could hear a speech like that. The new ideas. We are not going to show the workers.

anything. We are going to the worker and say, "Please teach us. Show us. You have to do it. Show us. We are part of you. We will try to become part of you." We have to learn. Now there are some of us who know more than others. Some of us who are more deep-rooted in the working class than others. But even those who are deep-rooted, the mere fact that we come here, those among us must go to the workers. Or where are we? And it is not saying the thing as it has been said in the past.

I merely wish to make this statement before the chairman closes the discussion. I merely wish to say that the fact that for the first time we can have a speaker and a speech like Douglass, both speaker and speech, is a great contribution to the movement. Now we must go to the workers and learn from the workers. We are not going to shove them a program. I'm happy. I'm for it.

BREMAN: Every place that people get together, whether it's in these informal social groups or on more formal occasions, they sort of get a history; isn't that right? But the history we have heard today has a program incorporated right in it. When we say, let us go and listen and learn, then we will write a program--well, that is actually how we did it. We saw the C.I.O. and there was the 1948 Resolution on State-Capitalism. Not only that, it was connected historically. Marx saw 1848 but after the defects he did some writing that afterwards he didn't think was so good. Then he saw the American Civil War, what did he see? He saw what the American, what the proletariat did everywhere, and then he was ready for Capital. In other words, when we give the history of our tendency, we give the program that flows from it, that comes naturally. We are going to the proletariat to see what they have to say, and then we will write a program. And that's why I think that the history that I heard today of this tendency has an altogether different meaning than any history I ever heard. And, like Dresser, I heard a couple in my time.

SUMMATION: I wish to say only a few words in conclusion. In setting precedents today, we've set one also in the present discussion. Or rather the lack of discussion. The lack of discussion was due neither to bureaucratic domination nor to the fact that the workers "can't express themselves." Quite the contrary. It results from the fact that each one of us has reached a stage where we want to get down to work. What is animating us is the new conception of politics a total conception. At the time that

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I was speaking I watched the comrades. I could see that when I spoke what was pure theory or history--well, you listened, but you weren't excited. But the minute the social milieu was the topic, both in the manner in which it shaped Marx's own theories, and the manner in which it shaped ours--all of you were excited. It is clear you are thinking already of the Program and Perspectives session, how you will make your contribution concretely to go forward and develop this proletarian milieu.

Now this is absolutely phenomenal to us who have been in the movement some 25 years now. I have never seen the rank and file in a convention that, by its very response to a speech rejected the old conception of politics and was already motivated by the new, total conception of politics. You have shown thereby that history and theory is not divided from politics nor is "politics" from the life with your own shop-mates. And this in itself is history-making.

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Draft

Letter to a British Marxist

Dear Marxist:

It is a long time now that you and many of your friends in Europe have persistently written to me telling me about Marxists and Marxists-in Great Britain and Europe, and asking me about the movement in the United States. I very rarely, in fact, as far as I can remember, I never answered. At that time I and some of my friends were long finished with Stalinism but were seeking to find a road with the Trotskyists. But now, I am happy to tell you, I am finished forever and ever with them also. Stalinists, dissident Stalinists, Titoists, Trotskyites of the Cannon brand, Trotskyites of the Shachtman stripe, after half a lifetime spent among them, I am at last free of everything they stand for. Perhaps at reading this you become a little frightened; you may say to yourself: here is another of the old-timers capitulating. You would be wrong. I am not capitulating to anything. I believe more than ever that the terrible crisis of society is due to the fact that the workers do not rule. I believe that until they do, society will continue to crash from one world-wide catastrophe to another. I believe that the large masses of the workers in every country are aware of this. In all these things and in matters related to them, I have not changed. But in regard to what for years has called itself the revolutionary movement, the inheritors of Marxism, etc, about this I have changed. This is what I want to write to you about. Let us face the fact. No movement exists any longer. There is none. If I tell you how and why, after a hundred years, Marxism has reached this situation in the United States, I believe I shall answer all the questions that you and the others have asked me over the past few years.

This letter has turned out to be so much and longer than I intended. So many people are asking the same questions that I shall have it printed if I can.

Introduction

Marxism is not something that exists in books or the political resolutions of presumptuous little organizations, forever telling millions of workers what to do and angry with them because they do not do it. Marxism, first, last and always, is the struggle of the workers and the great masses of the people to free themselves from capitalist slavery and to live a fully human life. When I say there is no Marxist movement today, a whole lot of people who think they are Marxists will say that this, if true, means the

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end of everything. They are...
Karl Marx is what the workers are...
above all here in the United States...
look at them.

Part I

Millions upon millions at one time or another believed in war for democracy; war to end war; League of Nations; United Nations; peace, prosperity and progress. Today nobody does. In national politics it is the same. Fear of atomic war, the daily struggle against speed-up, the corruption of politicians, murderous taxation; the worker in the plant or the mine, the share-cropper, the back-aching typist, the student waiting to be called by his draft board, do any of them believe that anything will change if Taft or Eisenhower becomes President instead of Truman? Does any Negro believe that a new president and a new administration will do anything to alter the situation of the Negroes in the United States? The millions of Negroes in Africa; Arabs in Morocco, Tunis, and the Middle East; Spanish workers under Franco, Indian peasants, Australian workers, never in the world was there so universal a revolt among countless millions everywhere against the exploitation and the incompetence of their rulers, and the unending disasters they have imposed upon mankind for the last thirty years.

The rulers know it. The workers of the world no longer believe what they are told. The workers of Western Europe are so sick of war for democracy that they have split the American ruling class wide open. One group, led by Truman and Eisenhower, are frantically trying to whip the Europeans up for war by corruption and intimidation, using William Green, George Meany, Philip Murray, the Reuther brothers, Dubinsky, Loveston, Irving Brown, and others of that stripe, as their agents among the European labor leaders. The second group, led by MacArthur and Hoover, think that defeatism is so widespread abroad that arms and money poured into Europe will end up as gifts to the Russian army when it moves. That is the great debate. They are debating over what the European workers will do. If ~~they~~ they were sure of these workers, there would be no debate.

It is not only workers who do not believe. The great majority of the people do not believe. For observe. The government, the press, the politicians, the professors and the parsons, radio and television, scream with one voice that America must be saved from Communism. It is obvious that Russian Communism is a monstrous barbarism. It is equally obvious that its international power has steadily grown. Yet the hundreds of thousands of students in the universities are bitterly hostile to being drafted. If they believed what they were told, they would be willing to go.

That is what the rulers call the free world. How much different is it with the one-party totalitarian states? Stalin, his stooges in Eastern Europe, and his allies in China, who between them rule nearly 800 million people, have so little faith in being believed that they can rule only by the most savage police-states history has ever known. They have a bullet waiting for the neck of anyone, however highly placed, who dares to ~~express~~ express an opinion contrary to theirs. They have to keep their frontiers closed against all foreign visitors, all foreign newspapers; not even a postcard can go into these countries without being censored. They go to unlimited trouble and expense to jam out foreign wireless stations; anyone in those countries caught listening to the foreign radio faces slave labor in a concentration camp. How the so-called democrats denounce all this! They say that it is a monstrous tyranny. And it is a monstrous tyranny, the most horrible the world has ever seen. But the government of the United States has itself instituted such a system of terror against those whom it calls subversives, that today vast numbers of people would not put their names to the Declaration of Independence or the Bill of Rights because they are afraid they will be accused of disloyalty and

Communism. These rulers too know what their workers think of them.

That, I assure you, is the reality in the United States today. It is only within the American working-class movement itself that you can find men so terrified of leading the gigantic struggles which they fear, so so permeated with contempt for working people, that they deny the universal distrust, hatred and contempt of the workers for their masters.

This total disillusionment of the mass with the men of power and authority is one of the greatest advances ever made in human society. When slaves reach the stage of refusing to believe what their masters tell them, then the age of slavery is approaching its end. Yet for the time being the revolt against the rulers appears chiefly as helplessness and hopelessness. Why? The reason is glaringly obvious. The workers, turning from the ruin their rulers are leading them into, look naturally to their own workers' organizations. The workers have built up these organizations over the years as their own safeguards and defense, first against exploitation and then against a social system plunging to ruin. But when they turn to the workers' organizations, these have nothing to tell the workers except to repeat what the Trumans, the Churchills and the Stalins, the architects of disaster, have to say. That is the workers' crisis.

Take the war. It is as plain as day that the world is being torn to pieces by a struggle for world power between two great coalitions, one headed by Russia, the other by the United States. It is equally plain that the workers in all countries are being drained dry by speed-up and taxation to prepare for the war. It is plain that they and their sons will die by the millions in the war. Why? General MacArthur admitted in his speech to Congress that World War III, like World War I and World War II, will settle nothing. But the Reuthers, the Philip Murrays, and the Attlees take the lead among the workers in war-mongering and demanding that the workers sacrifice all for the victory of what they call the free world. And likewise with the followers of Russian Communism and its allies. They demand the same killing sacrifices from the workers they control, the same mass murders, only this time it is for the victory of Russia and its allies. ~~These~~ These are already at war with one another. Where the Reuthers and the Murrays can get away with it, they drive out of the labor movement the Communists, by which they mean not only followers of Stalin but all who oppose them. Similarly, the followers of Stalin, wherever they have the power, are equally merciless against all in the labor movement who oppose them.

Support us - that is the program of all these bureaucracies. They come to the rank and file workers, to all the oppressed, Negroes, youth, women, with a program of demands, 1, 2, 3. If you agree, follow us and we will lead you to victory. If you don't agree, then you are backward or too stupid to understand that the others are deceiving you. But when you look at these programs they all boil down to this: let us speed-up and die for American Imperialism and its allies. ~~Let~~ Let us speed-up and die for Russian Imperialism and its allies.

Workers Distrust the Bureaucrats.

But the workers no longer trust these bureaucrats. The American war-mongers spend millions in trying to make the world believe that the American way and the high standard of living make the American workers fanatically ready to die for democracy against Russian Communism. True, the American workers detest Russian Communism. But if you are to work out Marxist theory correctly, you must know that American workers not only hate the economic and political system under which they live but are now profoundly distrustful of the labor bureaucracy. This statement, I am sure, will startle you. Just remember that a mighty organization of propaganda is spending millions every day to prove the opposite, not only to you, but to American workers also. The American labor leaders ~~are~~ now sworn over Europe are a powerful part of this propaganda, but the voice of the millions of rank and file workers is never heard. Much of this letter will be devoted to showing you what

they think.

I shall begin with a recent article by one of the best known of American labor journalists, a man who earns his living by baiting Stalinists, and who, morning, noon and night, preaches the superiority of democracy, free world, American way, etc. over Russian Communism. His name is Victor Riesel, and his article, a syndicated column, appeared in newspapers from coast to coast on November 7. ~~It is a masterpiece of~~

"New York -- When President Truman returned to his office after entertaining the gracious English prince and princess, he faced a King-sized headache. For on his desk was a confidential report, quietly submitted by his high economic counsellors, advising him to expect runaway inflation, uncontrollable sky-rocketing prices and wages -- in the next 12 months.

"That's not all that's uncontrollable these days. CIO leaders, who will confirm the presidential report when they form their convention platform in the coming week, report a mysteriously low rash of wildest 'rank-and-file' strikes sprouting in the grass roots.

"These are flash stoppages. Many walkouts are being led by strangers. And although completely disavowed by the responsible national union leadership, these wildcats are effective. Sometimes violent, they have cooled blast furnaces, shut down auto plants and disrupted successful labor negotiations. They point grimly to a restive -- instead of festive -- Thanksgiving, as unknown leaders dash on the scene, shout about run-away prices, high rents, speed-up production and then disappear.

"Even in this pier-paralyzed city, the most startling strike news came from a visitor -- the handsomest and certainly one of the most effective of America's labor leaders -- David McDonald, second in command to Philip Murray in the CIO Steelworkers' union. Puffing away on his pipe so that it gave off smoke like an old locomotive coal burner, McDonald revealed that a considerable amount of steel production had been slashed in the past months by a series of these stoppages.

"Our people had just completed negotiating with the Tennessee Coal and Iron Co., down in Birmingham, Ala." McDonald told us. "As they walked back to the plant and union headquarters, there was a picket line at the gate. We didn't authorize it. We weren't striking. But some of our people were, and we still don't know who provoked and organized it. But they were yelling about speed-up."

"That one threw 14,000 people out for a while when the company was forced to bank six blast furnaces. That's a lot of lost steel. McDonald disclosed other such wildcats in the Chicago area, jam-packed with sprawling mills, and in Johnstown, Pa.

"First there's a wreat. Then disrupted production because of short strikes. And the leadership, such as McDonald, just finds it impossible to pinpoint responsibility for the walkouts.

"This thing is spreading. Everywhere you go you hear the mysterious words 'rank-and-file committee.' I learned, for example, a few weeks ago that a group inside the automotive division of General Motors was planning such a flash stoppage. Then that group learned that the auto union leadership itself (in Chicago) had some grievances and planned to call ~~was~~ an official strike against speeded-up production. The first group met and switched plans. Now it's working on prolonging the official walkout if it's called -- or attempting to provoke a strike if the responsible leadership makes peace with the company.

"At Ford, the 'rank-and-file' has gone wild. It's screaming for a national Ford strike unless Walter Reuther delivers to them no less than \$60 a week for unemployment insurance, most of the year round; a 30-hour week with 40 hours pay to spread jobs, and a lot of other pie in the sky demands. Watch that crowd; they'll walk.

"There are a series of flash strikes scheduled for the General Electric jet and atomic plants. The rank-and-file just doesn't return after lunch. ~~Then~~ Then they make it up by working overtime. No picket lines, just no workers in the p.m., are the plans. The rank-and-files loses no money, but the company loses production in disrupted schedules.

"Then there is the New York waterfront, on which roving rank-and-file squads are getting real tough -- gas in the belly, stuff, men beaten on day-lit streets, cars ripped and rocks heaved.

"The record's swiftly being filled with these stoppages -- some costing only \$1,000, others crippling over one billion dollars worth of merchandise. There's even a rank-and-file committee in the ladies millinery line. Everywhere a contract expires, the 'rank-and-filers' swing into action.

"It throws contract negotiations back into the jungle days. Younger ~~and~~ workers are learning that their squads can be tough and upset agreements made between their regular leaders and their companies."

That is the American working class today. From end to end of the country the rank and file masses are burning with anger against the labor bureaucracy which has seized and prostituted the great organizations of labor to the service of American capital and American Imperialism. This that Riessel describes has been a commonplace for years in cities like Detroit. A single worker will get into a dispute with a foreman about when to eat a sandwich; on account of this thousands of workers will walk off the job, and disrupt production in a dozen plants. It is the labor bureaucracy which gets them peaceably back to work. Nobody else could. The recent strike on the water-front lasted 25 days, disrupted the handling of a billion dollars worth of goods. The important thing about it is that it was directed against a settlement made by the union leadership. The Stalinists are not responsible in any way for all this. Riessel and everybody else would love to blame it on them. But this is the American working-class working out its own problems in its own way, hostile to the labor bureaucracy of Stalin and equally hostile to the labor bureaucracy of Truman.

But this recognition that the bureaucracy is the enemy, the perpetual thinking and talking about how to get rid of the bureaucratic stranglehold and yet not harm the union, the wildcat strikes against the bureaucracy that are constantly exploding, these are not merely protests against "bad working conditions", or struggles for five cents more an hour. The bourgeoisie try to pretend that this is all that is troubling the workers. The Stalinists and the Trotskyites genuinely believe that all American workers want is peace and a little more of their so-called higher standard of living. In reality these struggles represent a rejection of the economy, the politics, the standards and values of American bourgeois society, and a search for a way out.

All serious thinkers in the United States are aware of the fact that the workers no longer have any faith in capitalist society and political democracy. Here, as everywhere else, the American ruling class, like every other class which is historically doomed, is in the throes of a violent and insoluble contradiction. On the one hand it boasts the American way and calls upon the world to suffer and die for the beautiful democratic way of life, but at the same time the crisis so staves it in the face wherever it looks that it is itself compelled to shriek and shout for some way out. There is scarcely a copy of a newspaper or a speech by a politician or publicist which does not openly and without any equivocation whatever, express the fears, the despair, the terror and the hopelessness of every section of the ruling class as to the future of American society. The only serious propaganda they can make is to point to the evils of Russian Communism and warn the workers: if you want free institutions you must have free enterprise. Which is proof enough that they know the workers do not care one penny for free enterprise.

Not only do the workers not believe. They have nothing to defend. The wild-cat strikes, the rank and file explosions, are merely the uncontrollable violent expressions and trials of strength of what they are really working out against what they want to destroy. Only Philistines, like the professional Marxists can believe that these millions of workers do the things they do for five cents an hour more. The American workers are intensely, in every sphere of life, every day, hammering out and shaping by trial and error, the premises of a new social order of their own. In this colossal creative effort, comprising a whole new society working out its own historical destiny amidst and against the intolerable corruption of the old, the vanguard role is played by the proletariat of the mass production industries.

The Society of Cooperative Labor.

Capitalist production itself has drilled into these workers the great principles by which alone modern society can survive - the principle of cooperative labor. At present the American workers use it and develop it against the capitalist system in the process of production itself. Every hour of the day they combine in groups, large and small, to fight it. They are inexhaustible in devising ways and means to evade the terms of the contract fastened on them by the labor bureaucracy. They combine co-operatively to oppose any

increase in production which they know is always at their expense, either in speed-up or unemployment. They combine to circumvent the plans of the time-study men, and to make life a daily hell for any foreman who tries to do his duty, i.e., to carry out production schedules as if workers were nothing else but pieces of machinery. And in all these struggles they find themselves compelled to think about and to fight against the practices and values of American capitalist society.

They rebel continuously against being used merely as appendages to the machine. They switch jobs with one another wherever possible, to learn something new. They leave one plant to go to another for the same purpose. Left to themselves there is scarcely a worker in a plant who would not go from job to job until within a year or two, he would be completely master of every process in the plant. Left to themselves, workers have no difficulty in apportioning hard or dirty work on a truly democratic basis. Even as it is, for their own purposes, they arrange work to cover up for a new worker, to make things easier for the aged, the handicapped or the ailing. They work out new schedules and combinations to improve processes, but always for their own purposes, either to save themselves work or frequently from their insatiable desire to have the satisfaction of seeing the splendid machinery work at maximum power. But all this they do for themselves and themselves alone. Many and many a skilled machinist can tell you that after years of working on his machine, he knows exactly how the machine can be rebuilt and double production - but, he adds, he will not tell those ----- . They will only use it to get more production out of him.

The ears of the world are deafened by the propaganda about the competence and efficiency of American capitalism. Ask American workers. Every hour of the day they are swearing at the bureaucracy, the incompetence, and the extra work and confusion that the present system forces upon them. They know that even with the plants organized as they are, if left to themselves, there is scarcely a big industrial plant in which an eight-hour schedule would not be finished in four hours. While if they were free to move about, study production as a whole, and had a little leisure for technical study, in a few years they would redesign the plants completely and astonish the world by what modern machinery could do.

Similarly with the efforts of the workers to institute a fully cooperative form of labor. Workers would prefer all to share alike and could organize it if left to themselves. But capitalist supervision persecutes them and disrupts their efforts, by all sorts of tricks with seniority, by grading jobs and rates of pay, by lay-offs and threats of lay-offs, by playing old against young, men against women, white against black, department against department, factory against factory, and even industry against industry. It is not for production but against working-class cooperation and solidarity that factory supervision fights its desperate battle and thereby disrupts production. Fight it must, by every means in its power, for this working-class solidarity means and can only mean the destruction of the capitalist system.

That is the root cause of the disorder and the crisis in production. Factory supervision claims that it is necessary for production. The truth is that factory supervision is the greatest cause of disruption of production. It is and must be in constant conflict with working-class cooperation and solidarity. Factory supervision must fight this because working-class cooperation and solidarity, if developed to the fullest degree, means the end of capitalism and a new mode of labor - socialism. In every country in the world, in the United States as well as in Russia, in Eastern Europe, Western Europe, China, the cry goes up for higher productivity. I have read speeches of the labor Cabinet ministers in Britain, saying that if only Britain could increase productivity, the British crisis would be got under control. But as long as you have in a plant thousands of men and women who want production organized in one way, and placed in authority over them scores of others whose only function is to drive them another way, you have that paralysis and disorder, bitterness, anger, frustration, which ruins modern production and explodes periodically in wild-cats, slow-downs, strikes for five cents more, and a permanent crisis in the whole system.

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It is the labor bureaucracy which holds the system together. For in this struggle for the working-class cooperative form of labor, the labor bureaucrat is one with the capitalist and factory supervision. He protests against the evils of capitalism, he runs up to Washington, he will even sometimes lead a strike for ten cents more, or five cents more, or eighteen cents and a half, but on this question of working-class cooperation he is hardly an enemy of the workers as any capitalist. The labor bureaucrat understands better than most that what the men are asking for every day means only one thing, complete control of production. For him, just like any capitalist, this is anarchy, ruin, chaos, and the end of civilization, not forgetting the end of the labor bureaucracy. He will struggle for a few pennies more but this vast and universal drive of the proletariat to rebuild society from the bottom and to use machines instead of letting machines use them - this the labor bureaucrat fights to the end and as millions of workers know, will join with the company and the government to crush it wherever he sees it.

Great as are the strides the workers are making, they fall short of what they want, not because of their backwardness, but because of the forces arrayed against them. The labor bureaucrat frequently talks very radically, and he is always saying or hinting, always, that while he is ready to reorganize society, he cannot do anything because the workers are backward. That is the continual complaint of all of them, Reutherites, Stalinists, Trotskyites - the workers are backward, they are not ready. The truth of the matter is that the working-class is far and away the most advanced section of the nation, and it is these political labor leaders and their capitalist masters who are the most backward elements in the country.

Take a simple obvious question like Negro discrimination, a shame and a scandal and a disgrace to American civilization for over three hundred years. It is American bourgeois society which for all these centuries has implanted the savagery of race-hatred in the minds of workers, and to this day continues to do so. Yet the moment the American workers began to organize themselves in the C.I.O., they struck American racial prejudice the hardest blow it has received since the Civil War. Do not listen to the talk of the labor bureaucrats about what "labor" did or what "we" did. It is on record that it was rank and file white workers who went to Negro workers, spoke frankly to them and socialized with them and brought them into the C.I.O., while the labor bureaucrats as a whole hesitated and hung back. The Negroes responded and it was on the picket-line that this solidarity was cemented. Since that time it is on the picket-line, on the assembly line and in the shop that a gigantic effort is being made by whites and Negroes, men and women, from North and South, to hammer out and maintain a working-class solidarity, irrespective of race. The workers carry on this battle every hour with defeats and failures, but with innumerable hard-won victories which are incorporated into the theory and practice of the class. This is the struggle for racial solidarity in the United States, and not the appointments of Negroes to petty jobs in government offices which the papers make such a fuss about.

What is it that holds it back? It is bourgeois society and the speech-making labor leaders, yes, none but they.

Let me give you an example of what is taking place in hundreds of plants every day. White and Negro workers in a plant will spend infinite time and patience in educating a white Southerner. He has come North, he has heard that things are different up there and he is ready for a change. He quickly learns that his own vital interests are dependent upon solidarity against the persecuting management, and soon begins to distinguish between men according to qualities of leadership and character and not according to race. In the plant he rapidly learns to overcome his prejudice against close association between white women and Negro men. This is the working-class, disciplined to solidarity by capitalist production, and in its ordinary daily work, finding the road to a new society. But they cannot work it out under the capitalist system, inside the plant supervisors and foremen

are ceaselessly injecting and circulating racial prejudice in the effort to break up the solidarity of the workers. And as soon as this white southerner leaves the plant, bourgeois race prejudice grips him. It corrupts him where he eats, where he lives, in what he reads, in the movies he watches. He hears the political parties, Democratic and Republican, making vast promises and denouncing the South. But he sees also that they do nothing to carry out their promises. But most corrupting of all is this. The labor bureaucracy, at conventions and through Negro stooges, periodically denounce race prejudice, keep up a ceaseless din about F.E.P.C., and rush off to Washington to give evidence before Senatorial Committees. But he soon recognizes that in the plant where he works eight hours a day, the labor leadership takes no serious steps to fight against discrimination. He sees that the labor bureaucrats always push the question of discrimination aside in what they call the interests of the union as a whole, by which they mean their own interests as bureaucrats. Walter Rauter is as noisy as he can be before a Senatorial Committee but he has nothing to say inside a plant. Instead he will use the union machinery against Negroes who start independent action against racial discrimination. This is what the workers have to fight against. The Southerner soon learns to accommodate himself to the hypocrisy of the North. It is bourgeois society and the labor bureaucracy which handicaps and throws back the efforts to create a new social order which the mass of the production workers are making every hour of the day.

As in Production. So in Society.

But despite all the barriers, nothing will stop the American workers.

Nothing will stop them because anyone who knows them at all knows that not only in production but in all spheres of society they are in total and complete revolt.

Working-class women by the million are engaged in destroying the old concept of the family. They are not waiting for some Stalinist or Trotskyite planners to educate them. They are in revolt against the domination of men in the home, and millions of marriages are no more than an armed truce for the sake of the children. They are in revolt against the isolation and monotonous drudgery of their daily work in the home. They go into the plant and despite the merciless exploitation of capitalism, they find in the cooperative labor and social solidarity a way of life which they prefer to the isolation, the drudgery and subordination of the old family life. Yet they know that to go into the plant as it is today is no solution. The antagonism between themselves and their husbands remain, the problems of the children remain. Cars and television sets (for the minority who can get them) are merely drugs and playthings to pacify the bitterness, the anger and the unending frustration of the most vital of human needs and relations which capitalism imposes upon working men and women. What to do exactly the women do not know. But they fight as best they can, discuss interminably among themselves, and nowhere so much as at work in the plant. They are working out their own social and moral standards in utter contempt and rejection of bourgeois ideas. They know their own needs and all over the country organize their own cooperative nursery schools, only to find themselves in a bitter battle with the bourgeois educational system and all the bureaucrats, big and little. These see not only their jobs, but the whole system that they represent, challenged by these women seeking to make for themselves the kind of life they want. It may safely be said that wherever these cooperative societies and organized education clash, the women are right, and if left to themselves and given the opportunity would organize a system of education as different from the old as a factory run by workers would be different from capitalist production. The women are handicapped at every turn but this much they know: they know that their deepest and apparently insoluble problems are due to the fact that their men are wrung dry by a system which does not use production for man, but uses up men for production, that their own lives and the lives of their children are governed by this ruthless, inhuman system, and they know that as long as it goes on, their lives will be as what they are.

Thus it is that capitalist production of itself breeds an organized revolt of unprecedented social power among the workers in the plant, and at home. It cannot be crushed because it is the result of capitalist production itself. Nowhere in the world has it

In the United States, the Stalinists and the Trotskyites are the only ones who respect the working class. They pay no attention to what it is really doing or believe that the collapse of capitalism is a matter of capitalists being able to produce goods. If they had the chance to plan everything then there would be no unemployment and no war. Then they could really teach the workers what a socialist society is like, to use a favorite phrase of the Trotskyites, a society of abundance. That is about as far as they reach. It is only now that I have left those people that I can begin to think my own thoughts and to listen and pay attention to workers, and try to find out what Marxism really is, not what Marx wrote in 1848 or 1867, but where his theory stands today, in 1952. As I look back the thing that strikes me over the years is the completely capitalist mentality of all of them, Stalinists, Cannonites, Shachtzmiterites, Reutherites. They understand far less of the workers than the intelligent capitalist does. They all of them thirst to lead, their whole idea and aim is to sit in the seats of the capitalists, that's all. The workers are to stay where they are. That is what they call socialism.

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Part II

I have dealt with one aspect, and the fundamental aspect of Marxism, the struggle for a new society inherent in the very situation of the working-class in capitalist society. Let me if I remind you again that to examine society and to grasp this is the theory of Marxism. But there are other aspects of Marxism, also theoretical on which one has to make up one's mind.

There was a time when a worker, sick of the crimes and hypocrisies of capitalist society, could find a refuge and a way out in organizations based upon the theory and practice of Marxism. However various were the forms Marxism took, it was always a doctrine of liberation and freedom, and above all, of liberation and freedom for the workers of the world. In times of peace as in times of war, Marxism propounded and debated and worked out policies for the working class, governed always by the idea of its liberation from all types of tyranny. Those days are gone. The ultimate confusion for the workers of today is that the most unbridled war-mongers, the most ferocious exploiters of labor, the most deadly enemies of freedom, build their totalitarian regimes at home and organize workers abroad in the name of Marx, the founder of scientific communism, and in the name of Lenin, the greatest of his disciples. It is true that even the capitalist press frequently exposes the difference between Communism as it was taught by its founders and the barbarisms of Russia and Eastern Europe which call themselves Communist. But this only serves to confuse the workers still more.

A serious worker, i.e., a worker who is thinking seriously about the problems of the working-class, cannot shirk the issue of precisely what Marxism is. And I take it that you and most of your friends are either serious workers or young intellectuals. What is Marxism today? An answer must be found. For the intellectuals the road is very hard. For the worker it is not too difficult to find. But only on one condition -- that he trust to his own experience as a worker.

Every Worker Can Understand Leninism

It is the mode of production which dominates all aspects of a society. Modern large-scale production, the daily class struggle in the plant, the cooperative labor of thousands working together in the highly organized and complicated and scientific processes of modern technology, concrete knowledge of the labor bureaucracy -- these are the foundations of understanding modern society, and therefore of understanding Marxism. A worker who goes through these experiences daily is far more fitted to understand the nature of the crisis and the way out than intellectuals and professional men who read dozens of books every year but never get into contact with reality. All that the worker needs is the will to study the history of his class and check it against his own knowledge. The books he needs are few, half-a-dozen pamphlets at most, not one of them more than 40 pages long. These pamphlets, his deep and intimate experience of modern production and some hard thinking and discussion, with other workers chiefly, will illuminate modern society and the role of the workers in it, as nothing else can.

The central event of the world we live in is the Russian Revolution. The working class has achieved victory once in history, in October 1917. And its leader, Lenin, could lead it to victory for one reason and one reason only -- because he believed that the workers of the world were ready to rule, not after he and some intellectuals and planners had trained them, but there and then, in 1917. For him, a socialist revolution meant that the workers and the other oppressed classes were to rule. It is this which separates him and his doctrine from all the cowards, hypocrites and tyrants who abuse him or pretend to follow in his footsteps. Grasp that he stood for this, and the way out of the crisis of today becomes clear. When you come to apply it, you will find it full of danger, full of heart-breaking effort, certain to demand great sacrifices and disappointments, but in terms of Leninist theory, the road will be clear. It is not difficult to understand.

Lenin wrote and spoke for millions of workers and farmers. His ideas had to be simple. They understood him perfectly, and every worker can understand him today. Confusion and difficulties are caused chiefly by the professional Marxists. The political existence, activity and hopes of these Stalinists, Titoists, Trotskyites, etc. are based upon the fact that they see themselves always as rulers over the workers. Lenin stood for the exact opposite of this. And that is why all these thirsty aspirants after power have to confuse everyone as to what Lenin stood for.

Lenin arrived in Russia, in April, 1917. The workers, soldiers and peasants had overthrown Tsarism. But they had done more ~~than~~ than that, they had created the Soviets. It is peculiar how words can change and lose their meaning, and come to mean exactly the opposite of what they stood for. In 1935 and for some years afterwards, the words "union" and "bargaining" for the sake of power to raise a grievance, discuss it at once, and settle it either by agreement or a strike. Today the word "union" means a labor bureaucracy, sitting with the employers and time-study men and technicians, and coming out with a contract 200 pages long, which ties the workers to the company schedules and which is controlled by the bureaucrats. The same thing has happened to the word "soviet." Today when we hear or read the word "soviet", it is usually in connection with the idea of Government. Soviet means the Soviet Government, with its huge bureaucracy, its huge army, its millions of secret police, its factories which are prisons, its prisons which are factories, its ambassadors and representatives at the United Nations, telling lie for lie with the ambassadors and representatives of the old bourgeois nations. But in 1917, the word "soviet" did not mean this. It meant the opposite of all this. It meant the destruction of the bureaucracy, the abolition of professional armies, the abolition of police. It meant elections based on factories, regiments, and groups of peasants. There was one delegate to every 500 workers, a delegate to every regiment, and a delegate to every few thousand ~~thousand~~ peasants. The workers, soldiers, and peasants formed these soviets on the basis of where and how they worked because they did not wish to hand over control of their lives and work to any bureaucrats, officials, army, police, or parliament. Nobody told them to do this, nobody educated them, and nobody could have done so.

By April, 1917, a few weeks after the overthrow of Tsarism, some 20 million people were already represented in these organizations which had sprung up all over Russia and were already increasing every day. They were the only force in Russia which had power. The Tsarist police, army, bureaucracy, and parliament had fallen apart. But the Russian Revolution and the Russian Attlees and the Russian Philip Murrays who led the Soviet in 1917 were paralyzed with ~~terror~~ at the sight of all these workers and peasants and common people in this new Soviet type of organization. Such an organization ~~was obviously~~ obviously signified not only the destruction of Tsarism but the replacement of capitalist production and capitalistic parliaments by a workers' organization of society. An intellectual can not understand this, or does so only after severe study and a great experience of the working class movement. But any worker, particularly in the mass production industries, who has experience of the cowardice and treachery of labor bureaucrats, can understand it. If tomorrow, all over the United States, workers, soldiers and farmers ~~showed~~ showed the existing government, formed workers' councils and faced Walter Reuther and William Green with the demands: Let us take over the country, it would mean that they did not want the capitalist production and parliamentary democracy any more. If the Russian workers, peasants and soldiers had wanted bourgeois elections and a bourgeois parliament, they would not have created and elected Soviets.

The Russian labor leaders were terrified. To them a society based on Soviets was anarchy and chaos and ruin. In other words, their ideas of social organization were completely bourgeois, completely capitalistic. In their fright they ran to beg a few liberals and "progressive" capitalists and landlords to form a government. These liberals thought that they and their kind were finished for good and were only too glad to find

that the labor leaders needed them. Thus was formed the Provisional Government, a government without any power whatever. The old Tsarist bureaucracy, army and police having disintegrated, the only real power in Russia was the people in the Soviet. But the labor leaders in the Soviet were terrified at the power of the people and fought tooth and nail to restore a capitalist type of government.

There you have the fundamental problem of the world in which we live. However different it may be in different countries, in essence it is the same. When the workers overthrow the capitalist government, as they have done so often in the last thirty years, who is to rule? Will the workers rule or will the labor bureaucrats, in terror of the revolutionary working-class, rush to find a government of liberals, "progressive" police chiefs and such like, all of whom aim at nothing else but putting the workers back in their place in the plant and in politics, i.e., restoring the old society. Ten thousand books and ten million words cannot explain the problem any better. That's the modern problem.

Lenin did not hesitate: The workers should rule. That is the significance of his famous slogan: All power to the Soviets. Let the workers, the soldiers and the peasants rule. No officials, no bureaucrats, no army, no police. Let the people arm themselves, men, women and children. They will keep order, control production, and build a new society, and nobody else can.

That is the problem today, and will be the problem until workers rule or society crashes to complete ruin.

Nationalization Will Solve Nothing.

How close Lenin's ideas were to the problems which overwhelm us some thirty years after he first put them forward can be seen from his attitude to nationalization. Today the world is shaken by the problem of nationalization. Must the Government take over the big plants? Must it confiscate them, or must it pay the owners? Lenin's answer in 1917 was a thunderbolt. Nationalization, he said, by itself will solve nothing. If even you take the property of the capitalists away without paying them, it will solve nothing. You must have the workers in complete control of the plants; and you must have a Soviet Government. If not, not only will nationalization solve nothing. Government control will only convert the factories into prisons and transform the workers into prison laborers. His basic idea was this. Society has now reached a stage where the working-class must take over. But, and this is what matters, if it does not, things will not stay as they are. When a working-class has reached the stage where it is ready to take over, you cannot leave it where it is. Either it takes over, or you have to suppress it. And the end will be the totalitarian state, or as he called it, penal labor for the workers. That is why he proposed to abolish the standing army. The people, men and women, should be armed and become a national militia. Either a people's army, or the army will rule by bayonets. That is why he proposed to abolish the police. The armed people would keep order. But if they didn't, the whole state would become a state of police. Society in general had reached a stage where you would have the totalitarian state or the workers' state. And a workers' state was a state in which the workers performed all the functions that the capitalists performed or hired people to perform. It still is the only kind of state in which workers will be free. And without that kind of state, not only the workers but the whole nation will have to endure a state of the army and the secret police.

This is Leninism, and this of course is poison to the Stalinists. They have converted Russian factories into precisely prisons of penal labor. But this question of the perversion of workers' power has gone far beyond the corruption of Stalinism, which is bad and soaked in lies and falsification of all types. Try the Trotskyites.

the Socialist Workers Party or the Workers Party, not in private where they will say anything, but in public. You will find that they all turn green with rage at the idea that nationalization without the Soviet power and without workers' control of production can result only in transforming the factories into prisons. In this there is no difference at all between Stalinists and Trotskyites. Face them with Lenin's exact words:

"The vital thing will be not so much the nationalization of capitalist property as the establishment of universal, all-embracing workers' control over the capitalists and their possible supporters. Confiscation will lead us nowhere...."

"Compulsory tractification, i.e. compulsory assignment into associations under the control of the state, in what capitalism has prepared the way for, and what the Junker state has put into effect in Germany. This will be fully realizable in Russia by the Soviets and the dictatorship of the pro-Soviet. And this will give us a "state apparatus" universal, new and non-bureaucratic." They will turn and twist and squirm and pour out a mass of words and, if you are not armed with printed documents, they will lie their way brazenly out of it, deliberately creating a mass of confusion, so as to bewilder the workers. The workers and peasants of Russia had no trouble in understanding Lenin. They read him and listened to him and knew exactly what he meant.

All these labor leaders or would-be leaders, Reutherites, Stalinists, Trotskyites, however much they differ among themselves, are the same in one thing that is fundamental -- their attitude to the workers. Each of them comes with his program. The workers must follow them. They know. They will lead. They will rule. If the workers do not accept them, the workers are backward. And it is on this concept of workers' backwardness that, in the name of the workers and of socialism, they will perpetrate the most atrocious violence upon the working class. The whole mighty apparatus of tyranny, violence and lies in Russia justified itself upon one idea, and that idea is that the bureaucrats must rule and plan because the Russian workers are too backward to rule; too backward to organize.

Who Will Do It?

It is around this question that the struggle for the October Revolution was waged after the overthrow of Tsarism in Russia. We have called the leaders of the Soviet Russian Reuthers, Philip Murray and Attlees. To tell the truth, we do them an injustice. Chernov, Dan, Teretelli and the leaders of the Soviet were men who had suffered years of exile and hard labor in their fight against Tsarism. That is why the workers elected them as leaders of the Soviet to begin with. They were not ordinary courtes. What they were afraid of was workers' power. Rather than a Soviet Government, they preferred to join with their old enemies, to go into exile, or even to die. Lenin begged them to take the power. They would not.

It isn't that they didn't know what was to be done. There was no mystery as to what was to be done. In a revolution there is never any mystery as to what is to be done. It was not a problem of books or of logic. Like speed-up it was a problem under everybody's nose. The Russian economy was in chaos. It was obvious that the capitalist were sabotaging the revolution by creating disorder in production. The thing to do was to discipline the capitalists. Lenin's point was that only the workers in the plant could do that. Skobelev, Minister of Economics, a powerful man in the Soviet, and with Reuther's gift for grandiose programs and slogans, threw out a phrase: "We will confiscate the profits of the capitalists 100%." The phrase acquired wings and spread all over Russia. Lenin asked: Who will do it? We Bolsheviks, he said, are accused of being wild and fierce. You propose to confiscate 100% of the profits. We Bolsheviks do not propose so much. Don't take all. Take only some of the profits. All we ask you is: Who will do it?

To this vital question the Russian Reuthers could give no answer. So the sabotage continued, the profits of a few continued to mount and economic life continued to disintegrate.

Lenin said that the law required to solve the situation could be passed in one day. Let the workers control every stage of production by means of factory committees and the Soviets. Lenin did not ignore the white-collar workers. He proposed that they should form committees of their own to help organize the work. And finally, he proposed that every mass political party (even parties that were not workers' parties) should send representatives to form a sort of National Economic Committee. The workers should lead, but he wanted the nation to mobilize itself, and against the landlords, landlords, bureaucrats, army, police and their hangers-on who represented the old society.

It is still the only principle which will ever emancipate the workers. Lenin applied it to every problem. There was a great demand for the calling of a Constituent Assembly, a body which would finally decide the future constitution of Russia. Lenin was for a Soviet Government, but he did not seek to impose his ideas upon the people. What he said was this: We, the Bolsheviks, want a Soviet Government. But if the people want a Constituent Assembly, to decide the form of government, let us have a Constituent Assembly where we can debate our different views. But -- who will organize it and write the regulations for it and carry out the elections? If the capitalist government does it, you will get one kind of Constituent Assembly. ~~But if~~ If the people in their Soviets organize the elections, you get another kind of Constituent Assembly. Let the people in the Soviets organize a Constituent Assembly. But here as in production, the labor leaders, afraid of the people, were paralyzed.

The same with the ending of the war. The labor leaders and the government wrote articles, sent telegrams, held conferences with ambassadors. Lenin said to the soldier: You are fighting the war, you end the war. You stick the bayonets in the ground and go yourselves and fraternize with the German soldiers.

Plans, rules, regulations, negotiations, order, discipline, yes. An organized society must have these. But in the capitalist state the capitalists or their capitalist politicians and bureaucrats organize this. In a workers' state the workers do it, and the fundamental institutions of a workers' state are the factory committees, the Soviet power and the armed people.

You in Britain will therefore understand that Lenin's ideas and plans had nothing in common with nationalization by the Labor Government, and labor leaders in the government, or labor leaders even taking over the government. That is nothing but the old crap doctored up to make it look palatable to the workers. Lenin proposed and carried out a workers' revolution. He saw, and this was his greatest contribution to the science of society, he saw that where the masses had created Soviets, it meant that they no longer wanted capitalist production and parliamentary democracy. This creation of the people he recognized as the beginning of a new epoch in human affairs. The Soviet which the people created, and which they alone could create, was the signal to us that they were ready. He said that if we who ~~claim~~ to be leaders do not recognize it, and help the workers to form a Soviet Government, the capitalists, once they get back into power, will institute a regime aimed at keeping these revolutionary workers in such subordination that they will never again be able to challenge capitalism. That is the sign - the creation of mass organizations of workers, farmers and soldiers. And the test of any workers' leader has been and always will be - is he for these, for all that they mean, or is he against them? Lenin did not believe that the Russian workers were backward and that he and the Bolshevik Party were advanced. What he said was that the workers were far beyond the Bolshevik Party and that the party had to work hard to catch up with them.

Show this to Stalinists or Trotskyites and watch how they will start to explain it away and prove that socialism means nationalization and planning (with themselves, of course, as the planners). And if you are obstinate, see how bitter and angry they will get - the bitterness and anger of bureaucrats who believe that they and not the workers must lead and rule

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Lenin had not only studied Marxism. He had had a long and intimate association with the advanced workers of St. Petersburg and Moscow, and knew workers in Britain, France, Germany and Switzerland where he had lived in exile. He believed in them. He knew that the Russian proletariat was a small minority amidst millions of backward peasants in a vast country of nearly 200 million people, which had few roads, a miserable railway system, and as late as 1926 had only 11,000 automobiles. But, he said, the Russians will begin, the proletariat of countries like England and America will finish it. If they don't, the Russian workers will be defeated. He never hid that from the Russian people, but told them so again and again. But, he said, we must take the power. For there is no choice. Imperialist war or proletarian revolution. That is the future of the world from now on. Can anyone who has lived through the last thirty years or any part of them doubt that he was right?

But Lenin was not taking any gamble in Russia. Small as the working class was, he knew its power. He said in 1917:

"In Germany the Junkers (landowners) and capitalists are introducing universal labor duty, which inevitably becomes military penal labor for the workers.

"Take, however, the same institutions and analyze its meaning under the revolutionary democratic state. Universal labor duty, introduced, regulated and directed by the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies is not yet Socialism, but it is no longer capitalism. It is a tremendous step towards Socialism, a step from which, if complete democracy is retained, no backward step towards capitalism would be possible without the most atrocious violence perpetrated upon the masses."

These words have proved to be the truest commentary ever made on the Russian Revolution. Lenin and the Bolsheviks established a Workers' state in Russia. And to destroy it Stalin and the Stalinists had to murder Trotsky and 9/10ths of the old Bolshevik Party; they had to commit the most atrocious violence on the Russian workers; they had to establish bureaucratic tyranny, purges, concentration camps, MVD and GPU surveillance day and night. That is the only way they can keep the Russian workers down.

Leninism and the War.

This is Leninism.

Understanding this you can easily grasp the Leninist policy in regard to World War I. No support to either side. Instead, revolution. Peace, yes, but peace by revolution. Turn the imperialist war into a civil war. The main enemy is at home. In a war of that kind, to support the capitalists was to help strengthen their grip upon the working-class and upon the colonial peoples and to perpetrate and intensify the barbarism which was all that the society could henceforth give. Unless and until the workers overthrew the society and established Soviet power, a workers' state, there would be imperialist war after imperialist war, and suffering, death and destruction for every country.

When Lenin said oppose, he meant total opposition without any compromise whatever. In 1917 with Tsarism overthrown and the Provisional Government in charge, but the real power in the hands of the Soviets of workers and soldiers and peasants, Russia was a free country, the freest in Europe. But the capitalists still ruled. Although the Provisional Government spent all its time trying to re-establish the capitalist bureaucracy, army, and police, and to crush the revolution, the labor leaders refused to get rid of this government and to take the power themselves in the Soviet. The headquarters of the Revolution was Petrograd. Riga, the port of Petrograd, was only a few miles away. The Russian General Staff openly invited the Germans to take Riga and so be able to crush the revolution in its most powerful stronghold. For the ruling class never hesitates to betray the country if that is the only way to safeguard its own position of domination over the workers. Despite the danger to the

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revolution, Lenin and the Bolsheviks refused to change their policy of opposition to the war. As long as Russia was not a workers' state, they would not support it in the war.

This might seem, and seemed to many at the time, to be madness. But World War II gave two (of many) startling examples why Leninism does not make the slightest concession on this fundamental question of working-class opposition to imperialist war.

First France. Ever since the Germans defeated France in 1870, the French ruling class had built up a great propaganda of a war of revenge, against Germany, calling on the workers to stop the class struggle and to form a "sacred union" whenever what they called the "national safety" was threatened. This need for unity against Germany was the dominating propaganda of the rulers of France for ~~over~~ over 50 years. When Germany went fascist under Hitler, the rulers of France screamed in the ears of the workers that all should unite to defend French civilization and democracy against German barbarism. Then in 1936 Hitler sent troops into the Rhineland. At that time he had no army to speak of and the German Generals opposed the move. They told Hitler that if the French army moved against Germany, they had neither soldiers nor arms to put up any fight. There would be a military catastrophe, and as an almost inevitable result, collapse of the whole regime. Hitler understood that but he also understood the ruling class of Europe. He insisted on marching in. The French Cabinet met. France now had the opportunity to destroy Hitler in a few hours. But, if they did, who would succeed him in Germany? It might be a workers' state. Although the evidence ~~was~~ for this has not come out as yet, at such times the French cabinet would certainly consult ~~with~~ the British Government and the American Government, if not directly, in the underhand ways that they use. The result of all this was that the French Government decided to leave Hitler alone. It was from that time that Hitler's power grew by leaps and bounds. The French ruling class had betrayed the French nation and Europe in order to save capitalism in Germany. They and their British and American friends are directly responsible for the destruction and ruin of World War II.

Still worse, when the French army was defeated in 1940, practically the whole of the French ruling class, particularly the financiers and industrialists, swung over to Hitler's side. General de Gaulle himself has written that when he began resistance in 1940 he had against him all of the people of ~~the~~ wealth and power (which does not prevent him from being now their willing tool). These people were quite satisfied to live in a France dominated by German Fascism just so long as they could exploit the workers. It was only when they saw that Hitler was losing, that they rushed over again to the side of the United States and Britain and shouted about national freedom and democracy.

Basing themselves upon their analysis of capitalism and capitalists, Lenin and the Bolsheviks supported the capitalist class neither in peace nor in wars, neither in victory nor in defeat*. Capitalists usually raise a tremendous howl about Lenin's policy of defeatism. They should be a little more cautious. Beginning - to go no further back - with the Loyalists in the American Revolution, there are repeated instances of capitalists who fought actively for the defeat of their own country because they preferred subordination to a foreign power rather than risk the common people taking power in their own country.

It must be understood that Lenin did not believe that he could persuade or reason workers into such a policy. He believed, more profoundly, that the old society was doomed and a new society was on the way. Workers would be compelled sooner or later to turn against their main enemy who was at home. A revolutionist had to work and wait. But once he understood what was taking place in the world around him, then his duty was to do nothing which

* Lenin went further - he said that the defeat of your own capitalist class would advance the cause of the nation as a whole. But he certainly did not mean this to apply in every case. It is inconceivable that he wanted the Germans to take Riga and wanted them to capture Leningrad. He did not want the victory of the opposing capitalist war-camp. What he wanted was that the working-class and above all the revolutionists should not compromise the class struggle by making the slightest concession to the ruling class in its own country.

would help the ruling class in any way. Imperialist war or proletarian revolution was his slogan, and he was on the side of the proletarian revolution.

This then was Leninism. It was and is a hard doctrine. But after thirty-five years of capitalist chaos and disorder, it is very very near to it. The workers have no confidence in the aims either of the war or in those who propagate it. Moscow and its allies and Washington and its allies are in deadly struggle, but both are absolutely united in this: no Leninism, no workers' state, no state without police, without army, without bureaucracy. All this means is against and Stalin too.

Before World War I, labor leaders and millions of workers in every country banded themselves together to oppose imperialist war. Until war actually began, they were not persecuted and were allowed freedom of speech. Not today. No labor leader of any status or anyone else who has the slightest influence is allowed to oppose the war. Hence the remarkable but quite logical spectacle that today when the vast masses in every country are bitterly opposed to the useless sacrifices of the war, there is no anti-war party anywhere. The governments allow none because they cannot afford it. If the C.I.O. were to say as the British Labor Party said in 1939, that it would not support its own government in any imperialist war, American society and American ~~war~~ politics would rock with an explosion greater than that of any atomic bomb. Aneurin Bevan in England does not oppose the war. All that he says is that the British Government should spend a little less on armaments and a little more on airplanes and teeth for the people. Such is the domination of government over the people that politicians who wish to oppose their own ruling class in the war no longer do so in the Leninist manner but rush to support the other side. They want to be on the side of power and big armies, Eisenhower's army or Stalin's army. Among the professional Marxist-Leninist faith in the people has almost disappeared, not because the people are backward, but precisely because they are sick of war and depression and unemployment and fascism and war again, and speed-up and inflation and taxation; they are so burdened with anger and readiness to destroy what is torturing them, that the Reuthers, the Murrays and the Attlees, the Stalinists and the Trotskyites, are more afraid of the people than of capitalism and look to one or the other of the capitalist armies, the capitalist police and the capitalist states, to win victories and to keep order. But the American proletariat and the great masses of the American people have nothing in common with them. American workers are opposed to the war but not for the sake of Russia or Stalin. They are thinking their own thoughts. ~~And their~~ And their thoughts are along the lines that I have described to you.

The Workers Are Thinking Their Own Thoughts

How could it be otherwise? The proof stares us in the face. Suddenly after nearly three hundred years of continuous struggle all over the world and great victories for freedom of speech and free dissemination of ideas, the world seems to have turned its face and its feet backwards. Great organizations and great states arise whose avowed purpose is to prevent the utterance or the circulation of one single idea which they do not approve. America is no exception. In this country today there is more fear and terror about criticizing the government than at any time since the founding of the Republic. Why? It is because the great masses of the people, from the very nature of the work they do and the lives they live, think naturally and easily in terms of a cooperative society. No one has to teach them these ideas as the stupid Trotskyites think. What is happening is that the ruling classes everywhere are engaged in a desperate struggle to ~~distort~~ distort, confuse and if necessary, totally suppress these ideas. But to suppress them, they will have to destroy the system of production itself, for it is this which gives rise to them. And the closer the people get to thinking their own thoughts, the more savagely the ruling class seeks ways and means to crush them. The labor leaders therefore are very circumspect in what they do and say, not because the people are backward but precisely because the people are so advanced. I can merely say again, there is no anti-war propaganda precisely because the people are so anti-war that no one dares to say anything which might unloose that mighty torrent. That is the United States today.

Part III

It was absolutely imperative that I give you some idea of what I understand by Leninism. Otherwise you could not understand my opinions (and my actions also). Also you could never get any real grasp of what is taking place in the United States today, either in the country as a whole or among the Marxist parties. These Marxist parties have never understood the American people, or rather they have never understood Marxism. They always learnt Marxism as a foreign doctrine, and then tried to graft it on to the American masses, instead of studying the history, the life and the thoughts of the American people and the American nation, and finding there the specific manner in which the universal truths of Marxism were expressing themselves. That, however, is a broader subject. I have gone into it sufficiently so far, and I shall go into it again before I am done.

The Marxist Parties in the United States

What is important is that there were Marxist parties in the United States, and I am not referring to the Stalinists. These Marxists had the usual attitude of Marxists everywhere. They were never

unduly troubled by the fact that the organization to which they belonged was small. They and their friends all loved it, whether it was maintaining an actual organization, or simply in a more informal way, merely exchange the results of studies, information and comments on the passing scene in a personal fashion. After all, comrades and friends for years were compelled to do little more than this. But any serious Marxist, however limited his sphere, knew that action by the proletariat could rapidly transform the national and the international situation. He never measured the progress of history by how many workers were listening to him personally, and when Marxists reached the stage of actually organizing and acting among the workers as an organization, for though they might not have served a very important historical function, at the very least, they held up a banner.

After the degeneration of the Russian Revolution and the corruption of the Stalinist parties, this was the role played by various small groups of Marxists, the most consistent and tenacious of whom were the Trotskyites of the Fourth International. And the best organized and most effective Trotskyites were in the United States. It is true that long after it was clear that the revolution was dead in Russia, they continued to follow Trotsky in the doctrine that Russia was a workers' state. Trotsky believed up to his death that Russia was a workers' state and should be supported in the war. He thought that World War II would see either the collapse of the Russian state back to capitalism, or another revolution which would clear out the bureaucracy and restore the workers to power. He believed that only a proletarian revolution could nationalize property, and that wherever the property was nationalized on any great scale, there you had a workers' state. He was wrong, but he died in 1940 and did not live to see states in Eastern Europe in which the nationalization of the property and the enslavement of the proletariat took place side by side. But whatever his mistakes about the Russian economy, to the last days of his life he was the open and uncompromising enemy of Stalinism, and for years his followers everywhere continued this tradition.

As usual there were splits. In the United States even before Trotsky died, one wing of Trotskyism under the leadership of Shachtman split away to become the Workers Party. It refused to defend Russia any longer. Both these parties, however, small though they were, were the sole organized representatives of the great liberating doctrines of Marx and Lenin. As such, they were the only voices from the all-powerful United States which opposed imperialist war and capitalism. Workers and revolutionaries abroad heard and were reminded that not everyone in America was a supporter of Truman and the State Department. The Socialist Workers Party in particular was a staunch opponent of American imperialism. During World War II, eighteen of its leaders went to jail for opposing the war; and some four million workers all over the United States protested against this persecution. In 1948 the Socialist Workers Party ran candidates for President and Vice-President, and its leaders spoke repeatedly on the radio to millions of listeners. They still preached that Russia was a workers' state and should be defended, but they merely talked about it, and even that not too often. They did nothing about it, and the face they presented to the world was one of opposition to American imperialism and, in the essential tradition of Trotsky, denunciation of Stalinism as the gangrene and the syphilis of the labor movement. The Workers Party developed very opportunist policies but particularly on college campuses it won interest and support as an outright enemy both of American imperialism and Russian imperialism. You in Europe with vast labor movements, powerful Communist Parties, and a long tradition of Marxism, can have little idea of the importance in the United States, actual and potential, of these apparently insignificant organizations. They were shown far beyond their actual circle.

I Am For Socialism, But--

Now what has happened is that within a few weeks of each other, some months ago, one, the Workers Party, came brazenly out and applied for a place in the war-camp of Truman, and the other, the Socialist Workers Party, as brazenly applied for a place in the war-camp of Stalin. Their degeneration had long been evident but, I will not deny it, the shock has been great. But what has come up is that the Workers Party seeks to join Truman in the name of - Lenin; and the Socialist Workers Party seeks to join Stalin in the name of ~~Lenin~~ - Trotsky. That they will not get away with as long as I have a pen to write with. You will understand therefore the comprehensive scope of this letter.

First Shachtman.

In the New International of July-August, 1951, p.205, he writes:

"To maintain political opposition to the war is correct. To continue to prosecute the class struggle is correct. But to prosecute the class struggle in such a way that it would clearly 'imperil the military position of the government, even to the point where it may be defeated by the enemy and lose the war' - that, in the conditions of the Third World War, would be disastrous to the working class and to socialism."

That is clear enough. Support the war. What could any capitalist, imperialist government desire more than a socialist who says: I am for socialism, your war is a barbarous, imperialist war, but I shall do nothing which might prevent you winning it. This is where Shachtman has reached after twenty-five years of anti-war struggle. It is not a personal opinion. It is far worse. He is the leader of an organization and that is where he is leading it.

But Shachtman is not content with that. He will use his Marxist past and reputation, such as it is, and his Marxist knowledge, to prove to workers that to join with Truman, Reuther, Eisenhower, Rankin and Senator Connolly to win the war is the policy of Lenin in 1917.

His article continues:

"Instead, socialist policy must be based upon the idea of transforming the imperialist war into a democratic war, that is, adopting broadly the view put forward by Lenin in 1917, with all the changes required by the differences between the situation then and now, and working for its adoption by the labor movement as a whole."

And what, according to Shachtman, is this policy adopted by Lenin in 1917?

"That means calling upon the labor movement to champion a series of economic and political measures which would, on the one hand, 'greatly enhance the military might of the country', and which, on the other hand, could not 'be put into effect without transforming the war from a war of conquest into a just war', from a war waged by the capitalists, into a war waged by the proletariat in the interests of all the toilers and exploited."

It is immediately obvious that this is a very different sort of Leninism from the Leninism of the Soviet power, workers' control of produc-

tion, and abolition of the bureaucracy, of the army and of the police. Shachtman undertakes, however, to explain at length what he claims to be Leninist measures.

"These measures would generally be of a type which, to use Lenin's excellent phrase, 'will not yet be socialist, but...will no longer be capitalism.' They would provide for a radical democratization of economic and political life, above all the most thoroughgoing and extensive popular controls over production, distribution of commodities, rents, prices and profits, complete abolition of all discriminatory and segregational acts and practices against racial, national and other minorities, above all the Negro minority, a democratic steeply-graduated income tax and a capital levy. Without proposing anything as utopian or irresponsible as complete disarmament, the measures would provide for an extension of social services, housing construction, cheap medical services for all, etc. Other measures of a similar type will suggest themselves."

This, in Shachtman's filthy hands, is what Lenin's policy of 1917 works out to be.

Frankly I would not be surprised if more than one professor or journalist, conscientious bourgeois professor or journalist, on reading this, was to say: "We are glad, Shachtman, that you have seen the error of your ways and are ready to join in the war for democracy. But to say that this is Leninism, and was Lenin's policy in 1917, that is ridiculous."

For my part I can say that in the course of a lifetime spent in the revolutionary movement, I have heard and seen and read of many examples of Judases and utterly conscienceless scoundrels and renegades from Marxism. But never have I seen anything to equal this. For the sake of the record, in the interests of elementary truth about the greatest event in the history of the modern world, I have to say again: Lenin did not and could not have the idea of transforming the imperialist war into a democratic war. His idea was to overthrow an imperialist government and substitute for it a workers' state. Lenin did not work for a program of measures to be adopted by the labor movement. He fought for the Soviet power. Lenin arrived in Russia when the Provisional Government was in power, and from that day until his party took the place of the Provisional Government he said: Do not support the Provisional Government; do not support the war; this is a capitalist, imperialist government and Russia is a capitalist, imperialist state. What we have to do is to substitute for this capitalist state the power of the workers. I did not believe it possible that anyone in the name of Lenin would arise to deny that, and try to use it as an argument for supporting an imperialist war.

This is a theoretical document but let me set once, before I go a step further, take up one very practical thing. I don't know personally any of you who have written but you seem for the most part to be young people without much practical experience of revolutionary politics. I warn you from the experience of many years: if any followers of Shachtman should turn up in the European movement, beware of them, beware of them in the most literal sense. People who break openly with Marxism and join imperialist will be open enemies. But these who do so in the name of Lenin are dangerous people. Keep away from them. The Stalinists, in addition to their other crimes, in World War II in order to justify their hounding American workers into war for Russia (for that is what it really was), used this very argument of the transformation of the imperialist war into a democratic war; though, strange as it may seem, even they did not have the nerve to say that this was Lenin's policy in 1917. But in the United States they were the ones who were

the advocates of incentive pay, of the no-strike pledge, who sabotaged the struggle of the Negroes for their rights, and, worst of all, were spies and finger-men for the Government and the police. When you reach the stage of saying that Lenin's policy in 1917 was to transform the imperialist war into a democratic war, it signifies a complete degeneration of the moral character. Henceforward such people will do anything. And the only real service they can render to the imperialists is to take care of the Leninists in the working-class movement. That will be their function.

Shachtman no longer retains a shred of intellectual honesty or moral principle. He says that Lenin in Russia ~~was~~ in 1917 changed his policy of turn the imperialist war into civil war. Let me show you an agent of the bourgeoisie ~~at~~ at work in the working-class.

When Lenin arrived in Russia in April, 1917, there was on the one hand the Soviet with millions of workers and soldiers and on the other hand the Provisional Government which, as I have said, existed solely because the Reuthers in the Soviet refused to form a Soviet Government. Day and night Lenin and the Bolsheviks pointed out: what we have here is a Dual Power. There on the one hand is the utterly fictitious power of the Provisional Government, and there on the other is the real power of the people in the Soviets. The Soviets are the open road to the new society. They are a creation of world-historical importance. Through this the workers in the plant and the peasants in the land can themselves control production and themselves carry on the government. This is not yet socialism, but in this Soviet power, socialism is looking at us through the windows. In these two organizations, the rotten Provisional Government and the mighty Soviet power, two societies face each other. The rotten feeble capitalist imperialist power and the power of the workers. We haven't to speculate any longer as to what workers' power is like. The Soviet is that power. But it must take the governmental power and become the state.

However, when some Bolsheviks talked about civil war, Lenin said: do not, for the time being, use that phrase. To use it in agitation, as a slogan, is tactically unsuitable. The workers have the power, the soldiers have the guns. The only reason why they do not with one blow push the imperialist government out of existence is because they are confused. The labor leaders who lead the Soviet are telling the workers that they must support the Provisional Government. As long as the workers believe this, it is wrong to talk about civil war. So explain. Events will teach them. They knew that the Tsarist Government was their enemy, but they don't know that this Provisional Government is, because this government claims that it, too, is for the revolution. As soon as the workers realize that this government is carrying out all the policies of Tsarism, they will overthrow it. Just explain. But - this explanation consisted of the denunciation and exposure of the Provisional Government as capitalist, imperialist, war-mongering, and plotting to crush the revolution. I have related already the attitude the Bolsheviks took when the Germans were being encouraged to take Riga by this same Government. It is obvious therefore that Lenin was never for the victory of the Provisional Government. Lenin never told the workers to support the war of the Provisional Government. Lenin never told the workers to do anything else except to substitute workers' power for the capitalist government. He did at one time say to the workers that you can take the power peacefully. Why? Because the first revolution in March had so shattered the Tsarist regime and the Soviets had so powerfully organized themselves that Lenin said to the workers: No revolution is needed to overthrow the Provisional Government. The power is yours. You only have to take it. But if you hesitate too long, they will gradually strengthen themselves and you will have to use bloodshed to do what you now can do without any trouble. That is why he told the party: do not talk about civil war now.

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This is what Shachtman likes to prove that in 1917 Lenin changed his policy of "Turn the Imperialist War into Civil War." This is how he seeks to use Lenin to justify support of the French Government and American imperialism in war.

Let me make my point unmistakably clear. If tomorrow, during a war, the American masses were to elect a Provisional Government, "factories", committees, and possibly organizations of "liberals", all break out in revolution: 1) as in 1917, the Provisional Government, labor leaders like Philip Murray, Reuther and Henry Ford, and liberal leaders like Walter White (to fool the Negroes), and former members of the Provisional Government with them, then you would have a situation similar to that in Russia in 1917. And if Murray and Reuther and the liberals while declaring that they were for the revolution, yet refused to bring the war to an end, refused to pass and enforce immediately laws abolishing discrimination against Negroes, refused immediately to declare the independence of Cuba, etc., refused to call upon workers everywhere to revolt against their non-making governments, etc., then that government would be a capitalist imperialist government, and the Leninist policy of 1917 would be to fight against it to the end. Since 1917 the labor leaders have learnt a few things, but the Marxists, the Leninists, have learnt a few also. Such a Provisional Government might declare the banks to be nationalized and the property of Henry Ford, General Motors, American Tel. & Tel., etc., to be nationalized. It would not mean a damn thing to the workers and the clerical staff unless they took it over. In Catalonia in 1936 Companys, the liberal, when he saw that the workers had the power, actually passed laws nationalizing the property of the big capitalists. By doing so he was able to present his government as a friend of the workers and to block the establishing of a workers' state. As soon as Companys got the chance, he betrayed the workers and opened the way for the capitalists to come back. There is no substitute for the Soviet power, the workers' state. You can agree or disagree. But that is the historical truth. And Shachtman? Is he merely confused? He knows exactly what he is doing. The most significant statement in his article is this: he advocates "the adoption of a program of economic aid for the upbuilding and modernization of backward countries which would not need to be more ambitious nor would it be more modest than the \$13 billion program proposed not long ago by President Reuther of the Auto Workers Union."

You have to live in the United States and follow radical politics closely to understand what that means. You would then know that Shachtman's party members in the U.A.W., Reuther's Union, have been striving and panting and crawling into all sorts of slimy holes and swallowing any amount of filth to make themselves palatable to the Reutherite bureaucracy. They want to be accepted and Shachtman does not throw this compliment to Reuther for nothing. It is there they are headed for. And I warn you again. If there are any such in your country and there is a war or a revolutionary crisis, beware of them. In every country, men of the stamp of Reuther do not open their doors for charity. If those people are taken in they will have to pay the price, and the price will be the blood of the Leninists as soon as the Leninists show that they are beginning to have power and influence among the workers. War and revolution are not things to play with. In war and revolution it is your politics that decide what you will do.

2009

We Are Against Stalin, But---

I was in the Workers Party when it split from the Socialist Workers Party in 1940. By 1947 it became obvious that the Workers Party was a bankrupt organization. In fact it was already on the way to where it is today. But to tell the truth, I didn't think it possible that Bhachtman, of all people, would descend so low. At any rate I and some who thought as I did, left the Workers Party and went back to the Socialist Workers Party, hoping to find there a Marxist organization. We had already developed our basic analysis of working-class politics from the Leninist point of view, and this differed seriously from the Socialist Workers Party. (But all this you know because we sent the documents to many friends abroad). We stated our own positions and our differences with them very firmly and took good care to have them all printed and published before we went in, but we went in modestly and full of good-will.

The Socialist Workers Party continued to repeat Trotsky's long outmoded position that Russia was a workers' state. But the Socialist Workers Party follows very closely the thinking of the Fourth International in Europe and all of them continued to attack the Stalinist parties, and particularly those which ruled in Eastern Europe, as satellites of Stalin. These states, they said, were capitalist states, because no proletarian revolution had taken place there and it was impossible for a workers' state to be created anywhere except by a proletarian revolution. This was of course absolutely correct.

Then came Tito's break with Stalin. To our astonishment, the official Fourth International (for the Socialist Workers Party is not an actual member) leapt for a stand on the Tito band-wagon. These Trotskyites, to justify themselves, rapidly discovered that a proletarian revolution had taken place in Yugoslavia some years before. They had not noticed it at the time but now they looked back and saw that this was so. Could anything be more farcical? A proletarian revolution, and still more, a successful proletarian revolution, is one of the most world-shaking of historical events. These Marxists, who are supposed to dedicate their lives and thoughts to the proletarian revolution, not only had not seen this one. They had for years abused Tito's state as a totalitarian tyranny, but now that they agreed that it was a workers' state, they could not agree as to when it had become one.

The Titoist bureaucracy is a one-party totalitarian Stalinist type of state in everything except the fact that it was determined to rule in Yugoslavia and not be at the mercy of Stalin's spies and murderers. Tito until the break was one of Stalin's most trusted and most blood-stained henchmen. But in his quarrel with Stalin, Tito used some arguments of Lenin. The Fourth International and the Socialist Workers Party declared that this proved that Tito was on the road to Leninism, published articles and a cartoon to that effect, and declared in public speeches that this turn of Tito to Leninism was the greatest thing that had happened to Trotskyism for its nearly 30 years of existence, that the dark night of Trotskyism was over and the dawn was breaking, etc, etc.

We were startled, my friends and I. We warned them that Tito would rapidly either rejoin Stalin or join up with American imperialism and in either case help lead the workers to the imperialist slaughter. They refused to pay any attention to us, but continued to make fools of themselves in public as well as in private. Needless to say, all their overtures to Tito came to nothing. He had no use for them. But one thing had been made so clear that no one could miss it. These Trotskyites were sick and tired of

waiting for the workers to lift them into power. The proletarian revolution, the Leninist workers' state, they no longer believed in it, if indeed they ever had. They had grabbed on to the Titoist bureaucracy as a swimmer with his last breath grabs on to any straw.

From there they moved rapidly, so rapidly that it was difficult to keep pace with them. Soon came the statement from Europe that the socialist society was hundreds of years away, followed by hints that not merely Titoism was Leninism, but that the Stalinist parties could lead the proletariat to socialist power.

We did not keep silent, but we might as well have talked to rocks and stones. A few months later, just before the 1950 Convention, it was whispered around that the Fourth International and the Socialist Workers Party were all in full agreement that the totalitarian prisons of Eastern Europe were workers' states. We had already written our position out in a document, State-Capitalism and World Revolution. But at that time we still believed that the majority of the Fourth International would continue to oppose Stalinism. Now at the Convention, we took an offensive. Speak up, we said, and say where you stand. The following is the speech that was delivered at the Convention. Though it is not short, I think you will find it not only of interest but of importance in any discussion of theory today. People often object to long quotations in political writings. I am not going to be bothered about that. I am not agitating anybody. You and I are trying to work out something.

"I want the Convention to understand very precisely what I am doing here.

"I am making what amounts to a declaration on behalf of our Tendency. We are not debating the issues raised by Comrade Weiss about Yugoslavia, or about state-capitalism. Or the description of the swinging of the Yugoslav pendulum as given by Comrade Wright.

"If we were doing that, we would have presented a resolution and requested a full-time reporter.

"The issue that matters for us is the related question.

"It is the role of Stalinism. It is expressed very simply in the document presented by us to the party. We placed it at the very beginning of the document. I shall read it for you.

"On page 4. 'The dilemma of the Fourth International is that it has to recognize that there now exists a labor bureaucracy which is the enemy of private property and national defense and yet is counter-revolutionary. The Fourth International cannot escape this decision: If the destruction of private property and the repudiation of national defense are revolutionary, then Stalinism is revolutionary and there is no historical need for a Fourth International.'

"For us, all discussions are entirely subordinate to the question of the role of Stalinism. The danger is to begin with Yugoslavia and then you may end with Stalinism as the leader of the revolution all over the world. We made it clear from the start that it was the question of the program and the building of the party.

"We stated further in our Bulletin, on pages 4 and 5: (These are the questions with which the theory of state-capitalism deals.

... primarily concerned with defensism or defeatism in Russia, about which we can do little. We are primarily concerned here with what the refusal to accept this theory does to the party, its solidarity, its capacity to fight its enemies, its capacity to preserve itself and to grow, in brief - to prepare the liquidation of Stalinism.

"I want to repeat, we are concerned with the building of the party. And the building of the party is above all else the question of program.

"In our document we characterized the position of Pablo very sharply. We considered his position a catastrophe for the International.

"In over a year of party discussions, neither the majority reporter nor any other leading representative of the majority has stood with Pablo. Yet, that is the central problem.

"The reporter now emphasizes that in his party position in which he is on his own and can let ~~himself~~ fly', that a process of liquidation of capitalism is going on in the buffer zone, while the real vital forces of the revolution have been crushed."

"That is interesting, but we do not wish to debate with him. We want an official position. We want to know where the Political Committee stands on this matter. We want to know, and our document shows that from the beginning we wanted to know, where they stand in relation to Pablo. We want to know if they agree or disagree with him. We want to know, if they agree, how and where they differentiate themselves from him. And his 200 years' perspective of degenerated workers' states and the continued existence of regenerated capitalism.

"We have stated that Pablo's tendency is a pre-Stalinist and liquidationist tendency. That we stand by. We shall make no more pronouncements in discussion in the party until we have an ~~official~~ official document to debate against.

"You have known us now for three years. You will have observed that we are very careful in what we say and how we say it. We are going to be very careful here. We told you at the last convention that we were glad that the S.W.P. was here for us to join.

"After three years, our original satisfaction is not only confirmed, but in every way increased. We believe that you also have found us to be good, loyal party members. But it would be wrong to disguise the fact that if the International, and the leadership of the majority of the S.W.P. come to the conclusion that Stalinism can lead the revolution, that would be a very serious thing for the party and therefore a very serious thing for us.

"That is why in accordance with our usual practice we are prepared to wait and see and to know what we are debating against, what is said, and who says it, so that we shall be able to characterize it with that care and precision which we have always exercised, even in the documents we wrote before we entered the S.W.P.

"Our position is known. No one can misunderstand our position at all.

"The basis of the Left Opposition, the C.L.A., the S.W.P., the whole Fourth International, every line that Trotsky wrote after 1934, was that Stalinism was the grave-digger and syphilis of the revolution. Not Stalinism in Russia but the Communist International and the Cominform which our comrades in Italy, in France, in China, in India have to fight against. We still believe them to be the grave-digger of the revolution. We still believe them to be the syphilis of the revolution.

"We have posed this question consistently almost from the very start of the discussion. We got no reply and it is for that reason that we are prepared to wait until the comrades are ready.

"We find that a number of comrades suddenly display an intense interest in the theoretical aspects of state-capitalism. Very progressive, but for ten years we have been writing on the theory of state-capitalism. No one said a single word on it. No one writes a line about what we have written. That is your privilege. But it is our privilege also not to debate that now and, as a matter of fact, we could not do so if we wanted. Debate what? And with whom? We cannot debate against some remarks made by the reporter on state-capitalism as one of the related questions. When some authoritative person writes a reply to the theoretical questions that we have raised, we can and will debate that. Not today. Not in place of the question whether Stalinism is the building of socialist society or the grave-digger and syphilis of the revolution.

"We do not say that the procedure that is being followed by the party at this convention is wrong. We do not say that for one single moment. We think that under the circumstances it is as good a procedure as is possible. We do not attack the leadership for not having a position on this question. That would be sniping. The kind of politics that we do not go in for. The leadership is absolutely correct to say that it is not prepared to take a position for the time being and the question is open until later. It cannot be said that the S.W.P. leadership avoids taking positions on political questions.

"What we are putting forward here is our situation. What we are saying is this. A minority, and a small minority at that, cannot discuss everything and at every time. We haven't got the forces for it. We haven't got the opportunity. The party press is able to take up Yugoslavia from day to day. It is able to follow events in Korea and in Russia. It is able to take up everything that is happening in Eastern Europe or in China. In theory, we as a minority, also are able to write whatever we please, as long as the discussion lasts.

"But we cannot write a stream of documents in internal bulletins. We wear ourselves out and we wear the comrades' patience out. You discuss one special case of exceptional circumstances. And then you have to discuss another case of unique or exceptional circumstances. I read in the press the other day that one morning at a meeting in Berlin, Germany had been declared a workers' state by a Stalinist functionary. Then there are the so-called Soviets of Hungary and Poland. We cannot keep up with that.

"Furthermore, we have a certain experience of discussing as a minority, during the last 10 years. We gain nothing by discussing in that way. In the end people get tired of discussions of that sort and often before the actual core of the discussion has been reached, they begin to say: "We have had enough of this. Everyone has been saying what he wanted to say for a long time and it is time to come to a conclusion."

"That will not happen to us. We want it understood, not only by what we say but by what we do, that we are discussing the nature of Stalinism and nothing else. For us, from that discussion, everything else flows.

"That is decisive for that involves the program of our party. Without the programmatic basis of the historical necessity of our organization, without the conviction that our organization, and ours alone, can lead the proletariat to the building of socialism, without that, for us the very foundations of Bolshevism are undermined.

"This is no new question for us. Our friends raised it at the World Congress in 1948. We are sorry now that they did not concentrate on this at that time to the exclusion of everything else. As it is, they were ignored. They said: You have in the Transitional Program that Stalinism is class collaborationist, reformist and is subordinated to the bourgeoisie. They said: Take it out of the Program. The Congress refused, without even bothering to discuss. They said that Stalinism aims at power but insisted that that power was not and could not be the proletarian revolution or socialism. The Congress ignored them. Now we are determined that everyone here and elsewhere should know that we have raised this question, that we are discussing no other question, and that, when the discussion is over, our position ~~on this matter~~ on this matter and our attitude to its importance will be absolutely clear.

"We place first things first.

"Some comrades attack us that we are unorthodox on the question of the role of the party. We will debate with you the role of the party in the Commune and in the October Revolution on another occasion - if that requires debate.

"And if it requires debate, we can even debate with you the role of the party in future revolutions. But today, and until this discussion is concluded, we discuss the role of this party and the world party of the Fourth International. That is the role of the party which is decisive for us at the present moment. There is no building of the party without a clear and unambiguous program.

"We say to you what we said to Shachtman with his bureaucratic collectivism. He brought forward this new society. We asked him: What was its future? He said he, as usual, did not know. Maybe it would last, maybe not. The masses would decide. We said to him the masses would decide. We have no need to be told by any other tendency that the masses will decide. But we, the party, must decide and the decision of the party is the program of the party. And if we

of the party cannot decide, the party has no program. And we repeat: If we decide that Stalinism may or may not, under the influence of the masses, lead the revolution, then we have not decided and we have no program.

"And we want it clear that if the decision goes against us, everyone will know the emphasis that we have placed on this question and will be able to see the consequences. When the discussion comes to an end, it comes to an end - however serious the point at issue may be. We accept that the basic emphasis will remain.

"We want the comrades to be aware of and to look for certain consequences.

"One of the correct errors you have already before your eyes - Comrade Marcy. No work is needed. The power and confidence of his document is the direct result of Pablo and the uncertainty of the leadership of the party as to the nature of Stalinism. If this position is finally adopted and becomes part of the theory and ideas of the organization, as fast as you cut down the Marcys - they will ~~spring~~ ^{spring} up again.

"On the other side. We said in the Balance Sheet a passage which I want to read to you. The quotation is on page 21:

"The decisive social and political feature of the United States, governing all aspects of its life, including its intellectual life, is the absence of a mass social-democratic party. It is the source of the greatest weakness to Bolshevism but a source also of its greatest strength...The absence of the mass political party compelled a revolutionary tendency to go to the proletariat in the process of production itself. There was no other way of making contact with the workers.

"We tried to say there that the split of the Workers Party from the Socialist Workers Party and its whole course shows that under the special circumstances of American politics, without a mass social-democratic party, petty-bourgeois elements are attracted to the revolutionary party. We pointed out that although the W.P. split away, the Bolshevik Party was bound to have these elements to a degree greater than in other countries where they would be in the Social-Democracy.

"And we pointed out that it was the special duty of the leadership in the United States to take a warning from the experiences of the W.P. and of the Goldmanites and to take special pains to educate, discipline and incorporate these elements.

"Their weakness, as we pointed out in the Balance Sheet also, is a tendency to bourgeois democracy and a certain latent hostility to proletarian discipline. Now if you say that Stalinism can make a revolution you strike a terrible blow at these elements. You cut away certain representative sections of the American revolution by this new policy.

"The whole party will feel it, fighting what I will call the Marcyites on the one hand, and these petty-bourgeois tendencies on

the other - the party... was prepared to call... points were not... maintaining the... international. The historical... presents every line...

"We in the party... consequences of this... party here, but in... Army in Berlin, in... China where Mao-Tse-tung... face of these... that only a... the Stalinists... other people that... road? Not only the... join Stalinism and...

"And here let us... has achieved national... Certain readjustments... grave-diggers of the revolution into the midwives of socialism.

"Comrade Wright tries to occupy an intermediate position. But we have found in the past that such positions are no more than a bridge for those who in reality oppose, but who for one reason or another are not prepared to take the march word of a small minority.

"That, then, comrades, is our position. It is the question of the program of the party in relation to Stalinism. When there is a position for us to oppose, we shall do so with a resolution of our own. If we are defeated, it will not be the first time. We have patience, and the speed of the developments, the pace at which some comrades are travelling and the road they are taking, all this makes us very very sure that the line we have worked out is the correct line and that its justification will not be long delayed.

"Finally, I would like to say this. The program of the party is one thing, and we have characterized Pabst, and in the proper place and at the proper time we shall characterize Pabst more sharply.

"But we want to make it clear. And in any document that we shall write for discussion in the party we will oppose any fundamental change of the program along these lines. We do not mean, or wish to imply, any abandonment of the revolution or renegacy or capitulation on the part of leading revolutionaries in the party men who were probably in the revolutionary movement before I was born, but with all the respect that we have for them, and will continue to have, both for what they have done and as leaders of the party to which we belong, we shall have to insist that the historical necessity of the Fourth International must be the basis of its program and any program or absence of a program or uncertainty about a program which threatens that basic conviction, places in development of the party in mortal peril."

"This, then, comrades, is where we stand in this discussion.

"For the rest, the comrades of the Tendency who think that we are responsible for the general direction of the party and the political policies of the Tendency are all in agreement that we discuss the program of the party in general, and we discuss it only in relation to an official

question: what is Stalinism? Can it lead the workers to socialism or not? You must answer.

In a few months they had answered. The end came in August. In that month the World Conference of the Fourth International met and abandoned all pretense of being anything else but stooges for the Kremlin and Stalinism. It said in its manifesto:

"The transformation which the Stalinist parties might undergo in the course of the most acute revolutionary crises may oblige the Leninist vanguard to readjust its tactics towards these parties."

The Stalinists have only to tackon.

"But this in no way relieves the proletariat from the task of building a new revolutionary leadership."

The more the Fourth International recruits, the more it can bring over to Stalinism. It will mobilize the workers of the world to join the Stalinist war-camp unconditionally:

"The World Congress of the Fourth International greets the workers, peasants and soldiers of the U.S.S.R. and of the 'Peoples' Democracies.' It assures them of complete and unconditional support by the whole world-wide revolutionary movement in the coming war against the restorationist efforts of the international bourgeoisie. Defense of collectivized property, planned economy, and of the workers' states, even though deformed and degenerated, is an ~~imperious~~ imperious duty of the world proletariat."

So that the war between the Kremlin and Washington is a war of classes, and if the state of Stalin wins, the working-class, not only in Russia but elsewhere, has won a victory.

But unlike Shechtman with Lenin, they did not get away with this. Trotsky's widow, Natalia Trotsky, was still alive. She had been fighting the Fourth International and the Socialist Workers Party for six years. She could stand it no longer. In May she had given to the world press her now famous letter which I quote here in full. You cannot read it too often.

"To the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party:

"Comrades,

"You know quite well that I have not been in political agreement with you for the past five or six years, since the end of the war and even earlier. The

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position taken on the important issues of recent times shows me that, instead of correcting your earlier errors, you are persisting in them and deepening them. On the road you have taken, ~~you have~~ you have reached a point where it is no longer possible for me to remain silent or to confine myself to private protest. I must now express my opinions publicly.

"The step which I feel obliged to take has been a grave and difficult one for me, and I can only regret it sincerely. But there is no other way. After a great deal of reflection and hesitations over a problem which has pained me deeply, I find that I must tell you that I see no other way than to say openly that our disagreements were it impossible for me to remain any longer in your ranks.

"The reasons for this final action on my part are known to most of you. I repeat them here briefly only for those to whom they are not familiar, touching only on our fundamentally important differences and not on the differences over matters of daily policy which are related to them or which follow from them.

"Obsessed by old and outlived formulas you continue to regard the Stalinist state as a workers' state. I cannot and will not follow you in this. Virtually every year after the beginning of the fight against the usurping Stalinist bureaucracy, L. D. Trotsky repeated that the regime was moving to the right under conditions of a lagging world revolution and the seizure of all political positions in Russia by the bureaucracy.

"Time and again, he pointed out how the consolidation of Stalinism in Russia led to the worsening of the economic, political and social positions of the working-class, and the triumph of a tyrannical and privileged aristocracy. If this trend continues, in a word, the revolution will be at an end and the restoration of capitalism will be achieved. That, unfortunately, is what has happened, even if in new and unexpected forms. There is hardly a country in the world where the authentic ideas and bearers of socialism are so barbarously hounded. It should be clear to everyone that the revolution has been completely destroyed by Stalinism. Yet you continue to say that under this unspeakable regime, Russia is still a workers' state. I consider this a blow at socialism. Stalinism and the Stalinist state have nothing whatever in common with a workers' state or with socialism. They are the worst and the most dangerous enemies of socialism and the working-class.

"You now hold that the states of Eastern Europe over which Stalinism established its domination during and after the war, are likewise workers' states. This is equivalent to saying that Stalinism has carried out a revolutionary socialist role. I cannot and will not follow you in this. After the war and even before it ended, there was a rising revolutionary movement of the masses in these Eastern countries.

"But it was not these masses who won power and it was not a workers' state that was established by their struggle. It was the Stalinist counter-revolution that won power, reducing these lands to vassals of the Kremlin by strangling the working masses, their revolutionary ~~aspirations~~ aspirations. By considering that the Stalinist bureaucracy established workers' states in these countries, you assign to it a progressive and even revolutionary role. By propagating this monstrous falsehood to the workers' vanguard, you deny to the Fourth International all the basic reasons for existence as the world party of the socialist revolution. I in the past, we always considered Stalinism to be a counter-revolutionary force in every sense of the term. You no longer do so. But I continue to do so.

"In 1932 and 1933 the Stalinists, in order to justify their shameless

capitulation to Hitlerism, declared that it would matter little if the Fascists came to power, because socialism would come after and through the rule of Fascism. Only dehumanized brutes without a shred of socialist thought or spirit could have argued this way. Now, notwithstanding the revolutionary aims which animate you, you maintain that the despotic Stalinist reaction which has triumphed in Eastern Europe is one of the roads through which socialism will eventually come. This view marks an irreparable break with the profoundest convictions always held by our movement and which I continue to share.

"I find it impossible to follow you in the question of the Tito regime in Yugoslavia. All the sympathy and support of revolutionists and even of all democrats, should go to the Yugoslav people in their determined resistance to the efforts of Moscow to reduce them and their country to vassalage. Every advantage should be taken of the concessions which the Yugoslav regime now finds itself obliged to make to the people. But your entire press is now devoted to an inexcusable idealization of the Titoist bureaucracy for which no ground exists in the traditions and principles of our movement.

"This bureaucracy is only a replica, in a new form, of the old Stalinist bureaucracy. It was trained in the ideas, the politics and morals of the G.P.U. Its regime differs from Stalin's in no fundamental regard. It is absurd to believe or to teach that the revolutionary leadership of the Yugoslav people will develop out of this bureaucracy or in any way other than in the course of struggle against it.

"Most insupportable of all is the position on the war to which you have committed yourselves. The Third World War which threatens humanity confronts the revolutionary movement with the most difficult problems, the most complex situations, the gravest decisions. Our position can be taken only after the most earnest and freest discussions. But in the face of all the events of recent years, you continue to advocate, and to pledge the entire movement, to the defense of the Stalinist state. You are even now supporting the armies of Stalinism in the war which is being endured by the anguished Korean people. I cannot and will not follow you in this.

"As far back as 1927, Trotsky, in reply to a disloyal question put to him in the Political Bureau by Stalin, stated his views as follows: For the socialist fatherland, yes! For the Stalinist regime, no! That was in 1927! Now, twenty-three years later, Stalin has left nothing of the socialist fatherland. It has been replaced by the enslavement and degradation of the people by the Stalinist autocracy. This is the state you propose to defend in the war, which you are already defending in Korea. I know very well how often you repeat that you are criticizing Stalinism and fighting it. But the fact is that your criticisms and your fight lose all value and can yield no results because they are determined by and subordinated to your position of defense of the Stalinist state. Whoever defends this regime of barbarous oppression, regardless of the motives, abandons the principles of socialism and internationalism.

"In the message sent me from the recent convention of the S.W.P., you write that Trotsky's ideas continue to be your guide. I must tell you that I read these words with great bitterness. As you observe from what I have written above, I do not see his ideas in your politics. I have confidence in these ideas. I remain convinced that the only way out of the present situation is the social revolution, the self-emancipation of the proletariat of the world.

NATALIA SEDOVA TROTSKY
MEXICO, D.F.
May 9, 1951

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Keep it by you and read it often. It is a historical document. After fifty years of struggle, in Natalia's letter still burns the fire which created and sustained Bolshevism; utter devotion, diligence with error but sternness which will not compromise with wrong, a will that sufferings and persecutions of a life-time have only steeled - but the whole governed today, as it was fifty years ago, by hatred of the incalculable crimes of bourgeois society, and devotion to socialism as Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky and countless others taught it and lived it, a doctrine of liberation, of freedom. The Stalinists had dragged it in the mud of exploitation and the blood of workers, and these Fourth Internationalists, year by year, had stagnated until finally they had reached that stage of callousness, perversion of the intelligence and loss of all moral values which could teach that when the Russian barbarism descended on Eastern Europe, that was the road to socialism.

Natalia showed how bitterly she felt the way in which these men had besmirched the very ideas of socialism. She calls them "dehumanized brutes". She does not know their dehumanized brutality as I do. I left that party in July. It was just a month before their friends in Europe openly declared allegiance to Stalin and his satellite parties, a policy that the American Trotskyites fully endorsed when it arrived here. As with the Shachtmanites, I would not trust any single one of these, especially in European countries, with five minutes of conversation. In twenty days they threw over the lessons of twenty years and went to Tito hat in hand and singing the praises of that butcher until he kicked them aside. They will do for Stalin what they were ready to do for Tito if he should ever need them. The bread is the same. They and Shachtman go out of Marxism together. History will remember them as the lowest depths to which Marxism has sunk in the hundred years of its existence.

The question is why. That also is a theoretical question and I shall give you a sketch, necessarily brief, of my ideas and the future of Marxism in the United States. But before I do so, I want to say that there is no great mystery about the way each of these has run to a master. They both of them, and there is no need to distinguish between them, both of them collapsed for one reason - they no longer believed that the American working-class could establish a workers' state within any period that they could see. In memorial speeches they both said the words, but the words meant nothing. Pick up Preis' The Welfare State or Cannon's The Road to ~~World~~ Peace. Nowhere, not in one single line, does the proletariat as a revolutionary force appear. If the Socialist Workers Party believed that the present crisis could end only in the victory of the American workers at home, they could never have arrived at the conclusion that a world-wide victory for Stalin and Stalinists is a victory for socialism. The Stalinists commit their crimes against the workers because, as they will admit in confidence, the workers are not yet ready to rule themselves. The Socialist Workers Party clutches at Stalinism because it depends upon the state-power of Stalin, the Red Army and the Stalinist parties, to win the victory; it does not believe the workers can win it. And Shachtman is tormented by the idea that in World War III, the Russians and their satellites will win a victory which will establish Stalinism in the United States. All are blind to the power of the working-class and the American working-class in particular. And what a class is this American proletariat! It is the greatest social class the world has ever known. Never before were so many tens of millions of men, women and children so united, disciplined and organized by the very mechanism of capitalist production itself; never were so many millions so literate, so well-educated in technology and the immense possibilities of science and industry; with such profound concepts of what constitutes human dignity, human freedom, and what constitutes tyranny. It is the government, the bourgeoisie and the intellectuals who try to spread terror about the loss of our liberties to Russian Communism. The American workers are not worried about Russian Communism. And rightly so. No power on earth exists which could impose a totalitarian domination upon the American proletarians and the millions of others who are proletarians in all but name and the clothes that they wear. No such power exists, neither in Russia nor here, none exists and none can be created.

Those who try to impose a totalitarian domination here (and they will try, sooner or later), will unleash a tornado that will root up and demolish not only them but all others who are like them, wherever they may be, in Buenos Aires or Peiping, in London, Calcutta or Moscow.

Part IV

As I said, the question is: why have these two parties gone the way they have? I put it that way, not because of them - they as Marxists are finished - but I put it that way for some very important reasons. First because of you and all like you, isolated individuals and groups who are struggling to understand Leninism, but who are shocked and sometimes bewildered by what the professed Marxists are doing. Today there are thousands like us everywhere, all asking the same question: why has this happened to Marxism? It is a good question so long as you do not confuse yourself and your friends with the working-class. The working-class, the workers in mass production industries in particular, are not dependent upon any theory or party. It is far truer to say that parties and theories are dependent upon them. They have their own way of judging and working at their problems. But a theoretical Marxist, whether an intellectual or a worker, that is something else. He can go badly wrong, ruin himself, discredit the doctrine, and ruin quite a number of others along with himself. And secondly, I put the question in relation to them because in revolutionary politics not only do the great ideas and events explain small and apparently insignificant things. The opposite is also true. Through the close observation of small political groupings, we are able to see ideas and forces of vast scope more clearly and more profoundly. The analysis of these pitiful capitulators is not a question, as they believe, of psychology and personality. On the contrary, it is here that you need the most serious Marxian theory. The working-class arrives at its conclusions and its decisions in its own way. But a Marxist must live by theory, or degeneration and collapse await him.

Capitalism develops according to two great fundamental laws, the law of the centralization of capital and the law of the socialization of labor. First, the law of centralization.

As Marx puts it, one capitalist kills many. It is the nature of units of capitalist production to destroy smaller units and incorporate what is valuable into themselves, to form greater and greater combines, to dominate a whole industry, then many industries, then a whole country, and today if possible, the world. But side by side with this expansion, the process of labor, the way the workers work, that changes. It becomes more and more a cooperative process, and there a new world begins. It is useless to try to paraphrase Marx. Only his own words will do:

"One capitalist always kills many. Hand in hand with this centralization, or this expropriation of many capitalists by a few, develop, on an ever-extending scale, the cooperative form of the labor-process, the conscious technical application of science, the methodical cultivation of the soil, the transformation of the instruments of labor into instruments of labor only usable in common, the economizing of all means of production by their use as the means of production of combined, socialized labor, the entanglement of all peoples in the net of the world-market, and this, the international character of the capitalist regime."

Watch that phrase: the cooperative form of the labor process. Marx had his eyes fixed on what was happening in production. And this leads us into the second great law, the law of the socialization of labor. For every stage in this process of growth and the

development of cooperation socialized labor, increases its numbers, unites it, disciplines it, organizes it. This has not a thing to do with any union, or party, not a thing. When capital organizes the River Rouge plant, needing 80,000 workers, it has thereby organized them as a social force, by the very fact that they work together in one large production unit. It is because capitalist production has organized them already, that a labor union and a labor political party can be formed. It is capitalism itself which produces, in Marx's phrase, its own grave-digger, in these millions of proletarians who are trained to cooperative labor by that scientific organization of large-scale production which capitalism itself created.

Others besides Marx had noticed this. And they believed that mankind would continually develop the cooperative form of the labor process with higher and higher standards of living, more and more democracy, more and more equality. People who thought this way at one time comprised the majority of educated society. But Marx was never afraid to stand alone and he laughed them to scorn. He ridiculed their idea of continuous progress. He insisted that it was the workers who were being trained to cooperation. It was the cooperative form of the labor process which grew continually. And the more the workers were knit into huge cooperative units, the more savagely capital had to attack and suppress them. Instead of a continuous growth of equality and democracy, you would have such class struggles as the world had never seen before, and a growing and unceasing revolt of the workers. Here are his own words:

"Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital who usurp and monopolize all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation, but with this too grows the revolt of the working-class, a class always increasing in numbers and disciplined, united, organized by the very mechanism of the process of production itself."

Is this true or not true? Only workers in the plant can give the answer at once and without hesitation. It is absolutely true. Before the union was formed, Ford, for example, was submitting the workers in his plant in Detroit to an exploitation and misery which was driving men crazy and cutting their lives in half. The men organized the C.I.O. to resist. Their capacity to resist has been taken away by the labor leaders and once more the struggle rages, this time by means of wild-cats and rank-and-file committees.

Marx wrote in 1867, 85 years ago. Since that time the unity, discipline and organization of the working-class has grown until today it is the most powerful social class the world has ever seen. And as centralization has increased and the number of capitalist magnates diminished, so of necessity bureaucracy has grown. For the magnates by themselves are too few to discipline tens of millions of workers. Bureaucracy is their weapon against the cooperative society. What else can stop the working-class?

Every worker in large-scale industry recognizes that today. These thousands of men in a single plant need a vast apparatus of foremen, time-study men, superintendents, plant protection, etc. Precisely because the men who labor do not run the plant, you have a swarm of engineers, technicians and clerical employees who are engaged in doing work a great deal of which is totally unnecessary. To these are added lawyers and their staffs, economists, public relations men, all utterly useless except that they are necessary for capital. When the men form the union, the labor leadership soon has to increase its own personnel to discipline the men and to carry on its interminable negotiations with the company. A problem which a dozen men in a plant could settle in ten minutes becomes a grievance and goes through a procedure involving a steadily increasing growth of bureaucracy. As the scale of production grows, so grows the bureaucratic administration. Finally the scale of production and the organizations of centralized capital and

socialized labor reach a stage where a strike in one industry, sometimes in one plant, can paralyze the economy of the country. The crisis in production becomes a crisis of society as a whole. The corporations cannot control the workers. The labor leaders by themselves cannot. Both run to the government which intervenes with labor-relations boards, fact-finders, arbitrators, mediators, which means still further multiplication of administrative processes and bureaucracy. There are foolish people who think that the whole process is due to the complications of modern industry. Every worker knows that that is nonsense. This mighty apparatus springs from the need to discipline the workers.

But that is absolutely impossible. You cannot discipline tens of millions of modern men. These are not slaves in Ancient Rome. They are educated, read newspapers, listen to the radio, enjoy means of communication and information undreamed of until fifty years ago, are familiar with national and world politics. And these highly civilized human beings, as a class the most highly civilized people the world has ever known, know that while the capitalist cannot run the plant without them, they can run it without him. Yet eight hours a day or more they are kicked around and pushed around and persecuted, told when to go to the toilet, when not to smoke, where to eat a sandwich, forbidden to walk twenty feet and talk to another worker. And every single soul, from the plant superintendent to the boy who is sweeping, knows that this has nothing to do with production. The foreman does not tell the worker how to do his work. He is there to discipline him. Every day that becomes harder to do. Hence more bureaucracy, more supervision, more time-study men, more negotiations, more fact-finders, more propagandists. The ultimate end of all this is what you have in Russia, the completely bureaucratized state of totalitarianism, soldiers with bayonets in the factory and millions in slave labor camps. It is the final centralization within a single country.

Millions of Officials and Functionaries.

All this bureaucratism, ending in the oneparty state, I repeat, is rooted in the need to discipline workers in production. But the relations of production in any society determine, shape, put their stamp upon all other relations. As production expands and is bureaucratized, so is it with all other spheres of social activity. The most important is government. Government today consists of vast administrative bureaucracies which in any large country comprise millions of officials and functionaries, the majority of whom grow and multiply by the same needs and procedures as in production. They exist for the same purpose, to discipline the population in general, and are essentially as useless.

Thus in addition to the government labor bureaucracy for labor, there is the bureaucracy for agriculture, and the bureaucracy for commerce.

There is the army today consisting of millions in war or peace and obviously here to stay as long as capitalism exists. This requires an immense bureaucracy, with a vast number of the bureaucrat wearing uniforms.

There is the bureaucracy for the immense growth of taxation. There is a vast bureaucracy dealing with social services, housing, health, old-age pensions, essentially a bureaucracy for the victims of capitalist production. There is now added to them an army of social workers who invade the homes of workers to help them adjust themselves to the burdens and miseries of the capitalist system; i.e., to keep them from revolting. There is the bureaucracy of courts, prisons, police and the secret police which grows larger every day, as workers show their utter rejection of the system.

As in production, this vast bureaucratic administration has one root cause, the need to suppress and discipline by propaganda, threats, charity and brute force, the immense power of millions of workers who, despite their differences, objectively, by the mere scale of modern production, constitute a permanent threat to property, power and ~~production. The need to suppress and discipline by propaganda, threats, charity and brute force, the immense power of millions of workers who, despite their differences, objectively, by the mere scale of modern production, constitute a permanent threat to property, power and~~ ~~appearance of plant supervision, taxation, bureaucracy, police, secret police, and the~~ ~~social security, bureaucrats, police and the~~ ~~order bur~~

...right of this need to protect the workers and the people, and the whole apparatus of plant supervision, taxation bureaucrats, labor-relations bureaucrats, security bureaucrats, police and law and order bureaucrats, the whole thing would fall apart and mankind would be free at last. But it will not just fall apart. Instead it grows more centralized and more powerful as the threat to capital grows. I expect that you in Britain are flooded with propaganda about "free enterprise" and "the American way", and your "statism" is criticized by American propagandists. Like the widespread talk of the incompetence of American capitalists in managing industry, this "free enterprise" talk is the utmost nonsense. The United States is in the grip of bureaucratism, the bureaucratism above all of the state.

The United States government today collects and dispenses more money than any other state in any time of history. Only recently a popular periodical showed that President Truman has collected more taxes than all the taxes collected by the 31 previous presidents of the United States. Over the last dozen years the government has dispensed the biggest orders to industry that any industry has ever had. The government has the final word on the disposition of raw materials and what should be produced and when. The United States government fixes wages, decides on conditions of labor, constantly intervenes in disputes between labor and capital and tries to lay down the law.

The true index of the present stage of capitalism is the role of the state in the economy. Marx in his theoretical work stated with the utmost clarity that the ultimate end of capitalism in any single country was the centralization of all the capital in the hands of one single capitalist or the single corporation. But long before it reached that, the state begins to assume the authority and responsibility for holding the system together. This merciless struggle of centralization of capital against socialized labor is driving the capitalist world to suicidal war. By 1914 the German state attempted to centralize European capital, as a preliminary to world power. That is what World War I was about. The other imperialisms, with the United States at their head, blocked it. But greater socialization and greater centralization continued until a totally centralized Germany under Hitler tried again and did for a brief moment succeed in centralizing European capital. The United States again crushed Germany. But once more the centralization of European capital is on the order of the day. Russia is preparing to seize the continent from the East while the United States is preparing the same from the West. To say that German militarism, or German Fascism or Russian Communism, or the Kaiser or Hitler or Stalin is the cause of all this, is propaganda suitable for half-wits and idiots. Most single countries are today too small to maintain the vast accumulations of capital needed for a national economy and the terrific class struggles these masses of capital generate. To exist at all, to fight the workers at home and its rivals abroad, capitalism has had to become state-capitalism, a form of development foretold and understood by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

* As late as 1919, it was only later that Trotsky changed his opinion.

But state-capitalism is not a continuous development of capitalism, but a transformation into its opposite. For capitalism lived and progressed by free competition, and hence found its fullest development under a democratic bourgeoisie. State-capitalism means and can only mean bureaucracy, tyranny and barbarism. That is true, as everyone can see, not only of Stalinist Russia but of Socialist Britain, not only where the property is nationalized but where private property ^{accumulates} ~~accumulates~~ to state domination as in America. The state-capitalist powers today, themselves the product of a remorseless centralization, are aiming at the final centralization, world mastery by the United States or by Russia. And to achieve this they have each built in their various ways and are expanding such a mighty bureaucratic apparatus of tyranny and oppression that even before the final clash civilization is collapsing under it. Peace, security, democratic rights, national independence, Russia moves across Europe and Asia destroying them from one side, while the United States counters from the other. Both know quite well that they run the risk of destroying themselves, but what else can they do?

As I say, many people can see this and the great majority of educated persons see nothing but disaster ahead. They say so openly and this is one of the surest signs of the complete decay of a society. They are blind to the socialization of labor.

The Invading Capitalist Society.

If the law of centralization is being driven to the ultimate limits, so is the law of the socialization of labor. It is incredible how blind some people are to this and, blindest of all are the professional Marxists. This you must see for if you do not, nothing can save you from the fate of either Cannon or Shachtman. It is not easy. And it is not easy because the whole of capitalist society, every section of it, labor leaders and all, lives by one basic idea: workers cannot rule; workers do not want to rule; what they want is good leaders. Yet it is possible for a Marxist by hard work to appreciate and begin to understand what Marx meant by the socialization of labor. No philosopher ever had a grander conception of humanity. Yet no philosophical conception was ever so solidly based on the first necessity of human society, labor and production.

Let us approach it first on the negative side, from the point of view of the bourgeoisie itself. Forget for a moment what we ~~usually~~ think of as politics, i.e., voting, elections, support of war, opposition to war, etc, forget it if only for a moment. Ignore also for the moment the five cents more an hour, or ten cents more an hour or even fifteen cents for which workers are supposed to struggle so hard. I shall take the American working-class for I know more about it than any other, but what I shall say of it is essentially true of any large body of organized workers anywhere.

I keep on saying that the American working-class is in absolute opposition to capitalist production, that most of its productive energy and inventiveness goes into a struggle with the capitalist class over every step of production. Let all sorts of educated idiots prattle about democracy. This question of labor and production is the very foundation of society. And if you doubt what I say about American workers in production, consult any list of publications on American production during the last three or four years. I know the names of at least fifty full-length books whose authors have racked their brains over how to get workers to work. Read the proceedings of the West Coast Federation of Employers. Read the work of Peter Drucker, a consultant of General Motors. If you wish, I could send you the information about popular articles in popular magazines like Colliers and the Reader's Digest. Or if you wish, go back to Elton Mayo's famous book, The Human Problems of an Industrial Civilization, and the long series of experiments and investigations he and his colleagues have carried on since. Most of the large universities have departments at work on this question. As for pamphlets, they exist in the hundreds. The management of the Ford Empire, including Henry II himself, has more than once come out with the statement: as far as productivity is concerned we cannot do much more. The question now is whether the workers will throw their energies into labor. And nothing is more certain than that the workers will not throw their energies into labor for capitalism. They do a certain amount of work, but they decide what that ~~amount~~ ^{amount} is, and the rest is one of relentless struggle to prevent capital forcing them to do more. The capitalist class and its economists see the problem. They are not playing at politics writing nonsense in little papers. They are serious people. They have to deal with production, and they see and feel the crisis every day. But they cannot see the only solution, which is for the working-class to take over completely. As far as I can gather from reading responsible people in Britain, that is the problem of capitalism there also. How to raise productivity? How to get the miners to work. It is the basic problem everywhere in the world, and ~~nowhere more so than in the totalitarian states. That is why they are totalitarian.~~ nowhere more so than in the totalitarian states. That is why they are totalitarian.

But the socialization of labor is not a mere question of resistance to centralized capital. It contains within itself the positive elements of the new society. And if you can see this in production, you can see it everywhere. Unless you see it in

production you can see it nowhere, and can never understand what is meant by the Marxist contention that the workers are the most advanced class in society. One of the difficulties in the way is that many of the ideas of the ruling class persist in the minds of workers even up to the very moment of the revolution. It is only after the first great outbreak that the masses begin to bring their energies and their years of thought and discussion to bear upon the problems that face them. Then stage by stage their own class ideas and class program rapidly unfold. No single human being or party could have predicted, far less organized the Soviet. No one could have guessed that it was coming until it came. But it is obvious that the Russian workers were in their own way and among themselves coming to the conclusion that they wanted something more than parliamentary democracy. Who in 1935 when Lewis and Green were proposing and counter-proposing in A.F. of L. council halls, who could have foreseen the gigantic actions and the sit-down strikes which brought the C.I.O.? Nobody. Absolutely nobody. Still more, did anybody conceive that American workers wanted to have a system whereby they would decide all grievances on the spot by immediate discussion and if the employers did not agree, immediate walking off the job? Yet that is what they were thinking while Roosevelt was passing the N.R.A. and Green and Lewis were arguing.

It is always very hard to foresee these things, impossible to foresee all of them. Yet today bourgeois society is in a very advanced stage of decay, and despite the superficial dominance of bourgeois ideas, it is possible to see unmistakably what tremendous and world-shaking passions and forces lie behind the restlessness and the bitterness of the working-class. Get to know any group of workers. That is a very difficult thing, but it can be done. Then ask them if they believe that the foreman, the plant superintendent and the other supervisory staff are necessary. The answer will be a categorical and unanimous: No - we do not need them. They cause all the trouble in the plant. And that for capitalism is the seed of death. When the slaves in the South had reached the stage where they would not work any longer, then slavery was doomed. This ever-growing conviction that it is supervision which is ruining life in the factory and preventing serious attention to production was always there, but it is being driven home and brought out into the open by the general crisis of capitalism as a world system.

But these supervisors day by day are forced to drive ever harder at these workers. The whole capitalist crisis with its bureaucracies, armies and wars, demands more and ever more speed-up, ever more discipline, ever more subordination. In the end it means the totalitarian state or the workers carrying out what they already know, taking over completely. The workers cannot continue merely to resist. They have to go further. Everybody shouts in their ears that for workers to attempt to rule means anarchy, chaos and in the end more bureaucracy. The workers do not accept this from the employers. Workers are the most disciplined people in the world. They have to be. They understand that leadership is necessary, order, discipline, someone to decide. But that is the very reverse of bureaucracy, a mass of officials in offices setting plans and foremen with whip in hand. What keeps them confused and doubtful is that their own labor leaders are always telling them the same thing. But the problem will have to be solved and the solution is in nobody's hands or in any books. It is there in the nature of production itself and the daily lives and experiences of the workers.

New Forces and New Passions Everywhere

And as always the solution to the problems of production show the road to the solution of all other problems.

Take the most bureaucratic, the most expensive and the most oppressive organization of modern society - the Army. Marxists badly need a serious theoretical study of the modern army. I cannot pretend to do that here. But consult any group of the millions of veterans anywhere and ask them what they think about the officer caste. The answer will be unshakable and it will be exactly what the workers think of supervision. Veterans

believe that the large majority of officers are not only utterly useless but are the main source of the bitterness, the frustration and the disorder in army life. And these men are not Marxists or necessarily opposed to the war. Many of them speak in terms of a more efficient army.

But you ~~must~~ have officers, some will say. What they mean is that you must have someone in command, which is a very different thing. A patrol of thirty or forty men who find themselves lost without an official leader, commonly decide to listen to the most capable and most experienced among them, usually a soldier who has seen a lot of the particular war or war in general. Nobody in his senses ever objected to leaders, commanders, discipline, least of all workers or soldiers who, unlike intellectuals, know how serious work and fighting are. The anger, the ferocious conflicts and the resulting disorder and incompetence arise from the organization of a solid caste of rulers who are banded together to suppress the mass. This sounds strange, I know. But it is only because we have been brought up in bourgeois society and have unthinkingly accepted, as we must to one degree or another, the ideas and practices that it instills into us from childhood, calling everything else anarchy and chaos. The truth is that the freest army the modern world has ever known was the army of Napoleon while he was still revolutionary. And that army was the most democratic and the most undisciplined army ever known. It was also one in which anyone from the ranks could most easily become an officer (for it was after all a bourgeois army) and, note this, it was an army which was continually shaken by revolts, insurrections and mutinies by men against the officers. Napoleon himself could do nothing to stop it. Another famous ~~was~~ modern army was Cromwell's army, also a revolutionary army. The freedom of discussion and promotion in that army was something that is difficult for us to understand today. Yet it was one of the finest fighting organizations the world has ever known. The truth is that the ferocious discipline and officer-caste of the modern army are not needed for fighting against the enemy. As in production, they are needed for one main purpose, to keep the men in subordination to their own officers.

But aren't men of technical knowledge needed in production as well as in the army? Sure they are. But ~~also~~, a great number of soldiers and rank-and-file workers ~~are~~ have this knowledge. And secondly, ask workers or veterans again. Is it possible for the majority of workers and soldiers to become technically proficient? The veterans can answer quicker than the workers. If the five years they spent in the army had been spent in the study and practice of science and technique, large countries like the United States and Russia would today have some twenty or thirty million workers who were at the same time as highly trained as any college-bred science student and far more capable. Such a body of men is the basis of democracy today and would wipe away the need for any caste of supervisors in the plant or in the army. This is the conception of the socialization of labor as analyzed by Marx and Lenin. I see it all around me today.

American workers are not thinking these things through to their conclusions. For one thing the whole might of bourgeois society is solidly against any such thinking. But these are their needs, their hopes, their aspirations. These needs, hopes, aspirations exist. Totalitarian states are formed to prevent these ideas being even thought. They cannot do it in totalitarian states, and in the United States they ~~are~~ are rampant. See how people read books like The Naked and the Dead and From Here to Eternity. In the United States up to the time of Lincoln and perhaps for a generation after, an active, able worker could go out and become a capitalist on his own; even at the beginning of the twentieth century a few could and many had the illusion. Now today they know that their future is ~~also~~ always will be in the plant. And they are reaching out to a new conception of their destiny.

It is everywhere. Ask the women in any local community if they need social workers,

nursery schools by the state, housing authorities to tell them where and how their houses should be built, bureaucrats to organize social security (in reality the organization of social insecurity), bureaucrats to take care of the aged, hospital bureaucrats and such-like, including psychiatrists to tell them that it is the father-complex or mother-fixation which has upset the relations between themselves and their husbands and children. Just on the surface they may appear to accept these things as inevitable. But once the ice is broken it does not take very long to find that the women know what they do want and know how to get it if they had the chance. It takes some Stalinist or Trotskyite, aching to educate workers, to believe that women do not know the kind of houses they want and where they want them. There is no limit to the impertinence of these would-be leaders of workers. Women by the million know what they want. They want to work because they know that in the plant there is a social existence. But they do not want conditions in the plant as they are today because that is slavery. They want hours which will enable them to work out cooperative care of the children. They know that if their husbands were not so exhausted and cruelly frustrated in the factory, the husband and wife relation would begin to be human and a source of strength and happiness to both. They know that work in the plant should be organized in such a way that the husbands could share in the bringing up of children. They know all this and they want it badly. Only a professional Marxist, eaten up with his own self-conceit and desirous to lead, believes that he and his party have to teach this to working-women. The women do not denounce the capitalist system, they do not know that what they want is socialism, but the thing itself, that is very real and very present to them. You will find these needs and ideas widespread among share-croppers in the most remote areas. Newspapers, radios, cheap literature, schools, hammer these things into their heads every day. They want them. And meanwhile they see vast billions spent on armaments. A very curious thing and highly significant is that my worker friends report that many of their fellow-workers say that while they have no use for what is in Russia, Communism, real Communism, the old kind of Communism is a good thing. To them the old kind of Communism is the cooperative society. That cooperative society is in existence. It is here now, in the working-class. It is not to be built and people trained to it by some party or leaders. The ideas that I have described spring naturally from the society of cooperative labor. Bourgeois society mobilizes itself against them because they exist. The centralized bureaucratic mass is the weapon which poisons, stifles, distorts the new society. But it is here and your duty is to study the working-class and find and understand what it seeks to do.

A Higher Type of Social Organization.

The government and the most acute minds in the United States know that bourgeois society is threatened. They do not fully comprehend exactly what the workers are striving for - it takes a Marxist to do that. But that the workers are determined to end the system, that they know. Proof? In 1939 the National Resources Planning Board, with such members and contributors as Beardsley Ruml, Gardiner C. Means, and Alvin Hansen, made a report to the President. There they stated:

"Moreover, as people become increasingly aware of the discrepancy between rich resources and poor results in living and as the ineffectiveness in the organization of resources becomes more clear, a sense of social frustration must develop and be reflected in justified social unrest and unavoidable friction. Individual frustration builds into social frustration. And social frustration is quite as likely to work itself out in socially destructive as in socially constructive ways...The opportunity for a higher standard of living is so great, the social frustration from the failure to obtain it is so real, that other means will undoubtedly be sought if a democratic solution is not worked out. The time for finding such a solution is not unlimited."

Again you can hear the note of crisis and of doom.

"The serious failure to use these resources to the full is placing our democratic institutions in jeopardy. The maintenance of democracy requires that an adequate solution be found to the problem of keeping resources fully employed."

Eleanor Roosevelt has been equally plain:

"We know, we people in the United States, that the world is facing new and unpredictable conditions...at the same time we know that adherence to old and outmoded answers may lead to destruction."

That much they know. But what exactly is to take the place of the outmoded system, that they cannot know. I have tried to describe it for you. And what is this but Marxism? Yes, this is Marxism.

In 1919, after the revolution, Lenin told the Russian workers:

"As I have had occasion to point out more than once, particularly in the speech I delivered at the meeting of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies on March 12, the dictatorship of the proletariat is not only violence against the exploiters, and not even mainly violence. The economic foundations of this revolutionary violence, the guarantee of its virility and its success is the fact that the proletariat represents and carries out a higher type of social organization of labor compared with capitalism. This is the essence. This is the source of strength and the guarantee of the inevitable and complete triumph of Communism.

"The serf organization of social labor rested on the discipline of the stick, while the toilers, who were robbed and tyrannized over by a handful of landlords, were extremely ignorant and downtrodden. The capitalist organization of social labor rested on the discipline of starvation, and, notwithstanding all the progress of bourgeois culture and bourgeois democracy, the vast masses of the toilers in the most advanced, civilized and democratic republics remained an ignorant and downtrodden mass of wage-slaves, or oppressed peasants, robbed and tyrannized over by a handful of capitalists. The Communist organization of social labor, the first step toward which is Socialism, rests, and will do so more and more as time goes on, on the free and conscious discipline of the very toilers who have thrown off the yoke of the landlords and capitalists.

"This new discipline does not drop from heaven, nor is it born out of pious wishes; it grows out of the material conditions of large-scale capitalist production, and out of this alone. Without this it is impossible. And the vehicle, or the channel, of these material conditions is a definite historical class, created, organized, consolidated, trained, educated and hardened by large-scale capitalism. This class is the proletariat."

He said it in a score of different ways. It was the policy with which he led the struggle for the October Revolution. It was the policy on which he strove to build the Soviet state. Today the Stalinists have a bullet for anyone under their control who would dare to mention this. The Trotskyites when asked about this in public maintain a grim and bitter silence; in private when they feel they are among their own friends and supporters, they will show you their contempt for this by their sneers at "mysticism" and "utopia."

Lenin was seeing in life what Marx fifty years earlier had been able to foresee in theory. Marx did not since his words on this question. He said that unless the workers, every worker, became a highly-skilled educated individual, bringing all his force and his energies to production and all other social activities, the society of modern industry would collapse. The words are so sharp and most so-called Marxists are so bitterly opposed to them that I quote them for you:

"It becomes a question of life and death for society to adapt the mode of production to the normal functioning of this law. Modern ~~industry~~ ^{industry} indeed compels society, under penalty of death, to replace the detail worker of today, crippled by life-long repetition of one and the same trivial operation and thus reduced to a mere fragment of a man, by the fully-developed individual fit for a variety of labors, ready to face any change of production, and to whom the different social functions he performs are but so many modes of giving free scope to his own natural and acquired powers."

Either the powers of the workers are released or society will continue on its rush to the abyss. Before you go rushing to lead workers, you spend some time in finding out what you really believe. What else do you think, I ask you, causes the paralysis of a country like France. Why for years in country after country, "democracy as we have known it being violently destroyed? Why do you have in Russia the most barbarous state power human society has ever known? Is it because mankind is evil or because men have not appreciated the virtues of parliamentary elections, or some wicked men have fooled others and seized the power, or they have a lust, just some evil lust, for world conquest? Isn't it obvious that the catastrophic decay of civilization; the unheard of barbarisms, cruelties, brutalities which are sweeping the world are due to the fact that the world as we have known it is threatened by total destruction and the rulers are mobilizing against it? Yes. But the world that is threatened is the world of capitalism. The force it is mobilizing to destroy ~~is~~ is the world of cooperative labor, and to achieve this it is destroying civilization itself.

The Struggle of the Russian Workers.

The Stalinists in theory and practice and the Trotskyites in theory have reduced the socialist society to something else. They say: change private property into state-property and behold: the miracle! What the Stalinists should say so is easy to understand. It is upon that basis that they propose to rule. But you get some idea of the catastrophe that has overtaken organized Marxism when, after the experiences of the last ten years in particular, one section of the Trotskyites continue to call Russia a workers' state because there is no longer private property there.

My friend, I believe that more than most people I am theoretically familiar with the Russian economy and the condition of the Russian worker. Let us for a moment show you what people rarely speak about, the struggles of the Russian workers against the Russian state-capitalist system, not merely their oppression but their struggles. Here too a modern Marxist needs to get his mind clear, for it is not lack of information which prevents the self-styled Marxists from knowing what is taking place in Russia. Under their own eyes in the United States, it is taking place, and they do not see it there either.

The millions in forced labor camps are the true measure of the never-ending resistance of the Russian workers to the Russian rulers in the state and in the factory. Had the revolt not been so persistent the terror wouldn't have been so violent. Nobody wants to put millions of people in concentration camps.

The end of World War II brought new purges against "thieves and misappropriators of nationalized property". This is just another expression for workers who will not capitulate to the grind of the belt-line system.

One-half million Soviet citizens found themselves outside the borders of Russia at the end of the war, either in the Red Army or as slave laborers in Germany. The overwhelming majority refused to return. When Britain and the United States in alliance with Stalin forced return upon them, there was a mass suicide movement. Despite pressure a quarter of a million succeeded in remaining outside the "socialist fatherland", and their stories reveal the tensions in the Soviet regime. These, however, in the majority, belonged to the Soviet intelligentsia. The Russian workers could not escape.

But it is these millions who day in and day out, year in and year out, for two solid decades since the inauguration of the First Five Year Plan, have never yielded, and perform miracles of ingenuity and endurance in resisting the totalitarian stranglehold over production. The ~~most~~ terror of the rulers before this revolt is most easily recorded in their laws:

1) 1929, the year of the First Five Year Plan. The appearance of workers' revolt was met by substituting for the ~~workshop~~ production conference with its Workers Conflict Commission, a production conference of engineers, managers and technical intelligentsia. The Decree of January 24, 1929, furthermore decreed that the workers are responsible for damaged goods.

2) 1930. Unemployment compensation was taken away from anyone willingly quitting his job. The factory director was ordered to insert in the worker's paybook the reasons for dismissal. This was to pin the label on the subversive worker.

3) 1932. At the end of what they called the "successful completion" of the plan, the rate of labor turnover was 152%. The workers would not stay in the plant. The factory directors were ordered to fire workers for a single day's absence; and since the place the worker lived at was generally owned by the factory, to deprive him of his lodgings as well.

4) 1933. The workers used the technique of slow-down. The State liquidated the Council of Labor and Defense. It made the trade unions into state organizations, run by the government. It started a campaign against "petty bourgeois equalitarianism". What ~~the workers really meant~~ this really meant was breaking up the solidarity of the workers by introducing piecework pay.

5) 1935. Stakhanovism, or piecework speedup, was made the rule of the land. So that this breakneck competition might really set the workers competing with each other, rationing was abolished so that no worker was sure of his piece of black bread. Nevertheless, while the Plan specified 15.7 million laborers as its goal, the number had to be increased to 22.8 million in order to accomplish the goals set. The cause of this was the workers' persistent slow-downs.

6) 1937. By the time the Second Five Year Plan was nearing its end, Russia was shaken by the trials of "Trotskyist-fascist-Bukharinist wreckers". Everybody was accused of sabotage. The workers ran away from the factories to the country in such numbers, that in 1938 passports were introduced to chain the worker to the job; just as in 1933 passports had been introduced to keep peasants away from the city. In face of the rebellion of the working-class, the Stalinists at the 18th Party Congress, March 1939, announced the birth and consolidation of the "classless intelligentsia". They thus gave official status in the Constitution to the technicians, time-study men, organizers, propagandists, secret police, etc, who constituted the force which was to fight the working-class. At its top level it consists of no more than 2.0% of the population.

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1931. In the midst of war the counter-revolutionary system was introduced. The ...
...break-down competition of Stalinism was replaced by "occidentist simulation"
...factory-to-factory competition. In the railroads martial law was introduced and it
has never been reported to this day.

The post-war was greeted by new purges. Seven million men were dead, 35
million persons were hospitalized and awaiting to Moscow, lived in ~~hospitals~~ "dug-outs or
caves". But the first Plan announced was for a 15% increase in heavy industry against
only a 7% increase in light industry. During the war heavy industry had never stopped,
while light industry, i.e., consumption goods for workers, had come virtually to a
standstill and farmers returned to primitive methods of cultivation. The result was that
despite all attempts of the government the flow of labor that had settled in the Ural
during the war began streaming back; while in the Ukraine the revolt took underground
proportions of such magnitude as to form actual guerrilla armies. So great was the workers'
revolt against planned, autocratic, bureaucratic conditions, so widespread was it, the
labor offenses were so innumerable, that to get any production done at all the Stalinist
state had to declare a general amnesty of all labor offenses during the war.

Purges are not due to a state of mind but to a state of production. They have
never ceased in Russia and will never cease under that regime because the crises cover
the class. And the crises never cease because the revolt of the working-class is continuous.

The same news comes from Czechoslovakia, Poland and the other countries in Eastern
Europe. And it is noticeable that it is in Czechoslovakia, industrially the most advanced
country of those Russia has made into satellites, that the resistance of the workers is
most powerful, the slow-downs best organized and the political crisis among the rulers
most desperate. The totalitarian states with their economies planned by the state, are
the most complete and therefore the most vicious form of capitalist centralization with
its corresponding socialization of the workers and the population, and such class
antagonisms and industrial and political crises as the world never saw before. In both
Russia and the United States the fundamental conflict is between despotic capital and
cooperative labor. Both in their different ways are subject to the laws of capitalist
production. But those who cannot see this in the United States will never be able to see
it in Russia. The Leninist analysis of modern society, as I see it, demands that each
society can only solve its productive problems and all the other problems that depend
upon production by the creation of a workers' state in the Leninist sense of that term.

The Workers in the United States.

I have spoken so far only of the advanced proletariat in the United States. What
is so striking is that all the American workers, organized or not organized, are the same
way. Here is some evidence. The Pittsburgh Courier is a paper of the Negro petty-bourgeois

But the Negro petty-bourgeoisie is such a thin stratum, it is to this day still so segregated by American bourgeois society, that it is very much concerned with the work and attitudes of the Negro masses. There are over a million Negro workers in the organized labor movement and many thousands of them in auto, coal, steel and wartime, constitute some of the very finest cadres of the American working class. But the vast majority of Negroes in the United States are at the very bottom of the social ladder. Yet this is how they are seen by Joseph D. Rabb, one of the *Congress* correspondents:

"TOO COCKY"

"Many employers of domestic workers and unskilled laborers declare that these workers are much too cocky and independent. It has been common knowledge, for a long time, that domestic workers have taken attitudes of arrogance and defiance.

"Housewives, both colored and white, continually complain that they cannot depend upon their help. It is charged that high pay, kind treatment and respectable recognition of their work and personalities do not satisfy them. They walk off the job at the drop of a hat. They quit without giving notice. They refuse to perform reasonable chores. They take cocky, independent attitudes, just as if they were the employers who pay the freight."

"There are manufacturers and employers who contend they have to handle their help 'with kid gloves' in order to keep them steadily working. In short, there are widespread objections registered every day, almost everywhere, about the *cockiness* and independence of working people."

"And it should be noted that few object to the scale of pay. They admit that the remuneration is fair. But they boldly state, 'We ain't going to take no stuff from nobody'. The pay-check is forgotten. They fear no consequences. They quit and will not hesitate to say, 'We don't ask nobody for nothing'."

"Employers frankly admit that they find themselves at disadvantages. White workers, it is well known, are just as bumptious. In public places, they are discourteous, insipid and overbearing. They resent they have to work in lowly capacities for a living. The white set-up seems 'screwed'."

That is the American working class, organized and unorganized. Burning with anger and hostility against a system which offers so much and gives so little. Many of these people, white and black, do not vote at all in elections. Only a minority of the American voting population voted in the presidential elections of 1948. Even among the organized workers, few attend union meetings. The liberals and the labor bureaucrats talk solemnly about the *people* and the ignorance of the masses of the people. It is they who are ignorant. These millions are not. They simply feel that whoever is elected, or whatever faction is in power in the union, is doing nothing for them.

The Whole Population is Ready for a Change

I have spoken so far only of the workers. But there are other sections of the population who are of extreme importance. The middle classes in the United States are themselves seething with hostility against the system. The small professional man, the typist, the clerical worker, the salesman or woman in the department store, are as sick of capitalism, its inflation, its smashup speed-up, its corruption, its wars, they are as sick of it as everybody else. But because there is no great Labor Party in the United States, they do not know where to go. For the time being on the surface they think in terms of capitalism. These people as a class cannot lead anything. But they are ready for organic change.

There is a daily violence in the American high school which is difficult to see from the outside. A vast conspiracy of silence is maintained about it. The youth fight, day in and day out, to run their own lives inside the school. Teachers, prison routines, social workers, courts of law and the police, all work closely together to "discipline" these youth and teach them to "behave".

In April 1950, this struggle exploded into the great Student Strike in New York City. Forty thousand high school youth left their schools and marched through the city to City Hall. Mounted police were thrown against them. For eight hours the police tried to break them up, and couldn't. The youth fought the police, sang songs, exploded fire-crackers to frighten the horses, shouted slogans like "No Sports, No School!" and "Does your father work? No, he's a cop!" They climbed trees and poles, turned over cars marked "City-Official", and shouted their defiance at the sweating police. They made fools out of the whole city administration - police, Mayor, school administration and social workers.

The newspapers screamed, get those kids off the streets! It had never happened before. The papers tried to tell people that the strike was called for higher wages for teachers. But if you asked any youth why he was out, he would answer "To get out of school." The strike was a complete rejection of the school. ~~It expressed the~~ It expressed the hatred the kids had for the teachers who tried to boss them around all day. The teachers, in whose cause the strike supposedly was held, were against the strike. Every politician, every "friend of the youth" was scared stiff of it. Because no one had called the strike, no one was leading it, no one "responsible" was at its head. The youth themselves, their cliques, sports groups, clubs, by themselves, had planned, organized and led the whole business. The professional Marxists had ~~seen~~ but contempt for the strike and the youth participating in it, and tried to say it was held for teacher's wages. And they wonder why their parties are isolated and sterile!

The self-discipline and cooperation of the strike, the complete freedom from teachers and "student governments", and above all the ~~new~~ "holiday spirit" of the youth in the strike are an indication of what these youth want the schools to be like every day. Every day, inside the schools, they fight continually to change the way the schools are run. They cut continuously, destroy school property, and stage small-scale riots in the lunch-rooms. The teacher knows she must maintain the harshest discipline inside the classroom - prohibit all whispering, break up cliques of friends, allow only one person to leave the room at a time, - or the whole classroom will explode right in her face.

This is the American high school today. When the working-class moves to destroy bureaucracy in the whole nation, the youth will go right along with it. Until that time, they will continue to fight the bureaucracy inside their ~~own~~ own school, and work out among themselves what they want the schools to be like.

It has been noticed that American middle-class youth today as a whole ask for little, expect little, do as they are compelled to do, and seek a little spot for themselves in the bureaucracy somewhere. Among them the old American vigor and optimism seem dead. They seem to take little interest in politics. They say openly that politicians are only a bunch of corrupt gangsters. They are deeply stirred by the Negro question, that is known. The inter-racial nature of the Stalinist youth group, Young Progressives of America, attracted many of these youth to it before the 1948 elections. More important than the politics of Wallace was the fact that the organization had Negroes in it. These middle-class youth are not pro-labor in the ordinary political sense, but socially they are not conscious of any great division between themselves and labor. In the United States, the class struggle in production is as sharp as it can be, but in social practices and behavior there is not that gap between the classes that exists in many countries in Europe. That means a lot. For the

passivity of the American middle class is a most unnatural thing. They are "passive" because they trust nobody. They are disappointed and more. They do not know where to look. They do not have the confidence of the workers and thus forces them forward. But if the workers should lead the people to life a new society, the middle-class youth by the millions will go with them and along a large section of the middle-classes as a whole. A large section of those who play in the bureaucracy are then because they do whatever job comes handy.

The same is true of the farmers. The passivity of American farmers is like no such that you in Europe see fed on a hollow system of a million farmers in the United States, perhaps some 8 million do well, but the millionaire collective farmers in Russia. But the vast majority are poor farmers or tenant-farmers, ^{bank} in poverty, with no prospect of ever getting the technical and educational facilities which they need to lift them into a truly civilized life, same with the aged. They want assistance without charity and they want work, work that suits them, but work. Only a system of cooperative labor, of workers arranging all aspects of production among themselves can do this. And as for the Negroes. No people anywhere hate the system as American Negroes hate it. By their gigantic struggles and by a forward march to place civil rights for Negroes in their platform. But the two parties do nothing and can do nothing without tearing apart the social structure of the United States. The Negroes fight on all fronts. Every day, all over the country, is millions of people the struggle for Negro freedom goes on. And they fight politically as well. They will continue to be the major force in breaking up the Democratic Party, because by forcing the Negro question to the forefront of American politics, they make increasingly noticeable that unnatural alliance between the advanced proletariat and the Southern reactionaries. It is the Negro question which will ^{at some point} ~~break up~~ smash this alliance and thereby release the working-class to begin the realization of its own destiny.

The Negroes, like the lower middle-classes, the youth, the farmers and the aged, what they all want is leadership. But not the leadership which the hollowness, conceit and stupidity of the Socialist Workers Party, the Workers Party, and these little parties believe that they and they alone can give. No, they want the leadership of the revolutionary working-class. When the proletariat moves, and move it will because it has to, there will be a new birth of this great nation. The dominance of government, the state in the modern system of state-capitalism has this effect: it makes the whole population to think always in ^{terms} of state-power. State-power decides everything. So that to get anywhere, you must have state-power. There are certain people who call themselves state-capitalists - you have a few among you - and say they are against Stalinism, or Russia and elsewhere, and they talk freely about the growth of bureaucracy in the modern world. Believe me, that doesn't mean a thing. Any number of people can understand the general idea of state-capitalism today. A Leninist analysis of state-capitalism is that ^{state} ~~capitalism~~ catches state-capitalism not only as producing bureaucracy but the revolutionary or ^{the} ~~the~~ force of cooperative labor. It is state-capitalism which compels the working-class, even while still under capitalist domination, to work out the premises of a new social order, which ^{when} ~~it~~ comes, will sweep with it the majority of the nation.

Just Who Is To Have Final Authority?

Now precisely because of this basic situation the labor bureaucracy plays its crucial role. For the whole ever-increasing bureaucratic structure is designed to force the workers and the people to do what they do not want to do, and the key to the whole structure is that labor be kept disciplined. All this planning that they talk so much about is above all planning to order labor about and to keep labor in order. For one big strike of a month in one industry will wreck the finest plans ever made by bureaucrats sitting in offices. Until

the workers themselves completely manage industry, the labor bureaucrats are the most important section of the whole bureaucratic structure. Note how during the last thirty years of the decay of bourgeois society, they have continually increased in power and importance. However capitalism goes, they go. In Lenin's day the working-class was not so powerful. These bureaucrats and a small section of the workers in each country profited by the high profits imperialism made in the colonies. In World War I each remained faithfully attached to his own capitalist class, the German bureaucrats went with the Kaiser, the British bureaucrats with the King, the Russians went with the Tsar, etc. Today that is gone. In nearly every country all over the world, the labor bureaucrats have chosen sides. The Stalinists go with the Kremlin and the Red Army; the Social-Democrats go with the United States. Each section seeks a big power, a big army, and in the world today the two which are decisive are Russia and the United States. Whether these bureaucrats have full power as in Russia, or play politics with the old ruling class as in Britain, or for the time being as in the United States keep the working-class tied to a capitalist party, whatever the form, it is the labor bureaucracy which keeps capitalism alive today. Without the labor-bureaucracy capitalism could not live a day. And nowhere is this more true than in the United States.

All this must seem so strange to you that I have to multiply proof. I quoted earlier an article by Victor Riesel. Here is another and I shall make a few remarks on this one as I go along. Riesel begins:

"CHICAGO.--

"Everywhere across our defense belt unruly mobs of hot-headed, outlaw strike leaders are defying union chiefs and employers - slowing down the output of fuel, secret gadgets and big machines which should be whipping out ammo and guns.

"Suddenly, in many areas the rebels, springing out of nowhere, have become powerful enough, for example, to challenge even the toughest labor leader - John L. Lewis. In the last nine months, in complete defiance of the man they call 'The Champ', hot-heads in the southern soft coal fields have called 309 damaging strikes. Scores more have kept the coal in the pits in northern sectors. And when John L. sent these rebels a letter (on Nov. 1) asking them to cut it out, the irresponsible wild-catters debated the chief's command, instead of obeying it automatically."

I could show you letters and memoranda from friends who know the coal industry, dated years back and showing precisely this, that tens of thousands of miners while ready to defend Lewis in his struggles with the Government and the coal operators, were organically hostile to him and his bureaucracy. (You should have seen the superior, tolerant, contemptuous politeness on the faces of the Workers Party or Socialist Workers Party leaders when we told them, warned them about this.) Now Riesel says what is really at stake:

"Only on the road do you discover that the basic issue is one of the most important ever tossed up on this beat. It is this: Just who is to have final authority inside a plant, or down in a pit? Who is boss - the foreman, or the irritated working guy who feels that when he walks out the crowd will quite with him, and the union will be forced to sanction the strike?"

I could not say it better. If you want to find out the realities of American society, you have to discount the noise and nonsense that go on in Washington. The American struggle is in production and there the American worker wants to rule.

Let Riesel continue:

"Wherever" (note that word please) "you travel you find strikes, costing

millions in pay and profits, forced by the hotheads down below - without consulting the responsible union leaders - because a foreman reprimanded a man in his division. Or a chap wasn't guaranteed special pay. Or someone was shifted to a new department. Or there was a lack of new tools. There's an argument and out walks the entire department, idling thousands in other sections."

That is American society today. I can show you this written by a few of us in a hundred places in a hundred ways during the last ten years. The men walk out over and over again apparently for nothing, and they do this because they are sick of the whole system. One day all are going to walk out at the same time and then, I assure you, the system will never be put together again.

What keeps it going at all? The labor bureaucracy Riesel knows this.

"It can be stopped. It is being stopped near Pittsburgh for example. There, 100 men in a special window division of the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Co. (in Creighton, Pa.) struck in support of a fellow worker who was suspended for failure to follow the instructions of a foreman. All production stopped. The 100 men were fired. Then it was that the union, the C. I. O. Glass Workers, revealed the kind of responsibility which many other unions could well emulate.

"In a few hours, the glass workers' president, Burt W. Phares, and his colleagues ruled the strike illegal. It would not be condoned by this C. I. O. union since it was a 'flagrant violation of the contract'. The company, after rehiring the 100 men, received from the union what the firm called a 'most courageous and unique document'.

"It said in effect, that any working chap who deliberately slows down work, or goes out on wildcat strikes can be fired without redress to union grievance machinery. Furthermore, insubordination of ~~men~~ or countermanning of supervisors' orders will be subject to immediate disciplinary action - with the support of the union."

Those bureaucrats hold American production and with it, American society, together. They are firm as hell against the men but not against the company. Riesel concludes:

"No clearer stand on this has been taken anywhere than here in Chicago, by the men who lead the union which processes most of the meat America's millions eat. Pat Gorman and Earl Jimerson, chiefs of the A. F. L. Meat Cutters' and Butcher Workmen's Union, put it this way in a memo dispatched to their members the other day:

"A wildcat strike is nothing more than an unintelligent exercise of bullheadedness on the part of labor leaders and unthinking labor members who take things into their own hands and declare a strike over issues which very often are thoroughly insignificant. They occur without any consideration being given to the existing agreement which most employers sign in good faith. No union is better than the agreement which it signed with the management. No union is worth its salt that does not fulfill, to the letter, its contracts with employers. The wildcat, as well as the nauseating slowdown, is a putrid concoction of unintelligent trade union leadership and unsound unionism."

"That says it."

That is the situation from end to end of American industry. I have quoted these articles in full because I want you to have them before you as a basis for the study of American society and to counter the existing barrage of lies with which you in Europe are being choked.

You have to decide. What is wrong with these workers. The bourgeoisie is baffled completely by it. Over and over again in the last years you will hear or read this question: Why do the workers behave like that. They will lose three months' wages in a strike over two cents an hour. The bourgeoisie shows them in the press that by not accepting two cents, they are each losing hundreds of dollars. As if the workers did not know that. They are resisting the whole system and their behavior is reasonable only if you understand the depth of the revolt and the vast, the revolutionary scope of the desires behind it. The workers will make a revolution for a new society, not to substitute Reuther for Ford.

It is difficult for us to understand these workers. I shall give you at random a few examples. I know three young girls who are close friends. One is an open Marxist. The other two are not Marxists. One of these two is a Negro and naturally the race question comes up. One day the Negro girl said to the Marxist, "Our friend, M., is white and I am a Negro. She loves me, but one day I know she will make a mistake with me on the race question. She will cry and ask me to forgive her, and I will do so. But if you who talk about socialism make the same mistake, I will never forgive you."

On a larger scale, in 1943, in Harlem, thousands of Negroes smashed to pieces hundreds of white business places, but touched not one of the thousands of white people who walked about in Harlem while the smashing was going on. As a demonstration that as Negroes they opposed the system but felt no animosity against white people as such, and as an example of self-imposed discipline, this is one of the most amazing political acts in the history of the country.

All over the country you find people like these who pay no attention whatever to Reuther and his trips to Washington, and denunciations of Communism on the radio, but in their own daily lives are tackling profound questions and working them out with a simplicity and clarity that puts intellectuals to shame.

Some years ago the Congress for some devious reason of its own charged the multi-millionaire Howard Hughes with fraud or something and hauled him up before a committee. With great arrogance this capitalist as good as told the Senate to go to hell. Strangely enough, those in touch with workers reported the immense satisfaction among them. They did not care that Hughes was a millionaire. It was that Congress had been denounced and abused before the whole country.

When the Taft-Hartley Act was passed, 145,000 miners spontaneously came out on strike, some of them using the slogan: Let the Senators dig coal! For years John L. Lewis, with only half-a-million miners behind him, has made mince-meat of all Government regulations and proposals about wages, etc. The Government has never dared to touch him. It is afraid not only of the miners. It knows that tens of millions of American workers feel that John L. Lewis is the best labor leader in the country. When Lewis led the coal strike during World War II, Murray and the rest rushed frantically to Roosevelt and forced him to raise all wages. Their argument was that all their own workers were itching to follow the example of the miners.

Finally, you have to live in the United States and watch the young men of 25-30 who were veterans in the last war. I know an architect, a butcher, a laundry man and a dozen others. You cannot tell them apart. All look the same, few trouble themselves about the race question. They just don't care. They are all full of scorn for politicians - they don't care. They are sober, disciplined people, doing their jobs and hating it. They are for capitalism dangerous beyond belief. If ever they are called to war again, they will make history.

This is American society, charged with social dynamite. The labor leaders have to fight these workers. If they don't, they are lost. The cleverest of them is Walter Reuther

whose life is divided into three parts: in his office; in Washington; and on the plane or train to and from Washington. As with every labor bureaucrat, his main point is that the workers are not ready, not yet advanced enough. In reality he and his machine are the greatest obstacles in the road of the workers in the United Auto Workers. Let me take a second to show this to you on the Negro question. It is on record that when the C.I.O. was formed, it was the rank and file white workers who went to the Negro workers and by frank discussion, social intermingling, etc. won them to union solidarity. The bureaucrats hesitated and lagged behind. Today Reuther will talk by the hour to a Washington Senate Committee about the evils of discrimination. He has a propaganda department headed by a Negro which periodically publishes anti-discrimination sentiments. But the machine has the whole U.A.W. working-class paralyzed by its refusal to lead the struggles in the plant. Any serious struggle in the plant automatically brings racial solidarity. But paralysis of struggle in the plant forces the workers to accept, and makes even some of them take advantage of, the racial antagonism which the corporation uses day and night. So that the reason why the promise of the C.I.O. to abolish racial discrimination has not gone beyond its wonderful beginning is due directly to the reactionary policies of the labor bureaucracy, not merely on the Negro question but on the situation of all the workers in the plant.

That then is the political alignment in the United States - the rank-and-file workers against the labor bureaucracy which is the main support and defense of capitalism, and the whole bureaucratic apparatus which it uses against the people. Analyze each bureaucracy specifically and you find the key to the political situation in every country. In Britain, as I see it, your task is to analyze the relation between the octopus of Labor Party, unions and cooperatives, and the stranglehold they have on the working-class. In the United States, the American worker has another problem. He has had over a century of experience of democratic politics. He has been trained and disciplined in the most advanced and therefore the most savagely exploitative industrial system in the world. If he ~~has~~ has a little extra money, he says for it in the intensity of his exploitation. And today he is revolting against the productive system itself and directly against the bureaucracy. It is the most dangerous ~~situation~~ situation in the world. For the labor bureaucracy in the United States has no great union or political machine. American workers have not the years of habitual subordination to a labor apparatus. The labor bureaucracy here is feeble beyond belief. That explains the frantic reaction of the American Government and the ruling class. Churchill knows that he can depend on the labor bureaucracy to keep the workers in England in order. The American bourgeoisie cannot depend on the American labor bureaucrats. The situation in the United States is tense beyond belief.

What Can We Do?

It will be hard for you to believe it, but we wore out our tongues, our fingers and our typewriters in trying to explain this to the Trotskyites. We told them in a thousand ways:

Every stage of capitalism has its own particular class relations.

We are now in a new stage, the stage of state-capitalism. This stage is distinguished by the fact that bureaucracy is the only means by which the capitalist class can hold its power.

But in this bureaucracy the labor bureaucracy is decisive. In each country it has specific forms. In the United States the struggle is centered in production.

The workers all over the world have learnt or are learning that a mere victory at the polls or nationalization of industry is not enough. They distrust ~~the~~ fear and hate bureaucracy. They do not want good Trotskyite bureaucrats instead of bad Reutherite or bad Stalinist bureaucrats. They want to substitute a system in which bureaucracy as such does

not exist. The only system which from its very nature excludes bureaucracy from the start is the Leninist workers' state. The workers in the United States are ready to listen to this, for they understand the problems of production better than any other working-class. You must begin with production. You must label the bureaucracy as a social and political force without which capitalism cannot live. The workers see that whenever they change one group of bureaucrats for another, these who were so militant when they were out of power, immediately begin to act in the same way as those they got rid of. They cannot help it. Today either you accept the creative force of the working-class, the society of cooperative labor, the Leninist state, or you go with the capitalist. Find those masses who are opposed to the bureaucracy, the rank and file workers, the Negroes, the women, the youth, respect them, understand that they in their own way understand capitalism and the nature of the new society more than you do. Stop trying to build caucuses in unions to take the place of Reuther or Curran or this or that labor bureaucrat. You will not succeed. Make it your business theoretically and practically to express the needs of the great mass in production first, and then elsewhere. Build on that.

They grinned or they sneered, and if you tried to advance these ideas too strongly, they fought you down bitterly. The result is like a beacon in the night. The working-class has not suffered. They have. They refused to accept the creative power of the working-class as the only force which could reorganize industry. They refused to accept the Leninist conception of the latent socialism in the working-class and the need, not for nationalization or even confiscation, but for the Soviet power and working-class management of production. Instead they lived in a maze of ambiguities about nationalized property equals workers' state, and planning, and above all, grasping for power in unions. It killed them. And as the crisis has become more unbearable, each runs to one of the bureaucracies. In its small way it is a very concrete and vivid demonstration of the fact that today, on a vast scale, one faces either the Leninist state or the continuing descent into barbarism.

Where does that leave people like you and me? In appearance, isolated and helpless. But only if you believe that the workers are waiting for you to come and educate them. In reality, if you purge yourself of that impudence and suicidal poison, a vast world opens up before you.

Think of it. In a world crashing to a war of disaster because of the struggle between two states for world mastery, in those countries which boast of freedom, there is no longer a single political organization which says: We are against both.

And yet that is exactly what the great masses of the workers think. For you it can mean an insight into the historical process and the beginning of a real understanding of the mighty forces clashing and grinding in the world of today. All the great philosophical problems, problems of economics and politics, begin to take understandable form and shape once you grasp that the basic clash is between centralized capital and socialized ~~mass~~ labor, that the working-class is already far on its way to understanding what is required for society to become a reasonable place to live in. Get hold of the central idea. You will stumble but you will not fall.

There is no Marxist organization in the United States today. There is none in Britain. But there are thousands of people all over the world who are seeking to find again the great tradition. You can do nothing until you sink yourself theoretically and practically in the working-class and learn to understand it. Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt in one of her recent columns reported that she had ~~spoken~~ ^{of her} in Europe to a speaker discussing a type of Communism which was not of the Russian variety. She wrote that many people in the United States would be astonished to learn that there is "a theory and practice" of Communism which has nothing to do with the barbarism of Stalin and the equally barbarous Communist Parties which support him. The amiable liberal does her own country an injustice. The theory of

Communism as Marx and Lenin taught is not studied in Europe, it is not studied in the United States. But in the daily lives and minds of the millions of workers in the United States, trained, disciplined and organized by capitalism, there simmers and flares and burns and spreads the Communism of Marx and of Lenin, for capitalism ~~teaches~~ teaches it to them. And as I have said and it is a very remarkable thing, they talk about a Communism which is not like Russia and which is good. Your task is to acquaint yourself with these workers and find out what they are doing and thinking. To do so you have to rid yourself of that fetish of leadership of the workers which is so characteristic of bourgeois society in our day and has poisoned the revolutionary movement. Forego for a few hours at any rate the suicidal action of rushing forward with big declarations and a program, calling upon tens of millions of workers to follow you. You will be the victim in the end. After you have blown the trumpet for a few years you will decide that the workers are not up to you as yet. And then into the bureaucracy you will go. Forget this leadership complex and study Marxist theory and the working-class. You will find how far the intellectuals, even the best of them, are in the rear of the workers. Clear your own mind ~~and~~ help me and a few, a very few, of my friends to clear ours. That is all I am doing. Soon I hope to have ready a study of the Workers' Party and the Workers' State in which I shall tackle specifically the question of the revolutionary party, I shall take up what was Marx's conception of the party, what was Lenin's conception and what must be done today. I shall take up the complicated question of why so many workers in countries like France and Italy have joined and still remain in the Communist Party. That question is not nearly so simple as it appears and you as a European can help to throw a great deal of light on it.

Do all this with me. But, yet once more, know that the working-class in its own way and by its own means is already working at all these questions and others that we have not even asked ourselves. It will be hard work for us to catch up with it.