

BULLETIN

WORKERS PARTY

NO II

CONVENTION DISCUSSION

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SUPPLEMENTARY RESOLUTION TO THE POLITICAL
RESOLUTION

In order to carry out the tasks set forth in the Political resolution and in order best to effect the consolidation of the party which is essential for accomplishing the tasks that face it in the coming period, the party decides:

1. In order that the party be in a better position to estimate just what forces it has, the convention decides upon an immediate and complete re-registration of the membership. The re-registration shall be conducted by the branch, sitting as a committee of the whole, taking up the case of each individual member, ascertaining the extent to which he or she has discharged his or her party responsibilities in the past period, and requiring from every member who re-registers a minimum schedule of activity and financial support for the future. Those members failing to conform to the requirements of membership, or expressing their inability or unwillingness to undertake responsibilities in the future, must either be dropped from the rolls or be placed on a probation period of not more than three months, at the end of which his full membership in the party will be reconsidered. The party re-registration should at the same time serve as an industrial registration of the party membership.

2. To recommend urgently to the Y.P.S.L. the fusion of its branches and members with the branches and membership of the Workers Party. The advantages accruing from the separate existence of a youth organization are indisputable; so is, in general, the need of a special youth organization to deal in its own way with the special problems of the youth in industry and in society as a whole. However, the concrete needs of the party at the present time would best be served by a centralization of all the forces standing on our program, with the corresponding reduction to a minimum of duplication of efforts, considerations which now outweigh the advantages of the present division into two organizations. Should such a fusion take place, the party will make special administrative provisions for the establishment of youth committees wherever possible, charged with the special task of supervising the recruitment and training of youth to party membership. The party requests the Y.P.S.L. to organize an immediate discussion of this proposal and to adopt a favorable decision at the earliest possible moment.

3. In order to lay greater emphasis upon the party's orientation to the industrial workers, and to speed the transformation of the party into a predominantly proletarian organization, the convention decides to concentrate upon the establishment and upbuilding of branches in the three key industrial centers which are now the outstanding weak spots of the party, namely Detroit, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh. To achieve this task as quickly as possible, the Political Committee is to draw upon the membership of already established branches for the purpose of sending groups of party and former-YPSL members into the three cities named, and to provide, as soon as it is possible, for at least two organizers devoting their full time to these cities. In addition, the Los Angeles organization, in collaboration with the Political Committee, is to assign members of its branches to work in the Bay area for the purpose of strengthening the party organization in that industrial region.

4. Towards the same purpose as mentioned at the beginning of Point 3, the executive committees of all branches and locals shall be set up, at the next regular or special elections, in such a manner as to assure a preponderance in all these bodies of proletarian elements, that is, the executive committees shall be composed of factory or shop workers to an extent of not less than sixty percent of the membership of these bodies.

5. In order to improve the functioning of the branches and raise their political level, and to strengthen the relations between the membership of the party and its leading committee, the convention decides that every member of the Political Committee shall, in the course of the coming year, spend not less than three months at a time in a given city outside of New York, not as a substitute of the local organizer, but devoting himself to the education and training of the Party membership, to participation in the internal work and external activities of the local organization, and to tightening the bonds between the local and national organizations with a view towards preparing the party to function properly under any circumstances. The locals to which the Political Committee members are to be assigned are Buffalo, Philadelphia, Cleveland-Akron-Pittsburgh, Chicago-Detroit, St. Louis and the West Coast.

6. So that the party may make the most effective use of all the forces at its disposal, the convention decides that the Political Committee shall endeavor to have those comrades who are now members-at large in localities which are minor in political importance or which have no early prospects of organizational development, transfer, where possible, to the centers upon which the Party is concentrating its efforts.

7. Regardless of what system of financial responsibilities is established by the convention, it decides that every party member shall be required to give no less than fifteen percent of his weekly income to the organization. Exceptions to this regulation may be made only by agreement with the National Committee.

8. In order to carry out without delay or interruption the decisions of this resolution, as well as the decisions adopted in the Program of Action, the convention decides upon the launching of a public campaign to raise a \$5,000 Party Builder Fund, with the assignment of quotas to all branches, to be collected one month from the opening of the drive.

Adopted by the Political Committee
September 9th, 1941
For submission to the Second National Convention.

AMENDMENT BY CARTER TO THE ABOVE RESOLUTION: To delete section 4 in regard to the composition of Executive Committees.

AMENDMENT BY CARTER TO THE POLITICAL RESOLUTION IN REGARD TO THE SHERMAN GROUP: That the Party approves the Political Committee's struggle against the Sherman group as an anti-Marxist faction, but disapproves of the P.C. decision declaring that members holding and advocating the views of the Sherman group are to be expelled from the Party for the advocacy of such views. The Convention endorses the Carter motion on the question of the Sherman group.

STALINIST RUSSIA: A BUREAUCRATIC COLLECTIVIST SOCIETY

Hitler's invasion of Russia brought sharply to the fore the conflicting views in the Workers Party on the class character of the Soviet Union. Until then those holding diverse positions on this question were all united by a common conception of the reactionary character of Russia's role in the Second World War and common political conclusions. However, the new turn in the war once again raised the problem: Is Stalin conducting a progressive or reactionary war? Should we retain our position of revolutionary opposition to all the camps in the Second World War or become supporters of Russia in the war?

For our party these questions necessarily raised the fundamental problem of the class nature of the Soviet Union. Only on this basis can we establish clear and consistent criteria for deciding the character of Russia's war and our political tasks. Even more: the dispute on this question has already revealed confusion and uncertainty on fundamental concepts of Marxism which far transcend in importance the "Russian question" itself. There is little doubt that in this problem, as in other matters, our generation of Marxists has failed to analyze adequately the new phenomena of our times, to examine critically our old doctrines in the light of new experiences, and to revise the views found wanting, we have thus failed to prepare ourselves for the rapidly moving events and tasks. Not only have the old movements failed, but the new movement for the Fourth International has likewise not met the theoretical and practical tests which the social crisis and the war have created.

It is imperative that this fact be frankly acknowledged; so that starting from a clear recognition of the existence of a crisis of Marxism - for it is nothing less than that - we can proceed collectively to reevaluate our old views and thus sharpen the theoretical and practical instruments indispensable for socialist victory. So far as the present author is concerned, the basis of such re-examinations remains the great scientific teachings of Marx and Engels, which employed in the critical spirit advised by the masters themselves alone furnish the guide for our present needs and for working class emancipation.

In the present article I propose to discuss the class character of the Soviet Union, particularly the views of Leon Trotsky, and present my own position in positive form.

L. Trotsky's Analysis of Stalinism

Trotsky once wrote: "You will agree that a theory is in general valuable only insofar as it helps to foresee the course of development and influences it purposefully." (The Defense of the Russian Revolution pgs. 22-23). Let us apply this sound concept to Trotsky's analysis of Stalinism.

The origin of the Russian Trotskyist Opposition dates back to the sharp factional fight which broke out in the Bolshevik Party after the death of Lenin. Trotsky analyzed this struggle as follows: In view of the fact that the Bolshevik Party had a complete monopoly of political power (that is, excluded all rival parties) the interests of the conflicting classes sought expression through factions of the ruling party. The Right Wing represented the Thermidorian faction; the pressure of the capitalist restorationist elements (the kulaks, Nepmen, the old petty bourgeois specialists) and the labor aristocracy (the better paid workers, white collar employees, and trade union officialdom). On the other hand, the Left Opposition represented the interests of the working class. In between these two class forces was the Stalin faction, the "bureaucratic centrist" wing of the party, representing no independent class, but wavering between the two fundamental factions, veering in the long run towards the Right Wing, towards bourgeois restoration. The defeats of the West European socialist revolutions strengthened both the Right and the Centre; which united against the Left on the basis of "socialism in one country alone".

The main internal danger, continued Trotsky, came from the capitalist elements, and politically the Right Wing. The latter favored a slow tempo of industrialization and collectivization, and increased concessions and conciliation with the rich and middle peasants. The Stalinists were attacked primarily for constantly conceding to the Right Wing. Trotsky spoke of the existence of elements of dual power in Russia, bourgeois and proletarian. He warned that the destruction of the proletarian wing of the party would spell the victory of the Russian Thermidor, that is, the destruction of nationalized property and the establishment of capitalism. Such, according to Trotsky, was the objective meaning of the factional fight in the Bolshevik Party and the logic of its development.

In early 1928 Trotsky wrote: "...the socialist character of industry is determined and secured in a decisive measure by the role of the party, the voluntary internal cohesion of the proletarian vanguard, the conscious discipline of the administrators, trade union functionaries, members of shop nuclei, etc. If we allow that this web is weakening, disintegrating, and ripping, then it becomes absolutely self-evident that within a brief period nothing will remain of the socialist character of state industry, transport, etc. The trusts and individual factories will begin living an independent life. Not a trace will be left of the planned beginnings, so weak at the present time. The economic struggles of the workers will acquire a scope unrestricted save by the relation of forces. The state ownership of the means of production will be first transformed into a juridical fiction, and later on, even the latter will be swept away." (Cf The Third International After Lenin. pg. 300.).

Trotsky's prognoses were refuted by history. The First Five Year Plan, put into effect a few months after he had penned the above lines, strengthened the centralized state ownership and con-

trol over the trusts and factories, and extended the planned economy on a scale never reached before. The Bolshevik Party was destroyed, both its Left Wing and Right Wing liquidated politically and physically. The proletarian "web" was broken, but the Stalinists extended their totalitarian domination over economy. At the same time the bureaucracy destroyed virtually all the old capitalist elements in the economy. Contrary to Trotsky's predictions the destruction of the Bolshevik Party did not mean the end of state property and planning; Russia did not travel the road of Thermidorian, capitalist restoration. On the contrary, the Stalinist counter-revolution took a new, hitherto unknown path, the road of bureaucratic absolutism.

Yet Trotsky in the above quotation (and on innumerable other occasions) stated that "the socialist character of industry is determined and secured in a decisive measure by the role of the party, the voluntary internal cohesion of the proletarian vanguard, etc." That is, the socialist character of state industry was determined by the domination of the proletarian party in the state and through it in the economy. Or put in another way, the economic power of the proletariat rested on its political power.

Confronted by the unexpected development of the destruction of the political power of the working class and the strengthening of state property and planning, Trotsky faced the dilemma: Either to maintain his old criterion and affirm that Russia is no longer a workers' state and its economy no longer "socialist"; or to revise completely the Marxist conception of the workers state. He chose the latter course and thereby abandoned the Marxist view which he had held until then. He now affirmed that it was the state owned character of property which determined the socialist character of the economy and the proletarian nature of the state. The bureaucracy's expropriation of the political power of the working class, he added, only signified that Russia was a "degenerated", workers state, politically dominated by a Bonapartist bureaucracy.

Unfortunately, Trotsky never subjected his old analysis to a thorough critical examination. He never sought to explain why, contrary to his predictions, Russia did not travel the Thermidorian, capitalist road of counter-revolution even though the political power of the working class was destroyed. It is true that he often declared that "the bureaucracy after a stubborn resistance, found itself compelled by the logic of its own interests to adopt the program of industrialization and collectivization." (The Kirov Assassination pg. 25. Emphasis in original). But this would only indicate that the logic of the bureaucracy's own interests was not capitalist restoration (or socialism) but its own absolutist rule in the state and economy.

And in retrospect, was the Right Wing of the Bolshevik Party the "Thermidorian" faction? Here again Trotsky never re-examined this question in great detail. However, he did write in 1938:

"The latest judicial frame-ups were aimed as a blow against the left. This is true also of the mopping up of the leaders of the Right Opposition, because the Right group of the Bolshevik Party, seen from the viewpoint of the bureaucracy's interests and tendencies, represented a left danger." (Of Program and Resolutions of the Founding Conference of the Fourth International. pgs. 46-47. Emphasis in original).

This correct appraisal of the relation between the Right Wing and the Stalinists involves a serious revision of the old view as to the "class struggle" in the Bolshevik Party. It is strange indeed, that the Right Wing, the "Thermidorian" faction, whose policy was that of resistance to rapid industrialization and collectivization, was to the left of the bureaucracy which "by the logic of its own interests" adopted the program of rapid industrialization and collectivization. Strange, that is, from the viewpoint of those who hold that Russia is a worker's state. It should be recalled that in 1929 there were Russian Oppositionists who advocated a bloc with the Right Wing against Stalinism. Trotsky at that time wrote a vitriolic attack on this proposal as "unprincipled," because it would mean a united front of the Left and the Right against the "Centrists". In this case, as in others, the false analysis led to incorrect politics.

II. STALINISM AND BONAPARTISM

Trotsky defended his new position that that the Stalinist State is a workers' state though the working class has no political power by citing bourgeois Bonapartist regimes. Under Bonapartism (and Fascism) the bourgeoisie is deprived of all political power and is in fact politically oppressed. Despite this, the bourgeoisie remains socially the ruling class and the regime is bourgeois in character. Stalinist Bonapartism, according to Trotsky, has an analogous relation to the Russian working class.

The analogy would be valid only if the political expropriation of the working class had been accompanied by the strengthening of its economic and social power, its domination over society. Such was the case under all Bonapartist regimes: the political expropriation of the bourgeoisie was accompanied by (or more exactly, was the precondition for) the strengthening of its economic and social power. (In a more complex form this holds true for Fascism). Marxists have adduced abundant empirical evidence to prove this contention.

But what does the evidence show as regards Russia? Simply this: that the working class has been deprived of all economic and social as well as political power. The strengthening of state property and planning, which allegedly signifies the social rule of the proletariat, resulted in the increased economic, social and political oppression of the working class. Here is a process which is the exact opposite of what occurs under Bonapartism!

By his analogy, however, Trotsky revealed an important methodological error which permeates his writings on Stalinist Russia. In seeking to explain the different possible forms of working class rule by citing the diverse forms of bourgeois rule, Trotsky failed to give adequate recognition to the decisive, qualitative differences between proletarian and bourgeois rule. In other contexts, for example, in his theory of the permanent revolution Trotsky proceeded from the basis of the totally new character of proletarian rule as compared to all previous class rule; to wit, the working class must first conquer political power, and through its own state organize economy. (And with successful socialist revolutions internationally build a world socialist economy which would lead to the dissolution of the workers' states and the proletariat as a class to triumph of a world socialist classless society.)

Every ruling class has its own laws of development and its own forms of economic, social and political domination (rule). The bourgeoisie, for example, first develops its economic power (capitalist ownership of the means of production and exchange) in the womb of feudalism, and then struggles for political and social power. In bourgeois society, in other words, the rule of the capitalist class rests basically on bourgeois private property. The state power defending this property may be in the hands of a semi-feudal aristocracy, a military clique, a parliamentary government controlled by the big bourgeois or petty bourgeois parties, a Bonapartist bureaucracy, a Fascist bureaucracy, etc. Quite the contrary is the case of the proletarian revolution and proletarian state. The proletariat is a propertyless class. Its control over economy and its domination in society is possible only through first winning political power. It is through its state power that the working class becomes the ruling class and develops the conditions for the abolition of all classes, the socialist society. Without political power the working class cannot be the ruling class in any case.

Of course, the workers' state may assume different forms. But whatever the form the state must express the political power of the proletariat. Once it is acknowledged, as Trotsky and everyone in our movement has, that the Russian workers have no political power whatsoever, that is tantamount to saying that Russia is no longer a workers' state.

But can there not be a sick, degenerated workers' state? History has given the answer: the regime of Lenin and Trotsky was a sick, bureaucratized revolutionary workers' state - as Lenin and Trotsky themselves often affirmed. In a healthy workers' state there would be complete workers' democracy, the working class exercising its power democratically through soviets, trade unions, rival parties. This state of affairs, as is known, never existed in Russia. The political rule of the working class was expressed almost exclusively through the dictatorship of the proletarian party, the Bolsheviks (with extreme limitations on soviet and union democracy from the earliest days). The administration of the state and the

economy in culturally backward and isolated Russia, while controlled by the Bolsheviks, was in the hands of a bureaucracy. The Bolsheviks expected, and worked for, the extension of the Russian Revolution into the more advanced industrial countries which would break the imperialist encirclement, and raise Russian industrial and cultural level, and thus create the preconditions for complete workers' democracy.

When these conditions did not materialize the Stalin faction which controlled the party apparatus expressed the dominant desire of the bureaucracy for a peaceful and stable national existence. The old Bolshevik (and bourgeois) elements of the bureaucracy were eliminated, and a new bureaucracy created. The theory and practise of national socialism, "socialism in one country alone" was developed as the great social rationalization ("ideology") of the bureaucracy. With the Stalin faction as its representative it utilized its centralized administrative control of the state and economy to conduct a civil war to destroy its internal opponents, proletarian and bourgeois. On the one hand, it destroyed the limited workers' democracy that had existed, liquidated the old Bolshevik Party, and converted the Communist International into the world detachment of Stalin's Foreign Office and GPU. On the other hand, it wiped out virtually all remnants of the old capitalist elements in the economy, strengthened state property and extended the industrialization and collectivization of the country. Thus when the Stalinists announced "the complete and irrevocable victory of socialism", they were indeed proclaiming to the world the triumph of bureaucratic collectivism.

III. Bureaucratic Collectivism: What Kind of New Society?

Stalinist Russia is thus a reactionary state based upon a new system of economic exploitation, bureaucratic collectivism. The ruling class is the bureaucracy which through its control of the state collectively owns, controls and administers the means of production and exchange. The basic motive force of the economy is the extraction of more and more surplus labor from the toilers so as to increase the revenue, power and position of the bureaucracy. The economy is organized and directed through state totalitarian planning and political terrorism. The toilers are compelled by the state (as well as economic necessity) to labor in the factories and fields. Forced labor is thus an inherent feature of present day Russian productive relations.

The relations within the ruling class - the share which individual bureaucrats receive of the wealth produced, their relative power and position, the manner in which persons enter or are forced out of the ruling class - are determined by non-economic, primarily political factors.

Through the state monopoly of foreign trade the bureaucracy has a complete monopoly over the internal market; for the exploi-

tation of the abundant material and human resources of the country for investment and for sale of goods. This monopoly is indispensable for the Stalinist imperialist exploitation and oppression of the national minority peoples of the Soviet Union (the Ukrainians, the Georgians, etc.)

While bureaucratic collectivism has succeeded in raising the industrial level of the country, its productive relations are tremendous obstacles to the real growth of the social productivity of labor, the raising of the living standards of the masses, and the economic and political freedom of the workers and peasants. Despite the organizational advantages of state owned monopoly of social property and the vast internal market, and totalitarian planning (aided by the importations of advanced capitalist technique) Stalinist Russia has experienced a growing decline in the annual rate of increase of industrial output; and an increasing disproportion between the income of the bureaucracy and the "new intellegentzia" on the one hand, and the income of the mass of workers and peasants on the other. (In recent years the yearly rate of increase of industrial production has been, according to official figures, only twice the rate experienced under Czarism.)

The terroristic regime which is an integral part of bureaucratic planning (the bureaucratic productive relations) leads to constant disruptions in production; disproportions in the output of the various industries dependent upon one another and therefore large scale economic waste; low efficiency of production. The constant purges of the bureaucracy leads to vast disruptions of planning and production. The low wages, speed up, (and poor housing) have lead to such large turnovers of labor, despite laws restricting labor mobility, that far stricter laws carrying penalties including death sentence, had to be proclaimed to maintain production. The progressive, organic and long range development of the productive forces, the real growth of the social productivity of labor, and the raising of the standard of living of the masses demand scientific planning, that is, democratic planning by and the masses. This is the antithesis of Stalinism.

Then again, bureaucratic collectivism is a nationally limited economy (or more accurately, confined to a single, backward "empire", Stalinist Russia). In relation to the capitalist imperialist states Russia occupies the position of a huge national trust which by monopolizing the home market intensifies the contradiction existing within these countries between the tendency for the unlimited increase of the capitalist productive forces and the growing limitations of the markets for capital investment and for the sale of commodities. From the standpoint of Russian industrial and cultural development, the overthrow of world capitalism is an indispensable condition for the liberation of its own nationally confined productive forces, so that it could benefit fully from the advanced Western technique and take its place as an integral part of a progressive world economy. Here also, bureaucratic collectivism (Stalinism) re-

veals its socially reactionary character in its role as an assistant of out-lived capitalist imperialism in the task of destroying the independent working class movement for socialism.

Thus, from the day of its birth, the new Stalinist society is a reactionary obstacle to the development of Russia and world society towards socialist freedom and security. From a historical viewpoint, Russia has taken a bastard path backward from the regime established by the Bolshevik Revolution. It is from the start torn by contradictions and antagonisms which exclude its assuming the progressive road comparably to early bourgeois society. It arrives on the scene of history as an expression of world social reaction; at a time when the world economic conditions already exist for a great leap forward from class exploitation to socialist freedom and plenty; and when the working class is the only social power which can bring about the progressive transformation of society.

The class conscious workers have no interests in common with this new system of exploitation and oppression, bureaucratic collectivism. In wartime as during peace the revolutionary socialist must not give any support to the Stalinist state. Our task is that of awakening the working class to socialist struggle against bureaucratic collectivism, Fascism and democratic imperialism; and for working class power and socialism.

(to be cont.)

Joseph Carter.

FOR AN EDUCATED MEMBERSHIP

With a year and a half of existence of our organization concluded, and the Party in the midst of a pre-convention discussion, it is only natural that both the leadership and the membership as a whole should look to see what we have accomplished and where we have failed. Such a review on my part has led me to various conclusions.

Most noteworthy among the accomplishments of our small organization has been the issuance of Labor Action as a weekly organ. Too much stress cannot be laid on this achievement, one worthy of mention under any conditions, and especially when accomplished by a small organization like ours; and the period in which it was necessary for us to establish ourselves as an organization. With this achievement must be included the issuance of The New International, our theoretical organ, and its enlargement to a 32 page magazine.

Noteworthy also are the three National Tours executed by our organization in a year and a half. These, not only for the internal effect of drawing our organization more tightly together, but for their agitational and propaganda value, which, I am sure, need not be elaborated upon here.

What has perhaps been the most all-inclusive accomplishment of our organization, however, has been "the proletarianization of our Party". And I put that in quotes because I feel that although we have made a long step forward on the road towards proletarianization of our Party, what we have accomplished in the matter of sending our members into industry cannot be rightly called proletarianization of our ranks. Our Party can become a proletarian party (that is, a party made up of Workers) only by bringing workers into our ranks. We have taken the first step in getting our members to the workers in the shops, factories and unions. The next step - the proletarianization of the Party - will be accomplished when these workers are brought into our Party. It is not accomplished only by sending our Party members to the workers. I repeat, (because I believe that many members think that when the Party membership goes into the factories, that is the proletarianization of the Party) - what we have accomplished is only the first step towards the proletarianization of the Workers Party. But because it is such an important prerequisite to our goal, and because it has been accomplished to such a gratifying degree, too much stress cannot be placed on the importance of this achievement.

However, in order for the organization to be able to accomplish the next task in this direction, something more is needed than the presence of our members in basic industry. That something more I refer to is an educated membership. It is in this field of education that the organization has lagged most. And it is precisely the education of the membership that is the most important step to be taken in the next period. For an ignorant membership cannot possibly meet the requirements of the day. If every last member of the Workers Party were to find his place in industry tomorrow, that would not necessarily mean that we would be able to do the job required of us; for an ignorant membership not only would not know how to conduct itself at their jobs or in the unions, but would have a hard time bringing the

workers they are in contact with, further than the first steps towards class-consciousness.

This ignorance of the fundamental principles of Marxism and Bolshevism has been most clearly demonstrated in the defections of Burnham, Andrews, the Sherman group, the Corbett clique and lastly of Dwight Macdonald; in the effects these defections had upon the membership as a whole.

Our resolution on the Aims, the Tasks and the Structure of the Workers Party, adopted at the last Convention, made a point of stressing the fact that we were an organization founded on Bolshevik practices and traditions and rooted in the principles of Marxism. Yet the leadership of the organization, with the tacit support of the ranks, permitted a Sherman to teach anti-Bolshevism and anti-Marxism to a group of young comrades whom he finally led out of our organization and into the ranks of the Socialist Party; it permitted a Macdonald to put forth (even in our weekly propaganda newspaper, and not during a pre-convention discussion period) theories on fascism and the State that had and could have nothing in common with Marxism; it permitted Corbett to hold together a group of members in a clique based neither on organizational nor political differences until it became necessary to expel the entire group from the organization. And all this under the guise of democracy! That, I feel, is carrying democracy a little too far, and certainly out of the bounds of Bolshevism.

It is true, the organization, in its support of the Political Committee's decision that the holding by the Sherman group of its anti-Bolshevik and anti-Marxist ideas as an organized bloc was incompatible with Party membership; in its agreement with the Political Committee on its stand against Macdonald and the views he was putting forth; etc., again reiterated the fact that they were and wished to remain a Bolshevik Party, rooted in the principles of Marxism. But I contend that the fact that these elements were permitted to remain in our organization until they were ready themselves to leave; that Sherman was able to build around himself a group of comrades he was able to take with him out of a revolutionary, Bolshevik, Marxist organization; the fact that in the Russian discussion now taking place a good percentage of the membership feels that they are not equipped to take a position on the class character of the Soviet State because they are not sufficiently educated in Marxian economics, etc.; shows that while we have a membership that wants to be part of a Bolshevik Marxist organization, they do not yet sufficiently know the principles of Bolshevism or Marxism.

This, comrades, is something that must receive first and concentrated attention in the next period. Not only must the leadership take the necessary steps in setting up a really well-functioning Educational Department, but the membership itself must settle down to some real reading and studying. Concentrated outlines (along the lines of the recently published "A.B.C. of Marxism") and study classes in all localities must be based on: 1. The history of our movement; 2. What is Bolshevism; 3. A study of organizational procedure; and 4. A concentrated study of Marxism in all its aspects. This educational program for the membership must be the first and main point in our Program of Action - for no activity, no matter how important, can or

will have any meaning if the organization as a whole does not know what kind of an organization it really is, and why it is that kind of organization. We must know, all of us, what it is that our activity is driving towards, or that activity can have no real meaning nor can it accomplish any real results in the future.

This articles gives in outline form the main deficiency of the organization in the past period. It by no means touches on all of them. Much can be said, and probably will be said about the incorrectness of this or that action or lack of action. I was not interested, however, in pointing out these deficiencies. It was a far more important deficiency that I felt must be brought sharply to the attention of the organization and especially of the leadership - who after all, are responsible for seeing to it that the membership is educated along the right lines and in the right direction. It is because I feel that unless this lack of education is corrected as quickly as possible all our activity and energy can come to nought, that I leave out comments on past or future Programs of Action.

FOR A STUDY OF THE HISTORY OF OUR MOVEMENT - WHY WE SEPAR*
ATED FROM THE SECOND AND THIRD INTERNATIONALS TO ESTABLISH
OUR OWN - THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL!

FOR A STUDY OF BOLSHEVISM!

FOR A STUDY OF ORGANIZATIONAL PROCEDURE!

FOR A CONCENTRATED STUDY OF MARXISM!

FOR A PARTY THAT KNOWS WHAT IT MEANS WHEN IT SAYS IT IS A
BOLSHEVIK, MARXIAN PARTY!

Mimi Slater

Central Branch, Local New York
Sept. 12, 1941