

Bulletin

OF THE WORKERS PARTY

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A CASE OF MISTAKEN DILEMMA

By Martin Harvey

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Comrades Garrett and Shachtman in their article "An Understandable Dilemma" (WORKERS PARTY BULLETIN, Vol. II, No. 2) kindly extend an invitation to all who are interested to extricate them from their "understandable dilemma" regarding the position of Johnson and Forest on the general strike. Not having the prejudices which Comrades Garrett and Shachtman concede for themselves I am only too happy to offer what little assistance I can - although there are sufficient indications that their dilemma is not "understandable" and their invitation is not an introduction to a serious discussion of the question.

The problem of Garrett-Shachtman seems to be that they do not know what Johnson's position on the general strike is. They ask: "Did Johnson in general favor the party's adoption of the general strike slogan?" And answer with assurance: "Not a single member of the Political Committee can answer that question." This is a remarkable case of political amnesia.

Perhaps comrades will recall the letter of Comrade McKinney in which he transmitted to the party branches the decisions of the P.C. on the mine workers' strike. (I do not recall the date.) In this letter McKinney listed the motions and decisions of the P.C. and then polemicized briefly against what he called the position of Johnson, i.e., the position in favor of the general strike slogan. Unless he has since become a victim of the unusual malady of amnesia, Comrade McKinney can answer the question of Comrades Garrett and Shachtman.

And not only McKinney. The Political Committee itself formally moved to invite Comrade Johnson to present "his slogan of a general strike" to the party for discussion. "His slogan!" And Garrett-Shachtman coyly arch their eyebrows: "Whose slogan?" Perhaps this is some extremely subtle joke - but an "understandable" dilemma? Not in the least.

Comrades Garrett and Shachtman make much ado in their article about the absence in the P.C. minutes of any concrete motion or proposal for the party to adopt the general strike slogan. They could have saved themselves the trouble of searching the P.C. minutes. The article by Johnson on the general strike (WORKERS PARTY BULLETIN, Vol. II, No. 1) notes: "It is perfectly obvious therefore that what was proposed (and what is still proposed) is no mere 'slogan' but a long hard serious preparation and an all-sided consistent education of the advanced workers who read our press, in the necessities of the objective situation. At a certain stage this can pass into open agitation."

In their demand for "motions" Comrades Garrett and Shachtman confuse two questions - the one of strategic orientation and the tactical application of the strategic line. The tactical slogan of the general strike, which was applicable to the mine crisis, could not be applied correctly by the party (as will be demonstrated later) because of a false strategic orientation. It was necessary, there-

fore, to reorient the party to a proper understanding of the present period and to a correct strategic line.

The main strategic orientation proposed by Johnson is propaganda for unified working class action against the government as the executive committee of the ruling class. An integral part of such an orientation is the struggle against the labor bureaucracy which seems to divert, stifle and prevent such unified action. The unified action may take many forms and it is the concrete situation which determines what tactical slogan is put forward in application of the strategic line. And in the mine crisis the situation called for the slogan of the general strike. It is not necessary here to review all of the arguments that have been presented in support of this strategic orientation. It is sufficient to say that with such an approach and the understanding of the movement of the working class which it implies the party would not have been caught completely by surprise in the mine strike. LABOR ACTION would have been able to offer some direction to the comrades in the unions and the party would have been able to make contact with advanced workers on the basis of their experiences and desires which were visibly contained in the general acceptance of the need for a general strike.

The relation between the strategic line and the tactical slogan can be shown in practice through an examination of the position of the party majority.

The party position was stated clearly by McKinney in the letter stated above. He was opposed to the slogan of the general strike on the grounds that the masses were not prepared for such an action and it could only lead to a serious defeat. That is, the working class was too backward. The article of Garrett-Shachtman repeats the general position. With disarming finality they say: "We are not in favor of employing the slogan of the general strike as an active political slogan of the party at the present time, and we are certainly not in favor of making it our main slogan."

That's clear enough, is it not? The party is opposed to the slogan of the general strike. Viewed with the strategic approach of the party majority it makes some sort of sense. That is, if the tremendous advance of the proletariat during and since the war is belittled or brushed aside, if the working class cannot carry out serious anti-capitalist actions without the leadership of the party (even if only, in the first stages, a labor party), if the workers are tied hand and foot to the labor bureaucracy, then to propose an action against the labor bureaucracy does seem far-fetched.

But life has a habit of intervening. It became impossible to ignore the question of the general strike. It was first treated by Shachtman in the LABOR ACTION of December 16, 1946. In this article he noted that Lewis and the miners could have "appealed to the rest of the working class to walk out in solidarity with them" and that millions of workers stood "poised in readiness to respond..." This article is treated by Johnson in the BULLETIN and so I will go on to what followed.

The mine situation was treated in two subsequent issues of LABOR ACTION. In the issue of March 17, 1947, the lead article was against government by injunction. In this article Comrade Garrett proposes a unity of action that "embraces every form of protest and demonstra-

tion including STOP WORK OR STRIKE ACTION." (Emphasis in original.) Further in the article is proposed a conference of union representatives which must consider "a NATIONWIDE PROTEST DEMONSTRATION under whatever form the conference thinks best - A GENERAL PROTEST STRIKE OF SPECIFIED DURATION, SYNCHRONIZED STOP-WORK ACTIONS, MONSTER MASS MEETINGS, ORGANIZED MARCHES, all of it dove-tailing with INDIVIDUAL UNION PLANS."

In the April 7, 1947 LABOR ACTION the lead article is once again on the miners, this time by McKinney on the Centralia disaster. The only proposal for action in this article is the following in big type: "IT WOULD, FOR EXAMPLE, BE A MAGNIFICENT DEMONSTRATION OF SOLIDARITY IF STEEL WORKERS AND OTHER WORKERS QUIT WORK FOR A DAY DURING THE SIX-DAY MOURNING PERIOD."

In neither article is there any serious criticism of the labor bureaucracy. For all one can gather these actions are to be realized through normal union procedures without any conflict with the bureaucrats.

McKinney and Garrett, both, of course, opposed to the general strike as an "active political slogan," propose (passively, perhaps?) a general strike of limited duration. But for them the slogan is an abstraction. They do not understand that the national general strike (even of limited duration) poses in the sharpest manner the question of who controls the state. The general strike is not a holiday slogan. It requires the clearest presentation of the role of the labor bureaucracy, of the dangers and the pitfalls which are inevitable if the working class puts its trust in the bureaucrats to initiate and lead to a successful conclusion general strike action - whether or not it is of limited duration. With the tensions that exist in American society today, a general strike of even the most limited character will inevitably unleash a counter-offensive of the bourgeoisie and can, in turn, carry the struggle of the proletariat to new heights - heights at which they cannot be readily controlled by the labor leaders.

The labor lieutenants understand this perfectly well. Can anyone doubt that the call of the Detroit AFL for a city-wide general strike in support of the miners helped hasten Lewis's decision to capitulate to the government? It is necessary, therefore, at every stage to explain to the workers that the leaders do not want to sharpen seriously the struggle with the bourgeoisie, that they will resist any serious struggle and that if they are forced into a fight they will seek to betray it at the earliest opportunity. To fail to do this is at the very least to let pass the opportunity to win advanced workers from reformism to revolutionary socialism.

This approach to the labor lieutenants and the question of general strike can nowhere be found in the party press. As a result the articles of Garrett and McKinney in LABOR ACTION assume the dual character of opportunism and adventurism - opportunist in its uncritical treatment of the labor leadership and adventurist in its posing of the general strike without any warning to or preparation of the workers.

The record of the party on the mine crisis is not a happy one. For weeks there was only silence - no line, no program to guide the party and its sympathizers. When a semblance of a program appears

it is muddled and confused, combining opportunism with adventurism. This confusion extends to the ranks of the party who have no clear understanding of the general strike and its significance. An innocent bystander who followed both the public press and the PARTY BULLETIN would be in an understandable dilemma if he tried to decide whether the party were for or against the general strike.

This inability to put forward correctly a tactical slogan stems entirely from the party's false strategic orientation which is based, in turn, on a misconception of the role of the proletariat. Operating on the assumption that the proletariat is dormant, that the class cannot display any initiative apart from the party, the party limits its agitation and propaganda to the "legal" forms and procedures of the organized labor movement, tying its political slogans to the existing institutions and leaders of the CIO and AFL. In doing this, the Majority misses the living currents within the working class.

No one who was in a factory during the mine crisis of last winter could have failed to see the readiness with which the working class would have responded to the most militant action against the government. Shachtman recognized this in his LABOR ACTION article. Yet the significance of this escaped the party completely. The working class is admittedly prepared to embark on a general strike against the capitalist government, a move which the labor bureaucracy was bound to resist in every way and our press speaks as if the masses of workers and the union leadership are as one - and proceeds lightmindedly to raise - the general strike (just a suggestion, you understand).

That is not responsible political leadership. That is confusion raised to the level of a political program. And in the article of Garrett and Shachtman confusion becomes a political method. Not to discuss differences but to confuse them. That becomes the object of a "discussion" article. Johnson presents a documented criticism of the Party's record in the mine crisis. Reply: wise-cracks. Johnson proposes a new propagandistic orientation for the party - one which the Minority presented at the last convention and was understood well enough then. Reply: "We don't get it."

And on the same level an entirely extraneous question is introduced in two places in this article of less than two pages. Both are parenthetical remarks: "(Why anyone should have to hesitate about opening up a discussion on such a question in the Workers Party, where discussion is not prohibited or even frowned upon, only God knows.)" "(Perhaps because our leadership does not tolerate the presentation of different opinions in the Committee or in the party as a whole?)" We will not discuss the political implication that in a revolutionary party any member can at any time raise any question for discussion. The intent of these sentences seems clear: Johnson implies that the party is not democratic. The reason that Comrades Johnson and Forest hesitated in raising the question of the general strike is stated very clearly at the beginning of Johnson's article. As responsible party leaders they hesitated to raise a position which had been decisively rejected at the last convention of the party. Garrett and Shachtman know this. If they thought the reason invalid they could have disputed it. Instead they choose to introduce the question obliquely to put the reader in the proper frame of mind to reject Johnson's point of view without a serious political reply to

that point of view. This, too, goes under the name of political discussion.

The errors and confusion of the party "line" on the mine strike are a consequence of the false-theoretical conception of the class forces at work in the United States today. When faced with reality the theory proves inadequate and leads the party to the morass of confusion and hesitation. From this same source comes the need to deal with political opposition with lightminded wisecracks and innuendo rather than a serious political reply. The demonstration of this in the article of Comrades Garrett and Shachtman speaks for itself. They have no serious political line and do not propose to defend it seriously.

If this article has in some small way helped to resolve their dilemma as to Johnson's meaning it is only to replace it with another, the real dilemma of the majority of the party. How to lead the party, guide it politically from day to day with a theoretical approach that leaves the party disarmed and unprepared with every movement of the proletariat. That is the dilemma.

#

A SCIENTIFIC DISCUSSION WITH COMRADE FOREST

By Albert Gates

* * *

I suppose one could say with some justification that there is sarcasm intended in the above title. But what is one to do about an opponent who does not know how to use quotations - to put it in its most charitable way - accurately? We had that business up once before in the polemic between McKinney and Forest and we shall try to clear it up in this dispute.

There is little point in adding to what I had written on the question of the inevitability of socialism. Howe has already taken up that point in the BULLETIN (VOL. II, No. 3). Naturally, I should have treated it somewhat differently, but what appeared is sufficient for the moment. I should like to close that point for the time being by saying that Forest's comments evaded the charge of "idealism" which I made. The "points" she makes, aside from the moments when she proves my charge, have nothing in reality to do with the dispute itself. And it is, frankly, difficult to discuss objective theoretical questions with a person who flies in all directions - but always away from the disputed question.

I have, however, one additional contribution to make to this point in the discussion. In the course of his voluminous and exciting writings, J. R. Johnson once wrote: "Engels and Lenin insisted that Marx deduced the inevitability of socialism not from the negation of the negation, but by an observation of socio-economic phenomena." Freddy Forest would do well to pay greater heed to this authority in her theoretical study and thinking.

I tried, in a wholly objective manner, to discuss the question of stratification, taking my point of departure the false implications contained in the Forest outline. Does Forest reply to what I wrote? No! She simply muddies up the water by irrelevant references to the Dona Torr edition of "Capital." What is in dispute here? Centralization and concentration of capital? Obviously not. Is it then the question of the inherent tendency of capitalism toward a "limit" which would not be reached "in any particular society until the entire social capital would be united, either in the hands of one single capitalist, or in those of one single corporation?" No, and Comrade Forest falsifies the issue when she tries by implication to say that my criticism of her is based on a denial of the tendency described by Marx.

Let me put it so plainly that Forest cannot evade responsibility for her loose writing and loose implications. I wrote: "Forest presents the tendency (is that a denial or recognition of it?) as a finished, completed process in a sentence whose grammatical structure suggests something which Marx did not say, explicitly or implicitly."

What didn't Marx say explicitly or implicitly? What Forest attributed to him, namely: that the tendency is already present as a finished product. The use of the word "is," where Marx used the word "if" and "would", whether conscious or unconscious is a misrepresentation, because Marx was cautious in dealing with probable developments, especially when discussing a tendency which was merely

inherent on the basis of certain economic laws of capitalist economy. Some comrades may think this discussion hair-splitting, but it is really not, because it seems quite clear to me, Forest notwithstanding, that without her Russian position to the effect that we have reached the limit of Marx's "tendency" in the collective capitalist economy in Russia, or the single capitalist trust there, she could not have so abandonedly inserted the word "is" to replace the word "if" or "would."

I tried then, in as mild a manner possible, to indicate some of the problems involved in an attempt to make a scientific assessment of the "stratification process" in modern society. You would think that an objectively, scientifically motivated comrade would attempt to grapple with a problem on which so many theories, explanations, points of view, have been disputed, in bourgeois as well as proletarian circles. Her attitude is flippant, supercilious. An example? I wrote: "The task of Marxists today is to determine how tendencies develop, whether or not they have been realized in modern society, or whether society has taken other turns, in opposition to the tendency."

What does Forest say: "And what turn has modern society taken 'in opposition to the tendency?'" (Note: I say Marxists must determine "whether society has taken other turns." Forest turns "must determine" and "whether" into a challenge which she discharges ludicrously.) Gates has nothing to offer * * * He writes that: "The big bourgeoisie, the dominant monopolists are compelled to oppose stratification." And then follows a footnote in which Forest "disregards" my reference to Germany, indicating that she not only does not understand what happened in Germany during Hitler's reign, but knows nothing about it. More than that, she understands little about what is happening concretely in bourgeois society or the role of the big bourgeoisie in the question of stratification which affects them at least as much as the proletariat. This is, apparently, of no importance whatever to a person who is always "governed by economic laws," and refuses to recognize the dialectical interrelationship of cause and effect, objective and subjective social forces.

Then she quotes me (accurately to be sure): "As a matter of fact, two parallel developments occur in modern bourgeois society springing from a single common cause."

And what does Forest do? With the same singleness of purpose which compels her to distort quotations she writes: "If so, the 'two parallel developments' are not opposing tendencies..." Where did Forest find in my article that the parallel developments are opposing tendencies? Why does she transfer my comments about the opposition of the big bourgeoisie to stratification, and the rise of stratification in the backward countries (countries of lower industrial development rather than those in which the "concentration and centralization had reached their highest point"), to the point about "parallel developments?" Only Forest can explain such a school of polemics.

Yet, as a matter of fact, the parallel tendencies are contained within contractions, oppositions, stresses, etc. produced by the tendencies. Only they have escaped our new school of dialecticians.

It was in this connection that I referred to the Engels' quotation. Against mysterious persons? Forest should know much better. She should know that many of the most recent adherents to the state capitalist theory of Russian society base themselves on the Engels quote.

Since Comrade Forest challenged me on her outline itself, I might say that I have now looked over the entire outline more carefully. With all due respect to her efforts, and I mean this sincerely, there is nothing profound and outstanding in what she did. The outline is a compilation of quotations from "Capital", chapter for chapter, something that has been done many times before in the movement. It can serve an instructor with a knowledge of "Capital" as a weekly guide in teaching a class. But it cannot be of much aid to the student who might just as well, and as easily, go right into "Capital" itself.

And so far as Forest's (and Johnson's) articles on the economy of Russia is concerned, we shall turn to them soon enough. For there, too, hangs a tale.

#

A NOTE FROM COMRADE AVEL VICTOR

* * *

April 22, 1947

To the Editor
Workers Party Bulletin

I would like to point out what is probably an unintentional error, either on the part of Comrade Irving Berg or of the technical helpers who assisted in the publication of the Bulletin.

Sigmund Freud's statement on Marxism and Russia is not contained in "The General Introduction to Psychoanalysis" as the footnote on page 8 states. There is no reference of any length to Marxism in "The General Introduction."

There is a long reference to Marxism and Russia in Freud's "New Introductory Lectures to Psychoanalysis." The statement runs from page 241 to page 248, and Berg's quotation is from this section.

Comrade Berg, however, repeats with substantial accuracy Freud's point of view and certainly more accurately and more completely and with more honesty than does Comrade Stiler.

Fraternally,

Avel Victor

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IN ANSWER TO SHIELDS

By William Gorman

* * *

In the WORKERS PARTY BULLETIN (VOL. II, No. 2), Comrade Shields subjects my article on the Zionist Congress to a page and a half of ridicule before he declares "enough of this forced facetiousness." Had he kept this in mind at the very beginning, he could have avoided giving a painful display of how serious political questions can be treated with thoughtless frivolity.

Shields writes, "Gorman finds nothing whatsoever in the deliberations of the Congress to take seriously enough to analyze, comment upon and indicate the Bolshevik solution....He finds it sufficient...to laugh at the whole proceedings, solutions and problems alike." We shall see in a moment who is displaying a lack of seriousness. Shields suggests that my proposed solution to Jewish-Arab-British differences is "hand-holding and joining." Given the proper degree of sophistry, a joke can be made out of anything. I was discussing in an earlier part of the article the ineffectual nature of individual acts of terror and the dangerous nature of its source--the semi-fascist, anti-Arab Revisionists. Rather than isolated terror actions, "what is required first is a political program which could mobilize both Jews and Arabs in Palestine, which could gain the support of the neighboring colonial peoples and the sympathy of the workers of the world." Shields overlooks this quotation because it provides him with nothing to laugh about. It is at the heart of the present impasse in Palestine.

Shields, armed with a powerful magnifying glass, notes carefully that I use the phrases "Jewish people" and "Jewish workers" interchangeably. From this he deduces brilliantly a contradiction to my previous point that the Jewish workers must break their present coalescence with the Jewish bourgeoisie. Further down, Shields makes another brilliant deduction. From the almost axiomatic statement that the Jews of Palestine should appeal to the British workers for support, Shields deduces that I want the Jews "to throw their full strength behind the Labor Party of Great Britain." One heavy blow follows another. He finally deduces that I really mean that Palistinian Jewry should support the anti-Jewish immigration position of the British Trotskyists. From all this I can only conclude that there is no sure-fire, guaranteed defense against political kibitzers in our movement.

I have no desire to explain away the serious errors of the British Trotskyists or the incidental errors of Comrade Gates. There are a few general points raised by Comrade Shields upon which I would like to comment.

Shields writes, "...all the other peoples whom Comrade Gorman mentions, he supports simply by virtue of the fact that they are struggling against imperialism and lays down no other condition for his support. For the Jews, however, this is not enough." This is another brilliant deduction by Shields. Like the present party position, I give critical support to every anti-imperialist struggle. But there was a different point involved when I wrote that Palistinian Jewry must turn away from the Zionist leadership which was ex-

posed as bankrupt by the whole proceedings of the Zionist Congress, and "begin to look elsewhere, to the peoples of Egypt, Indo-China, India, Burma, Malay, the Philippines, Indonesia - all of whom are struggling valiantly to free themselves from imperialist exploitation and terror." In all the countries mentioned, there has occurred or is now occurring a violent mass military effort to expel the imperialist power. This is not and has not been the case in Palestine. Up to 1939, the whole Zionist leadership and program based itself upon the military intervention of the British against the possible threats of Arab resistance. Since the 1939 White Paper, we have witnessed individual acts of terror against the British. But we know from experience and from theory, that individual acts of heroism as a substitute for mass action only indicate the disorientation and even impotence of the masses due to lack of leadership, program and perspective. An objection might be raised that a violent Jewish uprising in Palestine today would be suicidal. Given the present relationship of forces between the small Jewish population and the large British troop concentration, this would be the only possible result. The problem then is one of changing the present relation of forces. Concretely, this means the Arabs of Palestine, of the neighboring countries and, in a final sense, the working people and colonial people of other countries must be drawn into the struggle against British imperialist rule. Thus, a Palestinian Jewish worker who paid serious attention to the struggle in Indo-China, Indonesia, etc. would see (1) that the only alternative to individual terrorism is not passivity but mass "terrorism" and (2) that the present resistance and hatred of British rule in Palestine is an integral part of the world-wide revolt against imperialism rather than a part of the plans of bourgeois Zionist chauvinists who envision an exclusive Jewish State with Jewish rule and exploitation of the Arabs. Shields interprets this point in my LABOR ACTION article as an insistence that the Jews of Palestine "must also shake hands with all kinds of exotic people before Comrade Gorman will support them." What can you do with this joker?

Comrade Shields exaggerates the role of the slogan of the right of self-determination to resolve the differences between the Jews and Arabs in Palestine. The revolutionary movement stands for the right of self-determination for any ethnic, racial, national group. However, this abstract right has nothing to do with the concrete struggle in Palestine today and tomorrow. The prime oppressor of both Jews and Arabs are the British. The Jewish and Arab ruling classes vie with each to be the exclusive instrumentality of British rule. The Jewish workers are in constant economic conflict with the Jewish capitalists and the Arab workers will not too long from now demonstrate their bitter hatred of the Arab effendi. The struggle against British rule is therefore identical with the struggle against the Jewish and Arab bourgeoisie; and, conversely, the class and colonial solidarity of the Jewish and Arab workers. How Shields continuously can compare the relation of the Jews and Arabs to that of the Russians and Ukrainians or Russians and Finns at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution is beyond comprehension. All available evidence too confirms the fact that the growing solidarity of the Jews and Arabs is built on the needs and objectives of the class struggle. The next stage is to combine unity on the class economic front with unity on the anti-imperialist front. It is only by the most abstract schematic thinking and total blindness to the socialist potentialities of the present struggles in Palestine that Shields can predict "with mathematical certainty" the

destruction of Palistinian Jewry after independence is achieved. (As examples of independent Arab states Shields provides Syria and Lebanon which are no more independent of France than the "banana republics" are independent of the US!) This left-handed apologia for Zionism is based on at least some of the theoretical premises of Zionism: awe before the "ideological cement" of "nationalism" without confidence in the capacity of a united working class to shatter it within the dynamics of the class struggle; indifference to the character of the epoch which is revolutionary on a continental and world-wide scale which objectively changes the character of the struggle within Palestine itself; indifference to the pivotal role occupied by the advanced Jewish proletariat in relation to the oppressed Arab peasantry of Palestine and the neighboring countries. Like the Zionists, Shields sees anti-semitism and national hatred as a static, constant factor unaffected by the class struggle. He assumes fundamentally the political premises of the Jewish bourgeoisie - fear of an Arab numerical majority, and the political premises of the Arab bourgeoisie - fear of a Jewish majority. He preoccupies himself with the schematic problem of numerical majorities after independence and even after socialism is achieved, rather than with the living, almost identical needs of the Jewish and Arab masses in the present-day class struggle and anti-imperialist struggle.

(Lest anyone attempt to apply the above arguments to the Negro question in the U.S.: the Negroes have been especially enslaved, oppressed and exploited on a racial basis by the white slaveholders and capitalists for over one hundred and fifty years. The objective premises, therefore, exist for the application of Lenin's position on the national question. This is not so in Palestine where the Arab ruling class has not oppressed or exploited the Jewish masses, nor has the Jewish ruling class exploited or oppressed the great majority of the Arabs. Rather, both nations have horizontal class structures and both nations are decidedly oppressed and exploited by a third - the British.)

One final point. Shields objects to Trotsky's opinion that the attempt to achieve a Jewish state under capitalism "is to pose a reactionary Utopia." He makes it clear that it is our duty instead "to strengthen the exceptionally weak strategic position of the Jewish nation." What does Shields mean? Does he propose that we raise Jewish immigration to Palestine as the practical solution to the problem of anti-semitism? Or, perhaps, the slogan of a Jewish national homeland or a Jewish state? It is impossible to reply to Shields' cursory objections to Trotsky on this question until Shields makes adequately clear how much of Zionist politics and positions he now embraces. What began as a few belabored jokes at the expense of a LABOR ACTION article may end as a total capitulation to Zionism.

#

JEWISH QUESTION DISCUSSION

* * *

Introduction

Following the symposium at which Comrade Ed Findley debated the Jewish question with me, I believed that we had reached a more common point of view than we had at the last convention. I expressed an opinion to Findley that if he subscribed to the N.C.'s position on the constituent assembly, it might be possible to present the party with a common resolution. Shortly thereafter, the following questions were received by the P.C. from Ed and Al Findley. I presented the following draft to the P.C. as an answer to their questions. The P.C. had a rather lengthy discussion of the question which resulted in the decision to elaborate and bring this resolution presented to the convention up to date. This the N.C. was instructed to do by the convention which ordered a discussion on it in the party. The following material is part of the discussion on the Jewish question which is now taking place.

- Albert Gates

- - -

January 3, 1947.

Political Committee
Workers Party
New York, N. Y.

Dear Comrades:

At the end of the symposium on Palestine in which Al Gates and Ed Findley participated, Gates informally and apparently on his own responsibility proposed to us the writing of a new, common resolution to which the adherents of the N.C. and Findley resolutions could subscribe.

He based his proposal on the impression that he obtained from the symposium presentations. It seemed to him that the actual differences between the two positions were less sharp than the resolution formulations would lead one to believe.

Therefore, in the interest of clarity and with the intent of exploring the areas of maximum agreement, we submit the following questions which are designed to test the limits of the N.C. position:

1. Does the P.C. believe that it is still incumbent upon revolutionary socialists to urge the Jewish masses to assimilate as a more progressive course than fighting for continued survival as a distinct national grouping?

2. Does the P.C. agree with the "Political Affairs" stricture that the conception of a world Jewish nation is reactionary?

3. Is it the position of the P.C. that any struggle for a territorial strategic base for national survival (in Palestine) is in-

evitably bound to be reactionary under imperialism? Or, is the form, that this struggle has taken, the basis of objection?

4. Does the P.C. visualize the Jewish aspect of the Palestine problem merely in terms of protecting the national interests of the existing Jewish community in Palestine or is there the full recognition that the interests of millions of non-Palestine residing Jews are involved?

5. In what concrete way does the P.C. prescription for a Constituent Assembly with usual minority status for the Jews differ from the moderate Arab nationalist program for an Arab National State with minority status for the Jews in Palestine?

6. Has the P.C. given full consideration to the role played by the disillusioning experiences of East and Central European Jews with constitutionally guaranteed minority rights in the reactions of Palestine Jews to political programs (whatever their source) that offer them garden variety minority status?

7. What valid objection can there be to correctly applying the Bolshevik conception of the "multi-national state," in the applicable form of Bi-Nationalism with majority rule, as does the Findley resolution (the Bi-National state is no more than a variant of the Bolshevik "multi-national state" idea)?

Your answering these questions will help stimulate a healthy, fruitful discussion of the issues involved in the "Jewish Question." Furthermore, we would like to see both our questions and your answers published in the Party BULLETIN for the information of the membership.

Fraternally yours,

Ed and Al Findley

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DRAFT OF REPLY TO THE ABOVE QUESTIONS
PREPARED BY ALBERT GATES AND PRESENTED
TO THE P.C. AT MEETING HELD APRIL 24,
1947.

I want to take up first the specific Findley questions:

1. Assimilation is progressive, but this general observation has no great importance for the Jews of the world. The concrete circumstances of their present existence makes it impossible to advocate this "way out" for the Jews as a serious proposition. And in politics you must be concrete.

It is therefore meaningless to say: Assimilation is a more progressive way out for the Jews because this road is blocked to them. In this respect, the P.C. position needs modification: at present our position has a somewhat ultimatic and unreal ring.

That this is so is revealed in our own effort to leave the old traditional position and solution, in recognition of the new factors in the situation produced by Hitlerism. If the question of

assimilation, therefore, has been a barrier to a common resolution on the Jewish question, I believe it should no longer be one.

2. Do we agree with "Political Affairs" that the conception of a world Jewish nation is reactionary? It is difficult for me to quite understand what is meant by this question. It is sufficient for us to understand that we are dealing with an oppressed and persecuted people who are distinguished from other peoples by tradition, language, religion, absence of territory, etc. To recognize the peculiar and separate position of the Jews is, of course, not reactionary. Whether the Jews are a nation in the same sense as other nations, in conformity with the classic description, is beside the point. The question does have relevance to the agitation for a Jewish State. The P.C. position on this question is concrete, for it is impossible to answer the question abstractly. For example, in a sense, the Birobidjan experiment was a sort of "Jewish State," a limited experiment which the Marxists supported. In the context of the Palestinian situation, the carving out of a Jewish state from an Arab nation, would be reactionary.

3. Question 3 relates to our attitude toward Jewish desire for "a territorial strategic base" for Jewish national survival. We do not oppose the present Jewish struggle for a territorial strategic base for national survival, and in Palestine. It is the Jewish program and attitude toward the Arabs which is reactionary and which we oppose. (For example, some Jews, Findley informs me, are for a bi-national state, but not now; only when the Jews have a guaranteed majority of the country.)

4. Do we see the Jewish problem as a world problem? Of course. We do not believe that it is essentially, or primarily, one of "protecting the national interests of the existing...community in Palestine." Were it not for the world situation, the Jewish question would not exist in its present form.

5. How does our position on the constituent assembly differ from the moderate Arab position of establishing an Arab national state with minority status for the Jews? I do not know what the moderate Arab view is in detail on guaranteeing minority rights for the Jews in an Arab national state. But our whole position on the national question, indicates that we are for the fullest rights and guarantee of those rights for the Jews. To us, this is not a formality, but a living thing, with a rich meaning. It means full rights of the Jews to exist as Jews in Palestine, in every sense of the term - if the Arabs are a majority, and there is no question about it, or if the situation were reversed. This forms part of a dynamic conception we have on the whole national question as part of the socialist struggle.

6. This relates to our appreciation of the role played by the "disillusioning experiences of East and Central European Jews." We are fully aware of this, otherwise, I repeat, there would not exist a Jewish question in its present form.

7. The last point in the Findley questions, dealing with the Bolsheviks and the multi-national state experiences in Russia, I am not fully prepared to answer as yet. I tried to look up the material on this and have not been successful beyond the more familiar material which appears primarily in the form of resolutions. You are acquainted in general with the Bolshevik solution to this question:

(a) National minorities, living in their own territories, were guaranteed their democratic rights even to the point of secession (Finland).

(b) Those that remained, remained as part of a federation of "socialist states," at least in theory. They had full national rights.

(c) National groupings within minority territory were guaranteed their full national rights also - a sort of immersed national right within a national right.

(d) Thus the union of states, making up Russia, was a multi-national state. It does not appear to be applicable to the Palestinian situation. Without going into the historical reasons for the differences (I have indicated them in previous articles), the fact is that Palestine, a tiny country, is primarily an Arab nation, by centuries of tradition and occupation, connected by borders to the Arab world. In recognizing this, it would be obstinate formalism, however, not to recognize that in recent years there has been a change in the relation of population that has brought about a change in turn in the question at issue. The two to one population relationship has altered things considerably, and in Jewish favor.

Given the context of the world situation of the Jews, and bearing in mind our new position in favor of Jewish immigration to Palestine, we are perforce required to recognize that if our program should be won, the new state would in a sense be bi-national, i.e., a state composed of two peoples, with an Arab majority. Given the territorial separation of the two peoples within one geographical territory of tiny Palestine, you would not avoid such expressions of this separation as:

Jewish press	-	Arab press
Jewish language	-	Arab language
Jewish regional and local governments	-	Arab regional and local governments.

over which would stand a constituent assembly, with an Arab majority, the assembly guaranteeing full democratic rights to both peoples alike.

The term bi-national, given the actual relationship of forces and the concrete nature of the present struggle, appears to be not merely unwise tactically, but is wholly misunderstood because of the context given it by the Jews themselves. Thus, a series of events have served to distort a rather extended series of ideas on a complex problem. That is why talk of bi-nationalism is so confusing and disorienting.

I am not sure we have come to grips with all aspects of the Jewish Palestinian question which takes on many external forms of the old "Irish Question." Obviously, the larger question is that of the domination of Palestine by British imperialism. No solution is possible without the expulsion of the British. This cannot be done as the Jewish terrorists are trying to do it now. That is a road to defeat - though it can, given a different set of circumstances, such as relations between the Jews and Arabs, serve as a spark to a rev-

olutionary struggle of grand proportions. Right now it is a rear-guard action, partly the product of the criminal policies of Zionism. For all our admiration and defense of the Jewish terrorists, we must not cease in our criticism of their course or in the advocacy of our general program.

We have now one serious opponent to our policy, namely, Leon Shields. I cannot say yet whether we can have a common resolution with the Findley comrades or not. I will say that I was under a wrong impression when I first read their letter to the Committee, believing them to be moving further and further away from us rather than moving closer. That was not my experience from a discussion with Ed Findley last Saturday. I cannot say for sure whether we will be able to write a common resolution, but I think there are good prospects for it. In the case of Shields, however sincere he is, we are far apart. Some of his criticisms in the BULLETIN of the British RCP, T. Cliff and the CI in general are apt and pungent. This is true of his remarks on the more abstract and formal advice given by Gorman in his article. But his main argument against the P.C. is revealed in his advocacy of "self-determination of the Jews in Palestine," as a primary condition to the struggle against British imperialism, or one concurrent with it. He rejects totally the value of the unifying character of the class struggle in Palestine as an instrument of bringing Arabs and Jews together. While our position is unavoidably abstract in parts, given concrete conditions in Palestine, he places no importance whatever to the influence of the class struggle in the country.

He places the Jewish question on the same plane with all other national minorities (Ukraine, etc.) when obviously there are profound differences in the problem. This grows out of his rejection of our position on the character of Palestine as an Arab nation - which he denies and also his denial that the Hitler era is responsible for Jewish desire to go to Palestine as the last haven of refuge. He does raise some interesting questions on self-determination on the basis of Russian experiences, quoting Lenin and Trotsky, which I have been unable to investigate or give thought to. They relate to the unwillingness of a people to accept on mere offer, the guarantees of self-determination from a former oppressing people, even though all the formalities may be correct.

In another article I shall take up Shields' article in the BULLETIN as well as discuss the question of partition and self-determination.

- Albert Gates

#

SHOULD FREE IMMIGRATION BE THE MAIN DEMAND FOR THE DP'S?

By Miriam Evans

* * *

Albert Findley, in the May 5 issue of LABOR ACTION on the "Plight of the DP's" (Jewish only), once more tries to prove that the aspiration for a Jewish state in Palestine as a partial solution to anti-Semitism in Europe is not utopian under capitalism. The Findley resolution on the Jewish question states:

"The Workers Party warns the Jewish masses against the danger of a despairing attitude toward the defense of Jewish and other democratic rights outside of Palestine."

But Findley lends himself to instilling a despairing attitude in the Jewish masses struggling for their democratic rights in Europe. The resolution states further:

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

In this LABOR ACTION article Findley, though he doesn't counterpose the two struggles in so many words, poses the struggle for and in Palestine as most important. His article is weighted heavily in the direction of the demand for free immigration and a bi-national state in Palestine. He gives lip-service to the need for Jewry to unite with the working class and the revolutionary party in struggle for the abolition of capitalism. And he quotes liberally to prove his thesis from the November NI editorial on the Jews in Europe and immigration to Palestine. He can only do so because he accepts that part of the majority position which recognizes the existence of national consciousness among the Jews in Europe today. The majority position lends itself to an overstress of the Palestinian question because of its failure to discuss adequately the roots of anti-Semitism and the fallacies and illusions that are rampant in Jewish nationalism as a solution to anti-Semitism. The majority position on the Jewish question states generally the road to the solution of anti-Semitism in Europe but it does not implement the struggle in Europe itself as it does the struggle for immigration to Palestine and immigration in general.

Says Findley in his article on the DP's:

"Thus in a fundamental sense and in a very real personal sense, the survival of the Jews is dependent upon the overthrow of capitalism. 'The Jewish proletariat is in need of revolution more than any other.' If anything can be learned from the past and present bestial assaults of capitalist anti-Semitism, it is that the only real and fundamental solution of the Jewish problem lies in the unity of the Jewish people with the working class and its revolutionary vanguard - the Workers Party."

Is this solution posed for American Jewry alone? For European Jewry Findley offers the mirage of Jewish statism.

"The fight for the right of Jews to go to Palestinē cannot be considered as a substitute for the need to fight against all reactionary restrictions upon immigration (emphasis mine, ME) whenever they occur."

Now it is this discussion of the problem solely in the light of immigration as a solution to the plight of the Jewish DP's that I take exception to. All possibility of a struggle for democratic rights of Jews in Europe is either completely ignored or spoken of with such pessimism and despair as to indicate that there is no other answer for European Jewry but "out Jew!"

As revolutionists it is our job to dispel the illusions of Jewry, not to give further credence to them --- leave that to the Zionists. The Jews in America and Europe have illusions about Palestinē, a false sense of security from the evils of anti-Semitism and the class struggle that Palestine seemingly holds out to them. Palestine is The Hope -- the Last Hope, or better yet, "The place where Jewry can grow strong in the land of the Jewish nation. How do we combat such despair? By ignoring all signs of struggle in Europe - in the DP camps? By proposing nothing other than immigration? The Jews in Europe have a tendency to lay the blame for the murder of 6,000,000 Jews on blocs of nationalities and ignore class distinctions. How do we expose the error of dumping the basket of responsibility on the doorstep of the Germans or the Poles, etc.? How do we educate the Jew and the non-Jew in the importance of class, that is, capitalist responsibility for anti-Semitism? Why does anti-Semitism exist in capitalist society? What is the role of anti-Semitism? A discussion of the plight of the displaced persons in Europe could answer these most important questions and end, not on a note of despair, but confidence in the struggle for democratic rights in Europe, and riding Europe of the American, English, French and Russian imperialists.

The main demands for the DP's should not be "Open the doors of the United States" and "Open the doors of Palestine."

On the displaced persons camps, just what are they? Concentration camps, without the special contribution of the Fascists of gas chambers, crematoria, etc. The "democratic" imperialists dangle death in the form of slow starvation. The experience of the Jews in these camps has shown them that American imperialist treatment is not much different than Nazi treatment.

Who is in the concentration camps? Only Jews? No. There are political refugees from the Stalinist regimes in Poland, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Russia -- Poles, Yugoslavs, Balts and Ukrainians. There are 1,200,000 refugees and displaced persons in Europe. About one-fifth of these are Jews and 153,000 of these are concentrated in the American zone in Germany.

What is the role of UNRRA in these concentration camps? UNRRA fosters, as only an agency dealing with food can, the division between the Jews and the rest of the prisoners. As an example of this, in July, 1946, the New York Times reported that a directive was issued and signed by Lieut. Gen. Sir Frederick Morgan indicating that further aid to all non-Jewish Poles, Yugoslavs, and other nationals

of United Nations countries would be refused unless they consented to return to their former homes.

There is greater desperation among the Jews in the DP camps than was ever visible among the Jews before. They are willing to risk everything in a fight for freedom. For them this is a last ditch fight. This has produced a desire to fight for their existence as a group, as a nation. The militant struggle, hunger strikes, mass demonstrations, for immigration to Palestine is one evidence of this. The sporadic struggles against the American imperialist army is another evidence. One more is the rioting in Bavaria last April on election day -- 5,000 Jewish displaced persons in the Landsberg area "swept out of their camp at Diessen and attacked German civilians. Two persons were killed and scores injured before United States soldiers quelled the riot." The hunger strikers and the 2,000 in a May Day demonstration in Landsberg to protest the twenty Jews jailed in connection with the riot attest to the militancy of these Jews. The Jewish DP's have their own elected governing bodies, governing within the limits that military rule allows them.

How should we as revolutionists direct this militancy on the part of DP Jews? By making a political program of their desperation? Or by directing their energies into channels that lead them to a socialist solution? Like Findley, I believe that many Jews want to emigrate, a good portion of them want to go to Palestine in particular. Unlike Findley, I do not counterpose immigration to remaining in Europe and struggling there for democratic rights. How many Jews want to leave Europe? How many want to go to Palestine? How many want to go to United States? Why do the Jews want to leave Europe? Why do they choose? What is the role of the Zionists in the choice? What is the role of American and British imperialism in all this selection? In what way does anti-Semitism, the scourge, the leader in capitalism's hate parade in Europe, figure into the wish of the Jew to leave Europe?

The Anglo-American Inquiry Committee Report of May 1, 1946, gives us information on the condition of the Jews in Europe. The Jewish workers and petty bourgeois are competitors of the non-Jewish worker and petty bourgeois for jobs in the chaotic European economy. Private property, once owned by Jewish small business men, is often restituted to the Jews at the expense of a non-Jewish small business man. This produces a great deal of hostility among the petty bourgeois. Jews desiring to leave Europe are advised by Zionist organizations to state Palestine as their choice. Some Jews state their preference for Palestine in view of the restriction of the United States Immigration Law, although they have indicated a preference for United States if it were possible. In the Stalinist dominated countries, Jews are government employees and members of the hated secret police. Many refugees and DP's find it difficult if not impossible to get work or travel permits. Many Jews in their countries of origin find it impossible to get a job. Many of those who want to emigrate would remain if they could find a means of livelihood. In some countries Communist and Socialist Jews have stated their intention of remaining where they are, their countries of origin.

From all this we can come to the conclusion that:

The DP Jews want to leave their prisoned existence inside the concentration camps misnomered "assembly centers." The non-Jewish

DP's also want to leave the concentration camps - which are for them as much a prison. We should demand the freedom of the prisoners - a demand never once mentioned by either the majority or Findley resolutions. And we certainly should not worry about General Clay closing the camps, as Findley does. We should put forward a slogan for a united struggle by both Jewish and non-Jewish DP's to win their democratic rights to emigrate, return to their countries of origin, or remain in any country in Europe unhampered by any of the imperialist armies. They should join with the workers and the refugees outside the prison camps in struggle for food and freedom from all imperialism in Europe. In cases such as the election riots in Bavaria we should show the Jewish DP that instead of fighting the German worker, he should join him in fighting for food and the right to work.

Inside and outside the concentration camps the Jews are being discriminated against economically. In almost every case this discrimination is fostered by the Stalinist or US supported governments that cannot solve the economic ills of the European continent and so seek the scapegoat. Under Stalinist dominated governments there appears a new variety of anti-Semitism fashioned after that which first cropped up in Russia with the degeneration of the Russian Revolution. The Stalinists use the Jew as a political scapegoat. The government employee and the secret police are, broadly speaking, in the same relation to the bureaucracy and the workers as the small business man is to the capitalists and the working class. Opposition, political or economic, vented by the working class and the petty bourgeois on the Jew, the scapegoat, is a safeguard for capitalist and Stalinist dominated governments. Rudzienski in his article in the January 1947 NI portrayed excellently the role of anti-Semitism in Poland. Our job is not to call the working class or middle class indigenous anti-Semites but it is rather to point out who is responsible for poverty and undemocratic governments. It is our job to point out how and why those responsible propagandize anti-Semitism. Break the working class and middle class from the prejudices that keep them from fighting their real enemies, the capitalists and the bureaucratic collectivists.

For those Jews who remain in Europe either through necessity or desire, should we propose a program of despair as the Zionists do? The New York Times of April 15, 1947, reported that "A Jewish Telegraphic Agency dispatch from Warsaw asserted that 15,000 Polish Jews in the American zone had registered for repatriation.

"The admission that some Jews are ready to call quits to their abortive attempts to reach Palestine or the United States marks a new low in Jewish leaders outlook here. That a Jewish news agency carried the dispatch with the categorical statement of the registration figure is considered little short of sensational in view of the Zionists efforts.

"However, a Jewish immigration official said that as early as last February, at the Paris conference, he heard of Polish Jews turning back home. If nothing is done on the Palestine situation, the 'tendency' will probably develop into a mass trek. One thing is certain, he declared: 'The Jews will not spend another winter in Germany.'

"Jewish leaders ... said that any Jews return to Poland was simply a matter of sheer hopelessness. Dr. Jacek Marecki, Polish

consul general, confirmed the growing Jewish despair, but added other reasons for the change of heart."

What program has Findley to offer these Jews returning to Poland? The Polish masses are indigenous anti-Semites? Go to Palestine, do not attempt to struggle in Poland? In Palestine the Jew in his "state within a state" has a measure of power which he cannot hope to achieve in Poland struggling with the Polish working class against the Stalinist bureaucracy? Why is anti-Semitism indigenous to the Polish masses? And is it true of only the Poles or maybe the Germans, the Rumanians, and the Czechoslovakians, etc.? Is there a working class anti-Semitism and a "capitalist totalitarian anti-Semitism?" The Jew and the non-Jew are competitors for government jobs. Some Jews are in the secret police. The Stalinists utilize this to deflect the struggle against its reactionary regime in Poland. A national consciousness exists among the Jews today but it reflects itself not only as a desire to go to Palestine but as a readiness to fight for their democratic rights in Europe as well. We should try to unite them with the European working class in the fight for these rights - not separate them still further.

England is taking DP's from continental Europe into England as slave laborers. We must expose and fight this. In this situation the demand for the democratic right to work, to a job and job security in Europe has to be placed foremost. And at all other times the demand must be put on an equal basis with the demand for free, unrestricted immigration to Palestine, United States, and all the rest of the world.

United States policy with regard to immigration of DP's to the United States is beginning to bend a little because of their growing imperialist burden in Palestine and the Near East. But, of course, there is not going to be any fundamental change. The Immigration Act will remain. This is just a measure to help deflect the struggle of those Jews who are determined to go to Palestine.

Immigration demands cannot take precedence over demands for democratic rights in Europe itself. The American and European workers should demand that the Anglo-American-French armies free the prisoners in the concentration camps. They should fight for the political and personal security of the anti-Stalinists in the DP camps. Jewish and non-Jewish DP's should join with the European workers in forming workers defense guards. The IP's and the working class should demand that there be no discrimination in employment. The DP's, refugees and the working class should demand for the DP's and refugees the right to a job and job security in any country the DP's and refugees choose to work. They should be given the right to work in Germany, if they wish, Poland, if they wish, Palestine, if they wish, or America, if they wish. And all the workers, refugees, and DP's should fight together to rid Europe of all of the imperialist armies that make Europe a prison for all the workers.

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THE NATURE OF THE STALINIST PARTIES
(AFTERTHOUGHTS ON A BRANCH DISCUSSION)

By Al Findley

* * *

The Stalinists are agents of the Russian ruling class. Every action, every decision is based on the interests of the Russian ruling class.

The Stalinists operate within the working class not as representatives of either the historical or immediate interests of the workers, or of a special privileged strata of the workers. Their only interests in fighting for workers' demands is to manipulate them in the interests of their Kremlin masters' struggle with the bourgeoisie of France, England, etc. That much, everyone in the Workers Party agrees, are the facts. The differences arise in the conclusions we draw.

It is difficult to imagine how such agreement in fact can lead to such differences in conclusions. It would appear simple enough that given the evaluation of the Russian State as bureaucratic collectivist (W.P. majority) or capitalist (Johnson) and the fact that the Stalinists act solely in the interests of this class, no other conclusion is possible except that the Stalinist parties are either capitalist totalitarian or bureaucratic collectivist totalitarian parties. Yet, the Johnsonites insist on calling the Stalinists a working class party.

Unlike the Johnsonites, the Cannonites have some justification in considering the Stalinist parties as working class parties. To the Cannonites, Russia is a degenerated workers state. The Stalinists in some distorted, degenerated manner, act in the interests of the working class. That is the crude essence of their concept of a degenerated workers state. -It is logical for them to conclude that - despite the fact that the Stalinist parties are agents of the Kremlin and only manipulate the workers for the interests of the Russian rulers - they still are a working class party. For the Johnsonites such a conclusion is a travesty of logic.

This travesty of logic by the Johnsonites has its own reason. It is all well and good to call Russia, a far off country, capitalist. It would be utterly ridiculous and defy the understanding of any worker to call the American or French Stalinists - capitalist. Rejecting the concept of bureaucratic collectivism, Johnson is forced to call them a workers party. That the term working class party loses all meaning is secondary. None of the established strategies or tactics usually applied to working class parties can be applied to the Stalinists, as so aptly proved by Max Shachtman in his article in the NI. Neither can the Stalinists be accused of having their social roots (i.e. representing the interests of) in the working class. What then is the meaning or purpose of calling them a working class party?

The Johnsonites argue as follows:

1. The CP appeals to and is composed of workers, has its mass base in the working class.

2. The CP's avowed and declared program is that of socialism and class struggle.

3. The Stalinists are necessarily dependent on the working class. Without the working class the Stalinists could not exist or function.

4. The Stalinist parties cannot take power and establish bureaucratic collectivism in countries outside of the orbit of the "Red" Army.

5. They are no less working class parties than the Social Democrats.

The first two arguments are nothing more than words. We never characterize a party primarily by its mass base or the subjective ideas of what it thinks it is fighting for. We always judge a party first and foremost by the objective guiding principles of its ACTIONS, i.e., by which class interests it serves. The composition of a party acts only as a clue, not a determinant of which class interests it serves.

The third argument of the necessary dependence of the Stalinists does not follow from the Johnson position. The reformist labor leaders cannot exist without a labor organization that in some way fights for the workers. For the Stalinists there is no such necessary tie. As agents, according to Johnson, of the state capitalists of Russia, their operation within the working class is, so to speak, a historical accident due only to the fact that the state capitalism of Russia evolved out of the destruction of the workers state, and the various Stalinist parties developed out of the ranks of the revolutionary movement.

From the Johnson point of view, there is absolutely no reason why the Stalinists, being agents of a capitalist class, cannot base themselves entirely on sections of the bourgeoisie such as the Wallaces and Peppers. Further, from their point of view, it is not theoretically excluded that the Stalinists, agents of a totalitarian state capitalism, cannot unite with that section of the capitalist class that seeks to introduce totalitarian state capitalism (fascism) in France, etc., provided they accept the hegemony or are at least pro-Russia.

The fourth argument that although they aim to, the CP cannot establish its bureaucratic rule in countries outside of the orbit of the Red Army, is certainly no argument that they are a working class party. Even were we to grant this point, it would not invalidate the definition of the Stalinist parties as bureaucratic collectivist parties. All it would do is LIMIT that definition; The Stalinists would then be bureaucratic collectivists only of a foreign class with no social roots in the class structure of the country, in the same manner as the German American Bund was an agent of German capitalism with no social roots in this country.

The last argument that the Stalinists are similar to the social democracy and reformist trade union leaders, deserves more attention. Not because it has any validity, but because even comrades of the majority are confused on this subject.

The argument continues as follows: True, the Stalinists and the Social Democrats function differently (democratic vs. totalitarian), but the Social Democrats, agents of the bourgeoisie (native) are considered by you as a working class party; the Stalinists too, though they operate in the interests of a ruling class (Russian) should be considered a working class party.

Those who use this argument are falling for the crude vulgarization of Marxism that is the theory of Social Fascism - that the Social Democrats are the direct agents of capitalism. The Marxists have always considered the Social Democrats as representatives of the immediate interests of the workers, or more accurately of a section of the working class - the labor aristocracy. It is only historically and in the long run that they represent the bourgeoisie.

It is true that even in their defense of the immediate interests of a section of the working class the Social Democrats are unreliable and capitulate to the capitalist class. Thus, their sell-out of strikes and the shooting down of revolutionists, etc. However, their social roots are in the working class, i.e., they represent the temporary interests of these workers - without that they could not exist.

The Stalinists, on the other hand, are direct agents of the Russian ruling class (whatever its nature may be). They never represent the interests of any group of workers, their social roots are not in the working class, but in the Russian ruling class. They do use the needs and demands of the workers for their own interests when their own needs can be served by championing the demands of the workers. That this happens often is true, since both the Stalinists and the workers are anti-capitalist, each for its own reasons - the workers for their immediate needs and for their historic socialist interests, the Stalinists because they represent the anti-capitalist, anti-working class rulers of Russia.

While analogies are dangerous we can use them as illustrations, not as proof - so let us illustrate. The difference between the Social Democrats and the Stalinists is similar to the difference between the reformist labor leader and the agent provocateur. Both operate within and appeal to the working class. One is the direct agent of another class, while the other represents the workers, despite his sellouts, etc.

One has the feeling when arguing with intelligent Johnsonites that the real question is not whether or not the Stalinists are a working class party, but something entirely different. They see lurking in the shadows the monster of the concept of world bureaucratic collectivist society. Ignoring logic, they charge at this monster via the road of the nature of the Stalinist parties. The argument may have its (mass) base in and around the question of the Stalinist parties, but has its (social) roots in an entirely different field.

It would lead to clarity both in the party and amongst the Johnsonites themselves if these comrades were to discuss the question on its own merits.

AN ANSWER TO COMRADE HOWE

By Charles Morgan

* * *

Howe's latest journalistic putsch ("A Question to Forest," BULLETIN, Vol. II, No. 3, April 21, 1947) has both political and clinical interest. However, time dictates that we leave to the Comrades Psychoanalysts the fascinating problem of the degree to which revisionism has influenced Howe's style (adventurism), his naivete ("Why did Forest call pragmatism American?"), his intellectual nihilism, MacDonaldism ("the inevitability of socialism ... whatever that may mean"), his falsetto iron ("as you live you learn"), etc.

Howe asks the question, "How did Marx deduce the inevitability of Socialism to begin with?" We propose to disregard his braggadocio and treat the question as though it had been asked in the spirit of humility more appropriate to the interrogator.

The entire question revolves around the relationship of Marx's method, dialectical materialism, to his analysis of the functioning of bourgeois society presented in Capital. In speaking of this relationship, Forest asserts that those who dissociate the two use the same point of departure as the bourgeois critics who impugn the economic analysis because of Marx's prior conviction of the inevitability of Socialism.

In reply to this, Howe claims that Marxists have always stated that the economic analysis is valid and verifiable apart from Marx's socialist beliefs and that it "retains objective scientific validity apart from his political convictions before writing Capital." That this is a satisfactory refutation of the bourgeois critics who have treated Capital as a cosmology designed to rationalize Marx's subjective loyalties may be freely granted. That is one question. But it is certainly no answer to Forest's assertion that the Marxists who arbitrarily divide the economic analysis from the sociology use the same point of departure as the petty bourgeois critics, a question of an entirely different nature.

As a matter of fact, Marxists have been able to assert the validity of the economic doctrines only as an integral component of the social philosophy of Marxism which culminates in the inevitability of the social revolution. It is now a commonplace, even among educated bourgeois, that Marx's economic categories are social categories. The validity of the doctrine can be found only within the context of the problem. The category of surplus value, for example, is objectively verifiable only as the expression of the production relationships which pertain in a capitalist society. Let him who abstractly hypostasizes Marx's economic categories apart from the historical context of the social relationships of a class society do so at his peril!

Thus Howe's sole citation in support of his contention that the economic doctrines may be dissociated from the sociological structure of Marxism proves, in reality, only the converse. Forest asserts that to deny the integral relationship between Marx's dialectical sociology and his economic doctrines is to use the same point of departure as the petty bourgeois critics who have denied the validity

of his economic doctrines. Howe's position is the negative aspect of this same approach. His sole example manages only to demonstrate irrefutably the nexus between the economic analysis and the complete system. Thus, sans fig-leaf, he takes his stand on the petty bourgeois point of departure from Marxism.

How, then, did Marx deduce the inevitability of Socialism? What is the relationship between the method of dialectical materialism, Marx's sociology, and the economic doctrines? Here Comrade Howe correctly poses the problem but immediately fails to distinguish between two relatively common words: "how" and "where." Marx took his facts, empirically, from society. Nor did he choose them dialectically, to flatter a preconceived goal. One of Marx's great contributions was the elimination of teleology from social philosophy; he was a materialist, not a utopian. That, we hope, needs little defense, within the party at least. But the question is how, what method.

Marx was the product of his time, the synthesis of the French Utopian Socialists and German philosophy. His basic philosophic problem was the relationship of men to society. The class struggle was not "discovered" by Marx but it required the materialist dialectic to understand that men are divided into classes because of the alienation of activity in production and to draw the logical conclusions from this division.

To Marx the application of labor to nature in the conscious planning of production is the specifically human function which differentiates men from other animals. This interchange between men and nature in the productive process is necessary and inevitable at all times and in all societies. But the method, or mode, of production, the particular forms under which men work, varies according to the state of development of the means of production.

The mode of production in turn determines the activity of men in relation to the process of production and the relationships between men are thus established according to the nature of their activity, i.e. classes arise. As stages in the development of the means of production succeed one another different classes rise to play a progressive role in the process of production and any older, no longer socially necessary classes disappear.

The concept of classes determined by the role of labor in the process of production presented all history, to Marx, as a panorama of struggling classes. In ancient Greece agriculture was the basis of production and the tools which then existed necessitated a large body of manual workers together with only a few directors. This precipitated the classes of slave and slave owner. From the slave not only labor but life could be alienated to the master. The feudal system of production which arose after the collapse of slavery permitted the alienation of labor through a different mechanism; the serf was bound to the land. And, similarly, in bourgeois society Marx saw the labor of the worker alienated from him to such an extent that his mode of life was an inversion of human existence. Marx noted that the animal functions of men, eating, sleeping, reproduction, and so on, were regarded as the only human functions while that which was specifically human, creative activity, had become only an animal liability.

The bourgeois mode of production negates the very meaning of life for the exploited class, for the proletariat. And the progressive alienation of labor coupled with the progressive growth of industry will force the working class to negate the negation, to destroy the womb which gives birth to the proletariat but which binds it in servitude by the invisible cord of wage slavery. The condition of existence for the working class will be the condition of the destruction of the bourgeois mode of production which progressively draws more and more workers into the orbit of wage slavery.

This, then, is the proletarian revolution, the social revolution which will inevitably release the springs of human creativity and restore men to their "natural" relationship in production and to one another. No more will labor be alienated from the individual, no more will men be blind slaves of an unconscious historical process. Rather, the true freedom which lies in the recognition of necessity will permit men to consciously create their own society, their own history and their own lives. This is the mighty vista which Marx surveyed from the summits of his dialectical method, the vista of the inevitable socialist revolution, clearly seen, profoundly understood ... in 1844, a full 15 years before the publication of the Critique of Political Economy.

This, Comrade Howe, is the answer to your question. It is interesting to note that it was upon this basis (increased production occasioned by the new Socialist worker) that Marx predicated ultimate communism: not at all upon the technological reorganization of the material elements of production as the administrators would have us believe.

Why was it necessary to undertake an exhaustive analysis of the actual operational principles of bourgeois society? Because, even though the inner essence of bourgeoisdom had been fathomed, it was necessary to discover the concrete form taken by the alienation of labor, to display the specific nature of capitalist alienation.

A problem correctly formulated is embryonically solved. And once Marx formulated the problem from the theoretical inevitability of Socialism operating through the reflex of the alienation of labor it was but a step to the comprehension of the secret of surplus value: the role played by the dual nature of labor which is central to "all understanding" of Marxian economics.

Marxian economic categories must be understood as expressions of social relationships which arise from the process of production and not as things in themselves which lead some sort of esoteric existence beyond the pale of microscopes. They are designed to enable us to see behind the camouflage of technical and periodical forms thus to understand the basic alienation of labor which is not changed but only magnified by the growth of the productive forces. A refusal to accept this distinguishing characteristic of Marxian economics leads many comrades far astray in many fields. They are led to mistake the method for the result, the form for the content and the expression for the essence.

Comrade Howe in his own fashion has been an outstanding fighter for proper Marxian methodology for quite some time now; he has established a tradition. His valiant onslaughts, in a negative sense,

have done ~~much~~ good in orienting young comrades toward the method of Marx. To further this excellent work Howe closes his polemic against Forest by erecting a brilliantly ridiculous dilemma. "You must be," he tells Forest, "a pragmatist...or an idealist." Presumably, everyone who reads Howe's article will not only recognize that he has overlooked the alternative of dialectical materialism, but will embrace that alternative -- fervently.

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