

# YOUNG SOCIALIST

# REVIEW

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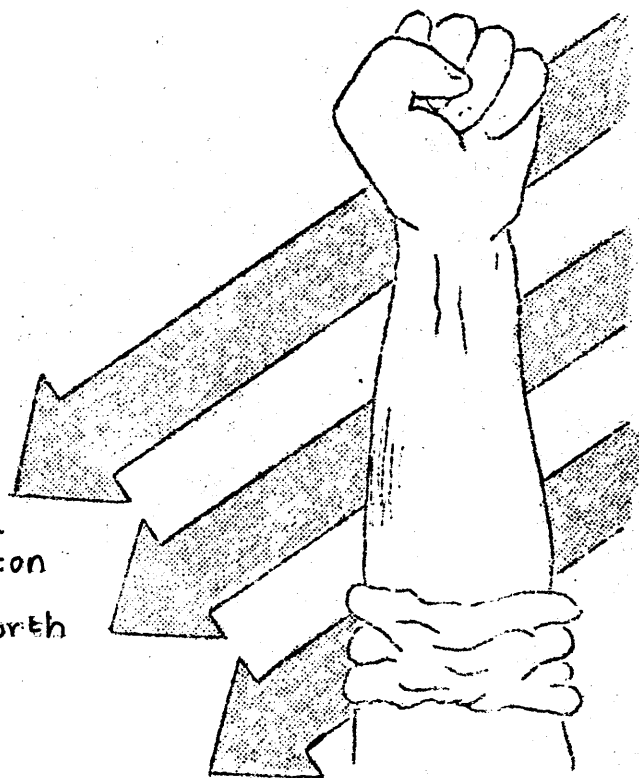
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INFORMATION AND  
DISCUSSION BULLETIN  
OF

THE YOUNG SOCIALIST LEAGUE

SPECIAL REFERENDUM ISSUE OF YSR -- FOR MEMBERS

Dear Comrades,

At the October 2 meeting of the NAC, the following resolution was passed: "We organize discussion and hold a membership referendum on electoral policy, under the Constitution of the YSL. That the referendum also ask those voting for the NEC minority position: Do you favor retroactive statement of the electoral position if the present NEC majority position is not published in YSR?"

The following resolution on organizing the resolution on referendum was also passed: "(a) Special YSR marked "FOR MEMBERS" be issued as soon as possible containing: NEC Majority and Minority Resolutions; Harrington and Wohlforth statements for NEC Referendum; Shane "Reply"; Harrington "Reply". (This was amended at the October 16 NAC to include the LA Document, the Walker letter, an article by Wohlforth.) (b) That 3 weeks after mailing of YSR be deadline for copy for another Referendum YSR; (c) that all documents for this YSR be stenciled by the contributors unless that is impossible; (d) that the Referendum be sent out to MAL's with the second YSR; that the ballots be sent to the units at that time; (e) that the deadline for ballots be three weeks after the mailing of the ballots, and this will be observed rigorously."

Two things must be emphasized: comrades are urgently requested to stencil their documents. Any comrade who can submit typed copy can submit stenciled copy. The strain on the NO of stenciling, mimeoxing and collating a 45 page YSR is tremendous, especially since we must rely on active New York comrades for much of the work.

Secondly, the copy deadline. This issue should be in the mail on the 29th. Allowing for time in mailing, the deadline for all comrades is, generously but strictly, November 23rd. If any West Coast comrade - but only from the West Coast - would feel an extension necessary, the NAC would probably grant it, but not for more than a week. Assuming that almost all of the copy will be received in stenciled form, we can hope to get the second, and final, Referendum YSR out early in December, and complete the vote before Christmas.

In order to insure an orderly and fair Referendum, these provisions, especially the one about the vote and copy deadlines, will have to be adhered to rigorously.

Fraternally,

National Action Committee, YSL

(sl)

SOCIALIST POLICY AND THE 1956 ELECTIONS  
by Shane Mage

9/20/56

INTRODUCTION

The timing of this discussion is, to say the least, highly regrettable. The November elections are the central--perhaps the only real--issue of current American politics. The political activity of the YSL in the next two months has to be focused upon them. The nature of that political activity will be determined by the NEC plenum of September 1-2. Three substantially divergent political lines have been proposed to the plenum. And, ten days before the plenum, not a word of discussion has been circulated, either to the membership of the League or of the NEC! I hope that this and other documents will be published before the plenum, although in the light of the past record there is little reason to believe so. What is the result of this situation? The NEC decisions, which will be arrived at without the slightest preliminary discussion, will scarcely be able to claim any sort of moral authority over the YSL members.

Where does the responsibility for this state of affairs lie? The record should be made perfectly clear.

Last January I drew up a statement of my position (Socialist Pro-test Vote for any of the three parties claiming to be Socialist) for the plenum then scheduled to be held in February. I was the only member of the NAC to prepare anything for this plenum. Because of this failure of the NAC the plenum had to be postponed. I made the motion to postpone it, and now regret that I did. I certainly would not have made that motion had I known that the NAC was as incapable of preparing for a plenum in September (when it had six months) as it was for February (when it had one.) At the meeting of the NAC that voted to postpone the plenum, it was voted to begin the discussion in May, for the Labor Day plenum. Comrade Loe was appointed to take charge of preparing the discussion. (I don't know who, if anyone, the NAC delegated to take his place when he had to go to the West Coast for two months.) There is no mention of this subject in minutes up to the middle of June. Since then no minutes have been sent out.

In May I wrote to comrade Martin urgently requesting that the discussion be begun immediately, that even if nothing else had been written, my document (of the preceding January) be circulated forthwith. I was informed that the NAC had rejected my request for special publication, and that my statement on the elections would be published in the regular issue of the YSR, to appear in June.

From that day to this I have waited for that June YSR to appear. I have not received it, but on August 20 (today) I got a letter from Comrade Martin telling me that my document had disappeared, and would I please forward another copy or a new draft. (As I cannot locate another copy now, and as there are, in comrade Martin's letter matters on which I want to comment, the subsequent material is an entirely new draft.)

THE 1956 ELECTIONS

There can be no disagreement among socialists as to our opposition to the Democratic and Republican parties. It is hard to imagine how both

parties could underline their basically identical reactionary characters. The unanimous consent of both parties to the quadrupling of the prison penalties under the Smith Act, the total failure even to bring to a vote any amendments to Taft-Hartley, the completely bi-partisan Senate burial of Civil Rights--are just a few of the innumerable instances in which the two big parties have shown their unanimous contempt for labor, the Negro people, and their complete subservience to big business.

Our attacks have to be particularly sharp against the Democratic party. Many workers and students still have illusions that this party is substantially preferable to the Republicans, because its propaganda gives greater play to the effusions of liberal swindlers and labor bureaucrats. Social progress will again become possible in American political life only when these illusions, and with them the Democratic party itself, are smashed, and a labor party, as the first politically progressive action of the American labor movement, is created.

Any Democratic party candidate for any office in this election, from President to dogcatcher, is by virtue of his party affiliation a political ally of some of the most reactionary forces in American political life. No matter how pro-labor a Democrat may sound (in a working-class constituency, of course) a vote for him is a vote for the party of Rep. Smith (of Smith Act fame). No matter how faithful to Civil Rights a Democrat swears he is, no matter how black his skin may be (in a Negro constituency, of course) a vote for him is a vote for the party of Sen. Eastland.

For a socialist to support any candidate whatever of the Democratic or Republican parties is to betray socialism. The YSL should not hesitate for one second to condemn any such betrayal.

Our central political theme must be to denounce the capitalist parties and call for a labor party. But this is not enough. Everyone who has, expects to have, or should have the right to vote must answer the question: who, if anyone, should I vote for? This goes for socialists too--they must answer this question for themselves, and, more important, they must be able to answer it for others before they can expect others to listen to them.

There are three possible answers that the YSL can give--and all appear to have their advocates within the YSL (judging from my sole source of information, comrade Martin's letter to me of 8/17.)

One answer is, "Don't vote!" or, as Martin phrases it, "Boycott the Elections!" What kind of position is this for America, in 1956? Election boycott is an important socialist slogan under certain conditions--when the elections are obviously fraudulent, or in a revolutionary situation when the need is not for parliamentary maneuvers but for the seizure of power. It is also indicated where there are no working class or socialist parties to vote for. But in the presidential election of 1956?

The slogan of boycott is not merely baseless, inasmuch as none of the three above-mentioned conditions apply--it is also useless, harmful, and self-defeating.

What is the meaning of not voting in America, a country where half the eligible voters don't vote anyway? The handful of abstentions we would influence would be swallowed up without trace in this apathetic mass--our gesture would be truly meaningless, without the slightest positive significance.

The right to vote is a democratic acquisition of enormous importance--it is that to us, revolutionary socialists who do not believe that parliamentary means are remotely adequate for the establishment of socialism. It is even more important to the millions of Negroes for whom it is not merely the symbol of full citizenship, but an indispensable lever for the establishment of full equality, the focal point of their emancipation struggle, for which leaders like Harry Moore and Dr. Lee have been martyred.

It is wrong for us to throw away our right, and completely irresponsible to ask them to throw away their right to vote, when there is a valid alternative.

Such an alternative exists--a socialist protest vote.

The other two possible answers proposed in the NAC discussion agree on the formula, "Vote Socialist" but give it an extremely different political content: one group defines a socialist vote as one for any of the three socialist parties (SP, SWP, SLP) running candidates, whereas the other restricts it to "a write in vote for Hoopes and Friedman" (the SP candidates, who, because of the collapse of the SP, will be on the ballot almost nowhere.)

1. As a broad socialist youth organization, the YSL seeks to include socialist youth of all tendencies--therefore it may well include supporters of any of the three candidates as well as young members of the SP or SWP (the SLP, as far as is known, has no young members). This formula would provide a common political line, and at the same time allow each member to work and vote for the socialist candidate of his choice.

2. On the basis of the YSL's own political line, as defined by last year's convention, there are no grounds to choose one party against another. The YSL's "Third Camp" line, defeatist towards all wars under Capitalist or Stalinist leadership, is surely no closer to the reformist SP's support to American imperialism than to the SWP's line of "defense of the Soviet Union" and of the colonial revolution even under Stalinist leadership! As for the SLP, if the YSL seriously believes that its call for a labor party is the central point in its program for America, it cannot conceivably give single endorsement to a group which not only rejects the call for a labor party, but is actually opposed to the existing labor movement!

Those who advocate support to the SP as the content of a "socialist protest vote" advance three arguments (as summarized by Martin in his letter of Aug. 17.)

The first: "The impermissibility of recommending a vote for the SWP."

Why is a vote for the SP permissible and one for the SWP impermissible? Evidently those who think so must base themselves on one of two viewpoints: either they feel more sympathy towards a party they think to be favorable to American imperialism than towards one they believe favorable to Russian imperialism--and thus show themselves, in a real sense, as critical supporters of the Western Camp; or else they believe that the SWP's politics are far more pro-Stalinist than the SP's are pro-capitalist.

The second viewpoint is radically false. Though its theoretical conception of Russia as a "degenerated workers state" is invalid and can lead to pro-Stalinist conclusions, the SWP's practical political activity is as resolutely anti-Stalinist as that of any other socialist group. A similar statement can hardly be made about the SP.

The crucial test of an organization's anti-Stalinism in the past few months has been its reaction to the Poznan uprising. The SWP has been unflinching, uncompromising, in its defense of the Poznan workers against the Stalinist police state. Week in, week out, the Militant has done a splendid job of refuting the "imperialist agents" and other slanders of the Stalinist apologists. In view of this record, any accusation of "pro-Stalinist politics" against the SWP can only be considered Stalinophobic nonsense. The actual politics of the SWP must be considered anti-Stalinist, though hampered by a false theory.

And what about the SP's relationship to the Western imperialist camp? The second argument in behalf of a pro-SP vote cited by Martin contends that such a vote is indicated "in view of events at the last SP convention."

What events? The SP's refusal to adopt a resolution even mildly condemning the French butchers of Algeria (led by the SP's "comrades", Mollet and Lacoste)? Here is a political test for anti-imperialists every bit as clear out as the Poznan events for anti-Stalinists. He who even hesitates, he who in the least equivocates in condemning the French war in Algeria and the policy of the SFIO (the two have been made identical by Mollet and Lacoste)--he who shows sympathy for imperialism, comradeship for its social-democratic henchmen--he forfeits all claim to political support from revolutionary socialists. The American SP has done worse. Though words are cheap for it, and commit it to nothing, not even to breaking with the 2nd International, it has yet to condemn French imperialism. And the leader of its "left" wing uses the columns of Labor Action to defend the refusal of the SP leaders to disown their "comrade" Mollet, even though he, McReynolds, personally deplors Mollet's policy...

Any other "events"? Perhaps this is a reference to the SP's decision favoring organic unity with the SDF, politically as corrupt a gang of "State Dept. Socialists" as can be found outside the American Committee for Cultural Freedom.

The third argument given by Martin refers to "our attitude towards unity of the ISL and SP." This mystifies me--as far as I know, the ISL has no attitude on this question. As for my attitude--I want none of such unity. Unities, like splits, are fruitful only when based on solid political considerations. Any unity that requires a rotten political compromise like political support of the present SP which is so far from breaking with imperialism that it prefers unity with the SDF to unity with the ISL (while its "left-wingers" seem to want to unite with both) can only be a setback to American socialism--and a political course based on this perspective can yield no good results.

NAC Draft Resolution--The 1956 Elections

- (1) There is no question that in the coming elections socialists must oppose the candidates of both major parties.
- (2) As socialists, we oppose capitalist parties from the viewpoint of our basic rejection of capitalist society and capitalist politics. In terms of basic issues, neither party offers any kind of progressive response to the problems which confront America and the world. On civil liberties, there is bi-partisan commitment to the witch-hunt; in foreign policy, both parties agree that America must continue its system of reactionary military alliances and its war policy; in terms of the economy, the Republicans and the Democrats stand together for a moderate New Dealism and neither party offers any serious hope of progress, e.g. the repeal, or even the significant amendment, of the Taft-Hartly Act. In the case of civil rights, the two Conventions compromised on the chief political issue before the country today. The Democratic Party remains the Party of Eastland, Stevenson and Reuther. The Republicans have served notice that they will not alienate the South.
- (3) But although both parties are close together on the main issues, there is, of course, a huge difference between the two of them. The Republicans are the Party of big business and mid-western isolationism. But the Democrats contain within their ranks most of the progressive forces in America today: organized labor, the liberals, the Negro movement. These forces are, of course, shakeed by the fact that they have subordinated themselves to a spurious "unity", i.e. to a coalition with reaction. Still, our work in this campaign will be primarily directed toward those who share their illusions and intend to vote for Stevenson.
- (4) We must point out to the Stevensonites that their candidate has spent the last four years in courting the South in order to promote the reactionary unity of his Party. It was this policy which led to a Convention which did not even give serious discussion to the question of civil rights and which, in the name of liberalism, was incapable of promising to implement the Supreme Court decision. We must counterpose to their illusions about the Democratic Party our slogan of a labor party, our conviction that only an independent coalition of farmer, Negro and other elements in our society, led by the labor movement, can break the hold of the DixieGop alliance which has effectively blocked all major social legislation since 1933.
- (5) Therefore, our primary tactic in this campaign will be to offer to analysis of why Stevenson and the Democratic Party do not offer the hope of progressive political action. Secondly, we must agitate for the labor party slogan as our conception of a real alternative to the two major parties. This should be the content of articles in Challenge, throw-aways, and speeches which we will give.
- (6) Unfortunately the significance of a socialist protest vote in 1956 will be considerably less than it was in 1948, and even less than it was four years ago. We have to note regretfully that the Socialist Party, which has traditionally been the vehicle of such a vote, will not be on the ballot in most of the states in which it did appear on the ballot in 1952, but instead will be conducting a write-in campaign on the whole. The effectiveness of a socialist vote in 1956 will therefore be greatly hindered.
- (7) Nevertheless, a socialist vote remains the only method by which all socialists can register their socialist convictions at the ballot box, as well as the only way in which those workers, Negroes and liberals who recognize the impermissability of voting for Stevenson in view of the Democratic Party's betrayal of the people on civil rights and other issues, can register their convictions. The Young

Socialist League recommends a socialist vote in 1956.

(8)\* (The question then arises as to whether we should recommend a vote for any of the three socialist parties which are running candidates, without specifying one of them, or whether we should recommend a vote for one of the socialist tickets in particular, and if so, which one. The first course is ruled out in our opinion in that we cannot advise a vote for one of the three socialist sects running a candidate this year, either as sole recommendation or as part of a general "Vote Socialist" proposal )

(9) We cannot recommend a vote for the candidates of the Socialist Workers Party in view of that Party's continued capitulation to Stalinism. This is particularly true this year when the SWP is attempting to make its ticket a rallying point for independent Stalinists, Stalinoids, such as the Monthly Review group, the remnants of the Progressive Party, even the CP itself. This year more than in the past a vote for the SWP is a vote for critical, independent pro-Stalinism, and this we reject out of hand.

(10) There remains the possibility of a vote for either the Socialist Party or the Socialist Labor Party. We do not, however, view our choice in the abstract. We favor unity between the Socialist Party and the Independent Socialist League since we look forward to the reassemble ment of all democratic socialists in one unified organization. We recognize that between the ISL, the SP and the YSL there exists enough in common to warrant and urge such a unification. Given these views, we therefore recommend a vote for the Socialist Party candidates, Darlington Hoopes and Samuel Friedman, in the 1956 elections. We urge: "Vote Socialist. Vote for Hoopes and Friedman."

(11) We must view this question in terms of the kind of a campaign the SP proposes. It will not be on the ballot in most states, and support of the SP tickets means calling for a write-in vote. The SP itself voted for a campaign primarily in an effort to get radio and television time. There is no indication that there will ever be a campaign organization, rallies, etc. In other words, the SP itself does not view its campaign as agitational.

(12) Given this situation, we endorse the campaign of the S P, but in a certain way. The slogan, Vote for Hoopes, should not play the major point in our agitational work. Our support means that we call upon members of the League and its sympathizers as well as radical workers, Negroes and liberals - those who are thinking in terms of a protest vote - to cast that vote for Hoopes and Friedman.

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\* Section (8) was not voted on by the committee. It was inserted in order to maintain continuity, sense, etc., and was necessary because the original draft was heavily amended.

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Statement FOR the NAC and Plenum Majority Position

Comrade Shane has advanced a series of arguments in favor of his slogan, "Vote Socialist" (for any one of the three socialist groups running candidates), and against the NAC and NEC majority position of "Vote Socialist, Vote for Hoopes and Friedman." Almost all of Shane's points hinge on his characterization of the SWP, his theory of the equi-distance from us of the SP and the SWP and his mistaken notion about the nature of the YSL.

Characterization of the SWP. For Shane, the SWP is simply a revolutionary socialist organization with a wrong theory on the Russian question. This theory is "invalid and can lead to pro-Stalinist conclusions, (but) the SWP's practical political activity is as resolutely anti-Stalinist as that of any other socialist group." At the same time, Shane objects to the majority characterization of the SWP as capitulating to Stalinism.

To begin with, Shane's characterization quoted above is, on the face of it, incredible. Is the practical political activity of the SWP as "resolutely anti-Stalinist" as that of the YSL or ISL? But then, to get down to cases, are the following examples of resolute anti-Stalinism?

- (a) The SWP role in the UAW as leading elements in the Stalinist caucus and against the Reuther caucus (including the slanders of Cochran);
- (b) The SWP support of Stalinist imperialism in the Korean war;
- (c) The SWP's continued glorification of the Chinese "revolution" as just about the most glorious event in socialist history since 1917;
- (d) The SWP's opposition to a socialist slogan of self-determination for Formosa, its willingness to sell out the Formosans to Mao.

What Shane ignores is a fact made especially obvious in the unity negotiations between the WP and the SWP: that the crucial difference on the question of Stalinism is not whether one characterizes the revolution one hopes for in Russia as "political" or "social", but above all how one reacts to Stalinist politics, i.e. to Stalinist imperialism, to Stalinist organizations, particularly those outside of Russia. In the four cases in point enumerated above, the truth about the SWP is plain enough: that it has been capitulationist with regard to Stalinism.

But perhaps this is all ancient history? Perhaps the SWP has changed? Then read the recent SWP letter to the Monthly Review asking for Sweezy's support. Read the Militant Convention issue. The entire orientation of the SWP in this period, is toward Stalinoide and Stalinists. To be sure, it states its opposition to the Stalinist regime, but it also emphasizes what it has in common with the Stalinist-Stalinoide. For example, a recent state-

ment by the SWP candidate for Governor of Michigan (printed in The International Socialist Review, Summer, 1956 issue) seeks to influence CP members to fight for official CP endorsement of the SWP ticket! In fact, the current SWP campaign perhaps more than any other, is based on emphasizing what it has in common with the Stalinist-Stalinoids.

Shane makes much out of the fact that the SWP is for the defense of the Poznan workers. If it were not, then it would not be a case of capitulating to Stalinism but of Stalinism as such. As it is, the Cochranites and various other Stalinoid elements also call for "justice" in this case. That the SWP supports the Poznan workers is to its credit; it hardly establishes its credentials as a Party "as resolutely anti-Stalinist as any other socialist group" in its practical activity.

Therefore, we must reject, out of hand, Shane's fantastic characterization of the SWP. We must accept the majority characterization of it as a Party capitulating to Stalinism.

The Theory of Equi-Distance. Comrade Shane proceeds from his inaccurate characterization of the SWP to an inaccurate characterization of the SP, and thus provides a basis for a theory of equi-distance.

For Shane, the SWP has its unfortunate theoretical misconception on Stalinism-- but then the SP hasn't condemned Mollet, is pro-imperialist on the other side, indeed (see page 4 of Shane's document) it is more pro-imperialist. To begin with, the SP did support American imperialism in the Korean war, it did vacillate on Mollet (though its Labor Day NEC condemned him). But these actions must be put into a context. They are obviously reprehensible to us, but we don't analyze politics on the basis of simple verbal formulations.

The SP is an inconsistent, social-democratic Party. It contains "state-department" socialists and third camp socialists, pacifists and supporters of American imperialism, political primitives and political fundamentalists, etc. Its political statements tend to the hodge-podge. Its 1956 program (a) has illusions about the UN; (b) opposes conscription; (c) identifies with both the Second International and the Asian Socialist Conference although those two centers have never been able to unite; (d) advocates "peace-panacea" type notions on disarmament. At the 1956 SP convention, a Third Camp resolution on foreign policy almost passed; the majority of the delegates were prepared to condemn Guy Mollet (they were out-manuevered in a parliamentary fashion), etc.

The SP has been pro-imperialist, no question about it. But it has done so at the same time that it has been anti-imperialist, i.e. its politics are characterized by inconsistency. This cannot be equated with, or made symmetrical to, the pro-Stalinism of the SWP which flows out of a finished program, i.e. is thought-out, internally consistent and so on.

But, Shane argues, isn't it crazy to favor a vote for the SP even while recognizing, yea even asserting, its inconsistency? This is where Shane's particularly schematic, abstract approach comes into play. He makes his judgement on the basis of comparing programs and positions, and leaves it at that. On such a basis, the only vote he can possibly recommend is one for the SLP. After all, as the Militant pointed out in opposing the SLP, that party is against both Washington and Moscow. The reason that we don't urge a vote for the SLP has to do with political reality, not with abstract consideration of program.

The point is that we are in a relation with the SP, that we regard it as something more than a muddled program, but as a political grouping with which we have cooperated (where have we cooperated with the SLP? the SWP?), which we can influence, toward which we have a perspective of probing the possibilities of unity.

Thus, even on the abstract level, we must reject Shane's theory of equi-distance (or, as it comes through in his document, of the closeness of the SWP). The SWP acting on its finished program, has been capitulationist toward Stalinism in the labor movement, in Korea, China, etc. The SP has backed capitalist imperialism in an inconsistent and confused level, now opposing it, now supporting it. But when we get off the abstract level (where a vote for the SLP would be mandatory), and get down to the actual relationship we have with the social democracy in America, there is no question of what we must do.

The Nature of the YSL. We welcome youth of various socialist tendencies into our organization. But this does not mean that we are neutral, that we should, as Shane argues, play the role of honest broker. We have positions, majority positions. We do not require a member to campaign for Hoopes and Friedman if he is opposed to it--we only ask him to differentiate himself from the organization on the point. But we aren't lofty and impartial on such questions.

A socialist protest vote doesn't mean much this year. It is most meaningful for the SP.

Mike Harrington

## THE 1956 ELECTIONS

By Tim Wohlforth

The NEC is in general agreement on: 1) its opposition to both major capitalist parties; 2) the necessity for raising the labor party slogan; 3) the relative meaninglessness of a socialist protest vote; 4) but the necessity of advising such a vote to those few we can reach.

The difference within the NEC revolves around the question of the nature of such a protest vote. The position proposed by Comrade Shane and myself calls for a general socialist protest vote, a vote for either the SP, the SLP, or the SWP.

We call for such a vote for we feel it is impossible for the YSL to support any one of these parties separately. We have important differences with all of them. Thus calling for a vote or any of the parties eliminates the support of one particular party and emphasises the socialist character of the vote we are calling for.

Also the call for such a vote is based on an understanding of the broad nature of the YSL. There are members of the YSL who wish to support the SP or may even be members of the SP; there are others who wish to support the SLP for it is closest to us on the Russian question, and still others who would support the SWP as a revolutionary socialist party. By calling for a general socialist vote we emphasise the broad nature of our organization.

Those who oppose such a protest vote do so on two bases. Negatively they state that it is impossible for us to support the SWP in any way, shape or form. Now while the SWP does hold certain pro-stalinist positions--on the Russian question, on the stalinist colonial revolution--positions which make it impossible for us to single out the SWP as against the other tendencies for support, to oppose its support along with other tendencies is pure stalinophobia and sectarian madness.

The SWP supports the Poznan workers, the best current test of one's attitude toward Stalinism, and is for the revolutionary overthrow of the stalinist bureaucracy; it therefore has a far better position on stalinist imperialism than the SP has on American imperialism.

Thus while we in no way lessen our political opposition to the SWP's incorrect and dangerous politics we refuse to bow to stalinophobia and its concomitant softness towards the social democracy.

The second reason given by those who oppose a general protest vote is the necessity, given the present orientation towards unity with the SP, to support the SP solely. I say that there is no political basis for supporting the SP solely, for the same reasons that those who favor unity have offered no political basis for unity. This is not the place to discuss organizational and tactical reasons for developing a unity orientation, but only to emphasise that if such an orientation leads us to develop a whitewashing, "soft" attitude towards the social democracy and its consistent betrayal of socialism, then such an orientation is politically disastrous.

I need not emphasize here the extent of the SP's capitulation to American imperialism, its support of NATO, of the United States in the Korean War (it is interesting to note Martin's emphasis of the SWP's support of stalinists in that war

but not seeing the SP's equally treacherous support of the U.S.A.), its continual support of the Second International and its betrayal of the working class. Last week the SP finally attacked Mollet but previous to that it had printed without comment the SFIO's resolution on Algeria in the Call.

Already there has begun a disastrous tendency in our movement to apologize for-- or at least not protest against--the SP's politics. Note Hal Draper's kid-glove treatment of McReynolds' letter in Labor Action. I only wish the whole movement could have heard the MEC discussion with rationalization on the part of Martin, Harrington and others to defend their support of the SP by spreading illusions about the nature of the organization.

To support the SP solely now would strengthen immeasurably this approach and would be in effect announcing to the world our agreement with the right wing of social democracy.

We therefore call for a general socialist protest vote, a vote for the SP, SLP, or SWP, and for the continuation of our struggle against Russian and American imperialism and lackeys of both.

W/W

## SOCIALIST POLICY AND THE 1956 ELECTIONS

--Reply to Harrington

By Shane Mage

Comrade Harrington's "Statement For the NAC and Plenum Majority Position (on the Elections) proves one thing -- that Harrington supports the SP. That is his right as a member of the YSL, and I am entirely in favor of the YSL containing members who support the SP. But I do object most strongly to his attempt, as official spokesman for the majority of the NAC, to persuade the YSL to support the SP by means of such a web of innuendoes, half-truths, untruths, and illogic as makes up his document.

The core of the majority position is its slander of the SWP as Pro-Stalinist. The NAC resolution speaks of the SWP's "pro-Stalinism" ("critical, independent" pro-Stalinism, to be sure, but the essence of the characterization is the same.) Both the majority draft and Harrington charge the SWP with "continued capitulation to Stalinism."

Harrington complements this with a whitewash of the SP, as is politically fitting and proper.

Let us first deal with the accusations against the SWP. Harrington seeks to prove that the SWP is a "Party capitulating to Stalinism" by means of four historical examples and a number of current instances of SWP policy.

### FOUR HISTORICAL EXAMPLES

His first example of the SWP's "capitulation" is "(a) The SWP role in the UAW as leading elements in the Stalinist caucus and against the Reuther caucus (including the slanders of Cochran).

In order for this example to have its intended effect, Harrington has to judiciously omit a few important facts.

According to the SWP itself, its attitude toward the anti-Reuther caucus (which incidentally, was Stalinist-supported, but not Stalinist-dominated, let alone Stalinist) did not flow from a desire to support Stalinists everywhere, but from an empirical evaluation of the militants on both sides, and was in fact opposed on similarly empirical grounds, by several top leaders of the SWP. Whether this evaluation was right or wrong, it is no evidence of pro-Stalinism. Harrington holds up the SWP policy in Auto as typical of its "capitulation to Stalinism", but he neglects to mention the SWP's bitter fight against the Stalinists in the NMU. He also fails to mention that the SWP's analysis of Reuther at that time has since been proven correct by his bureaucratization of the UAW and his political conversion from a semi-socialist and partisan of a labor party into a supporter of the Democratic Party and the U.S. State Department.

To compensate for these omissions, we have "the slanders of Cochran" dragged in by the hair, though the charge of negative slander of Reuther, even if true, is no proof of positive pro-Stalinism. It is, in fact, a bit strange that Harrington saw

fit to mention Cochran, when everyone knows he broke with the SWP because it was too anti-Stalinist !

His second historical example is "(b) the SWP support of Stalinist imperialism in the Korean war;". This is not the place to recapitulate the discussion on Stalinism and the colonial revolution which took place two years ago. (That discussion centered on Viet-nam, but I would now say that it is roughly applicable to Korea.) The SWP position of support to what it considered (in my opinion, correctly) to be the struggle of the Korean people against U.S. imperialism and its agent Ehee, even though that struggle took place under a murderous Stalinist leadership which the SWP denounced, may, for purposes of discussion be admitted to be wrong. Does it follow that the SWP supported "Stalinist imperialism"? Harrington is the last person in the YSL with the right to make that claim, since he has maintained that Stalinism, as a social system, cannot be called imperialist.

But as I once before pointed out, the general sociological definition of imperialism is of limited value in real political situations. Imperialism cannot exist apart from a real imperialist ruling class. The war in Korea began as a civil war. Because a foreign power was not the principal protagonist on the Stalinist side (until China was forced to enter -- a case we will deal with next) the North Korean struggle was not an imperialist one.

But even if, for purposes of discussion, we abandon common sense as well as Marxism, and term the Korean struggle "imperialist", how then does the SP, which supported our "immediate enemy", U.S. imperialism, become a preferable alternative to the SWP? Harrington, according to his own logic, ought to criticize it at least as harshly as he does the SWP. Unfortunately, as we shall see, he does no such thing.

Harrington's third point is "(c) The SWP's continued glorification of the Chinese "revolution" as just about the most glorious event in socialist history since 1917;". Stripped of the snide terminology ("glorification", etc.) his political grievance here is that the SWP supports that huge movement of hundreds of millions of millennially suppressed people which has scourged imperialism and feudalism from the face of China, and defends it against imperialist attack, even while bitterly opposing the Stalinist police regime which seeks to stifle the further growth of the revolution. Because the SWP defends the Chinese revolution as it is, Harrington cannot show that the SWP has falsified it in order to sing its praises. He takes the easy way, and denies its very existence by putting a pair of quotation marks around the word revolution. The antonym of "glorification" is "denigration". Nevertheless, the Chinese revolution exists. Those who doubt its existence are advised to read Jack Belden's great reportage, "China Shakes the World". Then at least they will be entitled to an opinion on the subject.

As to the SWP's defense of the Chinese revolution (as in Korea) constituting some sort of "capitulation", please remember that

socialists defended China against foreign imperialism even when it was ruled by the butcher Chiang Kai-Shek. It is one thing to say the SWP is wrong (which, on this point, I deny). It is another to say it is "capitulating."

Harrington's final historical point is no more impressive than the others: "(d) The SWP's opposition to a socialist slogan of self-determination for Formosa, its willingness to sell out the Formosans to Mao."

It is unfortunate that a leading comrade has to be informed of such an elementary Marxist distinction, but it is necessary. Self-determination is not "a socialist slogan". Self-determination is a Bourgeois-democratic right which socialists protect and defend, as they do other democratic rights, but which has no socialist content whatsoever. In a given historical situation, the exercise of this right can be a reactionary action, in which case it is the duty of socialists to oppose it, by force of arms if necessary, as the Russian Revolution had to do in the Transcaucasian Republics in 1921 (See Trotsky's book "Between Red and White"). Rosa Luxemburg's (erroneous) generalized denial of the right of self-determination in the imperialist epoch made her no less great as a democrat and revolutionist.

So, even if the SWP did deny a right of self-determination possessed by Formosa, there are many possible situations in which, far from being anti-socialist, this would be the correct socialist policy (for instance, if Formosan self-determination meant that it would remain an American military base for the reconquest of China.)

All these considerations would be important if Formosa possessed the right of self-determination. But Formosa has no such right!

I have argued this point before, in my draft International Resolution of last year, and never received an answer (unless being voted down constitutes an answer.) So I will present the same argument here.

Only nations have the right to self-determination -- and Formosa lacks every aspect of nationhood. Its people are Chinese. Its language is Chinese (there isn't even a separate Formosan dialect among the many Chinese dialects. The inhabitants of Formosa speak three Mainland dialects.) Its culture is Chinese. Historically it has been part of China from its first civilized settlement until it was seized by Japan (the foregoing is discussed in A.W. Ballantine, "Formosa - A Problem for U.S. Foreign Policy", Brookings Institute, 1952.) It has not even had any rational consciousness -- its people have always considered themselves part of China.

Here is how an author sympathetic to the Formosan Separatist viewpoint described the national feelings of the Formosans in 1945:

"The six million Chinese-descended natives of Formosa were generally enthusiastic at the prospect of returning to Chinese



rule." (Riggs--"Formosa Under Nationalist Rule", an American Institute of Pacific Relations study, Macmillan, 1952, P.45.)

If self-determination is involved in the Formosa question at all, it tends to justify the Chinese claim to recover all Chinese lands conquered by imperialism.

This in no way means that we should be for the Chinese Stalinist occupation of Formosa under all circumstances. If the choice were to be posed in terms of Chinese occupation or an independent democratic Formosa, socialists should oppose union with China as the Trotskyists opposed union with Hitler Germany in the Saar plebescite of 1934 (although the Saar was incontestably German.) If the SWP stated that in such a situation it would be for Stalinist occupation, then the charge of "selling out the Formosans" would have great validity.

But in the actual situation, the struggle is between the Chinese revolution and the counter-revolutionary forces of the U.S. and Chiang. A plebescite under Chiang's occupation would be a farce. The SWP's position on Formosa is a simple extension of its position of defense of the Chinese revolution, and stands or falls with that position.

If however, the Formosan workers should carry through their own revolution, ousting the U.S. and Chiang, I can assure Comrade Harrington that the SWP would not urge them to capitulate to the Stalinist hangmen, but would do all in its power to defend them against the Stalinists. That is the only way it would "sell out the Formosans".

#### CURRENT SWP POLICY

As we have shown, Harrington's historical examples fail completely to justify his picture of the SWP's "capitulation to Stalinism". The instances of current SWP policy he uses to support his case are even weaker.

His evidence for the SWP's present "capitulation to Stalinism" is that "The entire orientation of the SWP in this period is toward Stalinoids and Stalinists." (This statement, incidentally, is quite false. The SWP also has a rather widely known orientation toward Negro struggles, such as the Montgomery Bus Boycott.) But what counts is not whether or not the SWP orients toward the Stalinists (except insofar as the failure of a radical group to orient towards the Stalinists in their present desperate crisis is final evidence of hopeless sectarianism). The only relevant fact is the political nature of that orientation.

Harrington refers to a number of SWP statements, with the unmistakable innuendo that they are capitulatory toward Stalinism.

He refers to the SWP's letter to the Monthly Review, asking for its electoral support--but he doesn't quote the letter to show any conciliationism toward the pro-Stalinist politics of the Sweezyites. But Harrington seeks to create exactly that impression: he

wants to persuade the uninformed reader, who does not know that the SWP has consistently referred to the Swoozites as "Moscow Triale Stalinists", and who has not seen the recent issue of the Militant which denounced Monthly Review's analysis of the 20th party congress, that the SWP is attempting to conciliate Swoozy.

Harrington urges you to "read the Militant convention issue." By all means, do so. You will find an electoral platform infinitely more revolutionary than that of the SP or SLP, and which contains such samples of the SWP's "capitulation to Stalinism" as "The repudiation of the hated dictator Stalin and the crisis now shaking the world Stalinist movement marks the beginning of a political revolution to establish workers democracy in the Soviet sphere" (ital. in original) and "Stalin's heirs seek co-existence with imperialism in order to retain their bureaucratic privileges and the power to repress the struggle for workers democracy in the Soviet sphere."

But Harrington's clinching point is that the SWP has so far capitulated to Stalinism that it actually "seeks to influence CP members to fight for official CP endorsement of the SWP ticket!" This is so impressive that he actually underlines it and adds an exclamation point.

Yes, we must defer to comrade Harrington's authority. It is most shameful and capitulatory for the SWP to urge CP members to fight against one of the most reactionary features of American Stalinism's current politics, and to urge them to win their party to at least one pro-socialist position. It is only regrettable that comrade Harrington was not as alert against capitulation to Stalinism at the time of the recent NEC plenum, when he voted for a resolution which called for "our urging naive LYLers to carry out their objections and protestations within the LYL."

#### A CASE STUDY--POZNAN

There is still one additional point that doesn't quite fit Harrington's picture of SWP capitulation to Stalinism--its stand on Poznan. After all, in a decisive workers vs. regime test, of the sort in which Social-Democrats seldom fail to side with their own bourgeoisie, the SWP supported the workers.

But this mere fact doesn't bother Harrington very much--he dismisses it, to use one of his favorite phrases, out of hand. After all, he says, didn't all sorts of Stalinoid elements "also call for 'justice' in this case?" (Note how subtly those quotation marks around justice insinuate that the SWP isn't even for genuine justice for the Poznan workers.) All the SWP has done is to make that bare minimum of criticism which separates "capitulating to Stalinism" from "Stalinism as such."

If Harrington's statement that the SWP's attitude on Poznan was no better than a Stalinoid one is true, this would be damning for the SWP--but on this issue at least, the SWP is entitled to be judged on the basis of what it itself says--certainly not on the basis of Harrington's totally undocumented and unsupported lumping of it with the Stalinoids.

What is the difference between the attitude of a Stalinoid and of a revolutionary opponent of Stalinism? Let us summarize the two.

The Stalinoid reaction to Poznan goes roughly thus: Unquestionably the workers had legitimate grievances, and the authorities handled them much too roughly; the arrested demonstrators ought to receive a fair trial, and it is regrettable that the government saw fit to exclude foreign observers from their trial; the abuses that led to the demonstrations ought to be corrected as soon as possible--on the other hand, it is very likely that genuine Western agents played leading roles in the movement--in no case, at any rate, should the workers have resorted to arms, since it is foolish to talk of a workers revolution in Poland, and so all that an armed uprising can do is to hamper the efforts of the bureaucracy to reform itself. The main hope is that the great reformer Crankiewicz (or, in the case of East Berlin, Beria) will be able to continue to improve the conditions of the people, despite the help which outbreaks of this sort give to the stand-pat elements within the regime.

As against this sort of argument, the position of revolutionary opponents of Stalinism goes something like this: Poznan represents a clear-cut conflict of social interests in which we give complete support to the heroic workers against the murderous bureaucratic regime. The Stalinist bureaucrats are preparing a frame-up of the arrested workers which should be combatted by all socialists. Any "liberalizing" measures taken by the regime are not fundamental reforms but mere concessions designed to stabilize the rule of the bureaucracy and avert mass discontent and rebellion. We look on the Poznan (and East German) events as the precursors of a workers revolution to destroy Stalinism, and call for and support the organization of such a revolution.

Into which political category, capitulation or revolutionary opposition, does the SMP's position on Poznan fall? The answer is given by the following excerpts from the lead editorial of the Summer, 1956 International Socialist Review (formerly the Fourth International):

"The June 28 general strike uprising of the workers of Poznan, Poland, is part of the same historical pattern of workingclass struggle against Stalinist rule that was manifested so dramatically three years earlier in East Germany....In their basic character as independent workingclass struggles against the Stalinist bureaucracy, the movements were qualitatively identical....In the Poznan uprising, as in the East German, we can observe the concrete forms and modes that the political revolution will take."

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"The Stalinist slander that the workers of East Germany and Poznan were led by the nose into a political uprising by spies and agents provocateurs is not merely a crude frame-up, it is a complete abandonment of even a pretense to a Marxist explanation for the violent clash between the working masses and the armed forces of

the Polish regime.

Only from the vantage point of an analysis of the bureaucratic caste as a parasitic formation separated from the workers in the factories by their privileges and their functions as "rulers", can these phenomena be understood."

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"The important question is not who started the shooting. What is important in civil war, as in any other war, is the fundamental character of the opposing camps. What was the line-up in Poznan? On one side, the whole working population marching under the slogan of 'bread and freedom'. On the other side, the bureaucratic caste and its armed forces.-

The question of who shot first fades into insignificance in the face of the gigantic fact that in a showdown, the components of Stalinist-ruled Poland dissolved into its constituent parts; on one side stood the toilers, on the other the functionaries, the security police and troops armed with Russian tanks and guns and staffed by Russian officers.

This crucial fact defines the character of the whole situation."

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"The heavy hand of the regime is not felt by the "soulless bureaucrats". The ferocity of the regime is directed toward massacring strikers and jailing worker-leaders on frame up charges."

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"In Poland, as in East Germany, the hatred of the masses for the Stalinist regime is intensified by the role of the regime as an agent of a foreign oppressor. This is a profound revolutionary factor in the situation. The Polish working class has suffered deep wounds from the national chauvinist drives of the Soviet bureaucracy. The liquidation of the Polish Communist Party during the late Thirties in preparation for the Stalin-Hitler pact; the murder of the entire Central Committee of the Polish CP, while living in Russian exile; the partition of Poland in agreement with the Nazis; the cruel betrayal of the Warsaw worker's uprising in the summer of 1944 by the Kremlin's army; the bureaucratic and military method used by the Kremlin to transform social relations in Poland after the Second World War; the looting of Polish economy during the occupation; the continued appropriation by the Kremlin of a big slice of the product of Polish industry without regard for the needs of the Polish people; the Russification of the Polish army--all these bitter recollections, current humiliations and sufferings are identified in the consciousness of the masses with the oppressive Russian bureaucracy and its Polish appointees.

"Will anyone dare to place the case of the Kremlin on the national question as against the grievances of the Polish people?  
Can anyone claim that the revolutionary right is not with the workers and peasants of Poland?"

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"The Poznan uprising, placed in the context of the line of development signaled by the East German general strike (of) June 17, 1953, which in turn arose out of a turbulent strike movement throughout the countries of Eastern Europe, provides the explanation for what underlies the present crisis in the Soviet bureaucracy and world Stalinism. Far from connoting a "new direction" in the thinking and outlook of the bureaucracy, the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was only an expression of the defensive posture the bureaucracy has assumed in relation to the masses."

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"The sensitive layers of the youth and the intellectuals detect an inner crackup and demoralization of the Stalinist regime. This thought must also grow in the factories as the workers feel their way to taking advantage of the crisis of the Stalinist regime in order to press their class demands. As they assess the experience of Poznan and build contact from factory to factory and from city to city, as the workers find ties with the best of the intellectuals and students, they will begin the work of forging a Bolshevik party once again."

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Leaving aside terminological criticisms, isn't the actual political line represented by this editorial one of revolutionary opposition to Stalinism? "Can anyone claim" the SWP asks, "that the revolutionary right is not with the workers and peasants of Poland?" Can anyone claim that this is the language of capitulation to Stalinism? Or that its spirit is anything but "resolutely anti-Stalinist"?

Why, one might ask, did Harrington feel impelled to present so wildly falsified a picture of the SWP's stand on Poznan? Because the actual position taken by the SWP totally refutes his characterization of it as "a Party capitulating to Stalinism" and proves my political definition of its "practical political activity" as "resolutely anti-Stalinist" (My original document stated that "the SWP's practical political activity is as resolutely anti-Stalinist as that of any other socialist group." I stand on that statement, but I have no intention to argue, in this discussion, whether or not the SWP is a shade less anti-Stalinist than some other group. I feel that its definition as "resolutely anti-Stalinist" is perfectly sufficient for present purposes.)

That the SWP's resolutely anti-Stalinist position on Poznan demolishes the slenderous charge of "capitulation to Stalinism" is perfectly obvious. That it proves my characterization of it needs only slight demonstration.

The SWP's position on Poznan is no different from its position on the Stalinist regime as a whole, or its position on every instance of worker and peasant opposition to Stalinism. Not only does Harrington make no effort to contest this fact, he actually admits it, for he states that the SWP program "is thought-out, internally consistent and so on." Simple logic establishes the rest.

Harrington admits that the SWP program is "internally consistent" i.e., the SWP's stand on Poznan is entirely consistent with the rest of its program.

The SWP's stand on Poznan, as we have proven, is "resolutely anti-Stalinist."

Therefore the rest of the SWP's program must be admitted to be "resolutely anti-Stalinist."

Therefore it is proven that the SWP's "practical political activity" as a whole is "resolutely anti-Stalinist."

(It will undoubtedly be objected that "defense of the Soviet Union" is not an anti-Stalinist position. But this position, applicable only in the event of a Third World War, does not interfere with the SWP's present practical political activity which is directed to the revolutionary overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy - and even in the event of war the SWP states that it would subordinate "defense of the Soviet Union" to the need for a workers revolution against Stalinism. Besides, I have pointed out in my original document that I consider the politics of the SWP, which are consistently anti-Stalinist, to be inconsistent with certain of its theoretical positions on Stalinism.)

Also, from the viewpoint of one who shares the YSL majority viewpoint on the colonial revolution and on tactics toward Stalinists, (without, at the same time, being infected with Stalinophobia), the SWP's politics may well appear inconsistent. To such comrades, I point out that the decisive consideration for the SWP is its support of a workers revolution against Stalinism, as is shown by its continued and consistent support for the peoples of the Stalinist sphere in every clash with the bureaucracy. Such "inconsistencies" as they may find in the SWP program can only be considered "deviations" from an anti-Stalinist program, not the decisive features of the program itself.

#### And What About the Socialist Party?

If Harrington tortures reality to deny that the SWP is even inconsistently anti-Stalinist, he is more than eager to plead inconsistency on behalf of the SP. In fact, it is his main political defense of the SP.

What is Harrington's political characterization of the SP? He calls it "an inconsistent, social-democratic party."

Harrington is very free with the charge of SWP "capitulation" to Stalinism - but has he thought of what it means to call a party "social-democratic"? Doesn't he know that for revolutionary socialists the term "social-democratic" has, since 1914, been politically synonymous to capitulation to the capitalist class, support to imperialism and imperialist war, betrayal of proletarian struggles, and even outright counter-revolution? Is it necessary to call the roll of social-democratic heroes from Noske and Kautsky to Mollet and Gaitskell?

Perhaps its "inconsistency" redeems the American SP - as it would if, alongside certain social-democratic positions, the SP was increasingly adopting bolshevik positions.

Harrington asserts that the SP contains all sorts of political elements, that its statements are usually "hodge-podge" and "muddled". We grant that willingly - but it doesn't show a single good thing about an organization's politics to say that its members are confused and its statements muddled.

To what extent does the SP's inconsistency affect its basic politics?

I assume there is no dispute about the consistency of the SP's deep-dyed reformism. Harrington's own characterization of "social-democratic" proclaims as much. It is noteworthy that in his enumeration of the elements of the SP he didn't mention any revolutionary socialists!

More striking, though not necessarily more important, is the SP's consistent support of U.S. imperialism. It is this that Harrington attempts to whitewash with the remarkable statement that "The SP has been pro-imperialist, no question about it, but it has done so at the same time that it has been anti-imperialist."

Here we have a classic example of a half-truth used to create a complete falsification. In what sense can it be said that the SP "has been anti-imperialist"? That it condemns imperialism in general? So does Dulles. That it forthrightly condemns "Stalinist imperialism"? So does Acheson. That it has occasionally and hesitantly criticized the imperialism of America's allies, England and France? The Chicago Tribune has spoken out against them far more consistently and vigorously.

The decisive test for a socialist group is its attitude toward its own bourgeoisie, toward its own imperialism. If a party fails to fight its own imperialism, its denunciation of foreign (and therefore rival) imperialism is mere duplicity.

On this score there is no "inconsistency" in the SP's position. The SP considers itself a critical supporter of U.S. foreign policy. The SP leadership has not deviated from that position, and does not intend to do so.

Since the current SP platform speaks only in generalities, this characterization of the SP can best be proven by citing the 1954 SP platform (drawn up, of course, by the same leadership which runs the SP today, and not a word of which has been repudiated

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The SP identifies with and supports the imperialist U.S. intervention in Korea. (Emphasis added in this and following quotes.)

"It is neither necessary nor wise when we find our country lined up with Syngman Rhee in resisting Communist aggression to pretend that such a ruler is a champion of democracy."

Thus do these supporters of American imperialism ("capitulators" is the wrong word - they were never opponents of imperialism, or surrendered to it so long ago that they cannot be charged with capitulating) prove their right to be called critical. "We" should not pretend that "our" ally Race is a democrat !

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The SP was more critical of U.S. policy towards Guatemala.

"A recent and flagrant example of this sort of error has been our government's behavior in the case of Guatemala."

(What, I wonder, would Harrington say about the SWP if it had ever said "The Moscow Trials are an example of the errors of our Communist leadership in handling political opposition.")

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Above all, socialists whose primary criticism of U.S. foreign policy is that it is imperialist and cannot be anything but imperialist so long as it is the foreign policy of an imperialist social system directed by an imperialist ruling class, whose avowed enemies we are, will be interested to learn that for the SP:

"The most serious of our ( ! ) American shortcomings ( !! ) has been our ( !!! ) failure dramatically and persistently to state politics upon which the hope of deliverance of the world from war might depend."

\* \* \*

We can already hear Harrington's objections - These are just "simple verbal formulations", just "programs and positions", and "we don't analyze politics on the basis of "such trifles.

How now, Mike - exactly what does an organization's politics consist of, if not its "programs and positions"? How are an organization's politics expressed if not in "simple" (and complex) "verbal formulations."? Do you claim to possess some non-verbal (perhaps extra-sensory?) means of divining the real politics of the SP? If so, please make it known to us, so we can abandon this tiresome business of "comparing programs and positions" !

But enough ! These questions are a bit beside the point. The truth of the matter is, that the NAC majority position on the elections is not based on any principled evaluation of the SP's politics, and comparison with the politics of other socialist groups. The position of political support to the SP alone flows from an organizational maneuver !

This is perfectly apparent from the majority documents. The NAC resolution gives as the sole reason for its support of the SP alone that "We favor unity between the Socialist Party and the Independent Socialist League.....between the ISL, the SP, and the YSL there exists enough in common to warrant and urge such a unification." Harrington, after his flutter in the direction of a political justification, returns to this basic reason. "The



point is that we are in a relation with the SP that we regard it as something...toward which we have the perspective of probing the possibilities of unity."

Is it possible to characterize this procedure too harshly? It is shockingly irresponsible towards the membership. Here a majority of the national leadership seeks to have the League adopt a position on a political question of prime importance - and it bases itself on a profoundly new orientation of which the membership is, to this moment, totally ignorant.

Not only was the membership not informed of this SP unity orientation, the non-N.Y. members of the NEC themselves had only the barest hints of it before the Labor Day plenum. The plenum decided to initiate a full discussion of this matter, including articles presenting both viewpoints in Challenge. But before this discussion takes place, before the members even know of the existence of an SP unity perspective, a majority of the NEC seeks to commit the organization to political support of the SP precisely on the basis of this undiscussed perspective.

If, from the viewpoint of democratic procedure, the manner of the adoption of this position is bad, its political content is far worse. What does it mean to take a political position (such as support of a candidate) on the basis of organizational maneuvers? The revolutionary movement has a name for this sort of thing, and if it doesn't apply in this instance it doesn't apply to anything at all. That name is opportunism.

In many instances of opportunism the political dangers involved in it are subtle and difficult to perceive. Here however, they are open and flagrant - so much so, that a political tendency far deeper than mere opportunism is obviously involved.

Everyone should be aware of the political meaning of the majority position. If the NCL appeals for votes for the SP ticket alone, it will be giving political support to a supporter of the State Dept. It will appear before American youth as a critical supporter, at second remove, of U.S. imperialism.

This is true, to a much higher degree, of unity with the SP. But the issue here is the elections. The question of SP unity is next on the League's agenda, and I intend to deal with its implications and significance in exhaustive fashion - at that time.

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A word on the SLP. According to Harrington, the only vote I can possibly recommend on a political basis is one for the SLP, because it is against both Washington and Moscow.

What country does Harrington think he's living in? Doesn't a party's stand on American issues have something to do with its political nature? The SLP is against both Washington and Moscow. Harrington neglects to mention that it is also against the American labor movement, and is as firmly wedded (for all its syndicalist talk) to a parliamentary beliefment of "socialism" as is the SP.

How can a revolutionary socialist vote be cast for such a decrepit sectarian - reformist group? -----

To sum up. The election campaign is a clash of political philosophies and programs - a clash between socialist politics and capitalist politics, and a clash of varying political conceptions within the socialist movement. The political meaning of support for a party is identification with its political views as against the views of all other parties running campaigns. This remains its political meaning regardless whether a stand is taken on a principled basis of expressed political preference, an opportunistic basis of organizational maneuvers, or on the dishonest basis of a real but concealed political preference.

This article has clearly defined the nature of the choice among the several American socialist political tendencies. The SLP is a sectarian, reformist group, opposed to the American labor movement. The SP, as Herrington himself admits, is "social-democratic"; whatever its inconsistencies and muddle-headedness, it is consistently reformist and presents itself as a critical supporter of U.S. foreign policy. The SWP is a revolutionary socialist party, a consistent opponent of our "immediate enemy", our own ruling class. If certain of its positions have been attacked as "pro-Stalinist", these positions exist in the context of a revolutionary opposition to Stalinism - the SWP has consistently called for a workers revolution to overthrow the Stalinist bureaucracy. (Even Herrington has to refer to "the revolution (the SWP) hopes for in Russia.")

Among these parties, how can there be any doubt which one a revolutionary socialist should support in this election? Even comrade Walker, who agrees with the majority position on the colonial revolution, and therefore rejects the SWP's stand of defense of Korea, China, Vietnam, etc., recognized that in world politics "The SWP is far more against Stalinist imperialism than the SP is against American imperialism."

As for American politics, who will not support a revolutionary party rather than a reformist one? -----

Why, then, have I proposed the slogan "Vote Socialist - for any of the 3 parties" and not the slogan "Vote for Dobbs and Weiss"? The two slogans are not necessarily contradictory.

In this document I have stated explicitly what was implicit, though obvious, in my previous article - that I support the SWP in this election and call on all members of the YSL and radical youth to vote for Dobbs and support the SWP campaign. I do not propose formal YSL support of Dobbs for two reasons.

First, and relatively unimportant (though I thought it most important a month ago), a general Socialist protest vote slogan is best suited to the YSL's heterogeneity. It would take a principled position on the class issue in the elections (socialist vs. capitalist), and at the same time leave the various political tendencies in the YSL equally free to support their preferred candidates.

The second reason is now of over-riding importance. I am deeply convinced that the orientation toward the SP which was presented at the Labor Day Pleum represents the worst possible political disaster for the YSL. Its definitive adoption would mean conversion of the YSL from an organization that seeks to be revolutionary into a fellow-traveler of the international Social-Democracy. This is what is at stake in the proposal to support the SP alone - and the general "Vote Socialist" slogan draws this issue as sharply as possible, precisely because it presents the minimum position common to all socialists: a socialist vote is in the opposite direction from a capitalist one.

The membership referendum (I assume the members will be allowed to decide an issue of this magnitude) will decide whether or not the YSL is to appear before the radical movement and American youth as the supporter of a reformist party, as the defender of a supporter of U.S. imperialism. That is the only issue.

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## On the Electoral Action Referendum

(1) At the very outset, one thing must be made clear: that the political basis of Shane's conclusions are electoral action is Canonite. Those comrades who agree with Shane's conclusion, but who do not share his politics, will, of course, make this clear in the course of discussion. But it is well to understand from the very beginning that the number of those who agree with Shane's politics and conclusions is quite small - unless everything we know about the internal politics of the YSL from recent Conventions, Plenums, letters, etc. has suddenly changed. The other comrades will provide their political basis in due time. At this point, however, I want to concern myself primarily with Comrade Shane.

(2) If there was any question before, Shane's answer to my NEC referendum statement now makes one thing transparently clear: that his politics are Canonite. Let us look at the cases in point.

(3) In my statement for the NEC referendum, I had pointed out that the SWP participation in the Thomas-Addes caucus in the UAW was an indication of its capitulation to Stalinism. Shane refutes this charge by affirming that the SWP role in this situation "did not flow from a desire to support Stalinists everywhere, but from an empirical evaluation of the militants on both sides..." The first part of Shane's answer is quite true: the SWP, at that time did not seek to support Stalinists x "everywhere" as was made clear by their blocing with anti-Stalinist forces in other unions. But the second half? The SWP's support in the UAW did not simply follow from an "empirical evaluation," but rather from a bad theory of Stalinist organization, one which leads in a capitulationist direction. Shane doesn't recognize this because... he agrees with the SWP theory. The "SWP's analysis of Reuther at the time," he now tells us, "has been proved correct." But that is the heart of the matter.

(4) What was the basis of the SWP characterization of Reuther? It was its well-known line of analogizing Stalinism, as a political movement, with Social Democracy as a political movement: "We evaluate the Stalinist parties in capitalist countries as working class parties led by treacherous leaders, similar to the Social Democratic traitors." But, as Shachtman pointed out at the time (NI, March, 1947), such a position is a "theoretical disaster", it is the most fundamental thing separating the independent socialist movement from the Canonites. Why? Because it misses the class nature of the two movements, the Stalinist and the Social Democratic.

(5) The Social Democracy operates within the framework of bourgeois democracy as a workingclass movement. It is quite capable of out and out counter-revolutionary actions, e.g. Noske, Mollet. But because of its class nature, the Social Democracy defends bourgeois democracy against fascism, has a vested in-

terest in the right to organize, the existence of unions, labor as a political force, etc. Stalinist movements, on the other hand, are based upon the class power of bureaucratic collectivism, that is, they act as agents of the bureaucratic collectivist class, they are themselves aspirants to power as a bureaucratic collectivist class. This means that in fundamental, class terms the Stalinists are opposed to the working class, e.g. that the first thing they will do when coming to power is to destroy the independent organizations of the workers. The participation of the Social Democracy in the labor movement is thus based in part on its character as a workingclass party which needs workingclass organizations. Not so with the Stalinists. Basically, in class terms, they are opposed to the workingclass, and when they defend the worker's interests, or appear to do so, it is a question of tactics.

(6) Canon once knew this. As Shachtman quotes him, he once said (in 1940), "The Stalinist base is the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union. They are perfectly willing to disrupt a trade union in defense of the foreign policy of Stalin. The traditional labor fakery have no roots in Russia nor any support in its powerful bureaucracy. Their only base of existence is the trade union; if the union is not preserved they have no further existence as trade union leaders. That tends to make them, from self-interest, a little more loyal to the unions than the Stalinists. That is why we have been correct in most cases in combining with them as against the Stalinists in purely union affairs."

(7) But the heart of the SWP support of Thomas-Addes in 1947 was that they forgot this truth which Canon had enunciated, that they changed to another line, one which can (and has, in their case) lead to capitulation to Stalinism. For the independent socialist reaction to this policy, I refer Shane to Shachtman's articles in LA, December, 1947. On this question, Shane accepts the SWP position. And, as we shall see, this leads to agreement with the SWP on a series of crucial, fundamental issues of socialist politics.

(8) But one more point has to be mentioned with regard to Shane's handling of the Thomas-Addes caucus. He tells us that I have "dragged in" Cochran's role "by the hair." At this point we must remember that Cochran's slanders in the Thomas-Addes paper, FDR, were echoed in the SWP press. Such an event is, comrades, "no accident" in an organization like the SWP. That Cochran left that organization some five years later doesn't change the point. What is proved by the incident is not "pro-Stalinism", i.e. the content of the slanders (accusing Reuther of being in cahoots with the GM management) is not pro-Stalinist but simply vicious. What it does indicate is how deeply the SWP went into a caucus which contained the Stalinists in the UAW, how a leading SWPer acted like the Stalinists in this situation.

(9) The main point remains. Shane disagrees with the indeper-

dent socialist analysis of the class nature, and differences, of Social Democracy and Stalinism. That doesn't cast a man into outer-darkness; it does make his politics unfit to be the basis of an independent socialist electoral policy.

(10) On the next point, Shane's logic takes him ever further, to a basic revision of our position on the Korean War. To begin with, Shane now finds his position on the Viet Minh "roughly applicable" to the case of Korea. (cf. Shane, YSR, Vol 1, no. 2, pp. 9-12) Shane considered the Viet Minh struggle a war of "national liberation," he advocated military support to the Viet Minh. In retrospect, then, he now says that we should have called for military support to the North Koreans. Moreover, Shane agrees with the SWP that the Korean war was "the struggle of the Korean people against U.S. imperialism and its agent Rhee, even though that struggle took place under a murderous Stalinist leadership..." It makes some difference to Shane that the Chinese Stalinist intervened. But, from June to late Fall of 1950, the Korean War was, for Shane, a "civil war".

(11) Shane is unclear on his exact position. "For the purpose of argument", he assumes that the SWP was wrong, though he agrees with every element in their analysis. To me, this means that Shane now, in retrospect, has revised a fundamental position of third camp politics, our opposition to both imperialisms in Korea. In doing this, he makes an incredible aside. For Shane, the absence of the physical presence of the Chinese Stalinists means that no foreign power was the "principal protagonist" in that war. Does Shane think for a minute that the North Korean Stalinists were "independent Stalinists"? Is there any evidence opposing the conclusion that North Korea was a puppet of Stalinist imperialism, that its government came to power on the points of Stalinist bayonets? Do we assume that the invasion of South Korea by the North was an independent act, flowing in any sense from the dynamics of a war of "national liberation." Or isn't it as plain as can be that it was a move in the world strategy of Stalinist imperialism, probably prompted by an American announcement that Korea would not be defended against attack?

(12) But this is not the place to argue the question of Korea. We need merely note that Shane has capitulated to the Canonite point of view on one more crucial issue.

(13) Next, the Chinese Revolution. I said the SWP "glorifies" the Stalinist revolution in China. Shane substantiates this, and includes himself in. Here is Shane's glorification: "the SWP supports that huge movement of hundreds of millions of millennially suppressed people which has scourged imperialism and feudalism from the face of China, and defends it against imperialist attack, even while bitterly opposing the Stalinist police regime which seeks to stifle the further growth of the revolution." Thus, the Shane-SWP view of China. There is the mass, people's revolution, anti-feudal, anti-imperialist; on top of it, a "police regime," the Stalinist state, which is seeking to "stifle the further growth of the revolution." What is our

view of the Chinese Revolution? We hold that "While the victory of Stalinism in China struck a blow at capitalist imperialism from which it will never recover, it, at the same time, raised the new enemy of socialism to power and set back for an indefinite period the workingclass, democracy and socialism." (International Resolution, YSR, Vol 2, No. 4, p. 30)

(14) Shane here, as before, misses the force of the phrase, "at the same ~~time~~ time." Neither he, nor the SWP understand that the destruction of feudalism and opposition to imperialism in China is simultaneously (since it is a Stalinist revolution) the beginning of a new, exploitative, anti-socialist society. Thus, the Chinese Stalinists are not simply a "police regime" "stiffling" a revolution. They are a social class making a social revolution, a bureaucratic collectivist revolution. I do not doubt the existence of this phenomenon as it is. I attempt to define it in class terms and to base my political attitude toward it on that characterization.

(15) Then, Shane once more brings in his famous example; that defending China against imperialist attack is like defending Chiang Kai-Shek against Japanese attack in the Thirties. But Comrade Draper rightly characterized this position for what it is: social patriotism in favor of Chinese Stalinism (see LA, Apr. 11, 1955) As Draper pointed out in that answer, "The real CONTEXT of the present war crisis over China is the imperialist antagonism between the capitalist and Stalinist war camps. War between Washington and Peiping would be indeed a 'component part' of this larger imperialist-war framework, whose protagonists are primarily the U.S. and Russia." And this, clearly, was not the case in the Japanese war in China in the Thirties.

(16) On China, then, we find that Shane agrees with the SWP on the fundamental estimation of the nature of the regime, that he continues his position on the defense of Stalinist imperialism against ~~American~~ imperialism. Once again, Shane is working from a position which is at fundamental variance with that of the YSL. In open Convention, Shane's point of view was overwhelmingly rejected. On this score, too, it should be remembered that the two leading comrades from Berkeley at that time wrote a letter to LA agreeing with Comrade Draper.

(17) Finally, there is Shane on the question of Formosa. But first, two asides. How Shane says can Harrington talk about imperialism when he has rejected the notion that Stalinism is imperialist? At the 1955 Convention, Shane complained that no one paid any attention to his state-capitalist argument. At some cost to myself (if only in typing) I wrote a long reply to Shane in which I disavowed my previous views on Stalinism and imperialism and explained why. Didn't Shane read the answer to his own position? Secondly, Shane patronizingly tells how embarrassing it is to have to correct a leading Comrade on the fact that self-determination is a bourgeois, not a socialist, demand. Here is Shane's well-known tendency toward the neat, the schematic,

the abstract. I prefer Lenin on this count: "It is senseless to contrast the Socialist revolution and the revolutionary struggle against capitalism to one of the questions of democracy, in this case the national question." (Coll. Works, Vol. 19, p. 368, Intl Pub. Ed)

(18) Back to the question of Formosa. Once more, Shane recapitulates his social patriotic point of view: Formosa is Chinese; the Chinese regime is a revolutionary regime; therefore, we would support attempts of that regime to win back Formosa. Lets pass the first point, even assume it. As Shane points out, socialists opposed union with Hitler Germany in the Saar plebiscite of 1934 even though the Saar was German. The reason was, of course, the nature of fascist Germany, as a reactionary force. But for us - not for Shane and not for the SWP - Chinese Stalinism is reactionary. In this case, Shane really takes off: "... in the actual situation, the struggle is between the Chinese Revolution and the counter-revolutionary forces of the U.S. and Chiang." Note: not the Chinese Revolution "under the treacherous and murderous leadership of Mao," not "the Chinese Revolution which will be far more efficient in crushing the workingclass and peasantry than the corrupt Kuomintang" - but simply, "the Chinese Revolution."

(19) But, again as Draper pointed out in the LA debate, any Chinese Stalinist attempt to take Formosa would not be an abstraction, it would be an integral part of the movement of Stalinist imperialism. And we would oppose it.

(20) Shane's handling of my four points against the SWP makes my initial point clear: on the UA7 fight, Shane adheres to the SWP analysis of Stalinist movements (an analysis which leads to pro-Stalinist politics) - and not to ours; on the Korean War, Shane accepts the SWP analysis; on the question of the nature of Chinese Stalinism, Shane has an SWP - and pro-Stalinist - point of view; and on the question of Formosa, Shane repeats his social patriotic point of view of last year. Therefore, Shane should favor a vote for Dobbs: Canonite politics deserve Canonite electoral action. But not the YSL. Shane himself has advanced the basic reason for opposing a vote for the SWP: he has himself demonstrated that such a vote is a vote for politics which capitulate to Stalinist.

(21) Now there are comrades who agree with Shane's conclusion, but not with his politics. They should, to my mind, do two things in the course of the discussion: clearly, specifically and unequivocally repudiate Shane's Canonite politics; put forward an argument in favor of Shane's position based upon the politics of independent socialism, not upon Canonism. The beginnings of such a position has been implied in the document which we received from the Los Angeles comrades, and I will deal with some of their points in the next section of this document. But the whole attitude must be spelled out, made clear. At the present, I assume that Shane's politics remain a tiny minority in the YSL as they were at the last Convention.



(22) But now, let us turn to current SWP policy. Originally, I said that the current political approach of the SWP is further evidence of its capitulating tendencies. No, says Comrade Shane. The SWP orients toward the CP, yes, but "The only relevant fact is the political nature of that orientation." Quite right. What is the political nature of that orientation?

(22) The SWP is opposed to the Stalinist bureaucracy. It says so in its press. If it did not, then it would simply be another variety of independent Stalinism, which it isn't. But at the same time, the whole burden of the SWP's campaign has been to point out to those who do not accept the SWP analysis of the bureaucracy that they should vote for the SWP, that the SWP is the only place for the CP member critical of the Democratic Party turn, for the Sweezyite, for the ALPera, etc. In other words, the real basis of their tactics is not their opposition to the bureaucracy, but their defense of "nationalized property".

(23) A word at this point to the LA Comrades who put out the statement on electoral action. They point out that the official CP is in the Stevenson camp. They go on to say, "Every CP member who votes for Farrell Dobbs (and there will be many) is voting against the opportunist subservience of the CP to the reformist line of Moscow and of the CP leadership. Every Stalinist or Stalinoid who votes for Dobbs does so with the knowledge (or prejudice) that Trotskyism is the most incisive anti-Stalinism." Not true! First, on the factual level. Have the comrades read the statements of people like Hallinan who are real, live breathing Stalinoids supporting the SWP? Do you find the least knowledge of the SWP as incisive anti-Stalinism there?

(24) Isn't the actuality the almost-opposite of what is described by the LA Comrades, i.e. that Stalinists and Stalinoids can use the SWP vote to save their consciences on the "American question" and keep their illusions at the same time? If the CP were running its own candidate, or supporting a third party, then a Stalinist-Stalinoid vote for the SWP would mean a real break. But precisely because there is no "regular" Stalinist-Stalinoid ticket, the SWP vote loses much of its significance. Did the comrades note, for example, the polite slap on the wrist which the CP gave to such deviators in their electoral action statement? No, in the actual situation, the SWP is, as the ISL characterized it, running an ersatz Stalinist campaign, and that is its political meaning.

(25) Again, I refer Shane and the LA comrades to the Militant. Here is the SWP's letter to the CP (Militant, September 24, 1956). There is, to be sure, a reference (one) to "the Soviet working class which is seeking to end the hated bureaucratic dictatorship in the Soviet Union in order to develop a socialist democracy..." Without this, as I pointed out before, the SWP would be simply

Stalinist. But what of the rest of the letter? "Dear Comrades," they salute the plenipotentiaries of the "hated bureaucracy". Then they go to the point that the CP should support the SWP campaign because Dobbs and Weiss "are campaigning for American working class support to the colonial revolution and the socialist revolution abroad." "Socialist revolution"? To a CPer, what does that unexplained reference mean? And then, after enumerating other reasons for official CP support of the SWP campaign, the letter goes on to say, "These are the principles the CP membership subscribes to and have been working tirelessly to realize." "Have been"? When? While the CP was applauding the first Smith Act trials? At what point in the past did this community of principles develop between the CP and the SWP?

(26) But Shane has an answer. This is only the SWP urging "CP members to fight against one of the most reactionary features of American Stalinism's current politics, and to urge them to win their party to at least one pro-socialist position." Why, then, the letter to the CP bureaucracy? What explain to Foster and Dennis that the SWP and the CP have so much in common. Perhaps this is merely a way of reaching the membership, of exposing Foster and Dennis? But then, when the CP Conference rejected the SWP proposal, what moral did the Militant draw from that? That this showed that the CP bureaucracy was composed of a bunch of bastards, that the CP, as an organization was no good, etc. etc.? No. This: "The election policy adopted by the Communist Party Conference - shamefaced support of the Democrats - is a betrayal of the socialist principles to which the CP membership adheres. It should be repudiated by every member of the Communist Party who wants to be something better than a flunkie for the party of Eastland, Walter and De Sapio. The most effective way to make that repudiation is to join with Hallinan and McAvoyn in their principled support to the Socialist Workers ticket." (my emphasis) "Principled." Read: support now involving the loss of a single Stalinist-Stalinoid prejudice.

(27) I am for urging CP rank and filers to raise demands that will put them in conflict with Stalinism and with the CP bureaucracy. I don't think that it is tactically necessary to go on and either/or: either support our line, lock, stock and barrel, or go back to the stinking CP where you belong. No. I would, from within the stated context of my own opposition to Stalinism, urge the CP rank and file to go step by step. But once they took a step and Foster-Dennis clobbered them, I would try to make my real point. I don't think that the SWP is simply making a tactical sortie when it asks for official, CP organizational support and suggests, as it did, that it would be willing to endorse a CP organizational candidate in return. For once they got slugged, they kept on advocating the same thing.

(28) On Poznan, let us get the facts straight. I said the SWP did support the Poznan workers. I pointed out that various Stalinoid tendencies call for "justice" too - and I did not

equate their stand with that of the Canonites. I then went on to say, and I stand by it, "That the SWP supports the Poznan workers is to its credit; it hardly establishes its credentials as a party 'as resolutely anti-Stalinist as...any other socialist group." (emphasis added)

(29) Shane then goes on to quote reams from the SWP to prove that it supported the Poznan workers; that it did not do so in a Stalinoid fashion, etc., etc. Yes. But, to return to my point, that does not establish its credentials as a party "as resolutely anti-Stalinist as...any other socialist group."

(30) And now we come to Shane's syllogism. I won't bother to distinguish it. That would be to become as foolish, as abstract, as scholastic as Shane. Suffice it to say that it shows that Shane cannot sense the complexity of political reality, that he is once more on his programmatic approach. "Internal consistency" is not the same thing as "entire consistency" as Shane tries to suggest, e.g. one plus three equals five plus two plus two, which is four, equals, eight. Two plus two is four; the series does add up to eight; it is "internally consistent; it is not "entirely consistent" since there are contradictory methods of adding. On to get off this ridiculous level where Shane put the question, all kinds of systems are internally consistent and entirely inconsistent, e.g. any ruling class ideology on the eve of the downfall of that class is usually internally consistent and completely inconsistent. But let it go. Let Shane's syllogism stand as an example of the true marriage of neo-scholasticism and Marxism.

(31) At this point, I have shown why I think that a vote for the SWP is impermissible. A word to the LA Comrades. In their statement, the comrades said, "...we find ourselves in agreement with most of the argumentation for this position by Comrades Shane and Walker..." Does this remain true, now that the Canonite basis of Shane's argumentation is there for everyone to see? Once more, comrades, I say, you may disagree with the NAC majority, but you cannot disagree with Shane's argumentation. To continue your agreement with Shane's conclusions, it seems to me that you must contravert my characterization of the SWP from our general political point of view.

(32) Now, for the question of the SP. True to his Canonite politics, Comrade Shane disagrees with our basic position that the independent socialists should now constitute themselves, in general, as the left wing of social democracy, or rather, in the left wing of social democracy. It is obvious that Shane rejects this point of view. But then, this generality, it is true, is not really controlling in the case of the American SP, since we refer above to the mass, workingclass parties of social democracy and the SP doesn't qualify under that heading. The question here, I think, is that Shane - and other, such as the LA Comrades - do not grasp the real nature of the SP.

(33) Previloxusly, I outlined the traditional independent socialist analysis of the nature of the Social Democracy. One aspect is of importance here. The Social Democracy is an inconsistent movement by its very nature. It has, in a sense, one foot in the bourgeois world (it is counter-revolutionary as towards revolutionary movements, e.g. Noske, Mollet), and one foot in the workers world (it defends the workers and their organizations against the fascists, elements of the bourgeoisie, etc. In the case of the SP, this has to be even further qualified. The American party certainly exhibits the pro-bourgeois aspect of social democracy, but, precisely because of its smallness, it has historically been quite under the influence of all kinds of pacifist and semi-leftist currents. In the Thirties, it was not a party of the Second International. And today, it displays the same kind of inconsistencies.

(34) Thus, the SP is not the simple supporter of Mollet and American imperialism, as the LA Comrades would have it. It is also the traditional American vehicle for a protest vote; the focus of political pacifism, etc. etc. It is not, as Shane would have it, a Party whose "consistency" is that of "deep-dyed reformism." Inadequate and wrong as the SP position was during World War II, it was not a social patriotic capitulation to America, pure and simple. In that period, SP locals grew up in c.o. camps, for example. In the Fifties, the SP did support the Korean War, and moved right (in effect, expelling the YPSL left) to 1954. Then a new "left" developed. This "left" is not what we would want, it is not what we are. It has all kinds of elements in it, third camp, pacifist, peace-panacea, etc. But the fact that a Third Camp resolution almost carried the 1956 SP Convention is certainly a refutation of "deep-dyed" reformism.

(35) Shane characterizes the SP as a consistent supporter of U.S. imperialism. That is not true. Officially even, the SP has fought against Franco and U.S. aid to Spain, against the repression in Guatemala, it has solidarized itself with the Asian Socialist Conference. At the same time, it has supported the Korean War, supported, then opposed, Mollet, etc.

(36) In passing, Shane pulls something of a goof. He builds his case out of the 1954 SP program, noting that it was "drawn up, of course, by the same leadership which runs the SP today, and not a word of which has been repudiated." Not a word from Shane that 1954 represented the high-water mark of right-wing influence; that it resulted in several left-wing resignations; that it occasioned the creation of a caucus which presented a Third Camp resolution to the 1956 Convention; and that this Third Camp resolution almost carried. This is not to say that the 1956 SP program puts forth our politics. It remains, as I characterized it in my NEC Referendum statement, inconsistent, reflecting all of the various tendencies in the SP. The difference between this inconsistency and the SP's program is huge; we must note it, we must act upon it, for it is a difference with political consequences.

(37) Now let me turn from Comrade Shane's full-blown, pro-Canonite position for a moment and take up Comrade Tim in his NEC Referendum statement.

(33) At the very outset, Tim, presumably, does not share Shane's political point of view. It is therefore incumbent upon him, as upon the LA Comrades, to state exactly what his differences are. To pass this over in silence would be the tactics of an unprincipled bloc. But, in Comrade Tim's referendum statement, he chooses to emphasize those things which bind him to Shane and to let the basic opposition go.

(39) There is the honest broker point. The YSL is open to all socialist youth, it is broad, and "by calling for a general socialist vote we emphasize the broad nature of our organization." What this misses is that, though the YSL is indeed broad, it is not neutral. It is not a loose alliance of socialist tendencies, or an information bureau. It is a political organization. Those who are in a minority - Shane, for example - have the fullest democratic rights. But that doesn't mean that we don't take a position on Stalinist imperialism, or on the nature of the Stalinist state, or on the question of the Stalinist movement. The "broadness" argument would only hold if there were no political reasons for us to oppose the SWP and endorse the SP campaign. There are.

(40) Next, Comrade Tim shrilly proclaims that to oppose support to the SWP while supporting other tendencies is "pure stalinophobia and sectarian madness." What is the basis of this extreme characterization. The following: "The SWP supports the Poznan workers, the best current test of one's attitude toward Stalinism ..." (my emphasis) But, as I pointed out to Shane, this is not true. All kinds of Stalinoids, Cochranites, Canonites, etc., - people who do not pass a decent political test on the question of Stalinism - support the Poznan workers. What Poznan does, in general, is to differentiate Stalinists, those who still support every dotted i and crossed t of the line, and various types of pro-Stalinists, Stalinoids, etc. Second, Tim notes that the SWP is "for the revolutionary overthrow of the stalinist bureaucracy." True, but not sufficient; the SWP also defends the interests of that bureaucracy when it supports Stalinist imperialism, that too should be noted. And then, the clincher: "it (the SWP) has a far better position on stalinist imperialism than the SP has on American imperialism." Where the "better" comes from, I don't know, assuming that this type of formula is valid at all. The SWP has supported stalinist imperialism; the SP has supported American imperialism; both do so "critically". What, from Tim's point of view, makes the SWP "better"? But then, Tim's point of view, like Shane's, is schematic, abstract, a comparison of words taken out of context. The SWP has its views within the context of a "finished program", i.e. they are rethought-out, they reveal a hardened theoretical error. The SP, as I have noted, acts out of its inconsistent nature, its now-you-see-it-now-you-don't support of American imperialism is of a politically different char-

acter. To put it on the most immediate level, the SP position is open to change much more than the SWP's, e.g. we can influence it.

(41) Tim's charge of "pure stalinophobia and sectarian madness" comes out, then, to rest upon an error, a half-truth, and an abstraction. It does not mention the profound differences between Tim and Shane. This I am sure we will hear during the course of the discussion, from Tim as well as from other Comrades who agree with Shane's conclusions but not with his arguments.

(42) Next: softness on social democracy. First, Tim concedes a previous point of mine: he refers to the SP's support of America as "equally treacherous" ("better"?) with the SWP's support of the Stalinists in Korea. But he then goes on to pinpoint a "disastrous tendency in our movement to apologize for - or at least not protest against - the SP's politics." One wonders: did Tim read LA on Mollet? Did he read the comparison's with Noske and company? Did he read Draper on America as the imperialist arbiter, and the references to the counter-revolutionary character of Social Democracy under various circumstances? I'm sure he did, but the "disastrous tendency" is documented on the basis of one case, e.g. the handling of the McReynolds' letter in LA. Now tactics are one thing, opportunism is another. It would be opportunist to blunt the socialist criticism of Mollet's imperialist role one bit (LA didn't); it would be tactically nonsense to deal with a tendency with whom one is considering uniting in the same tone of voice one would use toward a rabidly rival organization. The line which divides tactics and opportunism is not one of tone (which may be varied for a whole series of reasons), but of basic political orientation (which cannot). At any rate, even granting Tim's case for the purpose of argument, the characterization of a "disastrous tendency" still doesn't hold water. It is just one more case of Tim's own affinity for the overly-sweeping generalization. As for the "rationalization" of Martin and Harrington on the NAC, I only ask that the comrades judge from our actions.

(43) But now, let me return to Comrade Shane and to a conclusion of this statement. One of the things which outrages Shane is the evidence of opportunism in the Majority stand. "What does it (the NAC position) mean to take a political position (such as support of a candidate) on the basis of organizational maneuvers?" Once again, the neat, the schematic. On the one side, the political-principled; on the other, the organizational-opportunist. But what is the real situation in the current campaign. None of the socialist tickets are politically meaningful in a broad sense of the term, i.e. they will not effect the disposition of political power. Their main political significance is as a protest vote and that is why we can even consider endorsing any one of the three campaigns even though we disagree with all of them. That is, most of us disagree with the SP, SWP and SLP; Shane doesn't. His politics are Canonite, and there's no problem for him. But for the YSL, endorsement means primarily endorsement of a protest vote, not of a political program. That is the political meaning of what we are doing.

(44) But is all of this a million removes from organizational questions? As I pointed out before, the SWP attitude toward the Stalinist organizations is the greatest single point of division between us, it indicates the real significance of the theoretical difference between us on the Russian question. Further, we have to estimate the current campaign in terms of the political realities facing the socialist movement. There has been a quantitative shift on the left (not a qualitative one, i.e. the nature of the period has not been fundamentally altered). The impact of the Twentieth Party Congress has resulted in a shift within the Stalinist-Stalinoid movement, a shift in focus from the CP itself to the various Stalinoid groupings. In this context, the SWP is running a campaign which offers people a change to proclaim a certain organizational independence of the CP while retaining their illusions about Stalinism. The manner in which Halinan and Macavoy have come over is an illustration of this point. It is a political fact (politics not existing in the abstract). On the other hand, there is a growing conviction that it is necessary to regroup the socialist movement for the breakout that will come. The SWP, as noted, has one position in this situation. The SLP remains sectarian, isolated. The only possibility of movement for us in this regard is tied up with the SP. This happens to be an important political dimension of the current campaign. It is sense, not opportunism, to take this into consideration. Shane here confuses opportunism with tactical intelligence. And as I pointed out before, the two are not the same.

(45) Negatively, the YSL cannot endorse the SWP or SLP. Positively, it has basic criticisms of the SP, but not of such a nature as to preclude endorsement. The SP remains the traditional vehicle for a protest vote in America today (if the comrades have been talking to lib-labs, indulging in all kinds of opportunistic political work such as that, they will know this). More, there is a tendency - and we must not exaggerate its strength, but it is, as Shane would say, there, we can't ignore it - in the SP which has a Third Camp line (is that true of the SWP? of the SLP?) An endorsement will aid them.

(46) But the main point remains: in no case is our criterion for endorsement in this campaign one of agreeing with a Party's program lock, stock and barrel. If that were true, we could not endorse any Party. Among the three Parties, the type of role which the SWP plays - that of running an ersatz Stalinist campaign - precludes endorsement of that ticket. The SLP is an irrelevance, even in the limited context of pushing for a protest vote. In terms of the American tradition of protest voting, in terms of the development of the SP left, in terms of that "opportunistic" thing, the development of a revitalized, healthy socialist movement in America, our course must be to endorse the SP campaign (not, note this, the SP; the SP campaign).

(47) A final word about Shane. I have spent so much time on

on Shane's views because they represent a tendency basically hostile to our political point of view. One last example. Shane ambiguously refers to the Majority position in this way: "Its definitive adoption would mean conversion of the YSL from an organization that seeks to be revolutionary into a fellow-traveler of the international Social-Democracy." "Fellow-traveler"? Is this a reference to the independent socialist position which sees our role in the present situation as one of operating within the left-wing of the international Social Democracy? Or simply of a manner of doing this that is objectionable? From Shane's arguments, one would guess the former, i.e. the Canonite position. There is no way in which such an attitude, if this it be, or Shane's other attitudes which are clear enough, can serve as the political basis of the electoral action position of an independent socialist group? I must repeat once more; those who agree only with Shane's conclusions, must (a) make clear their opposition to Shane's politics and (b) provide an alternative political basis of their own.

(48) Finally, let me address myself to those comrades who do ~~not~~ agree with Shane's conclusions but do ~~xxxxx~~ not agree with his politics.. I am convinced that if they take the current campaign in its actuality, and if they do so from the point of view of our politics, they will see that the only course is to endorse the campaign of Hoopes and Friedman.

Mike Harrington



(11)

THE ELECTORAL QUESTION, Being Divers Comments on Comrade Harrington's Answer to Shane. By Tim Wohlforth

To begin with let us get ne thing straight: the Los Angeles comrades, Comrade Shane, Comrade Walker and myself have made clear the political basis for our position on the electoral question. Any insinuation that this political basis as presented by Shane in his first document, by the L.A. comrades in their nationally circulated document and by myself in the NEC referendum document, is Cannonism is a complete and unadulterated smear on the part of Harrington. The fact that we have political differences among ourselves is known to everybody; but the common political basis of our position has been stated and it is based on independent socialist politics, no on Cannonism.

It is therefore not incumbent upon us, as Harrington asserts, to present a new political basis for our position. I feel it is unnecessary here to repeat in detail this area of political agreement--calling for a vote for any of the socialist candidates, refusing to bow to stalinophobia and bar support for the SWP along with the other parties, and our feeling that singling out the SP for support alone is a form of capitulation to social reformism--and I refer interested comrades to the aforementioned documents.

Comrade Shane in his latest document has made passing references to a new position adopted by him on Korea and Formosa. I for one do not intend to answer Shane on this matter until he presents these ideas in some substantive form and not just in a casual reference. They are not pertinent to the present discussion except that Harrington's reaction to them is an illustration of the extent of his stalinophobia. To him Cannonism becomes "ersatz pro-stalinism", Shane's state capitalism becomes "Cannonism" and the left wing's argumentation--which clearly states its differences with the SWP--becomes "based on Cannonite politics." Such a tendency to smear political opponents and to refuse to differentiate between basically different political points of view has no place in a socialist movement and simply is an example of the extent of Comrade Harrington's capitulation to the atmosphere of the times.

#### THE SWP QUESTION

In the midst of the electoral discussion Martin and Harrington have come up with a new position on the SWP. It is being presented to the movement without any real argumentation, with an attempt to appeal to stalinophobia and the prejudices against a competing revolutionary socialist group. The relationship of this "hardening" towards the only other revolutionary movement in the country and "softening" towards the social democracy is obvious; they are but different sides of the same coin.

But let us examine what they say. The statement in Labor Action with which Harrington has solidarized himself states that "In addition to its previous rapid movement in the direction of political capitulation to Stalinism and political solidarity with Stalinism in the looming world war, this year the SWP is putting itself forward before the voters as, in effect, the ersatz electoral instrument of pro-stalinism..."

If there is one thing that has been characteristic of the SWP over the last 15 years it has been its tenacity in holding to Trotsky's original degenerate worker state theory. Without understanding this how can one understand the fight against the pro-stalinism of the Cochranites? Thus I do not see this "rapid movement" in any direction, as their present position is basically the position they have had since the Thirties. Would Harrington characterize the world role of Trotskyism in the Thirties as "capitulation to Stalinism"? Logically he must if he condemns the SWP's present politics. Otherwise he must argue that the SWP has broke

with Trotskyism in its general historical sense as have the Cochranites. Secondly he must state that the WP was wrong to call for unity between the two revolutionary tendencies in 1946 and to try to reenter the Fourth International. Since this argument is not made we must assume that the comrade feels that only in this particular campaign has the SWP exhibited its pro Stalinist program.

In concentrating on the endorsement of the SWP by Hallinan and McAvoy, Harrington and Martin are correct in at least recognizing its importance. Today when much of socialist politics is isolated and of little meaning this event is of prime importance and is an illustration of the disillusionment of the Stalinist camp and the desire on the part of its better elements to remain in some way, shape or form socialists. Within this context the moves of Hallinan and McAvoy are of tremendous importance and of a strikingly progressive nature. Harrington's reaction to this development proves that despite all his attacks upon the left wing as sectarians it is he and the right wing who are blinded by sectarianism. To expect Stalinist fellow travelers to adopt our politics overnight is ridiculous and even to expect them to adopt the SWP politics immediately is likewise illusory. But for them to move in the direction of the SWP is a progressive step and must be applauded.

Even if Harrington does not recognize the meaning of the Hallinan and McAvoy endorsements the CP does. From what I hear from the West Coast the CP is engaging in a smear campaign in the "People's World" against Hallinan and the SWP. Alan Max, using a new variant of the old "social fascist" line said in the "Worker" that the politics of the SWP and McCarthy "dovetail neatly."

Harrington fails to answer Shane's challenge to prove that the SWP has actually changed its politics in this campaign. All he can produce as "evidence" is the fact that the SWP wrote a letter to the CP calling for its support of the SWP's electoral campaign. This technique, of course, has been used in the revolutionary movement for years and by Trotsky himself (whom Harrington has failed to convince me was pro Stalinist).

Let's look at the "Militant" in the period during which it was seeking the support of the ALPers. I challenge Harrington to find anything "pro Stalinist" with the SWP's coverage of the Poznan trials. This has been so completely different from pro Stalinism or Stalinoidism in its hatred of the bureaucracy and its revolutionary support of the Polish people that there can be no comparison. One article starts out "A revolution can not be put on trial!" It goes on to attack the Stalinists for trying to maintain that the fighting that took place was that of hoodlums and not workers. It states "this is the new lie they have concocted to save their regime from the onus of being so oppressive as to have called forth a revolutionary uprising."

Is this not clearcut anti Stalinism? Is this not the voice of a revolutionary movement tied to the working class (even though having an incorrect Russian position)?

How about the SWP's attitude toward the CP? I challenge Harrington to find anything capitulatory about the following editorial in the "Militant" on the CP's NC resolution:

"In its content the resolution presents no rupture with the Stalinist past. Stalinist domination of the CP meant that its course was determined by the foreign policy requirements for the Soviet bureaucratic caste in whose interests Stalin ruled. The bureaucracy is still in command in the Soviet Union and its requirements continue to shape the politics of the American CP leaders. This dictates an

intensified effort at this time to achieve a new Yalta-type agreement with U.S. imperialism".

Change "caste" to "class" and it could be a quote from LA!

But before Harrington and his stalinophobic friends start frothing at the mouth and casting me into the limbo of Cannonism, let me state the obvious: I am not now nor ever have been a Cannonite, a Cochranite, or a Sweezyite (not to mention an Ohlerite, Stamite, Brandlerite, Weisbordite, Johnsonite, or heaven forbid, a Marlenite). I pledge myself to defend the revolutionary movement from the evils of the degenerate workers state theory. I believe that this theory is incorrect not only in the abstract but that in the concrete it leads to certain pro-stalinist (as well as anti-stalinist) political acts. Thus the SWP is committed to defense of the Soviet Union in a war but at the same time it will relentlessly struggle against the Soviet bureaucracy and support the working-class. Its position is internally consistent but objectively inconsistent on the Russian question.

But the question at issue is not whether the YSL should support the SWP alone in the elections. It is simply whether it is permissible to support it along with other socialist tendencies. The majority in my opinion is moving logically towards the position that the SWP is not a socialist party—that it is a party of ersatz bureaucratic collectivism, is anti-working class, and the like. Otherwise it makes no political sense to refuse to support the SWP along with other tendencies when the issue is simply their socialist nature. We are calling for support of any party which we consider to be socialist.

The real political meaning for the YSL of a socialist vote is its nature as a protest against capitalist politics, and not the relative merits and demerits of the socialist parties running candidates. There are those who support our position on the electoral question who are for supporting the SP in certain localities (see Comrade Debbie's statement), others for supporting the SLP.

In my opinion it is the duty of all revolutionary socialists in the YSL to vote for the only revolutionary party on the ballot, the SWP. Those of us particularly who base our politics on the great tradition of Trotskyism in this country and throughout the world—for all our differences with the "orthodox" Trotskyists—must support them.

But I reiterate: the YSL as a broad student organization must emphasize simply the socialist nature of the protest vote. However, since it is too late now to formulate such a policy for this election I hope that all third camp socialists, while voiding their criticisms of the SWP, will support its candidates.

#### THE ELECTORAL QUESTION AND SP-ISL-YSL UNITY---

The first thing that must be said about the relation between the SP unity question and electoral support for the SP is the point raised by comrade Arlon in a communication to the NAC: it is impermissible to develop a line for the working class simply on the basis of internal political needs. We must base our request for the support of radicals for the SP not on the basis of our relations with the SP but on the basis of the ability of the SP vis-a-vis the other sectors to represent the radicals in this election.

That a majority has chosen to do otherwise is obvious. The whole question of support for the SP candidates only came up after the desire to unite with the SP became a phobia among the right wing. Thus have we a clear out example of unparalleled opportunism. That opportunism is always tied to reformism will soon become apparent.

The ridiculousness of calling for support of the SP when the SP is hardly running a campaign is obvious. In New York, for example, the only visible sign of a campaign supporting the SP candidates was a distribution of LA's and leaflets in Harlem by guess who-the YSL. We are in effect "ersatz social democrats" in this election-or at least a far better case can be made for this proposition than for that of Harrington

In many states either the SWP or the SLP will be on the ballot. To write in Hoopes and Friedman under those conditions would be paramount to not getting your vote counted at all. Thus the size of the total socialist protest vote would be diminished.

But when one looks at the real politics behind this opportunistic move it is even more appalling. To Harrington the "inconsistencies" on the part of the SP on American imperialism are mere trifles when compared with the SWP's "capitulation" to the stalinists.

All I can say is that if the SP would only be half as diligent in attacking American imperialism as the SWP is in fighting the stalinists it would be a great victory for the working class movement. The fact is that at every step the SWP is at variance with the current politics of the Kremlin. It is against co-existence; it supports the colonial revolution; it is against the CP capitulation at home. The SP, on the other hand, at every point critically or otherwise supports American imperialism; its alliances and its politics. One little point in the SP platform is illustrative of its politics. It supports the witchhunt of federal employees, that is, the screening of people for their political ideas in the interest of "National Security." It is known that Thomas for years has agreed with Hook on the Stalinist teaching issue but now a witchhunt point of view is actually in the platform of the party. As another example of the SP's capitulation to the witchhunt atmosphere Sam Friedman, in a debate in New York, characterized the SWP's senatorial candidate as "a trotskyite Communist who believes in totalitarianism".

Thus we see that the YSL and the ISL are being maneuvered into the position of becoming the left-wing apologizers for the social democracy. Harrington and Martin have taken a correct position that revolutionists must enter the mass working class social democratic movement, in order to win support of the workers, build revolutionary cadres, and prepare for the eventual split of the social democracy. They have taken this position and applied it to a movement with no roots in the working class, with almost no members, which is completely demoralized, which has a left wing that could at best be characterized as confused centrism, and which is headed with or without us for the ash-heap of history.

Thus we can characterize the political direction in which Harrington and Martin wish to see our movement develop as towards becoming the tail of the Second International; of becoming centrists in our politics. Harrington and Martin are galloping in Kautsky's direction at an increasing rate of speed just at the time when the hope of building a real revolutionary working class movement in this country is coming closer to realization. As the country begins to wake up, with the Negroes carrying out their tremendous struggles, with militancy beginning to increase in the working class, and with the students beginning to awaken politically. At this time of great possibilities for revolutionists Harrington and Martin are ready to dive head first into the dungheap of reformism and its twin opportunism.

For an example of a correct third camp attitude towards the question of unifying the working class movement I refer our comrades to Libertini's recent article in LA. Here we see that the Italian independent socialists (USI) are fighting for unity on the basis of third camp politics and fighting against unity on the basis of

Saragat's politics. They do this even though Saragat's left wing is a hundred times better than the SP's in America. All we of the left ask is the same politics in this country. We ask that the YSL go on the record in favor of unity of the democratic socialist movement on the basis of third camp politics. This, by the way, is not asking complete capitulation to us. Anyone who thinks that our politics are simply third camp does not understand that on this question we agree with a variety of centrists and pacifists such as the peacemakers and the motley crew that assembled in England under the name of the "Third Way Movement".

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