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Fighting for Socialism in the 'American Century'

James P. Cannon

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Introduction

By Dave Holmes

Adolf Hitler's boast of creating a "thousand-year Reich" is often recalled with derision: for all the devastation it caused, German fascism's rule lasted only 12 years. But the German bourgeoisie was not the only ruling class with grand ambitions. In a 1941 editorial in his *Life* magazine, publishing magnate Henry Luce wrote of creating an "American century".

The 20th century was marked by the explosive drive of US imperialism for world domination. It was the real victor in World War I and after World War II its dominant role in world economy and politics was clear to all. Today, the United States is *the* world superpower, with the world's largest and most powerful economy and with a qualitative military superiority over all its capitalist rivals.

For all that, however, Washington's world empire is no more likely to last than Hitler's abortive attempt at European domination. In one of the selections in this book, the 1946 "Theses on the American Revolution", James P. Cannon explains that, precisely because of its world role, "American capitalism, hitherto only partially involved in the death agony of capitalism as a world system, is henceforth subject to the full and direct impact of all the forces and contradictions that have debilitated the old capitalist countries of Europe".

The push for global domination will meet the resistance of the world's peoples who do not want to be slaves of US imperialism. Washington's long and atrocious war in Vietnam, for instance, met unquenchable resistance from the Vietnamese people and called forth a massive antiwar movement at home. This showed the whole world that even a superpower can be defeated.

It also showed the world that there are indeed "two Americas", as Cannon put it in the 1948 convention speech included here. On the one hand, there is the profit-mad ruling class, shrinking at no crime to get its way. On the other hand, there are the working people of the United States, the vast majority, who do not want to oppress

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anybody.

The US working class, Cannon explained, has the potential to put an end to the capitalist madness and create a socialist society of peace, justice and plenty for all. "They have the power in America. All that is necessary is for the working class to understand it — and to use it … We firmly believe the real America — the America of the workers, the people — will help save the world by saving herself. We, the American Trotskyists … summon our America to her great destiny — not as conqueror but as liberator of the world."

James P. Cannon devoted his whole conscious life to this perspective. A socialist and IWW activist before World War I, a founder of the Communist Party in the United States and one of its central leaders in the 1920s and the founder and longtime leader of the US Trotskyist movement, Cannon is the outstanding figure of 20th century American socialism.

This book brings together a representative selection of his articles, speeches and lectures, grouped, not chronologically, but under broad themes. It doesn't deal with everything Cannon did or said but it does make clear the comprehensiveness of his revolutionary outlook.

Cannon's life was dedicated to the struggle to build up a revolutionary socialist party that can lead the working class in its struggle for power. The first section, The Leninist Party and Earlier Traditions, deals with this question and shows the superiority of Lenin's conceptions over all others. The fifth section, Defending the Revolutionary Party, grapples with some of the key problems encountered in building such an organisation.

Other selections touch on the Russian Revolution, one of the most fundamental influences of Cannon's life; trade union work; the crimes of US imperialism; the role of intellectuals in public life; the African-American struggle; and socialism and democracy. The last two selections deal with how the United States could be reorganised once the monopolists and plutocrats have been overthrown — it is an inspiring prospect.

Of course, the contention of the editors and publishers, and the reason for producing this book, is that Cannon's ideas remain deeply relevant to the struggle for socialism today, and not only in the United States but in all countries, especially in the other advanced capitalist countries. This is a primer in Marxist politics.

About James P. Cannon

James Patrick Cannon was born in February 1890 in Rosedale, Kansas (today a part of Kansas City). His socialism came from his father, an Irish republican and Populist who had become a socialist in 1897.

Cannon joined the Socialist Party in 1908; he left it in 1911 to join the more militant Industrial Workers of the World. In 1912-14 he was a travelling organiser and agitator for the IWW in the Midwest and during the war he was active in its Kansas City branch.

Following the 1917 Russian Revolution, Cannon rejoined the SP to link up with its developing pro-Bolshevik left wing. In June 1919 he was Kansas City delegate to a national SP left-wing caucus in New York. At the SP's August 1919 convention in Chicago, the left wing split. Two communist parties were formed; Cannon and the Kansas City left wing adhered to John Reed's Communist Labor Party. Cannon was elected CLP secretary for Missouri and organiser for Missouri, Kansas and Nebraska.

In December 1921, the two communist parties fused to form the Workers Party of America. Cannon was its first national chairman (until 1923) and delivered the keynote address at the convention. He was a member of the Central Executive Committee from 1920 to 1928 and of the Executive Council from 1922 to 1928. He was a prominent party spokesperson through the 1920s.

In July 1925 Cannon played the key role in founding the International Labor Defence, a united-front organisation dedicated to defending all class-war prisoners. Cannon was ILD secretary from its inception until his expulsion in 1928.

In June 1922 Cannon was the US delegate to the Executive Committee of the Communist International in Moscow. He spent seven months there and was a delegate to the Fourth Congress of the Comintern. He made four further trips to the Soviet Union, representing the US party at Comintern meetings. On his last trip he was a delegate to the Comintern's Sixth World Congress, July-August 1928.

At this congress he accidentally obtained a copy of Trotsky's criticism of the draft program of the Comintern and was won to the perspectives of the Left Opposition. Returning to the US, in October 1928 he was expelled from the CP for "Trotskyism", along with Max Shachtman and Martin Abern.

Cannon gathered more supporters and established the Communist League of America, as the US organisation of the International Left Opposition. In November 1928 the first issue of the *Militant* came out. The CLA held its first convention in Chicago in May 1929.

In 1934 the CLA gained national prominence through its leadership role in the Minneapolis Teamsters strikes. In December the CLA fused with A.J. Muste's American Workers Party to form the Workers Party of the United States.

In the latter part of 1934 Cannon travelled to France for a leadership meeting of the International Communist League (the successor body to the International Left Opposition) and to help resolve the severe internal problems of the French Trotskyists. He also met Trotsky at his temporary home in the French Alps.

In mid-1936 the WPUS entered the Socialist Party as a public faction in order to meet up with the left wing developing there. Forced out in the latter part of 1937, the Trotskyists took the bulk of the SP youth and radical workers with them. At a conference in Chicago, the Socialist Workers Party was founded on New Year's Day 1938.

In the summer of 1938, Cannon travelled to England to try to promote the unity of the various Trotskyist groups there. Then he went to France to participate in the founding conference of the Fourth International in Paris in September. His work there was highly appreciated by Trotsky.

In 1939-40 a struggle took place in the SWP over the attitude to be taken toward the Soviet Union in the coming war. With Trotsky, Cannon played the main role in arguing that the USSR should be defended against imperialism, despite Stalin. Max Shachtman, James Burnham and Martin Abern split in April 1940, taking 40% of the organisation with them to form the Workers Party.

In July 1941, Cannon and a number of other SWP and Teamster leaders in Minneapolis were indicted for conspiring to overthrow the US government. Eventually Cannon and 17 other party leaders were sentenced to prison terms of 12-16 months. Cannon was in jail from the end of 1943 until January 1945.

He served as the SWP's national secretary until 1953 when Farrell Dobbs took over. From then until his death he was the national chairman of the party.

In 1952-53 Cannon led the fight to defend the party's revolutionary perspectives against the minority led by Bert Cochran (see the section Defending the Revolutionary Party in this volume).

In 1952 Cannon and his companion, Rose Karsner, moved to Los Angeles. Cannon died there in August 1974.

Some 14 books of Cannon's works have been published in the United States along with many pamphlets and bulletins. For a listing see *Building the Revolutionary Party: An introduction to James P. Cannon* by Dave Holmes et al. (Resistance Books: Chippendale, 1997).■

THE LENINIST PARTY & EARLIER TRADITIONS

Eugene V. Debs: His June 16, 1918 antiwar speech at Canton, Ohio earned him a 10-year prison sentence.

The Revolutionary Party & Its Role in the Struggle for Socialism

First published in International Socialist Review, September-October 1967, and later included in the anthology 50 Years of World Revolution (1917-1967) (Merit Publishers: New York, 1968).

The greatest contribution to the arsenal of Marxism since the death of Engels in 1895 was Lenin's conception of the vanguard party as the organiser and director of the proletarian revolution. That celebrated theory of organisation was not, as some contend, simply a product of the special Russian conditions of his time and restricted to them. It is deep-rooted in two of the weightiest realities of the 20th century: the *actuality* of the workers' struggle for the conquest of power, and the *necessity* of creating a leadership capable of carrying it through to the end.

Recognising that our epoch was characterised by imperialist wars, proletarian revolutions, and colonial uprisings, Lenin deliberately set out at the beginning of this century to form a party able to turn such cataclysmic events to the advantage of socialism. The triumph of the Bolsheviks in the upheavals of 1917, and the durability of the Soviet Union they established, attested to Lenin's foresight and the merits of his methods of organisation. His party stands out as the unsurpassed prototype of what a democratic and centralised leadership of the workers, true to Marxist principles and applying them with courage and skill, can be and do.

Limited as it was to a single country, the epoch-making achievement of the Bolsheviks did not conclusively dispose of further dispute over the nature of the revolutionary leadership. That controversy has continued ever since. Fifty years afterwards there is no lack of sceptics inside the socialist ranks who doubt or deny that a party of the Leninist type is either necessary or desirable. And even where Lenin's theory is clearly understood and convincing, the problem of the vanguard party remains as urgent as ever, since it has yet to be solved in the everyday struggle against the old order.

A correct appreciation of the vanguard party and its indispensable role depends upon understanding the crucial importance of the subjective factors in the proletarian revolution. On a broad historical scale, and in the final accounting, economic conditions are decisive in shaping the development of society. This truth of historical materialism does not negate the fact that the political and psychological processes unfolding within the working masses more directly and immediately affect the course, the pace, and the outcome of the national and world revolution. Once the objective material preconditions for revolutionary activity by the workers have reached a certain point of maturity, their will and consciousness, expressed through the intervention of the organised vanguard, can become the key component in determining the outcome of the class struggle.

The Leninist theory of the vanguard party is based on two factors: the heterogeneity of the working class and the exceptionally conscious character of the movement for socialism. The revolutionising of the proletariat and oppressed people in general is a complex, prolonged, and contradictory affair. Under class society and capitalism, the toilers are stratified and divided in many ways; they live under very dissimilar conditions and are at disparate stages of economic and political development. Their culture is inadequate and their outlook narrow. Consequently they do not and cannot all at once, *en masse* and to the same degree, arrive at a clear and comprehensive understanding of their real position in society or the political course they must follow to end the evils they suffer from and make their way to a better system. Still less can they learn quickly and easily how to act most effectively to protect and promote their class interests.

This irregular self-determination of the class as a whole is the primary cause for a vanguard party. It has to be constituted by those elements of the class and their spokesmen who grasp the requirements for revolutionary action and proceed to their implementation sooner than the bulk of the proletariat on both a national and international scale. Here also is the basic reason that the vanguard always begins as a minority of its class, a "splinter group". The earliest formations of advanced workers committed to socialism, and their intellectual associates propagating its views, must first organise themselves around a definite body of scientific doctrine, class tradition, and experience, and work out a correct political program in order then to organise and lead the big battalions of revolutionary forces.

The vanguard party should aim at all times to reach, move, and win the broadest masses. Yet, beginning with Lenin's Bolsheviks, no such party has ever started out with the backing of the majority of the class and as its recognised head. It originates, as a rule, as a group of propagandists concerned with the elaboration and dissemination of

ideas. It trains, teaches, and tempers cadres around that program and outlook which they take to the masses for consideration, adoption, action, and verification.

The size and influence of their organisation is never a matter of indifference to serious revolutionists. Nonetheless, *quantitative* indices alone cannot be taken as the decisive determinants for judging the real nature of a revolutionary grouping. More fundamental are such qualitative features as the program and relationship with the class whose interests it formulates, represents, and fights for.

"The interests of the class cannot be formulated otherwise than in the shape of a program; the program cannot be defended otherwise than by creating the party", wrote Trotsky in *What Next?* — "The class, taken by itself, is only raw material for exploitation. The proletariat acquires an independent role only at that moment when, from a social class *in itself*, it becomes a political class *for itself*. This cannot take place otherwise than through the medium of a party. The party is that historical organ by means of which the class becomes class conscious."[1]

Marxism teaches that the revolution against capitalism and the socialist reconstruction of the old world can be accomplished only through conscious, collective action by the workers themselves. The vanguard party is the highest expression and irreplaceable instrument of that class consciousness at all stages of the world revolutionary process. In the prerevolutionary period the vanguard assembles and welds together the cadres who march ahead of the main army but seek at all points to maintain correct relations with it. The vanguard grows in numbers and influence and comes to the fore in the course of the mass struggle for supremacy which it aspires to bring to a successful conclusion. After the overthrow of the old ruling powers, the vanguard leads the people in the tasks of defending and constructing the new society.

A political organisation capable of handling such colossal tasks cannot arise spontaneously or haphazardly; *it has to be continuously, consistently and consciously built*. It is not only foolish but fatal to take a lackadaisical attitude toward party-building or its problems. The bitter experiences of so many revolutionary opportunities aborted, mismanaged, and ruined over the past half century by inadequate or treacherous leaderships has incontestably demonstrated that nonchalance in this vital area is a sure formula for disorientation and defeat.

Lenin's superb capacities as a revolutionary leader were best shown in his insistence upon the utmost consciousness in all aspects of party-building, from capital issues of theory and policy to the meticulous attention given to small details of daily work. Other parties and kinds of parties are content to amble and stumble along, dealing empirically and in a makeshift manner with problems as they arise. Lenin introduced system and planning into the construction and activity of the revolutionary party on

the road to power, not only into the economy such a party was later called upon to direct. He left as little as possible to chance and improvisation. Proceeding from a formulated appraisal of the given stage of the struggle, he singled out the main tasks at hand and sought to discover and devise the best ways and means of solving them in accord with the long-range goals of world socialism.

The vanguard party, guided by the methods of scientific socialism and totally dedicated to the welfare of the toiling masses and all victims of oppression, must always be in principled opposition to the guardians and institutions of class society. These traits can immunise it against the infections, and armour it against the pressures, of alien class influences. But the Leninist party must be, above all, a *combat* party intent on organising the masses for effective action leading to the taking of power.

That overriding aim determines the character of the party and priority of its tasks. It cannot be a talking shop for aimless and endless debate. The purpose of its deliberations, discussions, and internal disputes is to arrive at decisions for action and systematic work. Neither can it be an infirmary for the care and cure of sick souls, nor itself a model of the future socialist society. It is a band of revolutionary fighters, ready, willing, and able to meet and defeat all enemies of the people and assist the masses in clearing the way to the new world.

Much of the New Left, imbued with an anarchistic or existentialist spirit, denigrate or dismiss professional leadership in a revolutionary movement. So do some disillusioned workers and ex-radicals, who have come to equate conscientious dedication to full-time leadership with bureaucratic domination and privilege. They fail to understand the interrelations between the masses, the revolutionary class, the party, and its leadership. Just as the revolutionary class leads the nation forward, so the vanguard party leads the class. However, the role of leadership does not stop there. The party itself needs leadership. It is impossible for a revolutionary party to provide correct leadership without the right sort of leaders. This leadership performs the same functions within the vanguard party as that party does for the working class.

Its cadres remain the backbone of the party, in periods of contraction as well as expansion. The vitality of such a party is certified by the capacity to extend and replenish its cadres and reproduce qualified leaders from one generation to another.

The vanguard party cannot be proclaimed by sectarian fiat or be created overnight. Its leadership and membership are selected and sifted out by tests and trials in the mass movement, and in the internal controversies and sharp conflicts over the critical policy questions raised at every turn in the class struggle. It is not possible to step over, and even less possible to leap over, the preliminary stage in which the basic cadres of the party organise and reorganise themselves in preparation for, and in connection

with, the larger job of organising and winning over broad sections of the masses.

The decisive role that kind of party can play in the making of history was dramatically exemplified by the Bolshevik cadres in the first world war and the first proletarian revolution. These cadres degenerated or were destroyed and replaced after Lenin's death by the totalitarian apparatus of the Soviet bureaucracy fashioned under Stalin. The importance of such cadres was negatively confirmed by the terrible defeats of the socialist forces in other countries, extending from the Germany of 1918 to the Spain of 1936-1939, because of the opportunism, defects, or defaults of the labour leaderships.

Contrary to the opinions of some other students of his remarkable career, I believe that Trotsky's most valuable contribution to the world revolutionary movement in the struggle against Stalinism and centrism was his defence and enrichment of the Leninist principles of the party, culminating in the decision to create new parties of the Fourth International along these lines. Trotsky was from 1903 to 1917 opposed in theory and practice to Lenin's methods of building a revolutionary party. It is a tribute to his exemplary objectivity and capacity for growth that he wholeheartedly came over to Lenin's conceptions in 1917, when he saw them verified by the developments of the revolution at home and abroad.

From that point to his last day Trotsky never for a moment wavered in his adherence to these methods of party-building. After correcting his mistake in that department, he became, after Lenin's death in 1924, the foremost exponent and developer of the Bolshevik traditions of the vanguard party in national and international politics.

Most people think that Trotsky's genius was best displayed in his work as theorist of the permanent revolution, as the head of the October uprising, or as creator and commander of the Red Army. I believe that he exercised his powers of revolutionary Marxist leadership most eminently not during the rise but during the recession of the Russian and world revolutions, when, as leader of the Left Opposition, he undertook to save the program and perspectives of the Bolshevik Party against the Stalinist reaction, and then founded the Fourth International once the Comintern had decisively disclosed its bankruptcy in 1933. The purpose of the new International was to create and coordinate new revolutionary mass parties of the world working class.

Trotsky summarised his views on the momentous importance of the vanguard party in the "Transitional Program" he drafted for its founding congress in 1938. He asserted that "the historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership".[2] The principal strategic task for our whole epoch is "overcoming the contradiction between the maturity of objective revolutionary conditions and the immaturity of the proletariat and its vanguard (the confusion and disappointment of

the older generation, the inexperience of the younger generation)".

He pointed out that the vanguard party was the sole agency by which this burning political problem of the imperialist phase of world capitalism could be solved. More specifically, he stated categorically: "… the crisis of the proletarian leadership, having become the crisis in mankind's culture, can be resolved only by the Fourth International",[3] the World Party of the Socialist Revolution.

Have the major experiences in the struggle for socialism, since this was written, spoken for or against Trotsky's pregnant political generalisations? Has the crisis of mankind, or the crisis of the proletarian leadership, been overcome?

The fact is it has grown ever deeper and more acute with the advent of nuclear weapons and the failures of the established parties to overthrow capitalist imperialism and promote the progress of socialism.

In the revolutionary resurgence in Western Europe opened by Mussolini's deposition in July 1943, which signalled the eclipse of fascism, to the ousting of the Communists from the coalition cabinets in France and Italy in 1947, the Stalinist and Social Democratic parties repeated their previous treachery and impotence by refusing to pursue a revolutionary policy directed toward the conquest of power in a highly revolutionary situation. These defaults and defeats permitted capitalism to be restabilised in the second most important sector of that system.

In the colonial countries from 1945 on, Communist leaderships, handcuffed or misled by Kremlin diplomacy, have been responsible for many setbacks and disasters. These have stretched from the compromise of the Indochinese Communists with the French imperialists in 1945 to political subservience to such representatives of the "progressive" bourgeoisie as Nehru in India, Kassim in Iraq, Goulart in Brazil, and Sukarno in Indonesia. The terrible reverses of the colonial freedom struggle, culminating in the Indonesian butchery of 1965, owing to such false leadership, provide powerful evidence that the need for new and better leadership is as urgent in the "Third World" as elsewhere.

The conquest of power by the Communist parties of Yugoslavia, China, North Korea, and North Vietnam has induced not a few radicals and ex-Trotskyists to assume or assert that Lenin's teachings on the party, and Trotsky's reaffirmation of them, are out of date. These developments prove, they argue, that it is a waste of time, a useless undertaking, to try to build independent revolutionary parties of the Leninist type as Trotsky advised, since the exploiters can be overthrown with other kinds of parties, especially if these are supported by a powerful workers' state like the Soviet Union or China.

What substance do these arguments have? It should first be observed that Trotsky

himself foresaw and allowed for such a possibility. In the "Transitional Program" he wrote: "… one cannot categorically deny in advance the theoretical possibility that, under the influence of completely exceptional circumstances (war, defeat, financial crash, mass revolutionary pressure, etc.), the petty-bourgeois parties including the Stalinists may go further than they themselves wish along the road to a break with the bourgeoisie."[4]

In the postwar years these exceptional conditions in the more backward countries have been the prostration and collapse of the most corrupt colonial bourgeoisies, the weaknesses of the old imperialist powers in Europe and of Japan, and the mighty upsurge of the indigenous peasant and proletarian masses. Certain Communist leaderships were confronted with the alternatives of being crushed by reaction, outflanked by the revolutionary forces, or taking command of the national liberation and anticapitalist struggles. After some hesitation and vacillation, and against the Kremlin's advice, the Communist leaders in Yugoslavia, China, and Vietnam took the latter course and led the proletariat and peasantry to power.

In its resolution on "The Dynamics of World Revolution Today", adopted at the 1963 Reunification Congress, the Fourth International has taken into account this variant of political development as follows: "The weakness of the enemy in the backward countries has opened the possibility of coming to power with a blunted instrument."[5]

However, this factual observation does not dispose of the entire question, or even touch its most important aspects. The deformations of the regimes emanating from the revolutionary movements headed by the Stalinised parties, and the opportunism and sectarianism exhibited by their leaderships since assuming power, notably in Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia, and China, demonstrate that the need for organising genuine Marxist parties is not ended with the overthrow of capitalist domination. The building of such political formations can become equally urgent as the result of the bureaucratic degeneration and deformation of postcapitalist states in an environment where imperialism remains predominant and backwardness prevails.

This was first recognised in the case of the Soviet Union by Trotsky in 1933. That political conclusion retains full validity for all those workers' states governed by parties that fail to uphold or foster a democratic internal regime or pursue an international revolutionary line. The experience of the Polish and Hungarian uprisings of 1956, and restriction of the de-Stalinisation processes in the Soviet Union, alike demonstrate the need for an independent Marxist-Leninist party to lead the antibureaucratic revolution to the end.

The keynote of the reunification document is that "the building of new mass revolutionary parties remains the central strategic task" in all three sectors of the

international struggle for socialism: the workers' states, the colonial regions, and above all in the advanced capitalisms.

If Yugoslavia and China are cited to show that any party will do in a pinch, the example of Cuba is often brought forward as proof that no party at all is required in the struggle for power, or that any kind of improvised political outfit will do the job. First of all, this involves a misconstruction of the political history of the Cuban Revolution. The July 26 Movement had a small, close-knit nucleus of leaders, subjected to military discipline by the imperatives of armed combat. They had to construct a broader leadership in the heat of civil war against Batista. Once the Cuban freedom fighters had become sovereign in the country, they found not only that they could not dispense with a vanguard party, but that they desperately needed one. They have therefore proceeded to construct one along Marxist lines and are still engaged in that task nine years after their victory.

Wouldn't their difficulties have been lessened before and after the taking of power if they had been able to enter the revolution with a more powerful cadre and party? But the default of the Cuban Stalinists foreclosed that more favourable possibility. Moreover, it should be recognised that, since the Cuban experience, both the imperialists and their native satellites under Washington's direction are much more alerted and prompt to take repressive measures to nip rebellion in the bud.

The circumstances of the struggle for power in the highly industrialised countries are vastly different from those in colonial lands, where the native upper classes are feeble, isolated, and discredited, and where the impetus of the unsolved tasks of the democratic revolution reinforces the claims of the wage workers. It would be foolish and fatal to hold that the workers in the imperialist strongholds will be able to get rid of capitalism under the direction of the bureaucratised, corrupt, and ossified Social Democratic or Communist parties, or any centrist shadow of them. Here the injunction to build revolutionary Marxist parties is absolutely unconditional.

The difficulties encountered by the Trotskyist vanguard over the past three decades show that there are no easy or simple recipes for solving the multiple problems posed by this necessity. The major obstacle to building alternative leaderships in most of these countries is the presence of powerful and wealthy Labor, Social Democratic, or Communist organisations which exercise bureaucratic control over the labour movement, but for traditional reasons continue to exact a certain loyalty from the workers. Under such conditions it is often advisable for the original corps of revolutionary Marxists to enter and work for extended periods within such mass parties.

It should never for a moment be forgotten that the prime objective of such a

tactical entry is the creation, consolidation, and expansion of the initial cadres and the growth of ties with the most advanced elements. It is not an end in itself. The immediate aim is to transform a propaganda group into a force capable of influencing, organising, and directing broad masses in action. The ultimate goal is to create a new mass party of the working class along this road.

Experience has shown that there are many pitfalls in implementing an entrist tactic. As a result of prolonged immersion in reformist work and overadaptation to a centrist environment, the fibre of the revolutionary cadre may become corroded and its perspectives dimmed and even lost. Total immersion in such a milieu has many liabilities and dangers. It is therefore essential that entrist work be complemented by a sector of open public work through which the full program and policies of the Fourth International can at all times be made accessible to the advanced workers.

It is also possible (We have seen such cases!) for entrism to be conducted in an impatient and inflexible way. Then, when adequate results are not quickly forthcoming, the group can prematurely revert to an independent organisational status. If persisted in, such a sectarian course can, under cover of a falsetto ultraleft rhetoric, lead to self-isolation and impotence. It can help the reformist and Communist bureaucrats by leaving them in uncontested command of the situation and narrowing the channels of contact and communication between the revolutionary Marxists and the best militants in the traditional parties.

Both through independent or entrist activities, as the given situation warranted, the American Trotskyists have been busy building a revolutionary Marxist party in the United States ever since they discarded the prospect of reforming the Communist Party in 1933. The Socialist Workers Party regards itself as the legitimate inheritor of the finest traditions of the socialist movement of Debs, the Socialist Labor Party of De Leon, the IWW of St. John and Haywood, and the early Communist Party. It has drawn upon and benefited from the good and bad experiences of these pioneer attempts to create the party needed by the American workers to lead their revolution.

The history of American communism since its inception in 1919 has been a record of struggle for the right kind of party. All the other problems have been related to this central issue.

Everything that has been done since October 1917 for the advancement of socialism in this citadel of world capitalism and counterrevolution has been governed by this necessity of building the vanguard party, and whatever will be accomplished in the future will, in my opinion, revolve around it. The key to the victory of socialism in the United States will be the fusion of American power, above all the potential power of its working class, with Russian ideas, first and foremost the organisational principles of

Lenin's Bolshevism.

The Leninist party proved indispensable in Russia, where the belated bourgeoisie was a feeble social and political force. It will be a million times more necessary in America, the home of the strongest, richest, and most ruthless exploiting class. The Bolshevik conception of the party and its leadership originated and was first put to the test in the weakest and most backward of capitalist countries. I venture to predict that it will become naturalised and find its fullest application in the struggle for socialism in the most developed country of capitalism.

The revolutionists here confront the most highly organised concentration of economic, political, military, and cultural power in history. These mighty forces of reaction cannot and will not be overthrown without a movement of the popular masses, black and white, which has a centralised, disciplined, principled, experienced Marxist leadership at its head.

It is impossible to stumble into a successful revolution in the United States. It will have to be organised and directed by people and a party that have at their command all the theory, knowledge, resources, and lessons accumulated by the world working class. Its know-how and organisation in politics and action must match and surpass that of its enemies.

Those who claim that a Leninist party is irrelevant or unneeded in the advanced capitalisms are 100% wrong. On the contrary, such a party is an absolutely essential condition and instrument for the promotion and triumph of the socialist revolution in the United States, the paragon of world capitalism. Just as the overturn inaugurated by the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky in 1917 was the first giant step in the world socialist revolution and renovation, so the Leninist theory of the party, first vindicated by that event, will find its ultimate verification in the overthrow of imperialism in its central fortress and the establishment of a socialist regime with full democracy on American soil.

Nothing less than the fate of humanity hinges upon the speediest solution of the drawn-out crisis of proletarian leadership. This will have to be done under the banner and through the program of the parties of the Fourth International. The very physical existence of our species depends upon the prompt fulfilment of this supreme obligation. No greater task was ever shouldered by revolutionists of the Marxist school — and not too much time will be given by the monopolists and militarists at bay to carry it through.

On this fiftieth anniversary of the imperishable October Revolution, which has shaped and changed all our lives, our motto is: "To work with more energy toward that goal and win it for the good of mankind."■

Eugene V. Debs & the Socialist Movement of His Time

This essay was published in Fourth International, *Winter 1956, to mark the centennial of the birth of pioneer socialist Eugene V. Debs. In a 1953 letter to an SWP comrade, Cannon expressed his desire to write an evaluation of Debs.*

"My projected essay would have two sides. First I would undertake to show Debs in all his grandeur as a proletarian hero; as the prototype and exemplar of the revolutionary man of the masses, the trade union organiser, the strike leader, the inspirer of the youth. That side of the project will be a labour of love for me, for I dearly love the memory of Debs. But I would feel obliged also to deal with another side of Debs; what I consider the weaker side, which has never been adequately examined and explained by other biographers and evaluators. In fact, it has never been touched; and the true picture of the real Debs, 'the man with his contradictions', with his weak side as well as his strong side, has never been drawn."[6]

1. Labour & socialism today

The centennial of the birth of Debs coincided with the merger of the AFL and CIO in a year of standstill, which appears to present a mixed picture of progress and reaction.

The organised labour movement as it stands today, with industrial unionism predominant, owes a lot to Debs, but his name was not mentioned at the merger convention. Debs was the greatest of the pioneers of industrial unionism who prepared the way — but that was yesterday. The smug bureaucrats who ran the convention are practical men who live strictly in the present, and they are convinced that progress is something you can see and count, here and now.

They counted approximately 15 million members in the affiliated organisations, and even more millions of dollars in the various treasuries, and found the situation better than ever. The official mood was never more complacent and conservative. On the other hand, various groups and organisations calling themselves socialists, taking

the numerical size of the present-day movement of political radicalism as their own criterion, found nothing to cheer about in Debs' centennial year. They compared the present membership and support of all the radical organisations with the tens of thousands of members and hundreds of thousands of votes of the Socialist Party in Debs' time, and concluded that things were never so bad. Their celebrations of the Debs Centennial were devoted mainly to nostalgic reminiscences about the "Golden Age of American Socialism" and sighs and lamentations for a return to "the way of Debs".

In my opinion, both of these estimates derive from a misunderstanding of the present reality of the labour movement and of its perspectives for the future. The changes since the time of Debs are not all progressive as the complacent trade-union bureaucrats imagine, and not all reactionary as some others assume, but a combination of both.

The organisation of 15 million workers in the AFL-CIO, plus about 2 million more in the independent unions — and the acquisition of a trade-union consciousness that has come with it — represents in itself a progressive achievement of incalculable significance. And more than trade-union expansion is involved in this achievement.

There has been a transformation of the position of the working class in American capitalist society, which is implicitly revolutionary. Properly understood, the achievements on the trade-union field represent a tremendous advance of the cause of American socialism; since the socialist movement is a part of the general movement of the working class, and has no independent interests or meaning of its own.

In addition to that — and no less important — the revolutionary socialist movement of the present, although numerically smaller, is ideologically richer than its predecessors. Insofar as it has assimilated the experience of the past, in this and other countries, and incorporated their lessons in its program, it is better prepared to understand its tasks. That represents progress for American socialism in the highest degree, for in the last analysis the program decides everything.

At the same time, it is obvious that the progressive growth of the industrial labour movement has not been accompanied by a corresponding development of the class-consciousness of the workers. On the contrary, the recent years have seen a decline in this respect; and this is reflected in the numerical weakness of socialist political organisation.

That is certainly a reactionary manifestation, but it is far outweighed by the other factors in the situation. The overall picture is one of tremendous progress of the American working class since the time of Debs. And the present position is a springboard for another forward leap.

In their next advance the organised trade unionists will become class conscious and proceed to class political organisation and action. That will be accomplished easier than was the first transformation of a disorganised, atomised class into the organised labour movement of the present day. And most probably it will take less time.

The same conditions and forces, arising from the contradictions of the class society, which produced the one will produce the other. We can take it for granted without fear of going wrong, that the artificial prosperity of present-day American capitalism will explode sooner and more devastatingly than did the more stable prosperity of expanding capitalism in the time of Debs; and that the next explosion will produce deeper changes in the consciousness of the workers than did the crisis of the '30s, which brought about the CIO.

In the light of that perspective, the work of revolutionary socialists in the present difficult period acquires an extraordinary historical significance. With that prospect in view, the present momentary lull in the class struggle, which gives time for thought and reflection, can be turned to advantage. It can be, and probably will be, one of the richest periods in the history of American socialism — a period of preparation for great events to come. A study of the socialist movement of the past can be a useful part of this preparation for the future.

That is the only sensible way to observe the Debs Centennial.

It should be an occasion, not for nostalgic reminiscence, not for moping and sighing for the return of times and conditions that are gone beyond recall, but for a thoroughgoing examination and critical evaluation of the early socialist movement. It should be seen as a stage of development, not as a pattern to copy. The aim should be to study its defeats as well as its victories, in order to learn something from the whole experience.

The first rule for such an inquiry should be to dig out the truth and to tell it; to represent the Debsian movement as it really was. Debs deserves this, and he can stand it too. Even his mistakes were the mistakes of a giant and a pioneer. In an objective survey they only make his monumental virtues stand out more sharply in contrast.

2. The making of a socialist

The real history of America is the history of a process leading up to socialism, and an essential part of that process is the activity of those who see the goal and show it to others. From that point of view Eugene V. Debs is a man to remember. The day of his birth one hundred years ago — November 5, 1855 — was a good day for this country. Debs saw the future and worked for it as no one else has been privileged to do. On the honour roll of the socialist pioneers his name leads all the rest.

The life of Debs is a great American story; but like everything else American, it is partly foreign. He was truly indigenous, about as American as you can get, and he did far more than anyone else to "Americanise" socialism. But he was not, as he is sometimes pictured, the exponent of a peculiar home-made socialism, figured out all by himself, without benefit of "foreign" ideas and influences.

Debs was the perfect example of an American worker whose life was transformed by the ideas of others, and imported ideas at that. Many influences, national and international, his own experiences and the ideas and actions of others at home and abroad, conspired to shape his life, and then to transform it when he was already on the threshold of middle age. The employers and their political tools did all they could to help. When President Cleveland sent federal troops to break the strike of the American Railway Union in 1894, and a federal judge put Debs in jail for violating an injunction, they made a great, if unintended, contribution to the auspicious launching of the native American socialist movement.

The inspired agitator began to "study socialism" in Woodstock jail. That was the starting point of the great change in the life of Debs, and thereby in the prospects of socialism in this country. It was to lead a little later to the organisation of the first indigenous movement of American socialism under the name of the Socialist Party.

The transformation of Debs, from a progressive unionist and Populist into a revolutionary socialist, didn't happen all at once, as if by a sudden revelation. It took him several more years after he left Woodstock jail, carefully checking the new idea against his own experiences in the class struggle, and experimenting with various reformist and utopian conceptions along the route, to find his way to the revolutionary socialism of Marx and Engels.

But when he finally got it, he got it straight and never changed. Debs learned the basic essentials from Kautsky, the best populariser of Marxism known in this country in the epoch before the First World War. Thereafter the Marxist theory of the class struggle was the central theme of all his agitation. He scornfully denounced the Gompers theory that the interests of capital and labour are identical. And he would have no truck with the delusive theory that capitalism will grow into socialism through a series of reforms.

Debs campaigned for the overthrow of capitalism by workers' revolution, and refused to settle for anything less. As he himself expressed it, he "determined to stick to the main issue and stay on the main track, no matter how alluring some of the byways may appear."

Debs was the main influence and most popular attraction making possible the formation of the Socialist Party of America at the "Unity Convention" in 1901, and the

party became an important factor in American life mainly because of him. There had been socialists and socialist organisations in this country for a half century before that; but they had been derailed every time by a combination of objective circumstances and their own misunderstanding of the doctrine they espoused. The original socialists had been mainly utopians of various kinds, or German immigrants who brought their socialist ideas with them and never learned to relate them to American conditions.

Engels who, like Marx, was foreign to no country, saw no future for that kind of socialism in the United States. In his letters to friends in this country, up to the time of his death in 1895, he continuously insisted that American socialism would never amount to anything until it learned to "speak English" and find expression through the native workers.

In Debs the movement finally found a man who really spoke the language of the country, and who knew how to explain the imported idea of socialism to the American workers in relation to their own experiences.

3. The role of the agitator

When he came to socialism, Debs had already attained national fame as a labour leader. He brought to the new party the rich benefits of his reputation and popularity, the splendour of his oratorical gifts, and a great good will to work for the cause. Debs made the difference; Debs, plus conditions at the time which produced an audience ready to respond. With Debs as its outstanding spokesman after the turn of the century, socialism began for the first time to get a hearing in this country.

Part of what I have to say about Debs and the movement he symbolised is the testimony of a witness who was there at the time. The rest is afterthought. My own appreciation of Debs goes all the way back to the beginning of my conscious life as a socialist. I never knew Debs personally, but I heard him speak several times and he loomed large in my life, as in the lives of all other radicals of my generation.

Debs was an ever-present influence in the home where I was raised. My father was a real Debs man — all the way through. Of all the public figures of the time, Debs was his favourite. Debs' character and general disposition, his way of life — his whole radiant personality — appealed strongly to my father. Most of the pioneer socialists I came to know were like that. They were good people, and they felt warmly toward Debs as one of their own — the best representative of what they themselves were, or wanted to be. It would not be an exaggeration to say that they loved Debs as a man, as a fellow human being, as much as they admired and trusted him as a socialist leader and orator.

My father's political evolution had been along the same line as that of Debs. He

had been a "labour man" since the old Knights of Labor days, then a Populist, then a Bryanite in the presidential campaign of '96, and he finally came to socialism, along with Debs, around the turn of the century. The *Appeal to Reason*, for which Debs was then the chief editorial writer, came to our house in the little town of Rosedale, Kansas, every week. When Moyer and Haywood, then leaders of the Western Federation of Miners, were arrested in 1906 on a framed-up charge of murder, the *Appeal*, with Debs in the lead, opened up a tremendous campaign for their defence. Debs called for revolutionary action to prevent the judicial murder, with his famous declaration: "If they hang Moyer and Haywood, they will have to hang me!"

That was when I first began to take notice of the paper and of Debs. From week to week I was deeply stirred by the thunderous appeals of Debs and the dispatches of George H. Shoaf, the *Appeal*'s "war correspondent" in the Western mine fields. My father and other local socialists chipped in to order extra bundles of the paper for free distribution. I was enlisted to help in that work. My first activity for the movement — in the memory of which I still take pride — was to distribute these special Moyer-Haywood editions of the *Appeal* from house to house in Rosedale. I was then 16 years old.

The campaign for the defence of Moyer and Haywood was the biggest socialist action of the time. All the agitation seemed to centre around that one burning issue, and it really stirred up the people. I believe it was the action itself, rather than the political arguments, that influenced me most at first. It was an action for justice, and that always appeals powerfully to the heart of youth. My commitment to the action led to further inquiry into the deeper social issues involved in the affair.

It was this great Moyer-Haywood campaign of Debs and the *Appeal to Reason* that started me on the road to socialism while I was still a boy, and I have always remembered them gratefully for that. In later years I met many people all around the country whose starting impulse had been the same as mine. Debs and the *Appeal to Reason* were the most decisive influences inspiring my generation of native radicals with the great promise of socialism.

Debs was a man of many talents, but he played his greatest role as an agitator, stirring up the people and sowing the seed of socialism far and wide. He was made for that and he gloried in it. The enduring work of Debs and the *Appeal to Reason*, with which he was long associated, was to wake people up, to shake them loose from habits of conformity and resignation, to show them a new road.

Debs denounced capitalism with a tongue of fire, but that was only one side of his agitation. He brought a message of hope for the good time coming. He bore down heavily on the prospect of a new social order based on cooperation and comradeship,

and made people see it and believe in it. The socialist movement of the early days was made up, in the main, of people who got their first introduction to socialism in the most elementary form from Debs and the *Appeal to Reason*.

That's a long time ago. In the meantime history has moved at an accelerated pace, here and everywhere else. Many things have happened in the world of which America is a part — but only a part — and these world events have had their influence on American socialism. The modern revolutionary movement has drawn its inspiration and its ideas from many sources and many experiences since the time of Debs, and these later acquisitions have become an essential part of its program.

But for all that, the movement of the present and the future in the United States is the lineal descendant of the earlier movement for which Debs was the outstanding spokesman, and owes its existence to that pioneering endeavour. The Debs centennial is a good time to take a deeper look at the movement of his time.

4. The double story

Those of the younger generation who want to study the ancestral origins of their movement, can easily find the necessary material already assembled. A group of conscientious scholars have been at work reclaiming the record as it was actually written in life and pointing it up with all the necessary documentation.

The published results of their work are already quite substantial. Almost as though in anticipation of the Debs Centennial, we have seen the publication of a number of books on the theme of Debs and American socialism within the last decade.

The Forging of American Socialism, by Howard H. Quint,[7] gives an account of the tributary movements and organisations in the nineteenth century and ends with the launching of the Socialist Party at the Unity Convention in 1901.

The American Socialist Movement — 1897-1912, by Ira Kipnis,[8] takes the story up to the presidential campaign of 1912, and gives an extensive report of the internal conflicts in the Socialist Party up to that time. The reformist leaders of the party come off badly in this account. The glaring contrast between them and Debs is fully documented on every point.

Following that, the Debs Centennial this year coincides with the publication of a rather concise history of *The Socialist Party of America* by David A. Shannon.[9] Professor Shannon's research has evidently been thoroughgoing and his documentary references are valuable. In his interpretation, however, he appears to be moved by a tolerance for the party reformists, who did an efficient job of exploiting the popularity of Debs and counteracting his revolutionary policy at the same time.

On top of these historical works, Debs speaks for himself in *Writings and Speeches*

of Eugene V. Debs.[10] This priceless volume, published in 1948, contains an "explanatory" introduction by Arthur Schlesinger Jr. which in simple decency had better been left out.

Schlesinger, the sophisticated "liberal" apologist of American imperialism, has no right to introduce Debs, the thoroughgoing and fully committed revolutionary socialist; and still less right to "explain" him because he can't begin to understand him. Schlesinger's ruminations stick out of this treasury of Debs' own speeches like a dirty thumb; but everything else in the book is clean and clear. It is the real Debs, explained in his own words.

Finally, there is the truly admirable biography of Debs by Ray Ginger, entitled *The Bending Cross*.[11] Following after earlier biographies by David Karsner and McAlister Coleman, Ginger gives a more complete and rounded report. This is a sweet book if there ever was one; the incomparable Gene comes to life in its pages. All the lights and shadows in that marvellous life as it was actually lived are there, the shadows making the lights shine brighter.

Out of this imposing mass of documentary material — allowing for the shadings of opinion and interpretation by the authors — emerges a pretty clear picture of what the Socialist Party was and what Debs was. Debs was by far the most popular socialist in the heyday of the party, and in the public mind he stood for the party. But the history of American socialism in the first two decades of this century is a double story.

It is the story of the party itself — its official policies and actions — and the story of the unofficial and largely independent policies and actions of Debs. They were related to each other and they went on at the same time, but they were not the same thing. Debs was in and of the party, but at the same time he was bigger than the party — bigger and better.

5. The Debs legend

Ray Ginger, the biographer of Debs, remarks that he was a legendary figure while he was still alive. Many stories — some of them of doubtful authenticity — were told about him, and many people professed devotion to him for different and even contradictory reasons.

Debs was a many-sided man, the like of which the movement has not seen, and this gave rise to misinterpretations by some who saw only one facet of his remarkable personality; and to misrepresentations by others who knew the whole man but chose to report only that part which seemed to serve their purpose. This business of presenting fragmentary pictures of Debs is still going on.

There is no doubt that Debs was friendly and generous, as befits a socialist, and

that he lived by the socialist ideal even in the jungle of class society. For that he was praised more than he was imitated, and attempts were often made to pass him off as a harmless saint. It was the fashion to say Debs was a good man, but that's not what they put him in prison for. There was nothing saintly about his denunciation of the exploiters of the workers and the labour fakers who preached the brotherhood of workers and exploiters.

For all the complexity of his personality, Debs was as rigidly simple in his dedication to a single idea, and in suiting his actions to his words, as was John Brown, his acknowledged hero. His beliefs and his practices as a socialist agitator were related to each other with a singular consistency in everything he said and did. The record is there to prove it.

He was a famous labour organiser and strike leader — a man of action — long before he came to socialism, and he never lost his love and feel for the firing line of the class struggle after he turned to the platform. Striking workers in trouble could always depend on Gene. He responded to every call, and wherever there was action he was apt to turn up in the thick of it.

Debs was a plain man of the people, of limited formal education, in a party swarming with slick lawyers, professional writers and unctuous doctors of divinity. It was customary for such people to say — flattering themselves by implication — that Debs was a good fellow and a great orator, but not the "brains" of the party; that he was no good for theory and politics.

The truth is, as the documentary record clearly shows, that as a political thinker on the broad questions of working-class policy in his time, Debs was wiser than all the pretentious intellectuals, theoreticians and politicians in the Socialist Party put together. On practically all such questions his judgment was also better than that of any of the left-wing leaders of his time, most of whom turned to syndicalism to one degree or another.

Debs' own speeches and writings, which stand up so well even today, make the Socialist Party for which he spoke appear better than it really was. The simplicity, clarity and revolutionary vigour of Debs were part of the party's baggage — but only a part. The Socialist Party, by its nature and composition, had other qualities and the other qualities predominated.

6. The all-inclusive party

The political law that every workers' party develops through internal struggles, splits and unifications is vividly illustrated in the stormy history of the Socialist Party — from start to finish. There is nothing obscure about this history; it is quite fully documented

in the historical works previously mentioned.

The Socialist Party came into existence at the "Unity Convention" of 1901, but it had roots in the movements of the past. The new unity followed from and was made possible by a split in the old Socialist Labor Party, which was left on the sidelines in dogmatic isolation; a split in the original, short-lived "Social Democracy", in which Debs and Berger broke away from the utopian colonist elements of that organisation; and an earlier split of thousands of native radicals — including Debs and J.A. Wayland, the famed publisher of the *Appeal to Reason* — from the Populist movement, which in its turn, had been "united" with the Democratic Party and swallowed up by it.

These currents of different origins, plus many other local groups and individuals who had begun to call themselves socialists, were finally brought together in one camp in the Socialist Party.

Revolutionists and reformists were present at the first convention, and even after, until the definitive split in 1919. In addition, the new organisation made room for a wide variety of people who believed in socialism in general and had all kinds of ideas as to what it really meant and how it was to be achieved. All hues of the political rainbow, from dogmatic ultra-radicalism to Christian Socialism, showed up in the party from the start.

The mixed assemblage was held together in uneasy unity by a loose organisational structure that left all hands free from any real central control. The principle of "states' rights" was written into the constitution by a provision for the complete autonomy of the separate state organisations; each one retained the right to run its own affairs and, by implication, to advocate its own brand of socialism. Decentralisation was further reinforced by the refusal to sanction a national official organ of the party. This measure was designed to strengthen the local and state publications — and incidentally, the local bosses such as Berger — in their own bailiwicks.

The party's principle of the free press included "free enterprise" in that domain. The most influential national publications of large circulation — *Appeal to Reason*, *Wilshire's Magazine*, the *Ripsaw*, and the *International Socialist Review* — were all privately owned. The individual owners interpreted socialism as they saw fit and the party members had no say, and this was accepted as the natural order of things.

To complete the picture of a socialist variety store, each party speaker, writer, editor and organiser, and — in actual practice — each individual, promoted his own kind of socialism in his own way; and the general unification, giving rise to the feeling of greater strength, stimulated all of them to greater effort. The net result was that socialism as a general idea got a good work-out, and many thousands of people heard about it for the first time, and accepted it as a desirable goal.

That in itself was a big step forward, although the internal conflict of tendencies was bound to store up problems and difficulties for the future. Such a heterogeneous party was made possible, and perhaps was historically justified as an experimental starting point, by the conditions of the time.

The socialist movement, such as it was, was new in this country. In its experiences, as well as in its thinking, it lagged far behind the European movement. The different groups and tendencies espousing socialism had yet to test out the possibility of working out a common policy by working together in a single organisation. The new Socialist Party provided an arena for the experiment.

The trade unions embraced only a narrow stratum of the skilled and privileged workers; the problem of organising the basic proletariat in the trustified industries — the essential starting point in the development of a real class movement — had not yet been seriously tackled. It was easier to organise general centres of radicalism, in the shape of socialist locals, than industrial unions which brought down the direct and immediate opposition of the entrenched employers in the basic industries.

In the country at large there was widespread discontent with the crude brutalities of expanding capitalism, just entering into its first violent stage of trustification and crushing everything in its path. Workers, exploited without the restraints of union organisation; tenant and mortgaged farmers waging an unequal struggle to survive on the land; and small businessmen squeezed to the wall by the trend to monopoly — they all felt the oppression of the "money power" and were looking about for some means of defence and protest.

The ruling capitalists, for their part, were happy with things as they were. They thought everything was fine and saw no need of ameliorating reforms. The two big political parties of capitalism had not yet developed the flexibility and capacity for reformist demagogy which they displayed in later decades; they stood pat on the status quo and showed little interest in the complaints of its victims. The collapse of the Populist Party had left a political vacuum.

7. The years of growth & expansion

The stage was set in the first decade of the present century for a general movement of social protest. And the new Socialist Party, with its appeal to all people with grievances, and its promise of a better deal all the way around in a new social order, soon became its principal rallying centre.

With Debs as its presidential candidate and most popular agitator, and powerfully supported by the widely-circulated *Appeal to Reason*, the new party got off to a good start and soon began to snowball into a movement of imposing proportions. Already

in 1900, as the presidential candidate of the new combination of forces before the formal unification in the following year, Debs polled nearly 100,000 votes. This was about three times the vote for a presidential candidate of any previous socialist ticket.

In 1904 the Debs vote leaped to 402,283, a sensational fourfold increase; and many people, calculating the *rate* of growth, began to predict a socialist majority in the foreseeable future. In 1908 the presidential vote remained stationary at 420,713; but this electoral disappointment was more than counterbalanced by the organisational growth of the party. In the intervening four years the party membership had doubled, going from 20,763 in 1904 to 41,751 in 1908. (Official figures cited by Shannon.) The party still had the wind in its sails, and the next four years saw spectacular advances all along the line.

Socialist mayors were elected all the way across the country from Schenectady, New York, to Berkeley, California, with Milwaukee, the home of small-time municipal reform socialism — almost as famous and even milder than its beer — the shining light in between.

We had a socialist mayor in New Castle, Pennsylvania, when I was there in 1912-1913, working on *Solidarity*, eastern organ of the IWW. Ohio, a centre of "red socialism", had a number of socialist mayors in the smaller industrial towns. On a tour for the IWW Akron rubber strike in 1913, I spoke in the City Hall at St. Marys, Ohio, with Scott Wilkins, the socialist mayor of the town, as chairman of the meeting. Scott was a "red socialist", friendly to the IWW.

By 1912, according to official records cited by Kipnis, the party had "more than one thousand of its members elected to political office in 337 towns and cities. These included 56 mayors, 305 aldermen and councilmen, 22 police officials, 155 school officials and four pound-keepers."

If the transformation of society from capitalism to socialism was simply a process of electing enough socialist mayors and aldermen, as a great many leaders of the Socialist Party — especially its candidates for office — fervently believed, the great change was well underway by 1912.

In the campaign of 1912 the socialist cause was promoted by 323 papers and periodicals — five dailies, 262 weeklies and 10 monthlies, plus 46 publications in foreign languages, of which eight were dailies. The *Appeal to Reason*, always the most widely read socialist paper, reached a circulation of over 600,000 in that year. The party membership, from a claimed 10,000 (probably an exaggeration) at the formation of the party 11 years earlier, had climbed to an average of 117,984 dues-payers for 1912, according to official records cited by Shannon.

In the 1912 presidential election Debs polled 897,000 votes on the Socialist ticket.

This was before woman suffrage, and it was about 6% of the total vote that year. Proportionally, this showing would represent more than four million votes in the 1952 election.

Considering that Debs, as always, campaigned on a program of straight class-struggle socialism, the 1912 vote was an impressive showing of socialist sentiment in this country at that time, even though a large percentage of the total must be discounted as protest, rather than socialist, votes, garnered by the reform socialists working the other side of the street.

But things were not as rosy as this statistical record of growth and expansion might seem to indicate. The year 1912 was the Socialist Party's peak year, in terms of membership as well as votes, and it never reached that peak again. The decline, in fact, had already set in before the votes were counted. This was due, not to public disfavour at the time, but to internal troubles.

At the moment of its greatest external success the contradictions of the "all-inclusive party" were beginning to catch up with it and tear it apart. After 1912 the Socialist Party's road was downhill to catastrophe.

8. Internal conflict & decline

The Socialist Party was more radical in its first years than it later became. The left wing was strong at the Founding Convention and still stronger at the second convention in 1904. As we see it now, the original left wing was faulty in some of its tactical positions; but it stood foursquare for industrial unionism and took a clear and definite stand on the basic principle of the class struggle — the essential starting point of any real socialist policy. The class struggle was the dominant theme of the party's pronouncements in its first — and best — period.

A loose alliance of the left and centre constituted the party majority at that time. The right-wing faction led by Berger, the Milwaukee, slow-motion, step-at-a-time municipal reformer, was a definite minority. But the opportunists fought for control of the party from the very beginning. As a pressure tactic in the fight, Berger threatened, at least once a year, to split off his Wisconsin section.

Soon after the 1904 convention the centrists led by Hillquit combined with the Milwaukee reformists against the proletarian left wing. Thereafter the policy of Berger — with a few modifications provided by Hillquit to make it go down easier — became the prevailing policy of the party. With this right-wing combination in control, "political action" was construed as the pure and simple business of socialists getting elected and serving in public office, and the party organisation became primarily an electoral machine.

The fight for industrial unionism — the burning issue of the labour movement championed by Debs and the left wing — was abandoned and betrayed by the opportunists in the hope of propitiating the AFL bureaucracy and roping in the votes of conservative craft unionists. The doctrine of socialism was watered down to make it more acceptable to "respectable" middle-class voters. The official Socialist Party turned more and more from the program of the class struggle to the scramble for electoral success by a program of reform.

This transformation did not take place all at once and without internal convulsions. The battle between left and right — the revolutionists and the reformists — raged without let-up in all sections of the party. Many locals and state organisations were left-wing strongholds, and there is little room for doubt that the majority sentiment of the rank and file leaned toward the left.

Debs, who voiced the sentiments of the rank and file more sensitively and accurately than anyone else, always stood for the class-struggle policy, and always made the same kind of speeches no matter what the official party platform said. But Debs poured out all his energies in external agitation; the full weight of his overwhelming influence was never brought to bear in the internal struggle.

The professional opportunists, on the other hand, worked at internal party politics all the time. They wangled their way into control of the national party machinery, and used it unscrupulously in their unceasing factional manoeuvres and manipulations. They fought, not only to impose their policy on an unwilling party, whose majority never trusted them, but also to drive out the revolutionary workers who consciously opposed them.

In 1910 Victor Berger, promoting the respectable reformist brand of socialism, was elected as the first socialist congressman; and a socialist city administration was swept into office in Milwaukee in the same year. These electoral victories had the double effect of strengthening the reformist influence in the party and of stimulating the hunger and thirst for office in other parts of the country by the Milwaukee method. Municipal elections, in which the opportunist wing of the party specialised, on a program of petty municipal reform, yielded many victories for socialist office-seekers, if not for socialism.

Says Kipnis: "Few of these local victories were won on the issue of capitalism versus socialism. In fact, this issue was usually kept well in the background. The great majority of Socialists elected to office between 1910 and 1912 were ministers and professional men who conducted their successful campaigns on reform questions that appeared crucial in their own communities; local option, prohibition, liquor law enforcement; corruption, inefficiency, maladministration, graft, and extravagance;

bipartisan combinations, boss and gang rule, and commission government; public improvements, aid to schools, playgrounds, and public health; municipal ownership, franchises, and equitable taxation; and, in a small minority of the elections, industrial depression and labour disputes."

The steady shift of the official policy from the class struggle to reformist gradualism, and the appeal to moderation and respectability that went with it, had its effects on the social composition of the party. Droves of office-hunting careerists, ministers of the gospel, businessmen, lawyers and other professional people were attracted to the organisation which agreeably combined the promise of free and easy social progress with possible personal advantages for the ambitious. In large part they came, not to serve in the ranks but to take charge and run the show. Lawyers, professional writers and preachers became the party's most prominent spokesmen and candidates for office.

At a Christian Socialist Congress in 1908 it was claimed that more than 300 preachers belonged to the Socialist Party. The preachers were all over the place; and in the nature of things they exerted their influence to blunt the edge of party policy. Kipnis pertinently remarks: "Since the Christian Socialists based their analysis on the brotherhood of man rather than on the class struggle, they aligned themselves with the opportunist, rather than the revolutionary, wing of the party."

The revolutionary workers in the party ranks were repelled by this middle-class invasion, as well as by the policy that induced it. Thousands left the party by the other door. Part of them, recoiling against the parliamentary idiocy of the official policy, renounced "politics" altogether and turned onto the by-path of syndicalism. Others simply dropped out. Thousands of revolutionary-minded workers, first-class human material out of which a great party might have been built, were scattered and lost to the movement in this period.

The revolutionary militants who remained in the party found themselves fighting a losing battle as a minority, without adequate leadership. In a drawn-out process the "all-inclusive" Socialist Party was being transformed into a predominantly reformist organisation in which revolutionary workers were no longer welcome.

At the 1912 convention the right-wing majority mobilised to finish the job. They pushed through an amendment to the constitution committing the party to bourgeois law and order, and proscribing the advocacy of any methods of working-class action which might infringe upon it. This amendment — the notorious "Article 11, Section 6" — which later was included almost verbatim in the "criminal syndicalism" laws adopted by various states to outlaw the IWW — read as follows:

"Any member of the party who opposes political action or advocates crime,

sabotage, or other methods of violence as a weapon of the working class to aid in its emancipation shall be expelled from membership in the party. Political action shall be construed to mean participation in elections for public office and practical legislative and administrative work along the lines of the Socialist Party platform."

This trickily worded amendment was deliberately designed to split the party by forcing out the revolutionary workers. This aim was largely realised. The convention action was followed by the recall of Bill Haywood, the fighting leader of the left wing, from the National Executive Committee, and a general exodus of revolutionary workers from the party.

The reformist bosses had also calculated that their demonstration of respectability would gain more recruits and more votes for the Socialist Party, if not for socialism. But in this they were sadly disappointed. The party membership declined precipitately after that, and so did the votes. By 1916 the party membership was down to an average of 83,138, a drop of close to 35,000 from the 1912 average. And the party vote that year — with Benson, a reformist, as presidential candidate in place of Debs — fell to 588,113, a decline of one-third from the Debs vote of 1912.

The Socialist Party never recovered from the purge of 1912, and came up to the First World War in a weakened condition. The war brought further mass desertions — this time primarily from the right-wing elements, who were finding the struggle for socialism far more difficult and dangerous than the program of reformist gradualism had made it appear. At the same time, the war, and then the Russian Revolution, also brought a new influx of foreign-born workers who swelled the membership of the language federations and provided a new base of support for a reinvigorated left wing.

This new left wing, armed with the great ideas of the Russian Revolution, fought far more effectively than its predecessor. There was no disorganised withdrawal and dispersal this time. The opportunist leaders, finding themselves in a minority, resorted to wholesale expulsions, and the split became definitive. The new left wing emerged from the internal struggle and split as the Communist Party.

The new Communist Party became the pole of attraction for all the vital elements in American radicalism in the next decade. The Socialist Party was left on the sidelines; after the split it declined steadily. The membership in 1922 was down to 11,277; and by 1928 it had declined to 7,793, of which almost half were foreign-language affiliates. (All figures from official records cited by Shannon.)

Debs remained a member of the shattered organisation, but that couldn't save it. Nothing could save it. The Socialist Party had lost its appeal to the rebel youth, and not even the magic name of Debs could give it credit any more. The great agitator died in 1926. In the last years of his life the Socialist Party had less members and less influence

— less everything — than it had started with a quarter of a century before.

9. The role of Debs in the internal conflict

The Socialist Party was bound to change in any case. It could begin as an all-inclusive political organisation, hospitably accommodating all shades and tendencies of radical thought; but it could not permanently retain the character of its founding days. It was destined, by its nature, to move toward a more homogeneous composition and a more definite policy. But the direction of the change, and the eventual transformation of the party into a reformist electoral machine, were not predetermined. Here individuals, by their actions and omissions, played their parts, and the most decisive part of all was played by Debs.

The role of Debs in the internal struggles of the Socialist Party is one of the most interesting and instructive aspects of the entire history of the movement. By a strange anomaly, the conduct of this irreproachable revolutionist was the most important single factor enabling the reformist right wing to control the party and drive out the revolutionary workers. He didn't want it that way, and he could have prevented it, but he let it happen just the same. That stands out clearly in the record, and it cannot be glossed over without falsifying the record and concealing one of the most important lessons of the whole experience.

Debs was by far the most popular and influential member of the party. If he had thrown his full weight into the internal conflict there is no doubt that he could have carried the majority with him. But that he would never do. At every critical turning point he stepped aside. His abstention from the fight was just what the reformists needed to win, and they could not have won without it.

Debs never deviated from the class-struggle line in his own public agitation. He fought steadfastly for industrial unionism, and he never compromised or dodged that issue as the official party did. He had no use for vote-catching nostrums. He was opposed to middle-class intellectuals and preachers occupying positions of leadership in the party. His stand against the war was magnificent. He supported the Russian Revolution and proclaimed himself a Bolshevik.

On all these basic issues his sympathies were always consistently with the left wing, and he frequently took occasion to make his own position clear in the *International Socialist Review*, the organ of the left wing. But that's as far as he would go. Having stated his position, he withdrew from the conflict every time.

This seems paradoxical, for Debs certainly was no pacifist. In the direct class struggle of the workers against the capitalists Debs was a fighter beyond reproach. Nothing and nobody could soften him up or cool his anger in that domain. He didn't waste any

of his good nature on the capitalist-minded labour fakers either.

Debs' blind spot was the narrower, but no less important, field of party politics and organisation. On that field he evaded the fight. This evasion was not inspired by pacifism; it followed from his own theory of the party.

As far as I know, Debs' theory of the party was never formally stated, but it is clearly indicated in the course he consistently followed in all the internal conflicts of the party — from beginning to end. He himself always spoke for a revolutionary program. But at the same time he thought the party should have room for other kinds of socialists; he stood for an all-inclusive socialist party, and party unity was his first consideration.

Debs was against expulsions and splits from either side. He was opposed to the split in 1919 and saddened by it. Even after the split had become definitive, and the rights and lefts had parted company for good, he still appealed for unity. Debs believed that all who called themselves socialists should work together in peace and harmony in one organisation. For him all members of the party, regardless of their tendency, were comrades in the struggle for socialism, and he couldn't stand quarrelling among comrades.

This excellent sentiment, which really ought to govern the relations between comrades who are united on the basic principles of the program, usually gets lost in the shuffle when factions fight over conflicting programs which express conflicting class interests. The reformists see to that, if the revolutionists don't. That's the way it was in the Socialist Party. Debs held aloof from the factions, but that didn't stop the factional struggles. And there was not much love lost in them either.

Debs' course in the internal conflicts of the party was also influenced by his theory of leadership, which he was inclined to equate with bureaucracy. He deliberately limited his own role to that of an agitator for socialism; the rest was up to the rank and file.

His repeated declarations — often quoted approvingly by thoughtless people — that he was not a leader and did not want to be a leader, were sincerely meant, like everything else he said. But the decisive role that leadership plays in every organisation and every collective action cannot be wished away. Debs' renunciation of leadership created a vacuum that other leaders — far less worthy — came to fill. And the program they brought with them was not the program of Debs.

Debs had an almost mystic faith in the rank and file, and repeatedly expressed his confidence that, with good will all around, the rank and file, with its sound revolutionary instincts, would set everything straight. Things didn't work out that way, and they never do. The rank and file, in the internal conflicts of the party, as in the trade unions, and in the broader class struggle, can assert its will only when it is organised; and

organisation never happens by itself. It requires leadership.

Debs' refusal to take an active part in the factional struggle, and to play his rightful part as the leader of an organised left wing, played into the hands of the reformist politicians. There his beautiful friendliness and generosity played him false, for the party was also an arena of the struggle for socialism. Debs spoke of "the love of comrades" — and he really meant it — but the opportunist sharpers didn't believe a word of it. They never do. They waged a vicious, organised fight against the revolutionary workers of the party all the time. And they were the gainers from Debs' abstention.

Debs' mistaken theory of the party was one of the most costly mistakes a revolutionist ever made in the entire history of the American movement.

The strength of capitalism is not in itself and its own institutions; it survives only because it has bases of support in the organisations of the workers. As we see it now, in the light of what we have learned from the Russian Revolution and its aftermath, nine-tenths of the struggle for socialism is the struggle against bourgeois influence in the workers' organisations, including the party.

The reformist leaders were the carriers of bourgeois influence in the Socialist Party, and at bottom the conflict of factions was an expression of the class struggle. Debs obviously didn't see it that way. His aloofness from the conflict enabled the opportunists to dominate the party machine and to undo much of his great work as an agitator for the cause.

Debs' mistaken theory of the party was one of the most important reasons why the Socialist Party, which he did more than anyone else to build up, ended so disgracefully and left so little behind.

10. Debs & Lenin

Here we can make an instructive comparison between the course of Debs — to whom we owe so much — and that of Lenin — to whom we owe even more.

As we see them in their words and works, which were always in harmony, they were much alike in character — honest and loyal in all circumstances; unselfish; big men, free from all pettiness. For both of them the general welfare of the human race stood higher than any concerns of self. Each of them, in his own way, has given us an example of a beautiful, heroic life devoted to a single idea which was also an ideal. There was a difference in one of their conceptions of method to realise the ideal.

Both men started out from the assumption that the transformation of society requires a workers' revolution. But Lenin went a step farther. He saw the workers' revolution as a concrete actuality of this epoch; and he concerned himself particularly with the question of how it was to be prepared and organised.

Lenin believed that for victory the workers required a party fit to lead a revolution; and to him that meant a party with a revolutionary program and leadership — a party of revolutionists. He concentrated the main energies of his life on the construction of just such a party, and on the struggle to keep it free from bourgeois ideas and influences.

Lenin recognised that this involved internal discussion and conflict, and he never shirked it. The Menshevik philistines — the Russian counterparts of the American Bergers and Hillquits — hated him for that, especially for his single-minded concentration on the struggle for a revolutionary program, and for his effectiveness in that struggle, but that did not deter him. Lenin believed in his bones that the internal problems of the party were the problems of the revolution, and he was on top of them all the time.

After 1904 Debs consistently refused to attend party conventions, where policy was decided, and always declined nomination for the National Committee, where policy was interpreted and put into practice. Lenin's attitude was directly opposite. He saw the party congress as the highest expression of party life, and he was always on hand there, ready to fight for his program. He regarded the Central Committee as the executive leadership of the movement, and he took his place at the head of it.

Lenin wrote a whole book about the conflict at the Second Congress of the party in 1903, where the first basic division between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks took place. He was in his element there, in that internal struggle which was to prove so fateful for the Russian Revolution and the future of all mankind.

Contrasting his own feeling about it to that of another delegate dismayed by the conflict, Lenin wrote:

> I cannot help recalling in this connection a conversation I happened to have at the congress with one of the "centre" delegates. "How oppressive the atmosphere is at our congress!" he complained. "This bitter fighting, this agitation of one against the other, this biting controversy, this uncomradely attitude! …" "What a splendid thing our congress is!" I replied. "A free and open struggle. Opinions have been stated. The shades have been revealed. The groups have taken shape. Hands have been raised. A decision has been taken. A stage has been passed. Forward! That's the stuff for me! That's life! That's not like the endless, tedious, word-chopping of your intellectuals, which stops not because the question has been settled, but because they are too tired to talk any more …"
>
> The comrade of the "centre" stared at me in perplexity and shrugged his shoulders. We were talking different languages. (*One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*, p. 225 footnote.)[12]

In her book, *Memories of Lenin*, Krupskaya, his widow, quoted those words of Lenin

with the remark: "That quotation sums up Ilyich to a T."[13]

The practical wiseacres in Lenin's time looked disdainfully at the ideological conflicts of the Russian emigres, and regarded Lenin as a sectarian fanatic who loved factional squabbling for its own sake. But Lenin was not fighting over trifles. He saw the struggle against opportunism in the Russian Social Democratic Party as an essential part of the struggle for the revolution. That's why he plunged into it.

It is important to remember that the Bolshevik Party, constructed in the course of that struggle, became the organiser and leader of the greatest revolution in history.

11. The most important lesson

Debs and Lenin, united on the broad program of revolutionary socialism, were divided on the narrower question of the character and role of the party. This turned out to be the most important question of our epoch for socialists in this country, as in every other country.

The Russian Revolution of 1917 clarified the question. Lenin's party of revolutionists stood up and demonstrated its historical rightness at the same time that the all-inclusive party of Debs was demonstrating its inadequacy.

This is the most important lesson to be derived from the experiences in the two countries, so far apart from each other yet so interdependent and alike in their eventual destiny. The validity of the comparison is not impaired by reference to the well-known fact that Russia came to a revolutionary situation before America, which hasn't come to it yet. Lenin's greatest contribution to the success of the Russian Revolution was the work of *preparation* for it. That began with the construction of a revolutionary party in a time of reaction, *before* the revolution; and the Bolshevik Party, in turn, began with *Lenin's theory of the party*.

The Socialist Party of Debs' time has to be judged, not for its failure to lead a revolution, but for its failure to work with that end in view and to select its membership accordingly. Socialism signifies and requires the revolutionary transformation of society; anything less than that is mere bourgeois reform. A socialist party deserves the name only to the extent that it acts as the conscious agency in preparing the workers for the necessary social revolution. That can only be a party of revolutionists; an all-inclusive party of diverse elements with conflicting programs will not do.

The achievements of American socialism in the early years of the present century are not to be discounted, but it would be well to understand just what these achievements were. The movement, of which the party was the central organising force, gave many thousands of people their first introduction to the general perspective of socialism; and it provided the arena where the main cadres of the revolutionary

movement of the future were first assembled. These were the net results that remained after everything else became only a memory, and they stand to the historic credit of the early Socialist Party — above all to Debs.

But these irrevocable achievements were rather the by-products of an experimental form of socialist organisation which, by its nature, could only be transitory. By including petty-bourgeois reformists and proletarian revolutionists in one political organisation, the Socialist Party, presumed to be an instrument of the class struggle of the workers against the capitalists, was simply introducing a form of the class struggle into its own ranks. The result was unceasing internal conflict from the first day the party was constituted. The eventual breakup of the party, and the decision of the revolutionary elements to launch a party of their own, was the necessary outcome of the whole experiment.

In the Russian movement Lenin saw all that beforehand, and the revolution was the gainer for it. After the Russian Revolution, the left wing of the American Socialist Party, and some of the syndicalists too, recognised the superiority of Lenin's method. Those who took the program of socialism seriously had no choice but to follow the path of Lenin. The Bolshevik Party of Lenin rightly became the model for the revolutionary workers in all countries, including this country.

The launching of the Communist Party in 1919 represented, not simply a break with the old Socialist Party, but even more important a break with the whole conception of a common party of revolutionists and opportunists. That signified a new beginning for American socialism, far more important historically than everything that had happened before, including the organisation of the Socialist Party in 1901. There can be no return to the outlived and discredited experiment of the past.

The reconstituted movement has encountered its own difficulties and made its own mistakes since that new beginning in 1919. But these are of a different order from the difficulties and mistakes of the earlier time and have to be considered separately. In any case, the poor ideological equipment of the old movement cannot help in their solution.

The struggle against the crimes and betrayals of Stalinism, the prerequisite for the construction of an honest revolutionary party, requires weapons from a different arsenal. Here also the Russians are our teachers. The programmatic weapons for this fight against Stalinist treachery were given to us by Trotsky, the coequal and successor of Lenin.

There can be no return to the past of the American movement. In connection with the Debs Centennial some charlatans, who measure the worth of a socialist movement by its numerical strength at the moment, have discovered new virtues in the old

Socialist Party, which polled so many votes in the time of Debs, and have recommended a new experiment on the same lines. Besides its worthlessness as advice to the socialist vanguard of the present day, that prescription does an injustice to the memory of Debs.

He deserves to be honoured for his great positive contributions to the cause of socialism, not for his mistakes. The life work of Debs, as the foremost agitator for socialism we have ever had, as the man of principle who always stood at his post in the class struggle in times of danger and difficulty, will always remain a treasured heritage of the revolutionary workers.

It is best — and it is enough — to honour him for that. The triumph of the cause he served so magnificently will require a different political instrument — a different kind of party — than the one he supported. The model for that is the party of Lenin. ■

The IWW — the Great Anticipation

First published in Fourth International*, Summer 1955, to mark the 50th anniversary of the Founding Convention of the IWW. In his essays on the syndicalist IWW and Debsian socialism, Cannon pays tribute to the two revolutionary traditions that preceded the formation of the communist movement in the United States and analyses their weaknesses compared to Lenin's concept of the revolutionary party.*

1. The bold design

When the Founding Convention of the IWW — the Industrial Workers of the World —assembled in Chicago in June 1905, the general strike movement initiating the first Russian Revolution was already under way, and its reverberations were heard in the convention hall. The two events coincided to give the world a preview of its future. The leaders at Chicago hailed the Russian Revolution as their own. The two simultaneous actions, arising independently with half a world between them, signalled the opening of a revolutionary century. They were the anticipations of things to come.

The defeated Russian Revolution of 1905 prepared the way for the victorious revolution of 1917. It was the "dress rehearsal", as Lenin said, and that evaluation is now universally recognised. The Founding Convention of the IWW was also a rehearsal; and it may well stand out in the final account as no less important than the Russian action at the same time.

The founders of the IWW were indubitably the original inspirers and prime movers of the modern industrial unions in the mass production industries. That is commonly admitted already, and that's a lot. But even such a recognition of the IWW, as the precursor of the present CIO, falls far short of a full estimate of its historic significance. The CIO movement, at its present stage of development, is only a small down payment on the demands presented to the future by the pioneers who assembled at the 1905 convention to start the IWW on its way.

The Founding Convention of the IWW brought together on a common platform the three giants among our ancestors — Debs, Haywood and De Leon. They came

from different backgrounds and fields of activity, and they soon parted company again. But the things they said and did, that one time they teamed up to set a new movement on foot, could not be undone. They wrote a charter for the American working class which has already inspired and influenced more than one generation of labour militants. And in its main essentials it will influence other generations yet to come.

They were big men, and they all grew taller when they stood together. They were distinguished from their contemporaries, as from the trade-union leaders of today, by the immensity of their ambition which transcended personal concerns, by their far-reaching vision of a world to be remade by the power of the organised workers, and by their total commitment to that endeavour.

The great majority of the other delegates who answered the call to the Founding Convention of the IWW were people of the same quality. They were the nonconformists, the stiff-necked irreconcilables, at war with capitalist society. Radicals, rebels and revolutionists started the IWW, as they have started every other progressive movement in the history of this country.

In these days when labour leaders try their best to talk like probationary members of the Junior Chamber of Commerce, it is refreshing to turn back to the reports of men who spoke a different language. Debs, Haywood and De Leon, and those who stood with them, did not believe in the partnership of capital and labour, as preached by Gompers and Co. at the time. Such talk, they said in the famous "preamble" to the constitution of the IWW, "misleads the workers". They spoke out in advance against the idea of the permanent "coexistence" of labour unions and the private ownership of industry, as championed by the CIO leaders of the present time.

The men who founded the IWW were pioneer industrial unionists, and the great industrial unions of today stem directly from them. But they aimed far beyond industrial unionism as a bargaining agency recognising the private ownership of industry as right and unchangeable. They saw the relations of capital and labour as a state of war.

Brissenden puts their main idea in a nutshell in his factually correct history of the movement: "The idea of the class conflict was really the bottom notion or 'first cause' of the IWW. The industrial union type was adopted because it would make it possible to wage this class war under more favourable conditions." (*The IWW: A Study of American Syndicalism*, by Paul Frederick Brissenden, p. 108.[14])

The founders of the IWW regarded the organisation of industrial unions as a means to an end; and the end they had in view was the overthrow of capitalism and its replacement by a new social order. This, the heart and soul of their program, still awaits its vindication in the revolution of the American workers. And the revolution,

when it arrives, will not neglect to acknowledge its anticipation at the Founding Convention of the IWW. For nothing less than the revolutionary goal of the workers' struggle was openly proclaimed there 50 years ago.

* * *

The bold design was drawn by Bill Haywood, general secretary of the Western Federation of Miners, who presided at the Founding Convention of the IWW. In his opening remarks, calling the convention to order, he said:

"This is the Continental Congress of the working class. We are here to confederate the workers of this country into a working class movement that shall have for its purpose the emancipation of the working class from the slave bondage of capitalism." (*Proceedings of the First Convention of the Industrial Workers of the World*, p. 1[15])

The trade unions today are beginning to catch up with the idea that Negroes are human beings, that they have a right to make a living and belong to a union. The IWW was 50 years ahead of them on this question, as on many others. Many of the old Gompers unions were lily-white job trusts, barring Negroes from membership and the right to employment in their jurisdictions. Haywood, in his opening speech, indignantly denounced the policy of those unions "affiliated with the AF of L, which in their constitution and bylaws prohibit the initiation of or conferring the obligation on a coloured man". He followed, in his speech at the public ratification meeting, with the declaration that the newly-launched organisation "recognises neither race, creed, colour, sex or previous condition of servitude". (*Proceedings*, p. 575.)

And he wound up with the prophetic suggestion that the American workers take the Russian path. He said he hoped to see the new movement "grow throughout this country until it takes in a great majority of the working people, and that those working people will rise in revolt against the capitalist system as the working class in Russia are doing today". (*Proceedings*, p. 580.)

Debs said: "The supreme need of the hour is a sound, revolutionary working class organisation … It must express the class struggle. It must recognise the class lines. It must, of course, be class conscious. It must be totally uncompromising. It must be an organisation of the rank and file." (*Proceedings*, pp. 144, 146.)

De Leon, for his part, said: "I have had but one foe — and that foe is the capitalist class … The ideal is the overthrow of the capitalist class." (*Proceedings*, pp. 147, 149.) De Leon, the thinker, was already projecting his thought beyond the overthrow of capitalism to "the form of the governmental administration of the Republic of Labour". In a post-convention speech at Minneapolis on "The Preamble of the IWW", he said that the industries, "regardless of former political boundaries, will be the constituencies

of that new central authority the rough scaffolding of which was raised last week in Chicago. Where the General Executive Board of the Industrial Workers of the World will sit there will be the nation's capital." (*Socialist Reconstruction of Society*, by Daniel De Leon.[16])

The speeches of the others, and the official statement adopted by the convention in the preamble to the constitution, followed the same line. The preamble began with the flat affirmation of the class struggle: "The working class and the employing class have nothing in common." Following that it said: "Between these two classes a struggle must go on until all the workers come together on the political, as well as on the industrial field, and take and hold" the industries of the country.

These were the most uncompromising, the most unambiguous declarations of revolutionary intention ever issued in this country up to that time. The goal of socialism had been previously envisioned by others. But at the Founding Convention of the IWW the idea that it was to be realised through a struggle for power, and that the power of the workers must be organised, was clearly formulated and nailed down.

The men of 1905 spoke truer than they knew, if only as anticipators of a historical work which still awaits its completion by others. Between that date of origin and the beginning of its decline after the First World War, the IWW wrote an inerasable record in action. But its place as a great progressive factor in American history is securely fixed by the brave and farseeing pronouncements of its Founding Convention alone. The ideas were the seed of the action.

The IWW had its own forebears, for the revolutionary labour movement is an unbroken continuum. Behind the convention assembled in Chicago 50 years ago stood the Knights of Labor; the eight-hour movement led by the Haymarket martyrs; the great industrial union strike of the American Railway Union; the stormy battles of the Western Federation of Miners; and the two socialist political organisations — the old Socialist Labor Party and the newly-formed Socialist Party.

All these preceding endeavours were tributary to the first convention of the IWW, and were represented there by participants. Lucy Parsons, the widow and comrade-in-arms of the noble martyr, was a delegate, as was Mother Jones, the revered leader of the miners, the symbol of their hope and courage in trial and tribulation.

These earlier movements and struggles, rich and tragic experiences, had prepared the way for the Founding Convention of the IWW. But Debs was not far wrong when he said, in a speech a few months later: "The revolutionary movement of the working class will date from the year 1905, from the organisation of the Industrial Workers of the World." (*Writings and Speeches of Eugene V. Debs*, p. 226.[17])

2. An organisation of revolutionists

The IWW set out to be an industrial union movement uniting all workers, regardless of any differences between them, on the simple proposition that all unions start with — the defence of their immediate interests against the employers. As an industrial union, the IWW in its heyday led some memorable battles on the economic field, and set a pattern of organisation and militant strike strategy for the later great struggles to build the CIO.

The CIO became possible only after and because the IWW had championed and popularised the program of industrial unionism in word and deed. That alone — the teaching and the example in the field of unionism — would be sufficient to establish the historical significance of the IWW as the initiator, the forerunner of the modern industrial unions, and thereby to justify a thousand times over all the effort and sacrifice put into it by so many people.

But the IWW was more than a union. It was also — at the same time — a revolutionary organisation whose simple and powerful ideas inspired and activated the best young militants of its time, the flower of a radical generation. That, above all, is what clothes the name of the IWW in glory.

The true character of the IWW as a revolutionary organisation was convincingly demonstrated in its first formative year, in the internal conflict which resulted in a split at its second convention. This split occurred over questions which are normally the concern of political parties rather than of unions. Charles O. Sherman, the first general president of the IWW, was an exponent of the industrial-union form of organisation. But that apparently was as far as he wanted to go, and it wasn't far enough for those who took the revolutionary pronouncements of the first convention seriously. They were not satisfied with lip service to larger principles.

When the second convention of the IWW assembled in Chicago in September 1906, Haywood was in jail in Idaho awaiting trial for his life; and Debs, never a man for factionalism, was standing aside. Vincent St. John, himself a prominent figure in the Western Federation of Miners, and a member of its delegation to the second convention of the IWW, came forward as the leader of the anti-Sherman forces, in alliance with De Leon.

As is customary in factional fights, all kinds of secondary charges were thrown about. But St. John stated the real issue motivating him and his supporters in his own invariably forthright manner. This resolute man was on the warpath at the second convention because, as he said:

"The administration of the IWW was in the hands of men who were not in accord with the revolutionary program of the organisation … The struggle for control of the

organisation formed the second convention into two camps. The majority vote of the convention was in the revolutionary camp. The reactionary camp, having the chairman, used obstructive tactics in their effort to gain control of the convention … The revolutionists cut this knot by abolishing the office of president and electing a chairman from among the revolutionists." (*The IWW: Its History, Structure and Method*, by Vincent St. John.[18])

That action precipitated the split and consigned Sherman to a niche in history as a unique figure. He was the first, and is so far the only, union president on record to get dumped because he was *not* a revolutionist. There will be others, but Sherman's name will live in history as the prototype.

This split at the second convention also resulted in the disaffiliation of the Western Federation of Miners, the only strongly organised union the IWW had had to start with. The other members of the WFM delegation, already turning to conservatism, supported Sherman in the split. But St. John, as was his nature and consistent practice, took his stand on principle.

Faced with a choice of affiliation between the widely advertised and well-heeled WFM, of which he was a paid officer, and the poverty-stricken, still obscure IWW, with its program and its principles, he unhesitatingly chose the latter. For him, as for all the others who counted in making IWW history, personal interests and questions of bread and butter unionism were secondary. The first allegiance was to revolutionary principle.

Sherman and his supporters, with the help of the police, seized the headquarters and held on to the funds of the organisation, such as they were. St. John remarked that the newly elected officials "were obliged to begin work after the second convention without the equipment of so much as a postage stamp". (Brissenden, p. 144.) The new administration under the leadership of St. John, who was thereafter to be the dominating influence in the organisation for the next decade, had to start from scratch with very little in the way of tangible assets except the program and the ideal.

That, plus the indomitable spirit of Vincent St. John, proved to be enough to hold the shattered organisation together. The Sherman faction, supported by the Western Federation of Miners, set up a rival organisation. But it didn't last long. The St. John wing prevailed in the post-convention conflict and proved itself to be the true IWW. But in the ensuing years it existed primarily, not as a mass industrial union of workers fighting for limited economic demands, but as a revolutionary organisation proclaiming an all-out fight against the capitalist system.

As such, the IWW attracted a remarkable selection of young revolutionary militants to its banner. As a union, the organisation led many strikes which swelled the

membership momentarily. But after the strikes were over, whether won or lost, stable union organisation was not maintained. After every strike, the membership settled down again to the diehard cadre united on principle.

3. The duality of the IWW

The IWW borrowed something from Marxism; quite a bit, in fact. Its two principal weapons — the doctrine of the class struggle and the idea that the workers must accomplish their own emancipation through their own organised power — came from this mighty arsenal. But for all that, the IWW was a genuinely indigenous product of its American environment, and its theory and practice ought to be considered against the background of the class struggle as it had developed up to that time in this country.

The experience of the American working class, which did not yet recognise itself as a distinct class, had been limited; and the generalising thought, even of its best representatives, was correspondingly incomplete. The class struggle was active enough, but it had not yet developed beyond its primary stages. Conflicts had generally taken the form of localised guerilla skirmishes, savagely conducted on both sides, between separate groups of workers and employers. The political power brought to bear on the side of the employers was mainly that of local authorities.

Federal troops had broken the ARU strike of the railroaders in '94 — "the Debs Rebellion", as the hysterical press described it — and had also been called out against the metal miners in the West. But these were exceptional cases. The intervention of the federal government, as the executive committee of all the capitalists — the constant and predominant factor in capital-labour relations in modern times — was rarely seen in the local and sectional conflicts half a century ago. The workers generally made a distinction between local and federal authorities, in favour of the latter — as do the great majority, in a delayed hangover from earlier times, even to this day.

The all-embracing struggle of all the workers as a class, against the capitalist class as a whole, with political power in the nation as the necessary goal of the struggle, was not yet discernible to many when the IWW made its entrance in 1905. The pronouncements of the founders of the IWW, and all the subsequent actions proceeding from them, should be read in that light. The restricted and limited scope of the class struggle in America up to that time, from which their program was derived, makes their prevision of 50 years ago stand out as all the more remarkable.

In the situation of that time, with the class struggle of the workers still in its most elementary stages, and many of its complications and complexities not yet disclosed in action, the leaders of the IWW foresaw the revolutionary goal of the working class and aimed at one single, overall formula for the organisation of the struggle. Putting

everything under one head, they undertook to build an organisation which, as Vincent St. John, its chief leader and inspirer after the second convention, expressed it, would be "all-sufficient for the workers' needs". One Big Union would do it all. There was an appealing power in the simplicity of this formula, but also a weakness — a contradiction — which experience was to reveal.

One of the most important contradictions of the IWW, implanted at its first convention and never resolved, was the dual role it assigned to itself. Not the least of the reasons for the eventual failure of the IWW — as an organisation — was its attempt to be both a union of all workers and a propaganda society of selected revolutionists — in essence a revolutionary party. Two different tasks and functions, which, at a certain stage of development, require separate and distinct organisations, were assumed by the IWW alone; and this duality hampered its effectiveness in both fields. All that, and many other things, are clearer now than they were then to the leading militants of the IWW — or anyone else in this country.

The IWW announced itself as an all-inclusive union; and any worker ready for organisation on an everyday union basis was invited to join, regardless of his views and opinions on any other question. In a number of instances, in times of organisation campaigns and strikes in separate localities, such all-inclusive membership was attained, if only for brief periods. But that did not prevent the IWW agitators from preaching the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism in every strike meeting.

The strike meetings of the IWW were in truth "schools for socialism". The immediate issues of the strike were the takeoff point for an exposition of the principle of the class struggle, for a full-scale indictment of the capitalist system all up and down the line, and the projection of a new social order of the free and equal.

The professed "non-political" policy of the IWW doesn't stand up very well against its actual record in action. The main burden of its energies was devoted to agitation and propaganda — in soapbox speeches, press, pamphlets and songbooks — against the existing social order; to defence campaigns in behalf of imprisoned workers; and to free-speech fights in numerous localities. All these activities were in the main, and in the proper meaning of the term, political.

The IWW at all times, even during strikes embracing masses of church-going, ordinarily conservative workers, acted as an organisation of revolutionists. The "real IWWs", the year-round activists, were nicknamed Wobblies — just when and why nobody knows — and the criterion of the Wobbly was his stand on the principle of the class struggle and its revolutionary goal; and his readiness to commit his whole life to it.

In truth, the IWW in its time of glory was neither a union nor a party in the full

meaning of these terms, but something of both, with some parts missing. It was an uncompleted anticipation of a Bolshevik party, lacking its rounded-out theory, and a projection of the revolutionary industrial unions of the future, minus the necessary mass membership. It was the IWW.

4. Vincent St. John

The second split of the IWW, which broke off De Leon and SLP elements at the fourth (1908) convention, likewise occurred over a doctrinal question. The issue this time was "political action" or, more correctly, conflicting conceptions of working class action in the class struggle which — properly understood — is essentially political.

The real purpose of the split was to free the IWW from the Socialist Labor Party's ultra-legalistic, narrowly restricted and doctrinaire conception of "political action" at the ballot box; and to clear the way for the St. John conception of overthrowing capitalism by the "direct action" of the organised workers. This, by a definition which was certainly arbitrary and inexact, was declared to be completely "non-political".

In a negative gesture, the 1908 convention merely threw the "political clause" out of the preamble. Later, going overboard, the IWW explicitly disavowed "politics" altogether, and political parties along with it. The origin of this trend is commonly attributed to the influence of French syndicalism. That is erroneous; although the IWW later imported some phrasemongering anti-political radicalism from Europe, to its detriment. Brissenden is correct when he says:

"The main ideas of IWW-ism — certainly of the IWW-ism of the first few years after 1905 — were of American origin, not French, as is commonly supposed. These sentiments were brewing in France, it is true, in the early nineties, but they were brewing also in this country and the American brew was essentially different from the French. It was only after 1908 that the *syndicalisme révolutionnaire* of France had any direct influence on the revolutionary industrial unionist movement here." (Brissenden, p. 53.)

The IWW brand of syndicalism, which its proponents insisted on calling "industrialism", never acknowledged French origination, and had no reason to. The IWW doctrine was *sui generis*, a native product of the American soil. And so was its chief author, Vincent St. John. St. John, as all the old-timers knew, was the man most responsible for shaping the character of the IWW in its heroic days. His public reputation was dimmed beside the glittering name of Bill Haywood, and this has misled the casual student of IWW history. But Vincent St. John was the organiser and leader of the cadres.

Haywood himself was a great man, worthy of his fame. He presided at the Founding

Convention, and his magnificent utterances there have already been quoted in the introductory paragraphs of this article. The "Big Fellow" conducted himself as a hero of labour in his celebrated trial in Idaho, and again called himself thunderously to public attention in the great IWW strikes at Lawrence, Paterson and Akron. In 1914 he took over from St. John the office of general secretary of the IWW, and thereafter stood at its head through all the storms of the war and the persecution. There is historical justice in the public identification of Bill Haywood's name with that of the IWW, as its personification.

But in the years 1906-1914, the years when the character of the IWW was fixed, and its basic cadres assembled, it was Vincent St. John who led the movement and directed all its operations. The story of the IWW would not be complete and would not be true if this chapter were omitted.

St. John, like Haywood, was a miner, a self-educated man who had come up to national prominence the hard way, out of the violent class battles of the western mining war. If "the Saint", as all his friends called him, borrowed something from the writings of others, and foreigners at that, he was scarcely aware of it. He was not a man of books; his school was his own experience and observation, and his creed was action. He had learned what he knew, which was quite a lot, mainly from life and his dealings with people, and he drew his conclusions from that.

This empiricism was his strength and his weakness. As an executive leader in practical situations he was superb, full of ideas — "enough to patch hell a mile" — and ready for action to apply them. In action he favoured the quick, drastic decision, the short cut. This propensity had yielded rich results in his work as a field leader of the Western Federation of Miners. He was widely renowned in the western mining camps and his power was recognised by friend and foe. Brissenden quotes a typical report about him by a mine-owners' detective agency in 1906:

"St. John has given the mine owners of the [Colorado mining] district more trouble in the past year than any twenty men up there. If left undisturbed he would have the entire district organised in another year."

In dealing with people — "handling men", as they used to say — Vincent St. John had no equal that I ever knew. He "sized up" men with a quick insight, compounded of simplicity and guile, spotting and sifting out the phonies and the dabblers — you had to be serious to get along with the Saint — and putting the others to work in his school of learning by doing, and getting the best out of them.

"Experience", "decision" and "action" were the key words in St. John's criteria. He thought a man was what he did. It was commonplace for him to pass approving judgment on an organiser with the remark, "He has had plenty of experience", or

"He'll be all right when he gets more experience". And once I heard him say, with a certain reservation, of another who was regarded as a comer in the organisation: "He's a good speaker, but I don't know how much decision he has." In his vocabulary "experience" meant tests under fire. "Decision" meant the capacity to think and act at the same time; to do what had to be done right off the bat, with no "philosophising" or fooling around.

St. John's positive qualities as a man of decision and action were contagious; like attracted like and he created an organisation in his own image. He was not a backslapper but a leader, with the reserve that befits a leader, and he didn't win men by argument alone. In fact, he was a man of few words. The Saint lived his ideas and methods. He radiated sincerity and integrity, and unselfishness free from taint or ostentation. The air was clean in his presence.

The young men who fought under his command — a notable cadre in their time — swore by the Saint. They trusted him. They felt that he was their friend, that he cared for them and that they could always get a square deal from him, or a little better, as long as they were on the square with the organisation. John S. Gambs, in his book, *The Decline of the IWW*,[19] a postscript to Brissenden's history, remarks: "I have heard it said that St. John, among outstanding leaders, was the best loved and most completely trusted official the IWW have ever had." He heard it right.

The IWW, as it evolved under the influence of St. John, scornfully rejected the narrow concept of "political action" as limited to parliamentary procedures. St. John understood the class struggle as a ruthless struggle for power. Nothing less and no other way would do; he was as sure of that as Lenin was. He judged socialist "politics" and political parties by the two examples before his eyes — the Socialist Party bossed by Berger and Hillquit and the Socialist Labor Party of De Leon — and he didn't like either of them.

That attitude was certainly right as far as it went. Berger was a small-bore socialist opportunist; and Hillquit, although slicker and more sophisticated, wasn't much better. He merely supplied a little radical phraseology to shield the cruder Bergerism from the attacks of the left.

De Leon, of course, was far superior to these pretentious pygmies; he towered above them. But De Leon, with all his great merits and capacities; with his exemplary selflessness and his complete and unconditional dedication to the workers' cause; with the enemies he made, for which he is entitled to our love and admiration — with all that, De Leon was sectarian in his tactics, and his conception of political action was rigidly formalistic, and rendered sterile by legalistic fetishism.

In my opinion, St. John was completely right in his hostility to Berger-Hillquit, and

more than half right in his break with De Leon. His objections to the parliamentary reformism of Berger-Hillquit and the ultra-legalism of the SLP contained much that must now be recognised as sound and correct. The error was in the universal opposition, based on these poor and limited examples, to all "politics" and all political parties. The flaw in his conceptions was in their incompleteness, which left them open, first to exaggeration and then to a false turn.

St. John's cultivated bent to learn from his own limited and localised experience and observations in life rather than from books, and to aim at simple solutions in direct action, deprived him of the benefits of a more comprehensive theory generalised by others from the worldwide experiences of the class struggle. And this was true in general of the IWW as a movement. Oversimplification placed some crippling limitations on its general conceptions which, in their eventual development, in situations that were far from simple, were to prove fatal for the IWW. But this took time. It took the First World War and the Russian Revolution to reveal in full scope the incompleteness of the governing thought of the IWW.

5. The long detour

The IWW's disdain for parliamentarism, which came to be interpreted as a rejection of all "politics" and political organisations, was not impressed on a body of members with blank minds. The main activities of the IWW, in fields imposed upon it by the conditions of the time, almost automatically yielded recruits whose own tendencies and predilections had been shaped along the same lines by their own experiences.

The IWW plan of organisation was made to order for modern mass production industry in the eastern half of the country, where the main power of the workers was concentrated. But the power of the exploiting class was concentrated there too, and organising the workers against the entrenched corporations was easier said than done.

The IWW program of revolution was designed above all to express the implicit tendency of the main mass of the basic proletariat in the trustified industries of the East. The chance for a wage worker to change his class status and become an independent proprietor or a small farmer was far less alluring there than on the western frontier, where such class transmigrations still could, and in many cases actually did, take place. If the logic of the class struggle had worked out formally — as it always does in due time — those workers in the industrial centres east of the Mississippi should have been the most class conscious and the most receptive to the IWW appeal.

But that's not the way things worked out in practice in the time when the IWW was making its strongest efforts. The organisation never succeeded in establishing stable unions among the workers in modern machine industry in the industrially developed

East. On the contrary, its predominant activity expanded along the lines of least resistance on the peripheral western fringes of the country, which at that time were still under construction. The IWW found a readier response to its appeal and recruited its main cadres among the marginal and migratory workers in that region.

This apparent anomaly — which is really nothing more than the time lag between reality and consciousness — has been seen many times in international experience. Those workers most prepared for socialism by industrial development are not always the first to recognise it.

The revolutionary movement recruits first, not where it chooses but where it can, and uses the first recruits as the cadres of the organisation and the carriers of the doctrine. Marxist socialism, the logical and necessary answer to developed capitalism, got its poorest start and was longer delayed in England, the preeminent centre of world capitalism in the time of Marx and Engels, while it flourished in Germany before its great industrialisation. The same Marxism, as developed by Lenin in the actual struggle for power — under the nickname of Bolshevism — is the program *par excellence* for America, the most advanced capitalist country; but it scored its first victory in industrially backward Russia.

The economic factor eventually predominates, and the class struggle runs its logical course everywhere — but only in the long run, not in a straight line. The class struggle of the workers in all its manifestations, from the most elementary action of a union organisation up to the revolution, breaks the chain of capitalist resistance at the weakest link.

So it was in the case of the IWW. Simply having the right form of organisation did not provide the IWW with the key to quick victory in the trustified industries. The founders, at the 1905 convention, had noted and emphasised the helplessness of obsolete craft unionism in this field; that was their stated motivation for proposing the industrial union form of organisation. But, for a long time, the same concentrated power that had broken up the old craft unions in modern industry was also strong enough to prevent their replacement by new unions in the industrial form.

The meagre success of the IWW in establishing revolutionary industrial unions in their natural habitat was not due to lack of effort. Time and again the IWW tried to crack the trustified industries, including steel, but was beaten back every time. All the heroic attempts of the IWW to organise in this field were isolated and broken up at the start.

The employers fought the new unionism in dead earnest. Against the program of the IWW and its little band of agitators, they brought up the heavy guns of their financial resources; public opinion moulded in their favour by press and pulpit; their

private armies of labour spies and thugs; and, always and everywhere, the police power of that "political state" which the IWW didn't want to recognise.

In all the most militant years of the IWW the best it could accomplish in modern mass production industry were localised strikes, nearly all of which were defeated. The victorious Lawrence textile strike of 1912, which established the national fame of the IWW, was the glorious exception. But no stable and permanent union organisation was ever maintained anywhere in the East for any length of time — not even in Lawrence.

From the formulation of the industrial union program of the IWW at the 1905 convention to its eventual realisation in life in the mass production industries, there was a long rough road with a wide detour. It took 30 years of propaganda and trial-and-error effort, and then a mass upheaval of volcanic power generated by an unprecedented economic crisis, before the fortresses of mass production industry could be stormed and conquered by industrial unionism. But the time for such an invincible mass revolt had not yet come when the IWW first sounded the call and launched its pioneering campaigns.

Meantime, defeated and repulsed in the industrialised East, where the workers were not yet ready for organisation and the corporations were more than ready to prevent it, the IWW found its best response and concentrated its main activity in the West. It scored some successes and built up an organisation primarily among the seasonal and migratory workers there.

6. The Wobblies as they were

There was no such thing as "full employment" in the time of the IWW. The economic cycle ran its normal ten-year course, with its periodic crises and depressions, producing a surplus labour army squeezed out of industry in the East. Unemployment rose and fell with the turns of the cycle, but was always a permanent feature of the times. An economic crisis in 1907 and a serious depression in 1913-1914 swelled the army of the jobless.

Many of the unemployed workers, especially the young, took to the road, as those of another generation were to do again in the '30s. The developing West had need of a floating labour force, and the supply drifted toward the demand. A large part of the mobile labour population in the West at that time, perhaps a majority, originated in the eastern half of the continent. Their conditions of life were pretty rough.

They were not the most decisive section of the working class; that resided, then as now, in the industrial centres of the eastern half of the continent. But these migrants, wherever they came from, responded most readily to the IWW program for a drastic

change in the social order.

The IWW was right at home among footloose workers who found casual employment in the harvest fields — travelling by freight train to follow the ripening of the grain, then back by freight train again to the transportation centres for any kind of work they could find there; railroad construction workers, shipping out for temporary jobs and then shipping back to the cities into unemployment again; lumberjacks, metal miners, seamen, etc., who lived in insecurity and worked, when they worked, under the harshest, most primitive conditions.

This narrow stratum of the unsettled and least privileged workers came to make up the bulk of the membership of the IWW. It was often said among the Wobblies, only half facetiously, that the name of their organisation, "Industrial Workers of the World", should be changed to "Migratory Workers of the World".

The American political system offered no place for the participation of this floating labour force of the expanding West. Very little provision of any kind was made for them. They were overlooked in the whole scheme of things. They lacked the residential qualifications to vote in elections and enjoyed few of the rights of political democracy accorded to settled citizens with a stake in their community. They were the dispossessed, the homeless outcasts, without roots or a stake any place in society, and with nothing to lose.

Since they had no right to vote anyway, it took little argument to persuade them that "political action" — at the ballot box — was a delusion and a snare. They had already been convinced, by their own harsh experiences, that it would take more than paper ballots to induce the exploiters to surrender their swollen privileges. The IWW, with its bold and sweeping program of revolution by direct action, spoke their language and they heard it gladly.

The IWW became for them their one all-sufficient organisation — their union and their party; their social centre; their home; their family; their school; and in a manner of speaking, their religion, without the supernatural trimmings — the faith they lived by. Some of Joe Hill's finest songs, it should be remembered, were derisive parodies of the religious hymns of the IWW's rivals in the fight for the souls of the migratory workers milling around in the congested Skid Row sections of the western and mid-western cities.

These were not the derelicts who populate the present day version of the old Skid Row. For the greater part, they were the young and venturesome, who had been forced out of the main industries in more settled communities, or had wandered away from them in search of opportunity and adventure. They had been badly bruised and beaten, but not conquered. They had the courage and the will to fight for an alleviation

of their own harsh conditions.

But when they enlisted in the IWW it meant far more to them than joining a union to promote a picayune program of immediate personal needs. The IWW proclaimed that by solidarity they could win everything. It gave them a vision of a new world and inspired them to fight for the general good of the whole working class.

These footloose workers, recruited by the propaganda and action of the IWW, became the carriers of its great, profoundly simple message wherever they travelled — the message expressed in the magic words: Solidarity, Workers' Power, One Big Union and Workers' Emancipation. Wherever they went, they affirmed their conviction that "there is power in a band of working men", as stated in the singing words of Joe Hill — "a power that must rule in every land".

They felt themselves to be — as indeed they were — the advance guard of an emancipating army. But it was an advance guard separated from the main body of troops in concentrated industry, separated and encircled, and compelled to wage guerilla actions while awaiting reinforcements from the main army of the proletariat in the East. It was a singing movement, with confidence in its mission. When the Wobblies sang out the swelling chorus of "Hold the Fort", they "heard the bugles blow" and really believed that "by our union we shall triumph over every foe".

Recruits enlisted in the main from this milieu soon came to make up the main cadres of the IWW; to provide its shock troops in all its battles, East and West; and to impress their own specific ideology upon it — the ideology which was in part the developed result of their own experiences, and in part derived from teachings of the IWW. These teachings seemed to formulate and systematise their own tendencies. That's why they accepted them so readily.

* * *

Many a worker recruited to the IWW under those conditions was soon on the move again, carrying his red card and his newly found convictions with him and transmitting them to others. All the progressive and radical sections of the labour movement were heavily influenced by the IWW in the years preceding the First World War.

The left-wing socialists were ardent sympathisers of the IWW, and quite a few of them were members. The same was true in large measure of the more militant trade unionists in the AFL. "Two-card men" were fairly numerous — those who belonged to the AFL unions for bread and butter reasons and carried the "red card" of the IWW for the sake of principle.

The IWW struck a spark in the heart of youth as no other movement in this country, before or since, has done. Young idealists from "the winds' four quarters"

came to the IWW and gave it all they had. The movement had its gifted strike leaders, organisers and orators, its poets and its martyrs.

By the accumulated weight of its unceasing propagandistic efforts, and by the influence of its heroic actions on many occasions which were sensationally publicised, the IWW eventually permeated a whole generation of American radicals, of all shades and affiliations, with its concept of industrial unionism as the best form for the organisation of workers' power and its program for a revolutionary settlement of the class struggle.

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It was a long way from the pioneer crusade of the IWW among the dispossessed migratory workers on the western frontier, in the second decade of our century, to the invincible picket lines and sit-down strikes of the mass production workers in the eastern centres of concentrated industry, in the '30s. A long way and not a straight one. But that's the route over which the message of industrial unionism eventually reached those places where it was most applicable and could eventually explode with the greatest power.

7. The turning point

The whole record of the IWW — or at any rate, the best part of it, the positive revolutionary part — was all written in propaganda and action in its first 15 years. That is the enduring story. The rest is anticlimax.

The turning point came with the entrance of the United States into the First World War in the spring of 1917, and the Russian Revolution in the same year. Then "politics", which the IWW had disavowed and cast out, came back and broke down the door.

These two events — again coinciding in Russia and America, as in 1905 — demonstrated that "political action" was not merely a matter of the ballot box, subordinate to the direct conflict of the unions and employers on the economic field, but the very essence of the class struggle. In opposing actions of two different classes the "political state", which the IWW had thought to ignore, was revealed as the centralised power of the ruling class; and the holding of the state power showed in each case which class was really ruling.

From one side, this was shown when the federal government of the United States intervened directly to break up the concentration points of the IWW by wholesale arrests of its activists. The "political action" of the capitalist state broke the back of the IWW as a union. The IWW was compelled to transform its principal activities into those of a defence organisation, striving by legal methods and propaganda, to protect

the political and civil rights of its members against the depredations of the capitalist state power.

From the other side, the same determining role of political action was demonstrated positively by the Russian Revolution. The Russian workers took the state power into their own hands and used that power to expropriate the capitalists and suppress all attempts at counterrevolution. That, in fact, was the first stage of the revolution, the precondition for all that was to follow. Moreover, the organising and directing centre of the victorious revolution had turned out to be, not an all-inclusive union, but a party of selected revolutionists united by a program and bound by discipline.

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The time had come for the IWW to remember Haywood's prophetic injunction at the Founding Convention in 1905: that the American workers should look to Russia and follow the Russian example. By war and revolution, the most imperative of all authorities, the IWW was put on notice to bring its theoretical conceptions up to date; to think and learn, and change a little.

First indications were that this would be done; the Bolshevik victory was hailed with enthusiasm by the members of the IWW. In their first reaction, it is safe to say, they saw in it the completion and vindication of their own endeavours. But this first impulse was not followed through.

Some of the leading Wobblies, including Haywood himself, tried to learn the lessons of the war and the Russian Revolution and to adjust their thinking to them. But the big majority, after several years of wavering, went the other way. That sealed the doom of the IWW. Its tragic failure to look, listen and learn from the two great events condemned it to defeat and decay.

The governing role of theory here asserted itself supremely, and in short order. While the IWW was settling down in ossification, converting its uncompleted conceptions about the real meaning of political action and political parties into a sterile anti-political dogma, the thinking of others was catching up with reality, with the great new things happening in the world. The others, the young left-wing socialists, soon to call themselves communists, lacked the battle-tested cadres of the IWW. But they had the correct program. That proved to be decisive.

The newly formed Communist Party soon outstripped the IWW and left it on the sidelines. It was all decided within the space of two or three years. By the time of its fifteenth anniversary in 1920 the IWW had already entered the irreversible road of decline. Its strength was spent. Most of its cadres, the precious human material selected and sifted out in heroic struggle, went down with the organisation. They had borne

persecution admirably, but the problems raised by it, and by all the great new events, overwhelmed them. The best militants fell into inactivity and then dropped out. The secondraters took over and completed the wreck and the ruin.

* * *

The failure of the main cadres of the IWW to become integrated in the new movement for the Communist Party in this country, inspired by the Russian Revolution, was a historical miscarriage which might have been prevented.

In action the IWW had been the most militant, the most revolutionary section of the workers' vanguard in this country. The IWW, while calling itself a union, was much nearer to Lenin's conception of a party of professional revolutionists than any other organisation calling itself a party at that time. In their practice, and partly also in their theory, the Wobblies were closer to Lenin's Bolsheviks than any other group in this country.

There should have been a fusion. But, in a fast-moving situation, a number of untoward circumstances, combined with the inadequacy of the American communist leadership, barred the way.

The failure of the IWW to find a place in the new movement assembling under the banner of the Russian Revolution, was not the fault of the Russians. They recognised the IWW as a rightful part of the movement they represented and made repeated attempts to include it in the new unification of forces.

The first manifesto of the Communist International specified the American IWW as one of the organisations invited to join. Later, in 1920, the Executive Committee of the Communist International addressed a special open letter to the IWW,[20] inviting its cooperation.

The letter explained, in the tone of brothers speaking to brothers, that the revolutionary parliamentarism of the Communist International had nothing in common with the ballot-box fetishism and piddling reformism of the right-wing socialists. Haywood says of that letter: "After I had finished reading it I called Ralph Chaplin over to my desk and said to him: 'Here is what we have been dreaming about; here is the IWW all feathered out!'" (*Bill Haywood's Book*, p. 360.[21])

In wartime France Trotsky had found his best friends and closest collaborators in the fight against the war among the syndicalists. After the Russian Revolution, in a notable series of letters, published later as a pamphlet, he urged them to join forces with the communists. The theses adopted by the Communist International at its Second Congress recognised the progressive and revolutionary side of prewar syndicalism, and said it represented a step forward from the ideology of the Second

International. The theses attempted to explain at the same time, in the most patient and friendly manner, the errors and limitations of syndicalism on the question of the revolutionary party and its role.

Perhaps the chief circumstance operating against a patient and fruitful discussion, and an orderly transition of the IWW to the higher ground of Bolshevism, was the furious persecution of the IWW at the time. When the Russian Revolution erupted in the victory in November 1917, hundreds of the IWW activists were held in jail under excessive bail, awaiting trial. Following their conviction a year later, they were sentenced to long terms in the Federal Penitentiary.

This imprisonment cut them off from contact with the great new events, and operated against the free exchange of ideas which might have resulted in an agreement and fusion with the dynamically developing left-wing socialist movement headed toward the new Communist Party. The IWW as an organisation was compelled to divert its entire activities into its campaign to provide legal defence for its victimised members. The members of the organisation had little time or thought for other things, including the one all-important thing — the assimilation of the lessons of the war and the Russian Revolution.

Despite that, a number of IWW men heard the new word from Russia and followed it. They recognised in Bolshevism the rounding out and completion of their own revolutionary conceptions, and joined the Communist Party. Haywood expressed their trend of thought succinctly, in an interview with Max Eastman, published in *The Liberator*, April 1921. "'I feel as if I'd always been there', he said to me. 'You remember I used to say that all we needed was fifty thousand real IWWs, and then about a million members to back them up? Well, isn't that a similar idea? At least I always realised that the essential thing was to have an organisation of *those who know*.'"

As class-conscious men of action, the Wobblies, "the real IWWs", had always worked together as a body to influence the larger mass. Their practice contained the essential idea of the Leninist conception of the relation between the party and the class. The Bolsheviks, being men of theory in all their action, formulated it more precisely and developed it to its logical conclusion in the organisation of those class-conscious elements into a party of their own.

All that seemed clear to me at the time, and I had great hopes that at least a large section of the Wobblies would recognise it. I did all I could to convince them. I made especially persistent efforts to convince Vincent St. John himself, and almost succeeded; I didn't know how close I had come until later, when it was too late.

When he was released from the Federal Penitentiary at Leavenworth on bond — I think it was in the early part of 1919 — the Saint stopped over in Kansas City and

visited me. We talked about the Russian Revolution night and day. I believe he was as sympathetic at that time as I was. The revolution was an *action* — and that's what he believed in. But he had not yet begun to grapple with the idea that the Russian way would be applicable to this country, and that the IWW would have to recognise it.

His hostility to a "party" and "politicians", based on what he had seen of such things in this country, was the fixed obstacle. I noted, however, that he did not argue back, but mainly listened to what I had to say. A year or so later we had several other discussions in New York, when he was still out on bail before he was returned to prison in the fall of 1921. We talked a great deal on those occasions; or rather, I did, and the Saint listened.

In addition to my proselytising zeal for communism in those days, I had a strong personal motivation for trying to win over Vincent St. John to the new movement. Coming from the syndicalistic background of the IWW, with its strong anti-intellectual emphasis, I had been plunged up to my neck in the internal struggles of the young Communist Party and association with its leading people. They were nearly all young intellectuals, without any experience or feel for the mass movement and the "direct action" of the class struggle. I was not very much at home in that milieu; I was lonesome for people of my own kind.

I had overcome my own "anti-intellectualism" to a considerable extent; but I knew for sure that the Communist Party would never find its way to the mass movement of the workers with a purely intellectualistic leadership. I was looking for reinforcements for a proletarian counterbalance on the other side, and I thought that if I could win over St. John it would make a big difference. In fact, I knew it.

I remember the occasion when I made the final effort with the Saint. The two of us went together to have dinner and spend the night as guests of Carlo Tresca and Elisabeth Gurley Flynn at their cottage on Staten Island beach. We spent very little time looking at the ocean, although that was the first time I had ever seen it. All through the dinner hour, and nearly all through the night, we discussed my thesis that the future belonged to the Communist Party; and that the IWW militants should not abandon the new party to the intellectuals, but come into it and help to shape its proletarian character.

As in the previous discussions, I did practically all the talking. The Saint listened, as did the others. There was no definite conclusion to the long discussion; neither expressed rejection nor acceptance of my proposals. But I began to feel worn-out with the effort and let it go at that.

A short time later St. John returned to Chicago. The officials in charge of the IWW centre there were hostile to communism and were embroiled in some bitter quarrels

with a pro-communist IWW group in Chicago. I don't know what the immediate occasion was, but St. John was drawn into the conflict and took a stand with the anti-communist group. Then, as was natural for him in any kind of a crisis, once he had made up his mind he took charge of the situation and began to steer the organisation definitely away from cooperation with the communists.

Years later — in 1926 — when Elisabeth Gurley Flynn herself finally came over to the Communist Party and was working with us in the International Labor Defence, she recalled that night's discussion on Staten Island and said: "Did you know you almost convinced The Saint that night? If you had tried a little harder you might have won him over." I hadn't known it; and when she told me that, I was deeply sorry that I had not tried just "a little harder".

The Saint was crowding 50 at that time, and jail and prison had taken their toll. He was a bit tired, and he may have felt that it was too late to start over again in a new field where he, like all of us, had much to learn. Whatever the reason for the failure, I still look back on it regretfully. Vincent St. John, and the IWW militants he would have brought along, could have made a big difference in everything that went on in the CP in the '20s.

8. The heritage

The eventual failure of the IWW to remain true to its original self, and to claim its own heritage, does not invalidate its great contributions in propaganda and action to the revolutionary movement which succeeds it. The IWW in its best days was more right than wrong, and all that was right remains the permanent acquisition of the American workers. Even some of the IWW propositions which seemed to be wrong — only because the times were not ripe for their full realisation — will find their vindication in the coming period.

The IWW's conception of a Republic of Labour, based on occupational representation, replacing the present political state with its territorial form of representation, was a remarkable prevision of the course of development which must necessarily follow from the victory of the workers in this country. This new and different form of social organisation was projected at the Founding Convention of the IWW even before the Russian Bolsheviks had recognised the workers' councils, which had arisen spontaneously in the 1905 Revolution, as the future governmental form.

The IWW program of *industrial* unionism was certainly right, although it came too early for fulfilment under the IWW banner. This has already been proved to the hilt in the emergence and consolidation of the CIO.

The IWW theory of *revolutionary* unionism likewise came too early for general

acceptance in the epoch of ascending capitalism in this country. It could not be realised on a wide scale in the time of the IWW. But *reformist* unions, in the present epoch of imperialist decay, have already become anachronistic and are confronted with an ultimatum from history to change their character or cease to be.

The mass industrial unions of workers, by the fact of their existence, instinctively strive toward socialism. With a capitalist-minded leadership, they are a house divided against itself, half slave and half free. That cannot stand. The stage is being set for the transformation of the reformist unions into revolutionary unions, as they were projected by the IWW half a century ago.

The great contradiction of the labour movement today is the disparity between the mass unions with their organised millions and the revolutionary party which still remains only a nucleus, and their separation from each other. The unity of the vanguard and the class, which the IWW tried to achieve in one organisation, was shattered because the time was not ripe and the formula was inadequate. The time is now approaching when this antithetic separation must give way to a new synthesis.

This synthesis — the unity of the class and the socialist vanguard — will be arrived at in the coming period in a different way from that attempted by the IWW. It will not be accomplished by a single organisation. The building of a separate party organisation of the socialist vanguard is the key to the resolution of the present contradiction of the labour movement. This will not be a barrier to working-class unity but the necessary condition for it.

The working class can be really united only when it becomes a class *for itself*, consciously fighting the exploiters as a class. The ruling bureaucrats, who preach and practice class collaboration, constitute in effect a pro-capitalist party in the trade unions. The party of the socialist vanguard represents the consciousness of the class. Its organisation signifies not a split of the class movement of the workers, but a division of labour within it, to facilitate and effectuate its unification on a revolutionary basis; that is, as a class for itself.

As an organisation of revolutionists, united not simply by the immediate economic interests which bind all workers together in a union, but by doctrine and program, the IWW was in practice, if not in theory, far ahead of other experiments along this line in its time, even though the IWW called itself a union and others called themselves parties.

That was the IWW's greatest contribution to the American labour movement — in the present stage of its development and in those to come. Its unfading claim to grateful remembrance will rest in the last analysis on the pioneering role it played as the first great anticipation of the revolutionary party which the vanguard of the

American workers will fashion to organise and lead their emancipating revolution.

This conception of an organisation of revolutionists has to be completed and rounded out, and recognised as the most essential, the most powerful of all designs in the epoch of imperialist decline and decay, which can be brought to an end only by a victorious workers' revolution. The American revolution, more than any other, will require a separate, special organisation of the revolutionary vanguard. And it must call itself by its right name, a party.

The experimental efforts of the IWW along this line remain part of the permanent capital of those who are undertaking to build such a party. They will not discard or discount the value of their inheritance from the old IWW; but they will also supplement it by the experience and thought of others beyond our borders.

The coming generation, which will have the task of bringing the class struggle to its conclusion — fulfilling the "historic mission of the working class", as the "preamble" described it — will take much from the old leaders of the IWW — Debs, Haywood, De Leon and St. John, and will glorify their names. But in assimilating all the huge experiences since their time, they will borrow even more heavily from the men who generalised these experiences into a guiding theory. The Americans will go to school to the Russians, as the Russians went to school to the Germans, Marx and Engels.

Haywood's advice at the Founding Convention of the IWW still holds good. The Russian way is the way to our American future, to the future of the whole world. The greatest thinkers of the international movement since Marx and Engels, and also the greatest men of action, were the Russian Bolsheviks. The Russian Revolution is there to prove it, ruling out all argument. That revolution still stands as the example; all the perversions and betrayals of Stalinism cannot change that.

The Russian Bolsheviks — Lenin and Trotsky in the first place — have inspired every forward step taken by the revolutionary vanguard in this country since 1917. And it is to them that the American workers will turn for guidance in the next stages of their evolving struggle for emancipation. The fusion of their "Russian" ideas with the inheritance of the IWW is the American workers' prescription for victory.

Los Angeles, June 1955■

THE EARLY YEARS OF AMERICAN COMMUNISM

Passaic, New Jersey, 1926: Textile workers' strike led by the Workers Party attracted wide support.

The Fifth Year of the Russian Revolution

After returning to the US in early 1923 from a lengthy stay in Russia, Cannon went on a five-month speaking tour across the country. His lecture was published by the Workers Party as a pamphlet in the same year.

Russia through the shadows

The story of Soviet Russia for the first four years after the revolution was a story of desperate struggle against tremendous odds. The fight of the Russian workers did not end with their victory over the bourgeoisie within Russia. The capitalist class of the entire world came to the aid of Russian capitalism.

The workers' republic was blockaded and shut off from the world. Counterrevolutionary plots and uprisings inside of Russia were financed and directed from the outside. Mercenary invading armies, backed by world capital, attacked Soviet Russia on all sides. On top of all this came the terrible famine which threatened to deal the final blow.

In those four years Soviet Russia indeed went "through the shadows". But now, after five years of the revolution, we can tell a brighter story. In 1922 Soviet Russia began to emerge from the shadows and started on the upward track. The long and devastating civil war was at an end and the counterrevolution stamped out. The great famine was conquered. The last of the invading foreign armies — except the Japanese in the Far East — had been driven from Russian soil; and the workers' government, freed from the terrible strain and necessity of war, was enabled, for the first time, to turn its efforts and energies to the great constructive task of building a new Russia on the ruins of the old.

While I was yet in Russia the Red Army drove the Japanese out of Vladivostok and set up the soviets again. And before the Fourth Congress of the Communist International was ended, we had the joy of hearing Comrade Lenin say that all the

territory of Russia was at last living in peace under the red flag of the soviets.

I reached Moscow on the first day of June. Signs of recuperation from the long travail were already noticeable. The streets and sidewalks were being repaired and buildings were being painted; for the first time in five years, they told me. During the war all resources and all energies went for bitter necessity; everything else had to wait. Even the buildings in the Kremlin got their first coat of paint this year.

I was riding on a Moscow streetcar one day soon after my arrival, with a comrade who had once been in America and who now holds a responsible position in the Soviet government. I spoke of the good appearance and condition of the car; it had just been newly painted, and looked very pretty. They know more about blending colours than we do; and they care more about it, too. He told me that the Moscow streetcar system had been greatly improved during the past year. The number of cars in operation had been greatly increased, the trackage extended and a fairly reliable schedule maintained. The Moscow streetcar workers were very proud of their achievement; especially so because the improvement in the service had brought with it a corresponding improvement in their own living conditions.

The famous Genoa Conference was still alive at that time, the conference which Lloyd George called to settle the problems of Europe, but which didn't succeed in settling anything except the career of Lloyd George. France and Belgium, you will remember, were demanding that the property in Russia which had been confiscated by the revolution should be restored to the original foreign owners. Russia had not yet given her final answer, and I asked my friend in the streetcar what he thought it would be.

He said, "Most of the big industrial plants in Russia, and even a part of the railroad system, belonged to foreign capitalists before the revolution. Russia was practically a colony of European capitalism."

"Do you know", he asked me, "who used to own the streetcar system in Moscow — it belonged to the poor Belgian capitalists, and they are trying to get it back at Genoa."

I asked him what chance the poor Belgian capitalists had to get their streetcars back. He answered, "No chance at all".

He told me as soon as that demand became known the Moscow streetcar workers — as well as the workers in the other important industries — called meetings and passed resolutions to this effect: "The foreign capitalists tried for four years to take these industries away from us by armed force, and they couldn't succeed. Now we are certainly not going to let them talk us out of them at the diplomatic table."

Before I went to Russia I had read much about the impending collapse of the

Soviet government. A story of this kind used to appear on an average of about once a week in the *New York Times* and other capitalist newspapers; and no doubt you have all read them. Here lately the capitalist press has dropped that story and the Socialist Party and the IWW papers have taken it up. I spent seven months in Russia, and I assure you that I looked diligently for the signs of this famous "collapse", but I couldn't find it. On the contrary, the more I investigated, the more I saw of the attitude of the Russian workers, the more I became convinced that the Soviet government under the control of the Communist Party is firmer and stronger now than at any period in its history.

I saw the power of the Russian Communist Party tested by an historic conflict with another party which challenged its control. The occasion was the trial of the leaders of the so-called Social Revolutionary Party.

These Social Revolutionaries were brought to trial before the proletarian court and when I was in Moscow, I was present, with an interpreter, on the day it opened in the Labour Temple, and at many of the other sessions. It was a fair trial — nothing like it ever occurred in America. The defendants were allowed to talk as freely and as much as they pleased. There was no restriction whatever on their liberty to speak in their own defence. The trouble with them was that they had no defence. The Soviet government had the goods on them. A number of the prisoners had repented of their crimes against the revolution, and they testified for the Soviet government.

The case was clear. These leaders of the SR Party, defeated in the political struggle with the Communist Party, resorted to a campaign of terror and assassination. They murdered Uritsky and Volodarsky. They dynamited the building which housed the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party and killed 14 people. They had Trotsky and Zinoviev marked for assassination. It was an SR bullet that brought Lenin down and from which he still suffers today.

They went even further than that. They went to the point that all the opponents of the Soviet system go in the end. They collaborated with the White Guards and they took money from the French government to do its dirty work in Russia. All this was clearly proven in the trial; most of it out of the mouths of men who had taken active part in the campaign.

While the trial was in progress occurred the anniversary of the assassination of Volodarsky, one of the most beloved leaders of the revolution, who had been shot down by the SRs; and the Communist Party called upon the workers to honour his memory by a demonstration for the Soviet government and against the SR Party. The communist speakers went to the factories and requested that no worker march except of his own free will.

I stood in Red Square and watched that demonstration. Practically the whole working-class population of Moscow marched that day, carrying banners which proclaimed their solidarity with the Soviet government and the Communist Party, and demanding the death penalty for the leaders of the counterrevolutionary, White Guard SR Party.

I was standing in the reviewing stand with the members of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. It was five o'clock in the evening. The demonstration had commenced at noon and the workers of Moscow were still marching in wide streams from all directions through Red Square. One of the leaders of the Russian Communist Party turned to us and said, "Comrades, this is the funeral of the counterrevolution in Russia".

So it was. The counterrevolution in Russia is as dead as the King of Egypt. The only places there is any life left in it are Paris, London and the East Side of New York.

Economic reconstruction

Politically, the Soviet regime, under the leadership of the Communist Party, greatly strengthened itself in the past year. And economic progress went hand in hand with political improvement. Much of this economic progress, and its reflection in the field of politics, was due to the timely introduction of the New Economic Policy, or, as they say in Russia, the "NEP".

Early in 1921 it became evident that some of the drastic economic measures taken by the Soviet government, under the pressure of political and military necessity, could not be adhered to. The backward social and industrial development of Russia, together with the failure of the European proletariat to succeed in making a revolution, compelled the Soviet government to make a retreat on the economic field.

The Soviet government had been forced to adopt many of these extreme economic measures by political and military necessity. But Lenin did not hesitate to say that they had been going too fast. The economic development of Russia did not permit the direct transition to a system of pure socialist economy.

When this frank and obvious statement was made by Lenin, the yellow socialists of the Second International, as well as some so-called "Marxians" of this country who have been against the Russian Revolution because it wasn't made according to their blueprint, find much satisfaction. They say: "Ha! Ha! We told you so. The Bolshevik Revolution was a mistake!" Their conclusions are that the workers of Russia should give up the political power and go back to capitalism.

But the Russian Bolsheviks are practical people. They have made the revolution once and they don't intend to go back and do it over again. They say: "No, the revolution

was not a mistake, and we will not go back to capitalism. We will make a retreat on the economic field, but we will keep the political power in the hands of the proletariat and use that as a lever to develop our industry to the point where it can serve as a base for a system of socialist economy. And if we can't find anything in the books to support this procedure, we'll write a book of our own."

There are people who say that Russia has gone back to capitalism, but that is not true. In Russia they say, "It is neither capitalism nor communism, it is 'NEP'!" Trotsky described the present situation in Russia as follows:

"The workers control the government. The workers' government has control of industry and is carrying on this industry according to the methods of the capitalist market, of capitalist calculation." I think that is the best concise definition of the NEP.

The state controls commerce and has a monopoly of foreign trade. The state owns all the land, and from the peasants who cultivate the land it collects a tax in kind of approximately 10% of the crop. Free trade is permitted. The peasants may sell or exchange their surplus products after the tax has been paid.

Private enterprises exist alongside of state enterprises. The workers in both state and private enterprises are paid wages in money and the medium of calculation and exchange is money. That is the NEP.

The New Economic Policy was first introduced in the spring of 1921; but it was not until 1922 that the effects of it began to be felt on a wide scale. During the period that I was in Russia the positive and beneficial results of the NEP could be seen in all fields.

The paper money of Soviet Russia, like that of all countries ruined by the war, was greatly inflated. But in 1922 it was stabilised for a period of six months as against three months in 1921. The peasants were able in 1922 to overcome the famine and they voluntarily brought their tax in kind to the government elevators and warehouses. Only in the most exceptional and isolated cases was it necessary to use force to collect the tax.

Before the revolution the Russian peasant had the landlord on his back. Today the landlord system is done away with; there is not one landlord left in the whole of Russia. All that the peasant produces, above his tax in kind of approximately 10%, is his own, to do with as he sees fit. The result is a very friendly attitude toward the Soviet government.

1922 marked the beginning of a general revival in trade and industry. The revolution inherited from the old regime an industrial system that was poorly developed, inefficiently managed and badly demoralised by the strain of the imperialist war. The long civil war, the interventions and the blockade dealt still heavier blows to Russian industry and almost brought it to complete ruin.

To try to do anything with it seemed a hopeless task. Agents of other governments, industrial experts, went to Russia, investigated her industries and reported that they couldn't be revived without assistance from the outside. It was reports of this kind that bolstered up the hope of European and American capitalists and their political agents that the Soviet government was certain to fall.

These gentlemen reckoned without the Russian working class and the Communist Party that leads and inspires it.

In the revolution and the war which followed it for more than four years, the Communist Party dared the "impossible" — and accomplished it. The same courage and determination characterise its attack on the problem of industry. Seval Zimmand told me a story of a meeting which he had an opportunity to attend in the Ural industrial district. It was a conference of engineers, factory managers and trade union leaders presided over by Bogdanov, the commissar of the Supreme Council of Public Economy. After discussing all features of the situation with the engineers and managers and hearing their reports, Bogdanov said, "I know that it is hard to improve the industries in the Ural. But the industries of the Ural can be improved and the industries of the Ural must be improved."

There, in one word, is a definition of the Communist Party of Russia — the party of MUST! While others say, "It is impossible", and, "We had better wait", or, "It can't be done", the Communist Party says, "It must be done!" — and the Communists go ahead and do it.

Russian industry, on the whole, in 1922 registered a general increase of production of more than 100%. This brought the standard of production up to 25% of the prewar condition. This condition is bad enough, but the Russian workers lived through a worse one, and they have begun to make headway.

Russian exports in 1922 were six times greater than the year before. In 1921 the exports were only 5% of the imports. Last year they were brought up to 25%. All the light industries, that is, those which produce for the market, improved remarkably last year and are now in pretty fair shape. The heavy industries, that is, the coal, iron, steel and oil industries, whose product goes mainly to the other state industries — only about 10% of it being sold in the market — recover more slowly. Here the problem is a colossal one. For a long time after the revolution, all these basic industries were in the hands of counterrevolutionary armies. The iron region in the Urals, the coal, iron and steel in the Donets Basin — the Pennsylvania of Russia — and the oil fields around Baku, were all held by hostile armies. When the Red Army recaptured these territories, the industries were in ruins.

The Soviet government bent itself to this task and in 1922 made substantial headway.

Coal production was increased 25% over 1921, naphtha 20%, cast iron 42%, while iron and steel production in 1922 doubled that of the year before. In 1913, before the imperialist war began, the Russian railroads loaded 30,000 cars a day. In 1918, at the low tide of the revolution, when the blockade was still in effect and hostile armies surrounded Russia with a ring of steel, the number of railroad cars loaded daily dropped to 7590. By 1921 this figure was brought up to 9500. In 1922 the improvement was continued and 11,500 cars were loaded; this is more than one-third of the prewar volume.

Russia's great problem today is the problem of heavy industry. The leaders of the Russian Revolution recognise this and are concentrating all their energies on that task.

The Soviet government is saving on everything in order to help the heavy industry. All state appropriations, even those for schools, are being reduced for this purpose. When some sentimental people complained that the reduction of school appropriations was a backward step, Lenin answered that the chance for Russia to become a really civilised and cultured nation depended on the improvement of the heavy industry. That is the foundation.

The Soviet government last year made a profit of 20 million gold rubles on its trading activities. That is the equivalent of ten million dollars, and the whole of it was given by the government as a subsidy to heavy industry. Likewise a considerable portion of the tax collected from the peasants and from the Nepmen engaged in commerce goes for that purpose.

One way of attracting outside capital, which has attained some degree of success, is through the formation of so-called mixed companies. The Soviet government goes into partnership with private capitalists in commercial enterprises, such as putting up part of the capital and sharing in the management and the profits. Lenin told us that by this means a large number of workers are enabled to learn from the capitalists how to carry on commerce; and the Soviet government retains the right to dissolve the companies later.

The wages of the Russian workers kept pace with the improvement of production, increasing in just about the same proportion. Wages are not yet up to the prewar standard. The Russian shoe workers today get 33.3% of prewar wages. The metal workers get 42.9%, the textile workers 42.1%and the wood workers 57.9%. Wages vary according to the conditions of the various industries. The foodstuff industry is pretty well on its feet and the bakery workers get 81.9% of prewar wages, while the tobacco industry pays 13.1%. These figures do not tell the whole story. Because the workers, under the Soviet government, get many special privileges such as cheap rent, food at

cost, etc.

The Russian worker, after five years of the revolution, is not as well off materially today as he was under the tsar. But his condition is now steadily improving and the political and spiritual gains of the revolution are beyond calculation. There is no sentiment among the workers for a return to the old regime. To those who measure everything in terms of concrete, immediate material gains, and who ask the Russian workers what they have to show for their five years of revolution, they answer: "The revolution is not over yet."

Trotsky pointed out at the Fourth Congress of the Communist International that the French standard of living, 10 years after the great revolution which smashed the feudal system and opened the way for the development of the capitalist mode of production, was far below that which prevailed immediately before the revolution. Revolutions destroy before they can build anew, and in this destruction the people suffer. But the destructive phase of the Russian Revolution is already past and in five more years, at the present rate of progress, there is no doubt that the material conditions of the Russian workers, as well as their spiritual, intellectual and political conditions, will be far better than ever before.

Since private industrial and commercial enterprises exist alongside of state enterprises, the question naturally arises — and it certainly is a most important question — what is the relative strength of the two? This question is answered by the figures on the number employed by each. The state controls all means of transport, including the railroads, and in this transportation industry 1,000,000 are employed. The state trusts — these are corporations organised by the state for the commercial and financial management of the various industries under its control — employ 1,300,000. And in non-trust state enterprises another half million workers. This brings the total of state employees up to 2,800,000. Private enterprises employ only 70,000.

There is little danger in this ratio. The danger is still lessened by the fact that the state holds all the big and important industries which are the bases of power while private capital is confined to smaller factories and to commerce. The average number of workers employed in state enterprises is 250 while private plants have an average of only 18.

Trade unionism in Russia

Practically all the workers employed in both state and private undertakings are organised into the Russian trade unions. These trade unions are organised according to the industrial form; there is but one union for each industry. The membership of the Russian trade unions is three million. Before the revolution the total membership of

all the trade unions of Russia was only 1,385,000.

The trade unions have played a great part in the revolution. During the period of "war communism" they were closely united to the apparatus and took upon themselves a number of government responsibilities. But under the New Economic Policy they have completely separated from the state machinery and have reorganised as independent bodies, having for their main functions the defence of the interests of the workers in the factories.

Strikes were never prohibited by law under the Soviet government, but during the period of the civil war the Trade Union Congress voluntarily decided to forego that method of struggle. Under the New Economic Policy, however, the right to strike has been reaffirmed. Strikes are discouraged and do not occur very often. Boards of conciliation, courts of arbitration and mutual agreements are first resorted to, and as a rule all controversies are settled by these means.

I never saw a strike in Soviet Russia and never heard of one taking place while I was there. But Comrade Melnichansky, the head of the Moscow trade unions, told me of a few that had occurred under his jurisdiction. In those cases all the methods and forms of industrial warfare familiar to European and American labour movements automatically developed, such as strike committees, pickets, strike benefits, etc. There had been rare cases, he told me, when unscrupulous employers had tried to operate the struck plant by means of ignorant peasants recruited from the villages. The government gave no favour to this "freedom of contract" so popular with our own government. And a visit from the pickets usually sufficed to convince the strikebreakers that they had better go back where they came from. I asked Comrade Melnichansky if they had encountered any strike injunctions. He laughed and answered, "My dear comrade, you must understand that this is not America!"

I attended the Fifth All-Russian Trade Union Congress. It is analogous to the national convention of the American Federation of Labor, but it was quite a different looking delegation from the sleek, fat, overdressed "men of labour" who meet once a year under the chairmanship of Gompers. There were more than a thousand delegates present at this congress, and I saw only one man who appeared to be overweight.

The congress was held in the Moscow Labour Temple which, in the old days, was the Nobles Club. It is a gorgeous place, with marble pillars, crystal chandeliers and gold leaf decorations. One could imagine that the "Nobles" had many a good time there in the "good old days". But, in the words of the comic strip artist, "Them days is over". The workers are the ruling class today and they have taken all the best places for their own purposes.

I saw something at that congress that never yet happened in America. Zinoviev

and Rykov came to the congress to make a report on behalf of the government. I thought how natural it was, in a country ruled by the workers, for the government to report to the trade unions. It is just as natural as it is in America for the government to report to the Chamber of Commerce. The same principle applies. Governments have the habit of reporting to those whom they really represent. The old proverb says, "Tell me whose bread you eat and I'll tell you whose song you sing".

The Soviet government is a labour government and it makes no secret of the fact that it is partial to the working class. It doesn't pretend to be fair or neutral. They frankly call the government a dictatorship. "It's just like your own government in America", they told me, "only it is a dictatorship of a different class."

"Otherwise the two governments are much alike", they said, "they are both dictatorships. But there is another difference. The Russian government says it is a dictatorship and makes no camouflage about it. The government of the United States pretends to be fair and democratic, to represent both the workers and the capitalists, but whenever you have a big strike the government soon shows whom it belongs to."

Ninety-eight percent of all the delegates to this Fifth All-Russian Trade Union Congress were members of the Communist party. Those figures constitute another answer to the question: "How does the Communist Party keep in power." When more than a thousand trade union delegates come together from all parts of Russia, and more than 98% of them are Communists, it is a pretty reliable indication, I think, that the Communist Party has its roots very deep in the basic organisations of the workers.

Referring to the fact that wages of the Russian workers had been increased 100% during the past year, keeping even pace with the increased production, Zinoviev laid before the congress the program of the Communist Party on the question of wages and production. He said the two must go forward together, hand in hand.

"Every country in the world", he said, "outside of Russia has built up its industrial system at the price of an impoverished and exploited working class. The capitalist countries have built a marvellous industrial system; they have erected great structures of steel and stone and cement; they have piled up wealth that staggers calculation. And alongside of all this they have a hungry and impoverished working class which made it all. For all their toil and accomplishments the workers have reaped a harvest of poverty and misery." "Russia", he said, "must not go that way. We are a working-class nation and we must not forget that the interest of the workers must be our first concern, always. We will strain all energies to increase production, but here at the beginning let us lay down an iron rule for our future guidance: that every improvement in industry must bring a corresponding improvement in the living standards of the workers in the industry. We want to build a big industry and we want to build it quickly. But we also

want to build a bigger and better human race."

The workers & the Red Army

Between the trade unions and the Red Army there is a close and fraternal unity that does not prevail between the labour movement and the army of any other country in Europe. The trade unionists regard the Red soldiers as the protectors and defenders of the labour movement, and they treat them with the highest honour.

There is a reason for this attitude. When some of the industrial districts of Russia fell into the hands of the counterrevolutionary armies, the first thing the White Guards did, after dissolving the soviets, was to break up the trade unions, shooting or jailing the leaders; it was something like West Virginia. And when the Red Army reconquered those territories, the trade unions were immediately reorganised under the protection of its bayonets. This is the reason for the brotherly solidarity between the unions and the army.

It was not surprising, therefore, that the Red Army should send a representative to the Trade Union Congress. General Budenny, the head of the famous Red cavalry, was there and he was given a tumultuous reception. I was thinking of the time a general of our army visited the American trade unionists, the time that General Wood came to Gary.[22] For several minutes they applauded and shouted for General Budenny. He was embarrassed and had difficulty getting started. His speech consisted of only one sentence, but it was enough. Drawing himself up to a military posture, he clicked his heels together and saluted the delegates and said, "Comrades, just tell us what you want us to do, and we'll do it!"

The Red Army is a new factor in the international situation, and a very important one. The diplomats cannot meet today to partition off the Earth without asking, "What will the Red Army do?" The Red soldier is present at all the councils of the war makers. He puts his fist on the table and says, "I am in on the war game in Europe from now on!"

The Red Army is something new under the sun, a proletarian army, made up exclusively of workers and peasants, with most of its officers drawn from the working class. It proved its mettle in the long and successful struggle against the interventionist armies. It has a morale, spirit and discipline unknown to the military history of Europe. There is not an army on the continent of Europe that, man for man, can stand up against it.

When I was in Russia the size of the Red Army had been reduced to 800,000 men. Since I left, it has been still further reduced to 600,000. But that is not its full strength by any means. The standing army of 600,000 is only a skeleton around which five million

men, already trained for service, can be quickly organised.

The Red Army is a powerful military machine, but that is not all. It is a school, the greatest school on Earth. The great bulk of its soldiers come from the peasantry, and 80% of the Russian peasants are illiterate. But in the Red Army they are all taught to read and write. Last May Day they celebrated the liquidation of illiteracy in the Red Army. Trotsky made the statement that on that day, there was not a soldier in the army who was not able to read and write. The Russian Bolsheviks have taken an instrument of destruction and utilised it for a great constructive purpose.

I visited some Red Army camps and learned something about the spirit of the soldiers at first hand. I had read something about it and wished to check up on what I had read. I asked Trotsky about it and he said, "Go to the camps and see the soldiers themselves. Then you will understand it." I asked him why the Red soldier has a different attitude toward the government from that of the other soldiers of Europe, and he answered, "The attitude of the Red soldier toward the Soviet government is determined by the attitude of the Soviet government toward the Red soldier."

That is the secret of it. That is the reason for the intense loyalty of the Red soldier which the old-school militarists cannot understand. The Red soldier is respected and honoured in time of peace as well as in war. He is not heroised as he marches off to battle and then chased up a back alley when he comes home. He is not given a medal when he is needed and refused a job or a handout when the war is over. In the working class society of Russia the Red soldier has a place of dignity and honour. In Russia the soldiers and the workers are the real "people of importance".

I saw another phase of the educational work of the army in one of the camps. It was a moving picture show attended by about 2000 soldiers. It was a moving picture of large-scale grain farming in Canada. Most of the soldiers in the audience were peasant lads. They had come from the villages and their idea of agriculture was founded on the primitive, individualistic methods they had always known. Most of them had never seen a farming implement larger than a one-horse plough. Here on the screen before them was flashed a picture of modern farming on a big scale, with tractors, gang-ploughs and great threshing machines; a single working unit covering hundreds of acres at a time.

They drank in that picture very eagerly. As I watched them I saw another picture. I saw those peasant lads going back home when their service in the army would be ended, with their newly acquired knowledge and their vision of the great world outside their little villages, telling their friends and their old folks of the great farming machinery which the city worker will manufacture for the peasants and which will be the means of developing large-scale communal farming instead of small-scale individual farming,

and which will transform the individualist peasant of today into the communist peasant of tomorrow.

I found the Red soldiers pretty well informed as to what is going on in the world. They spoke of the prospects of revolution in Germany with the air of men who had read and talked much about it. That is part of their education; Trotsky keeps them fully informed about international developments, and there are special communist detachments in all regiments who carry on a constant propaganda for internationalism.

Capitalist journalists write a great deal about the intense national patriotism of the Red Army. These stories are usually written by journalists who sit around in Moscow hotels and cook up stories about it, and, as a rule, they are very far from the truth. As a matter of fact, the main effort of communist propaganda in the army is to overcome tendencies toward Russian national patriotism and to develop a patriotism to the international proletariat. Since the army quit singing *God Save the Tsar* it has had no national official hymn. The official air played in the Red Army is the *Internationale*. Internationalism is the watchword.

This was impressed upon us very vividly by a speech we heard at the graduation exercises of the school of Red Cavalry commanders at Moscow. A number of international delegates attended those exercises and spent the entire day with the young students who were just finishing their studies. For several hours we watched them perform hair-raising feats on horseback and late in the afternoon we had dinner with them in the mess hall. After dinner the delegates from the various countries each spoke a few words of greeting to the graduates and then they put up one of the graduates to respond. He was lifted upon the table from which we had just eaten our dinner, a young communist lad who only a short time before had been taken from the factory, put through an intensive course of instruction and on that day was being turned out as a Red commander.

"Comrades", he said, "we greet you as comrades and brothers in the same army with us. We do not want you to think of us as soldiers of Russia, but as soldiers of the international proletariat. Our army is a working-class army and the working class of the world is our country. We will be very glad when the workers of Europe rise in revolt and call on us for assistance; and when that day comes they will find us ready."

The workers & internationalism

It is not only the Red soldiers in Russia who are internationalists. Internationalism permeates the entire working class. When the Russian workers rose in revolt five years ago and struck the blow that destroyed Russian capitalism they were confident that the workers throughout Europe would follow their example. They have been waiting five

years for the international revolution and they still believe it is coming. Nothing has been able to shake that faith. They believe in the workers of Europe as they believe in the sun.

Ah, the faith of those Russian workers! It is so strong that it communicates itself to others. All of us who saw and felt it came away with our own faith surer and stronger. One afternoon I heard a band playing in the street outside the hotel where I was living. I looked out the window and saw a big parade marching with banners flying. I took a Russian comrade with me and we followed the parade. It wound up at the Labour Temple with a mass meeting. There were enthusiastic speeches, the band played the *Internationale* and the crowd sang it. It was a demonstration of the bakery workers of Moscow with the bakers of Bulgaria who were out on a general strike. And those bakery workers of Moscow, from their meagre wages, raised a fund to send to their comrades in faraway Bulgaria to cheer them on in the fight.

On the fifth anniversary of the revolution the delegates of the communist parties and Red trade unions were the guests of the proletariat of Petrograd. A great throng of workers met us at the station. We symbolised to them the international labour movement and they gave us a warm and generous welcome. Red Army troops were drawn up before the station, the streets in all directions were packed with workers who had come to greet us, and from every building and post flew banners, proclaiming the fifth anniversary of the Russian Revolution and hailing the international revolution.

That day we saw a demonstration of the workers of Petrograd. I shall never forget it. They had built a special reviewing stand for us before the Uritsky Palace and we stood there and watched them march by in detachments according to the factories where they worked. They carried the same old banners which they had carried five years before, many of them torn by the bullets that flew during the decisive battle.

I never saw before such an outpouring of people, nor such enthusiasm. The parade commenced at 11 o'clock in the morning. Hour after hour we saw them come in wide streams across the square. The afternoon wore away and turned to dusk. It was six o'clock and we grew tired of standing and had to leave, and still the workers of Petrograd were coming by the thousands, carrying their revolutionary banners and singing the *Internationale*. All the workers of Petrograd marched that day to show their solidarity with the international proletariat and to prove to us that they still believe in the revolution they made five years before.

The next day, as though to show us that the Russian Revolution and the International has not only spirit and solidarity on its side but military power also, they let us see a parade of the Red Army.

It was a cheering and inspiring sight to see the Red soldiers on the march with their

rifles over their shoulders and their bayonets shining in the sun. They marched in perfect step, with heads erect, the picture of physical prowess. As they passed the reviewing stand they all shouted, "Long live the Communist International!" and we shouted back, "Long live the Red Army!"

In the reviewing stand that day were delegates of the communist parties of other countries; and beside us sat the diplomats of foreign governments in Russia. It is the custom to invite them whenever there is a parade of the Red Army. They say that when the diplomats see the Red soldiers march, it cools their enthusiasm for another war against Soviet Russia.

Before we left Petrograd we made a pilgrimage to the Field of Mars, where in one great grave are buried the victims of the November Revolution.[23] Five years before it was the scene of desperate battle. The air was torn by rifle fire and the cries of those Petrograd workers who had risen in revolt and staked their lives on the issue. On the 7th of November, five years before, the workers of Petrograd fought there the battle of the human race and of the future. Many of them fell, never to rise again.

We stood there, with heads uncovered, in a cold, drizzling rain. The once noisy battlefield was quiet. There was no sound but the soft music of the *Funeral Hymn of the Revolution*, and the very ground, once spattered with the blood of our heroic dead, was banked high with flowers, placed there in gratitude and love by the delegates of the communist parties and red trade unions of all lands.

Those Petrograd workers put their lives in the scale. They had lived lives of misery and oppression, but they were possessed by a daring vision of the future when the lives of all men will be better and fairer. They were the heralds of a new day in the world when there will be no more masters and no more slaves, and they gave their lives to hasten on that day.

There is an end now to their labour, their struggle and their sacrifice. They rest beneath the Field of Mars and their mouths are stopped with dust. But still from the grave they speak, and their voices are heard all over the world. They lighted an everlasting fire in the sky which the whole world is destined to see and follow.

Those Petrograd workers struck the blow which shattered the capitalist regime in Russia and put the working class in power. But they did more than that, because the Russian Revolution did not stop in Russia. It found its way over the borders. It broke through the blockade and spread all over the Earth. The Russian Revolution was the beginning of the international revolution.

Wherever there is a group of militant workers anywhere in the world, there is the Russian Revolution. The Russian Revolution is in the heart of every rebel worker the world over. The Russian Revolution is in this room.

Comrade Trotsky told us, just before we left Moscow, that the best way we can help Soviet Russia is to build a bigger trade union movement and a stronger party of our own. Recognition by other governments will be of some temporary value, but the real recognition Soviet Russia wants is the recognition of the working class. When she gets that she will not need the recognition of capitalist governments. Then she can refuse to recognise them!

For, after all, Soviet Russia is not a "country". Soviet Russia is a part of the world labour movement. Soviet Russia is a strike — the greatest strike in all history. When the working class of Europe and America join that strike it will be the end of capitalism.■

Our Aims & Tactics in the Trade Unions

The following speech was delivered on July 27, 1924 in St. Louis, Missouri to a conference of Workers Party coal miners. It was first published in the Daily Worker *magazine supplement, August 2, 1924.*

Comrades:

These conferences of party members in the important trade unions in which representatives of the Central Executive Committee take part are becoming frequent occurrences. We must regard this as a healthy sign. It indicates that we are maturing as a party of theoretical and practical revolutionists, and getting a firm grip on our basic tasks. The close collaboration between the active comrades in the field and the leading organ of the party has a beneficial result all the way around.

The close and intimate contact with the practical problems of the daily struggle, and with the comrades who directly face them, serves as an unerring corrective to any tendency there might be in the party to deal with these problems in an abstract or purely doctrinaire fashion. On the other hand, the participation of the party representatives insures that the fundamental political aspect of the trade union struggle will be brought to the front in these trade union conferences. The importance of this cannot be overestimated. Otherwise there is constant danger of the work of our trade union comrades being influenced too much by expediency and so-called practicality. One-sided conceptions, purely trade union points of view, take the upper hand and the general class issues of the struggle are pushed into the background. Such a state of affairs must be guarded against. We know too well that it leads to reformism and futility.

We are meeting here today to consider the problems of the particular trade union you belong to, from the standpoint of the party, which is the standpoint of all communists. And I think I will be proceeding in the proper order if I put forward as a

premise the revolutionary aims of our party and propose that we weigh and judge every trade union question that comes before us, no matter how small or practical it may appear to be, in the light of our final aims.

A revolutionary party

Our party is a party of the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. The proletarian revolution is the only solution of the labour problem and all our work must lead to this goal. This is our starting point in the trade unions, as in every field of activity in the class struggle. It is this fundamental conception that distinguishes us from all other parties and groups in the labour movement. It is the band of steel that binds us together into one party.

Our revolutionary goal shapes our policy in the daily struggle. The revolutionary aspirations of our party comrades generate the enthusiasm and self-sacrifice that give the party its driving power. Woe to us if we become so "practical" as to forget this for one moment. All our work must lead toward the proletarian revolution. If we keep this always in mind and measure all our daily work by this standard we will keep on the right road. The revolutionary principles to which we are committed put upon us responsibilities and duties which cannot be shifted or evaded if we are to live up to our conception of the party as the vanguard of the workers. We have to stand up and fight for the true interests of the working class as a whole, at every turn of the road.

With the masses, but leading them

We want to be with the masses, but we must also be ahead of the masses, and not be afraid to take an unpopular stand, when it is necessary in order to combat their prejudices. Take for example the Ku Klux Klan. Here is an organisation that is anti-labour in its very character — yet large numbers of coal miners are misled into supporting it. To fight the Ku Klux Klan, to expose its reactionary nature and win the workers away from it, is a difficult and somewhat hazardous task in certain sections of the country, but it is our duty to the working class to make such a fight. We would not be worthy of the proud name our party bears if we evaded such a fight on any pretext.

Our work in the trade unions is developing. Evidence of this can be seen on every side. Such conferences as this are proof of the rapid strides we are making. We have already accumulated rich experience, and this experience is bringing to light both positive and negative sides in our work. One of our main duties is to review the whole activity from time to time, to strengthen and improve what is good, and discover what is bad in order to reject it.

It goes without saying that we communists esteem each other very highly, but

when we meet together in conferences such as this, it is not for the purpose of extending bouquets and empty compliments, but to speak out openly and frankly; to subject all our work to thoroughgoing examination and criticism in order that errors may be discovered and overcome. You have the right to expect plain speaking from the Central Executive Committee. I feel quite confident that if some errors in your work are mentioned here in this discussion, if some of the mistakes that individual comrades made are pointed out in a friendly and brotherly, but nevertheless frank manner, as is the custom among communists, that none of you will feel offended. The discussion is only for the purpose of improving our effectiveness and strengthening the party for the fight.

Our valuable experiences

The power of a disciplined party, founded on revolutionary principles, and concerning itself in a businesslike fashion with all aspects of the trade union struggle, has already begun to manifest itself. At the last convention of the Illinois miners, for example, everybody could see that the party is beginning to grow up, to stretch its shoulders, and take its place on the stage of events.[24] Our party appeared there as the leader of the fight for the interests of the men in the mines. It was in the forefront, dealing the heaviest blows against the agents of the bourgeoisie, who have usurped the official positions in the miners' union. The work of our comrades in this convention added greatly toward making the miners' union a better union for the class struggle, thereby increasing the prestige of our party. That must be acknowledged at the very beginning.

In a whole series of trade union conventions held in recent months the same phenomenon was to be observed. Our small party, which only yesterday emerged from underground and began to collect the scattered forces of the revolutionary workers, was the storm centre of the fight against reaction in the labour movement. We have not yet become the leader of the masses in the trade unions, but we have become the leader in the fight for their interests. The rest will follow in good time. Of this we can be confident.

It is no accident that our party is pushing forward everywhere and putting itself at the head of the struggle. The reason for this is that ours is the only party willing to fight for the immediate interests of the workers, and the only party standing for the solution of the labour problem by means of the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. All of the interests of the working class, immediately and ultimately, are indissolubly bound up with the revolution. And if we make mistakes here and there, if we fail to take the fullest advantage of opportunities which arise in the course of the struggle, it is because our comrades in the unions, due mainly to inexperience, have not fully mastered the

art of taking a practical stand on every question that arises, and relating it skilfully to the final aims of the movement.

Correcting our mistakes

To do practical work, and at the same time to deepen and extend the class consciousness of the workers, and lead them toward the struggle for power — this is the heart of our task in the trade unions. From this point of view an examination of events that transpired at the last convention of the Illinois miners will bring forth fruitful results. Our power will be multiplied at the next convention, if we frankly recognise the negative as well as the positive sides of our activity at the last one.

One of the main errors made by our comrades there was the failure to realise fully that the brazen scheme of class collaboration, presented to the convention in the report of Frank Farrington, revealed the political and ideological basis of all the corruption and betrayal of the whole bureaucracy of the United Mine Workers of America, from Lewis to Farrington. Our comrades should have attacked this report in the most militant fashion. They should have shot it to shreds on the ground that it represented the theory of the mutual interests of the coal diggers and the parasites who exploit them and fatten on their toil and misery. Against it they should have set up the principle of the class struggle, the theory of the salvation of the workers through uncompromising struggle against their exploiters.

Such a fight would have been a dagger aimed at the very heart of the corrupt and treacherous trade union bureaucracy, because it would have been aimed at the false system of ideas with which they poison the labour movement. Such a fight should have been seized upon as the best means of opening the eyes of the miners, and making them see their real problem. All the other fights in the convention, the fight over the appointive power, the fight for better legislation in union affairs, for the reinstatement of Howat, etc., should have been regarded by our comrades, and explained to the delegates, as related to the basic fight for the principle of the class struggle, and subordinate to it. This would have been the best means of awakening the honest rank and file delegates, and of binding them more closely to us.

Another error at the convention occurred in the handling of the resolution on the recognition of Soviet Russia. Here again the principle of the class struggle was involved. The Farrington machine played a clever game with the delegates on this resolution, by calling for the recognition of Soviet Russia in one paragraph, and then nullifying the whole effect of the resolution by adding the qualification that Soviet Russia should recognise certain obligations — the very obligations which the capitalist governments of the world have been vainly trying for six years to impose upon her. Our comrades

made the mistake of thinking that the question of formal recognition of Soviet Russia was the real issue, and of considering such a resolution a victory for us.

This was entirely too "statesmanlike". We are for the recognition of Soviet Russia, because it is a working-class state, and because we recognise that the interests of the working class all over the world are bound up with it. The recognition of Soviet Russia is for us an issue of the class struggle, and we should have made the fight purely on that basis, and hammered home again to the delegates the idea that the solidarity of labour, the worldwide union of the working class in the fight for the overthrow of capitalism, must be accepted as the guiding principle of the labour movement. We might have failed to get a majority of the convention if we had put the fight on this basis, just as we might have failed to get a majority in a clear-cut class struggle fight against Farrington's scheme of class collaboration, but that is a secondary matter. We would have brought the principle to the front. We would have clarified the minds of many of the delegates, and tied them more closely to us. It is not the formal victory but the fight that is important.

Inadequate organisation

From the same point of view the inadequate development of the left-wing caucus at the convention should be pointed out. Some comrades objected to these caucuses on the ground that Farrington's spies might be present and learn something in advance about the fights we intended to make in the convention. This attitude is erroneous. It is the result of overcaution and too much concern for immediate legislative and technical victories. Moreover, it represents, to a certain extent, an unconscious yielding to the position of the reactionary officials who naturally resent any attempt to organise the rank and file against them. This question goes much deeper than appears at first glance. The failure to organise the left-wing delegates at the convention into a fighting body, if carried to its logical conclusion, would lead to the failure to organise the left-wing forces throughout the union. It means giving up, under pressure of the officialdom, the right to organise the Trade Union Educational League. "Don't make a molehill into a mountain", is a good maxim; but it is just as good if we turn it around and say to the comrades who are willing to concede this small point: "Don't make a mountain into a molehill." If we are making a serious fight to break the control of the trade union bureaucracy we must not neglect to organise our troops.

Our fight for the conquest of the union is at bottom a fight to organise the rank and file workers together with us on the basis of the class struggle. Therefore, they must be enlightened as to our aims and plans.

Conventions should be regarded as the best occasions to advance this process.

The conventions afford us the opportunity of coming into close contact with rank and file delegates, of combating by discussion and argument their prejudices and misconceptions, and of uniting them with us into an organised body to fight for the regeneration of the labour movement. The left-wing caucus is necessary for this work.

It is far more important to us if we get acquainted with 10 new workers and make them a part of the organised fight, than if we pass a dozen resolutions in the convention by an accidental majority.

The conscious support of the workers is what we want. We are fighting for their minds and hearts. Do not forget that, comrades. The officialdom can turn our best resolutions into scraps of paper. They can retain office by stealing elections, but they cannot take away from us the workers we have won over to our way of thinking and fighting. The officials can maintain themselves in power, for a time, by a thousand tricks and fraudulent practices. But once we have won the masses over to our side, we can snap our fingers at them. The control of the unions means for us the control of the masses. This, and this alone, will insure our final victory.

Communists & union offices

I want to pass over now to another question which will become more and more important as our strength develops in the trade unions. It has confronted us already a number of times. That is the question of comrades holding office in the unions and becoming candidates for office. This may become one of our greatest dangers, and one of the greatest sources of corruption of party members, if we do not properly estimate this question and take a resolute stand on it at the very beginning.

In the discussions which took place here today, we heard the remark made by one of the comrades that our struggle in the unions is a struggle for strategic positions. This is a one-sided view and if we allow it to stand alone, we will fall into a serious error. We must adopt the point of view that our struggle is a struggle to develop the class consciousness of the rank and file workers and to win them over to the principle of the revolutionary struggle against capitalism under the leadership of our party.

If we will connect the fight for strategic positions with this broad political aim and subordinate it to this aim, we will be on safe ground. Otherwise, we will be confronted with the spectacle of party members regarding the fight for office as an end in itself; of evading or putting aside questions of principle with which the masses are not familiar; of scheming and calculating too closely in order to get into office. Of course the comrades will justify all this on the ground that once they get into office they will be able to do big things for the party. But quite often we will be apt to find the very comrades who adopt this method of getting into office falling into the habit of continuing it in order to hold

the office. They will thereby degenerate into mere office-holders and office-hunters. They will lose the confidence and respect of the militant rank and file workers, and our party, which stands responsible for them, will have its prestige greatly injured.

Strategic positions, however, are very important and we must not take a doctrinaire view in regard to them. The opinion expressed here by one comrade that men become petty-bourgeois in their interests and outlook as soon as they are elected to office and that, therefore, we should have nothing to do with office, is not correct. It is true that official position, especially in the American trade union movement, has led many men in the past to corruption and betrayal of the workers, but that does not say that communists must be corrupted. We have to hold the conception that a true communist can go anywhere the party sends him and do anything, and still remain a communist — still remain true to the working class. Comrade Lenin was an official. He had more power than Frank Farrington, but he did not become like Frank Farrington. The guarantee against corruption of party members who become officials is that they remain close to the party and that they base their fight for office on the support of the rank and file for the policy of the class struggle, and do not become too expedient and too "clever" — do not try to "sneak" into office by soft-pedalling and pussy-footing on questions of principle which may be unpopular, but which communists, nevertheless, are duty bound to stand for.

A party of struggle

Our party is a party of rank and file revolutionary workers, a party of revolutionary struggle against capitalism and all its works, and we expect comrades who are put into official positions to retain that fundamental conception and carry it out in all their official work. They must not allow themselves to be influenced by their positions into an attitude of overcaution. Above all, they must not acquire an "official" psychology, and fail to do their duty by the party for fear of jeopardising their positions. We do not put communists into office in order that they may do less for the party, but more.

The atmosphere of American trade union officialdom is a fetid one. It is permeated through and through with customs and traditions of a non-proletarian character. Take care, you comrades who become officials, that you do not sink into this swamp. Remember always that you are communists and hold on to your rebel communist spirit. Do not succumb to the customs and traditions of office developed by the agents of the bourgeoisie, who have fastened themselves upon the labour movement in official positions, but take your own revolutionary ethics and customs with you.

Party discipline

The question of party discipline becomes especially important in connection with comrades in official positions. Comrades so situated must tie themselves closely to the party, make themselves one with it, and regard the party always as their best friend. The close union of a communist official with the party will be the best guarantee that he will be able to retain his revolutionary point of view and do his duty by the working class. The party expects even more discipline to be shown by comrades who become officials and leaders than by other members of the party. It does not fear even the biggest officials who go against the decisions of the party and follow a policy in conflict with it. Comrades who hold offices, no matter how important they may be, cannot act as independent individuals without being called to order by the party.

The test of our work

We can sum up the whole question in a few words. We are not progressives, but revolutionists. Our role in the trade union movement is to organise the masses for the proletarian revolution and to lead them in the struggle for it. All of our daily work must be related to this, and subordinated to it. The test of our work can never be made by formal victories on paper, but by the development of class consciousness in the ranks of the workers, the degree of their organisation on that basis and the increasing influence and leadership of our party. Strategic positions in the labour movement are of importance chiefly from the standpoint of enabling the party to advance and develop its work of revolutionising the masses.

Let us be shrewd and practical by all means. Let us learn how to meet every question that arises in the union, in a realistic and businesslike manner. Let us become experts in the daily work of the unions, and in manoeuvring for strategic positions, but let us also remember always the danger of degenerating into mere professional office seekers.

Active unionists, especially those who hold office, are beset by a thousand temptations to turn aside from the road of the class struggle. Only their close union with the party will enable them to overcome these temptations. With the assistance of the party they will learn how to serve the workers in the daily struggle and to connect all their activity with the task of leading the masses toward the final revolution. They will learn how to measure their progress at every step, not by formal victories on paper, but by the development of the class consciousness of the workers and the influence of the party, by the extent to which their activity inspires the workers with that spirit of determined struggle, which is the spirit of communism.

Many difficulties will confront us in the task we have undertaken, but, with the

assistance of the party and the International, we will solve them all. We will win over the masses to the side of communism; we will wrest the labour movement from the hands of the agents of the bourgeoisie and convert them into mighty instruments for the proletarian revolution.■

How to Organise & Conduct a Study Class

The following article was first published in the Daily Worker *magazine supplement, December 13, 1924. At the time, Cannon was the educational director of the Workers Party.*

The problem of educational work is many-sided. Enthusiasm for this work among the party members must be aroused and maintained. A general recognition of its fundamental importance must be established. It must be organically connected with the life and struggles of the party, and must not become academic and sterile. And it must be conducted in a systematic manner, becoming an established part of the life of the party throughout the year. This last will not just "happen". It will take much work and the introduction of correct organisational and technical principles. All our theories will come to nothing if our educational apparatus does not function properly.

Many classes have landed on the rocks because they were not conducted properly. One of the most frequent inquiries we have received from comrades who are undertaking party educational work is: "What is the best way to conduct a study class?" It is the purpose of this article to give an answer to this question based on the collective experience in the field of educational work from which a few general principles can be extracted.

Let us begin at the beginning and proceed step by step. When the responsible party committee in the given localities has decided to establish a class, let us say, for example, in the "ABC of Communism", the next move must be to appoint a leader for the class. This leader must understand that the class will not move of itself, but must be organised and directed from beginning to end, otherwise it will fall to pieces. The comrade in charge of the class must then proceed to enrol students, having them register for the class and making sure he has a sufficient number who agree in advance to attend the classes before he sets the time for calling it. As soon as a sufficient

number of students have been enrolled, a date is set for the first class and all the students are notified.

At this point we should speak a word about the danger of haphazardness in the attendance at the classes on the part of any of the students. The party committee must decide that the attendance at class once a week, or more frequently, as the case may be, is a part of the member's party duty and should excuse him from party obligations for those nights. The systematic and regular attendance at class by all students must be constantly stressed, and the party committee and the leader of the class must constantly fight against the tendency, which always grows up, to regard the study class as a series of lectures at which one can "drop in" whenever he feels like it. Good results can only be obtained when the class is an organised body and is regularly attended by the same students.

Methods of conducting classes

The methods of conducting the classes which have proved most successful from past experience can be roughly divided into two general methods. These methods may be modified and varied in many ways, according to local circumstances, experience and qualifications of the teacher, etc.

These two methods are:

1. The lecture-question method.
2. The method of reading from and discussing the text in the class.

The lecture-question method. This is the method most frequently employed by experienced teachers, and one which yields the most satisfactory results if qualified comrades can be found to conduct the class along this line. The use of this method presupposes that the teacher, who is himself thoroughly familiar with the subject matter of the text, possesses some ability and experience as a lecturer. It is not necessary, however, for him to be a professional. The average communist who has a firm grasp of his subject will find that with a little practice he can succeed in holding the attention of a class.

Under this method the teacher delivers a lecture for the period of about one hour on some phase of the general subject, dealt with in the text. In addition he requires the students to read, outside the class, in connection with his lecture, certain portions of the text and sometimes portions of other books which deal with the same subject. When the class comes together for the second time it is opened with a question period of about thirty minutes during which the lecturer quizzes the students on the subject matter of the previous week's lecture and the reading in connection with it. It is best to have a short recess at the end of the question period in order to get a fresh start for the

lecture. A lecture of about an hour then completes the evening's work. Again the students are referred to sections of the text for reading in connection with the lecture. The same procedure is then followed at each successive meeting of the class until the end of the course.

When this method is employed it is not advisable to have indiscriminate discussion in the class, as this will almost invariably divert the attention of the class from the immediate subject at hand and destroy the possibility of consecutive instruction. For a teacher to conduct a class according to this method he must take it firmly in hand, establish his authority at the very beginning, and maintain it throughout the course. Nothing is more fatal to the success of such a class than for the opinion to grow up amongst some of the students that the teacher knows less then they do about the subject. For he will then be unable to maintain the proper discipline in the class and hold it to its course. Whenever a study class, organised for the purpose of consecutive study of a certain aspect of communist theory or tactics, begins to resolve itself into a group for general discussion or a debating society, its early demise can be confidently expected.

Reading and discussing the text. This method also works out very well, especially in elementary classes. In this method, as in all others, however, the first prerequisite is a class leader who takes a responsible attitude towards the work and who takes it upon himself to organise and lead the class and hold it down to the matter in hand. This class leader should by all means thoroughly study the text before the class commences and make himself master of it.

The class conducted according to this method proceeds by the class leader calling upon the students, one after another, to read a few sentences or a paragraph from the text. After each student finishes reading the part assigned to him, the leader asks the student who has read the passage to explain it in his own words. If he fails to bring out the meaning clearly or interprets the passage incorrectly, the question is directed to other students, the leader himself finally intervening to clarify the matter if necessary.

Proceeding along this line the class will cover a chapter or so of the text each evening. Before the reading commences each time, the leader should conduct a brief quiz of the class on the part of the text dealt with on the preceding evening in order to bring out the points clearly for the second time, refresh the memory of the students, and connect the preceding class with the one about to begin.

In the course of a few months, proceeding along this line, the class will get through the "ABC of Communism" and will have acquired a grasp of the fundamental theories of the movement. Moreover, if the class has been conducted successfully, if it has had the good fortune to have a leader that can inspire confidence and enthusiasm and who

can hold it together as an organised body in spite of all difficulties, the students of the class, or at least a large part of them, will emerge from their first course of training with a strong will and spirit to acquire more knowledge and thereby equip themselves better to become worthy fighters in the cause of communism.

The success of the study class work is to a very large extent dependent upon organisation, leadership and class discipline. It should start on time and stop on time each evening. It must not accommodate itself to casual students or chronic latecomers. It should not degenerate into a mere discussion group over the general problems of the movement but must confine itself in a disciplined manner to the specific subjects dealt with in the course. It should be conducted in a businesslike fashion from start to finish, students being enrolled and the roll called each evening. Above all it should have a leader who, notwithstanding lack of previous experience, will take his task so seriously as to thoroughly master the subject himself. Then he will be able to establish sufficient authority in the class to lead it step by step to the end of the course. ■

CAPITALISM & SOCIALISM

Hiroshima, 1945: “This is how American imperialism is bringing civilisation to the Orient. What an unspeakable atrocity! What a shame has come to America …”

The Bombing of Hiroshima & Nagasaki

Cannon gave the following address on August 22, 1945 to a memorial meeting in New York for Leon Trotsky (assassinated by a Stalinist agent in Mexico on August 21, 1940). The atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki had just taken place (August 6 and 9), and Cannon used the occasion to express his outrage at this atrocity. His talk was published in the Militant*, September 22, 1945, under the title "The Heritage of Leon Trotsky and the Tasks of His Disciples".*

Five years ago today, when the world stood in the depths of the reaction engendered by the imperialist war, our great leader and teacher, Comrade Trotsky, perished at the hands of a Stalinist assassin. We memorialised him then as the great man of ideas, not yet acknowledged by the world, but a man whose ideas represented the future of mankind. Today, on the fifth anniversary of his tragic and most untimely death, as we stand at the beginning of the greatest revolutionary crisis in the history of the world, when thoughts and words must be transformed into deeds — today we pay our grateful tribute to Trotsky as the man of action.

When we celebrated the 10th anniversary of our party in 1938, at a great jubilee meeting, Comrade Trotsky was one of the speakers. He couldn't come to New York, but he spoke to us on a phonograph record which he had made for the occasion — a greeting to our party on its tenth anniversary. Many of you no doubt have heard that speech. You will recall that he said we have the right to take time out to celebrate past achievements only as a preparation for the future. In the same sense we can say that if we take time tonight to memorialise our noble and illustrious dead, we do it primarily as a means of preparing and organising the struggle of the living for the goal which he pointed out to us.

The main ideas of Trotsky, the ideas for which he lived and died, are comparatively simple. He saw the great problem of society arising from the fact that modern industry,

which is necessarily operated socially by great masses of people, is hampered and constricted by the anachronism of private ownership and its operation for private profit, rather than for the needs of the people. He saw that the modern productive forces have far, far outgrown the artificial barriers of the national states. These two great contradictions — the private ownership of the means of production and their operation for private profit, and the stifling of industry within the outlived framework of the national states — are the sources of the great ills of modern society — poverty, unemployment, fascism, and war.

Trotsky saw the only way out for humanity in the revolutionary overthrow of outlived capitalism. Industry must be socialised and operated on the basis of a plan, for use and not for profit. The national antagonisms of the separate capitalist states have to give way to an international federation — the Socialist United States of the World. Socialised and planned economy can produce and provide an abundance for all the people — not only in one nation, but in all nations. The separate socialist nations, having no need or incentive to exploit others, having no conflicts over markets, spheres of influence, and fields of investment, no need of colonies to exploit and enslave — these separate socialist nations will necessarily unite in peace and cooperation based on a worldwide division of labour. The strength of one nation will become the strength of all, the scarcities of one will be made up by the plethora of others. Humanity will organise the cooperative exchange of all the conquests of art and science for the use of all peoples of all lands.

Trotsky taught that only the workers can bring about this revolutionary transformation. Only the working class, the only really progressive and revolutionary class in modern society, standing at the head of all the oppressed and deprived and exploited and enslaved — only they can bring about this great revolutionary transformation and reorganisation of society. The workers are the only progressive class, and they are the most powerful class by virtue of their numbers and their strategic position in society. All the workers need is to become conscious of their historic interests and of their power, and to organise to make it effective.

Trotsky taught that this struggle for the revolutionary transformation of the world, which is on the historic agenda right now, requires the leadership of a party. But — Comrade Trotsky emphasised — not a party like other parties. That was his message to our 10th anniversary meeting: "not a party like other parties", not a halfhearted, not a reformistic, not a talking and compromising party, but a thoroughgoing revolutionary party, a thinking and acting party. A party irreconcilably opposed to capitalism on every front and to capitalist war in particular. Such a party, he said, is required to lead this grand assault against an outlived social system.

The workers of the world needed the ideas of Trotsky in 1940. All the material conditions for the transformation of society from capitalism to socialism had long since matured. What lagged behind was the consciousness and the understanding of the masses of the workers and their organisations. They had need of Trotsky's ideas when he spoke out — the one great voice in the world — against the slaughter of the second imperialist war. But they were not yet ready, they were not yet properly organised, to understand the ideas of Trotsky and to act on them.

The great organisations of the workers, political and industrial, had fallen under the leadership of men who were, in effect, not representatives of the interests of the workers, but agents of the bourgeoisie within the labour movement. The social democratic parties; the communist parties of the Comintern, which had turned traitor to communism and to the proletariat; and the great trade unions — they all rejected the revolutionary program of Trotsky. They all supported the capitalist governments; and the governments plunged the people into the bloody shambles of the war.

Trotsky died confident of the victory of the Fourth International, as he said in that last message which we carry above our platform tonight. He died confident of the victory, but without having the opportunity to live and participate in it.

We have had six years of the war. The war that was supported by the labour leaders. The war that was defended by the professors and the intellectuals. The war that was blessed by the church. And now we can count up the results. What are the fruits of this war which, it was promised, was going to bring benefit to mankind? Look at Europe! Look at Asia! Or, closer home, look at the closing factories and the long lines before the unemployment offices, lines that will grow longer and hungrier, lines in which the returning soldiers will soon take their weary places — if they come back alive and able to walk from the battlefields.

Under capitalism the factories ran full blast to produce the instruments of destruction, but they cannot keep open to produce for human needs in time of so-called peace. The whole of Europe, the whole of great cultured Europe, is a continent of hunger and despair and devastation and death.

The victors at Potsdam announced to Europe the fruits of the victory and the liberation. They decreed the breakup of German industry, the most powerful and productive industry on the continent of Europe. They announced that the living standards of industrialised Germany, the workshop of Europe, can be no higher than those of the devastated backward agricultural states. Not to raise the lowest to the level of the highest, but to drag the highest and most developed and cultured countries down to the level of the lowest and least developed countries — that is the explicit program of the makers of the so-called peace. Such is the program for Europe.

And what are the results in terms of human beings? I read a dispatch in the *New York Times* today from Frankfurt. It is a casual, matter-of-fact informational piece from which I quote a reference to an official report of the situation in that area. "The figures", says the correspondent of the *Times*, "show that the average consumer in this zone is living on 1100 to 1300 calories a day, in contrast to the army's ration of 3600." Less than one-third of the food estimated by the army to be required to maintain the soldiers at a level of efficiency is allotted to the "liberated" people of Germany in the American zone. Surely the European people will develop a great love and appreciation for the liberators.

Surely the foundations are being laid for the peace of a thousand years. Capitalism in its death agony is dragging humanity down into the abyss. Capitalism is demonstrating itself every day more and more, in so-called peace as in war, as the enemy of the people. Bomb the people to death! Burn them to death with incendiary bombs! Break up their industries and starve them to death! And if that is not horrible enough, then blast them off the face of the Earth with atomic bombs! That is the program of liberating capitalism.

What a commentary on the real nature of capitalism in its decadent phase is this, that the scientific conquest of the marvellous secret of atomic energy, which might rationally be used to lighten the burdens of all mankind, is employed first for the wholesale destruction of half a million people.

Hiroshima, the first target, had a population of 340,000 people. Nagasaki, the second target, had a population of 253,000 people. A total in the two cities of approximately 600,000 people, in cities of flimsy construction where, as the reporters explained, the houses were built roof against roof. How many were killed? How many Japanese people were destroyed to celebrate the discovery of the secret of atomic energy? From all the indications, from all the reports we have received so far, they were nearly all killed or injured. Nearly all.

In the *Times* today there is a report from the Tokyo radio about Nagasaki which states that "the centre of the once thriving city has been turned into a vast devastation, with nothing left except rubble as far as the eye could see". Photographs showing the bomb damage appeared on the front page of the Japanese newspaper *Mainichi*. The report says: "One of these pictures revealed a tragic scene 10 miles away from the centre of the atomic air attack", where farm houses were either crushed down or the roofs torn asunder. The broadcast quoted a photographer of the Yamaha Photographic Institute, who had rushed to the city immediately after the bomb hit, as having said: "Nagasaki is now a dead city, all the areas being literally razed to the ground. Only a few buildings are left, standing conspicuously from the ashes." The photographer said

that "the toll of the population was great and even the few survivors have not escaped some kind of injury." So far the Japanese press has quoted only one survivor of Hiroshima.

In two calculated blows, with two atomic bombs, American imperialism killed or injured half a million human beings. The young and the old, the child in the cradle and the aged and infirm, the newly married, the well and the sick, men, women, and children — they all had to die in two blows because of a quarrel between the imperialists of Wall Street and a similar gang in Japan.

This is how American imperialism is bringing civilisation to the Orient. What an unspeakable atrocity! What a shame has come to America, the America that once placed in New York harbour a Statue of Liberty enlightening the world. Now the world recoils in horror from her name. Even some of the preachers who blessed the war have been moved to protest. One said in an interview in the press: "America has lost her moral position." Her moral position? Yes. She lost that all right. That is true. And the imperialist monsters who threw the bombs know it. But look what they gained. They gained control of the boundless riches of the Orient. They gained the power to exploit and enslave hundreds of millions of people in the Far East. And that is what they went to war for — not for moral position, but for profit.

Another preacher quoted in the press, reminding himself of something he had once read in the Bible about the meek and gentle Jesus, said it would be useless to send missionaries to the Far East anymore. That raises a very interesting question which I am sure they will discuss among themselves. One can imagine an interesting discussion taking place in the inner circles of the House of Rockefeller and the House of Morgan, who are at one and the same time — quite by accident of course — pillars of finance and pillars of the church and supporters of missionary enterprises of various kinds. "What shall we do with the heathens in the Orient? Shall we send missionaries to lead them to the Christian heaven or shall we send atomic bombs to blow them to hell?" There is a subject for debate, a debate on a macabre theme. But in any case, you can be sure that where American imperialism is involved, hell will get by far the greater number of the customers.

American imperialism has brought upon itself the fear and hatred of the whole world. American imperialism is regarded throughout the world today as the enemy of mankind. The First World War cost 12 million dead. Twelve million. The Second World War, within a quarter of a century, has already cost not less than 30 million dead; and there are not less than 30 million more to be starved to death before the results of the war are totalled up.

What a harvest of death capitalism has brought to the world! If the skulls of all of

the victims could be brought together and piled into one pyramid, what a high mountain that would make. What a monument to the achievements of capitalism that would be, and how fitting a symbol of what capitalist imperialism really is. I believe it would lack only one thing to make it perfect. That would be a big electric sign on the pyramid of skulls, proclaiming the ironical promise of the Four Freedoms. The dead at least are free from want and free from fear. But the survivors live in hunger and terror of the future.

Who won the war that cost over 30 million lives? Our cartoonist in the *Militant*, with great artistic merit and insight, explained it in a few strokes of the pen when she drew that picture of the capitalist with the moneybags in his hands, standing on top of the world with one foot on the graveyard and the other on destroyed cities, with the caption: "The Only Victor". The only winner is American imperialism and its satellites in other countries.

What are the perspectives? How do our masters visualise the future after this great achievement of the six-year war?

Before the Second World War, with all its horror and destruction of human life and human culture, is formally ended, they are already thinking and planning for the third.

Don't we have to stop these madmen and take power out of their hands? Can we doubt that the peoples of all the world are thinking it cannot go much further, that there must be some way to change it? Long ago the revolutionary Marxists said that the alternative facing humanity was either socialism or a new barbarism, that capitalism threatens to go down in ruins and drag civilisation with it. But in the light of what has been developed in this war and is projected for the future, I think we can say now that the alternative can be made even more precise: The alternative facing mankind is socialism or annihilation! It is a problem of whether capitalism is allowed to remain or whether the human race is to continue to survive on this planet.

We believe that the people of the world will waken to this frightful alternative and act in time to save themselves. We believe that before American imperialism, the new master of the world, has time to consolidate its victories, it will be attacked from two sides and defeated. On the one side the peoples of the world, transformed into the colonial slaves of Wall Street, will rebel against the imperialist master, as the conquered provinces rose against imperial Rome. Simultaneously with that uprising, and coordinating our struggle with it, we, the Trotskyist party, will lead the workers and plebeians of America in a revolutionary attack against our main enemy and the main enemy of mankind, the imperialists of the United States.

Five years ago today we first mourned and commemorated our great man of

ideas, Comrade Trotsky. Today, as revolutionary action is becoming a life-and-death necessity for hundreds of millions of people, as we prepare to go over from ideas to action — to action guided by ideas — we commemorate Trotsky as the great man of action, the organiser of workers, the leader of revolutions. That is the spirit in which we commemorate Comrade Trotsky tonight.

He enjoined us above everything else to build a party. And again I repeat what he said: "Not a party like other parties", but a party fit to lead a revolution, a party that does not dabble, does not go halfway, but carries the struggle through to the end.

If you are serious; if you mean business, if you want to take part in the fight for a better life for yourself and for the salvation of mankind, we invite you to join us in this party and take part in this great struggle.

There is no place for pessimists or fainthearted people in our party, no place for self-seekers, careerists, and bureaucrats. But the door is wide open to resolute workers who are determined to change the world and ready to stake their heads on the issue.

Trotsky has bequeathed to us a great heritage. He gave to us a great system of ideas which constitute our program. And he set before us the example of a man who was a model revolutionist, who lived and died for the cause of humanity, and who, above all, showed how to apply theory in action in the greatest revolution in history.

With this heritage we are armed and armoured for struggle and for victory. All that we, the disciples of Trotsky, need for that victory is to understand those ideas clearly, to assimilate them into our flesh and blood, to be true to them, and, above all, to apply them in action.

If we do that we can build a party that no power on Earth can break. We can build a party fit to lead the masses of America — to answer the imperialist program of war on the peoples of the world, with revolution at home and peace with the peoples of the world.■

The Treason of the Intellectuals

The following article appeared in the Militant*, May 24, 1947. In it Cannon indicts those leftist intellectuals of the 1930s who had made their peace with capitalism, often becoming rabid right-wingers. But he stresses that those committed intellectuals who throw in their lot with the revolutionary workers' movement can play a key role. Marx, Engels, Lenin, Luxemburg and Trotsky are outstanding examples.*

Whatever became of the revolutionary intellectuals — and why? What happened to the numerically formidable aggregation of cogitators and problem-solvers who challenged capitalism to a showdown fight in the unforgotten '30s and appeared to be all set to mount the barricades with fountain pens unsheathed?

Time was when it seemed that a section of the American intelligentsia, quartered in New York, was at long last preparing to emulate that renowned band of educated people in Western Europe and old Russia who so bravely revolted against the spiritual stagnation and decay of bourgeois society, abandoned their own class in disgust and contempt, formulated and popularised the socialist doctrines of the proletariat, and placed themselves at the head of its emancipation.

Alas, the hopes aroused by the vociferously uttered challenges of the American intellectuals proved to be immeasurably greater than their capacity to fulfil them. The contrast between their showing and that of the revolutionary intellectuals of Europe and tsarist Russia is appalling to contemplate. The latter went ahead of the workers' movement, organised it, supplied it with ideological weapons and inspired it to strive for great goals.

But here in America the radical intellectuals — with only a very few exceptions — abandoned the mission they had undertaken just at the time when the workers, rising out of nothingness, moved under their own power to create gigantic organisations which boldly engaged in head-on struggle against the most powerful monopolists. Great class battles have taken place, and more momentous ones are in preparation. The workers are on the march. But all is quiet on the intellectual front. The imperialists

"pacified" that sector without a fight.

The American intellectuals didn't simply step out for a rest, like tired warriors nursing their wounds after a hard campaign. They quit before the fight got really started. They took it on the lam. They deserted and betrayed. Their well-advertised revolt against capitalism ended "not with a bang but a whimper".

The learned professors such as Hook and Burnham, the writers such as Eastman and Corey, and the journalists whose names are too numerous to mention, did not fall back to an independent middle position after they had deserted the workers whom they had promised to lead and the youth whom they had promised truly to instruct. They went over to the enemy, unconditionally and all the way, with all their bags and such baggage as they had, and helped to lie the youth into the war.

And they lost no time about it. With the most unseemly haste, without a decent interval for meditation, they began forthwith to ideologise in behalf of American monopoly capitalism as calmly and easily as one changes his shirt. If you draw a line somewhere to the left of the Hearst press and to the right of the *New York Times*, you will identify the present political position of our absconding highbrows. Even Henry Wallace, with his populist-pacifist blather about the "common man" and "peace by understanding", is much too radical, too far to the left, for them. These newly converted servitors of capitalism outshout all others in their zeal, as the man who came to Christ late in life prayed more fervently than the Christians of longer standing and surer conviction.

Professor Sidney Hook, who once expounded the class struggle, declaimed against imperialist war and explained that workers' internationalism alone can lead to peace and socialism, now reveals in the *New York Times Magazine* that the basic conflict of our age is that between "democracy" and "totalitarianism".

Professor James Burnham once informed us, with straight-faced solemnity, that for him "socialism is a moral ideal". Today, with the force-worshipping mentality of a fascist and the irresponsibility of an idiot shouting "fire" in a crowded theatre, he incites the power-drunk American imperialists to convince the world of their benevolence by hurling atomic bombs.

Authors like Lewis Corey, who once wrote Marxist books against capitalism in favour of socialism, now writes other books in a directly opposite sense to justify and glorify capitalism. Max Eastman, the original champion of Trotsky and his revolutionary cause, now writes like Herbert Hoover, with the difference only that the style is better.

A fair-sized mob of journalists, who for a while served or aspired to serve the labour movement and the cause of internationalism, have comfortably settled back into editorial spots on the most conservative and reactionary newspapers and

magazines and labour there to "slant" the news and poison the wells of public information. A considerable number of the more educated or more sophisticated radicals, ex-Trotskyists or almost-Trotskyists, who fancied themselves to be racehorses, so to speak — and of purest breed at that — now work as harness-broken dray horses hauling loads for Henry Luce, the "American century" man, and contentedly munch their oats in the editorial stables of *Time-Life-Fortune*.

One and all, these fugitives from the revolution think the late Thomas Wolfe was off base when he said, "You can't go home again", and refute him with pragmatic proof: "We can and we did". To anyone who values and respects human dignity they present a most unattractive spectacle. Their performance borders on obscenity when they take time out from ballyhooing the "Truman Doctrine" to deliver little homilies about "independence" and to expatiate, like any hypocritical crook, mammon-serving sky pilot or confidence man, on the well-known virtues of "morality". They are just about as independent — and just about as moral — as advertising copywriters or the authors of radio commercials, including the singing variety.

The dominating fact of present-day society is the struggle between the two great classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, the outcome of which will decide the fate of humanity. No individual and no other class can be "independent" or neutral in this struggle. All must take sides and serve or follow one of the great classes or the other. The powerless, in-between, petty-bourgeois class, which is incapable of maintaining an independent policy, swings from one side to the other, always attracted to the side which displays the greatest power at the moment.

The New York intellectuals, unknown to themselves, are simply verifying this Marxist political law by swinging over to the dominant power of the present day, along with the rest of the petty-bourgeois class to which they belong. At the present time American monopoly capitalism gives the appearance of invincible power. That is what determines the current predilection of the petty-bourgeois class to side with the monopolists against the workers.

To be sure, the present picture of social relations is somewhat deceptive. The "invincibility" of American imperialism is only the temporary and superficial appearance of things and is certain to be exploded in the course of further developments. But the petty-bourgeois intellectuals would not know about that, for they are not much given to analysis, deep thinking and foresight.

No one can be "independent" in the struggle between the great classes. But even in the more limited sense of the term, the independence of character which enables and even requires one to make a free choice of ideas regardless of external circumstances and pressures, and to hold firmly to those which he considers to be right, to see a light

and follow it regardless — the quality which most precisely distinguishes the revolutionist from the functionary and the flunkey — even this kind of independence is alien to the palpitating New York intelligentsia who change their ideas according to changes of the weather and the atmospheric pressures of the day.

In the early '30s, when American capitalism was writhing in the depths of the crisis, while the Soviet Union under Stalin seemed to be going forward from one success to another — and physically annihilating the Trotskyist opposition in the process — the present day professional anti-Stalinists were nearly all fellow-travellers of Stalinism, sponsors of the Stalinist "League Against War and Fascism" and organisers of the "Artists and Writers Committee for Foster and Ford" in 1932.

Later on, when the economic conjuncture in capitalist America began to improve, at the same time that some spots began to show up in the Soviet sun, our doughty fellow-travellers began to travel in another direction, from Stalin and Browder to Roosevelt and Truman, some of them detouring and tipping their hats to Trotsky on the way.

These "independent thinkers" haven't the least idea what it means and what it takes to fight for an idea independently, against any odds whatever. They only know how to serve a power, not to create one of their own. And these professional "moralists" don't bother much about honesty and scrupulousness in practice.

In their apologist propaganda for American "democracy" they systematically throw the Stalinists and the Trotskyists together into one sack which they label alternatively "communist" and "totalitarian" — although they are well aware of the fundamental differences between these mortally antagonistic tendencies.

Their venomous hatred of the Trotskyists has the same profound psychological basis as that of the Stalinists. They hate us for the same reason that the Stalinists hate us — because we are witnesses to their treachery. Our existence and our struggle are evidence against them, and a reproach to them. Their desertion, of course, is not evidence of the elimination of the class struggle, which most of them discovered late and soon forgot. It is a sign, rather, of its sharpening and intensification — a process which exerts its pressure everywhere and squeezes people into their proper places.

The working class of America is taking these defections in stride, building up great organisations, tempering them in struggle and looking ever more confidently to a better future. That is the greatest assurance that the present state of affairs, which is not good for the great majority of people, can and will be changed for the better, for the workers have the power to change what needs to be changed and to do what needs to be done.

The terrified rout of the New York professors, writers, journalists and serious

thinkers, who didn't stop to think, would be comical — were it not for the sadly disappointed and betrayed hopes of the new generation of students who have been led into a blind alley of pessimism and resignation by these educated Judas goats. It is really too bad that the young generation in the universities, including the veterans who have returned to their studies bitter and disillusioned, have been temporarily disoriented by the circumstance that those ideologists, whom they had a right to look to for enlightenment and guidance, turned rotten before they became ripe, like apples blighted by an untimely frost.

The workers, too, need the forces of enlightenment and progress which a section of the educated classes, as individuals, can supply and did supply so notably in Europe and old Russia. It will happen here, too. There can be no doubt that the further disintegration of capitalist society in the United States will impel a section of the intelligentsia to revolt. This revolt will acquire great significance when it leads them, as it must, to join forces with the labour movement in the revolutionary struggle for the socialist transformation of society, which alone can save humanity from the abyss.

This union of revolutionary intellectuals with the best representatives of militant labour will open up a perspective of great promise for the leadership of the coming American revolution. But this promise, from the side of the intellectuals, depends entirely and exclusively on the new generation now approaching maturity.

The workers will make the emancipating revolution in any case, but the task will be easier if the young intellectuals contribute reinforcements to the leadership in time. For that the workers must look forward, not backward. The shameless traitors of the old generation are spiritually dead, and there is no such thing as resurrection. Cross them off. Look to the living and let the dead bury the dead.■

The Two Americas

The following keynote address was delivered on July 1, 1948 to the 13th National Convention of the Socialist Workers Party. It was broadcast live by the American Broadcasting System over a nationwide network. It was published in the Militant, *July 12, 1948.*

Comrade chairman, delegates and friends:

We meet in national convention at a time of the gravest world crisis — a crisis which contains the direct threat of a third and more terrible world war. The basic causes of this world crisis are no mystery.

The first cause is the breakdown of capitalism throughout Europe — and Asia — and the colonial lands. The working people want peace and bread, which capitalism cannot give. The colonial slaves don't want to be slaves any more — and capitalism cannot live without colonial slaves. The working people, the poor peasants and the colonial slaves are in revolt against the continued rule of bankers and landlords.

On the other hand, American capitalism — the last solvent stronghold of an outlived and doomed world system — is trying to prop up the hated regimes of capitalists and kings and landlords by economic pressure and military force.

These are the two main elements of the present world crisis.

The Wall Street money-sharks, and the brass hats of Prussian mentality, are riding high in Washington these days. The masters of America, drunk with power, are threatening and terrifying the people of the world — seeking to dominate and enslave them — striving to transform the other countries of the world into colonies of the American empire.

Their program is a program of madness, and it is doomed to failure. The great majority of the peoples of the world do not want to be slaves of America. That is to their credit and we applaud them for it. The attempt to enslave them would be profitable only for the small group of monopolists — and the military caste, who dream of careers as colonial administrators of conquered peoples.

But the criminal adventure would encounter such ferocious resistance that the American people at home would have to pay an enormous cost in living standards ruined by inflation, in the stamping out of democracy by military rule. And America's young sons would have to pay in misery, blood and death. The American people would be among the first victims of the insane campaign of American imperialism to conquer and enslave the world.

To avoid this calamity it is necessary now to show the people of the world the other America. For there are two Americas — and millions of the people already distinguish between them.

One is the America of the imperialists — of the little clique of capitalists, landlords, and militarists who are threatening and terrifying the world. This is the America the people of the world hate and fear.

There is the other America — the America of the workers and farmers and the "little people". They constitute the great majority of the people. They do the work of the country. They revere its old democratic traditions — its old record of friendship for the people of other lands, in their struggles against kings and despots — its generous asylum once freely granted to the oppressed.

This is the America which must and will solve the world crisis — by taking power out of the hands of the little clique of exploiters and parasites, and establishing a government of workers and farmers. The workers' and farmers' government will immediately proceed to change things *fundamentally* —

Throw out the profit and rent hogs, and increase the living standards of the people who do the useful work.

Assure freedom and democratic rights to all, not forgetting those who are denied any semblance of them now.

Call back the truculent admirals from the seven seas — and ground the airplanes with their dangling bombs.

Hold out the hand of friendship and comradely help to the oppressed and hungry people in the world.

These people don't want to fight anybody. They only want to live. There are two billion people in the world — and more than half of them don't get enough to eat. These people should be helped — not threatened, not driven back into slavery, under the social system that has kept half of them hungry all their lives.

It is well to recall now that America was born of revolution in 1776, and secured its unity as a nation through another revolution — the Civil War — which smashed the abomination of chattel slavery in the process. Our great, rich, wonderful country was once the light and the hope of the world. But our America has fallen into the hands of

a small, selfish group, who are trying to dominate the world — and to set up a police state at home.

These Wall Street money-sharks are just as foreign to the real America as were the despots who ruled the land before the revolution of 1776. They are just as foreign as were the traffickers in human flesh and blood — the slave owners — whose power was broken by the Civil War — the blessed second American revolution. These imperialist rulers of America are the worst enemies of the American people.

American democracy, under their rule, is slipping away. The fear that oppressed Mark Twain, the fear that America would lose its democracy, is steadily becoming a reality. The Taft-Hartley Law is but the most recent instance of this ominous trend. The divine right of kings has reappeared in America — disguised as the divine right of judges to issue injunctions and levy fines against labour organisations.

Only three years have passed since the imperialists finished the last slaughter. And now they are drafting the youth for another. Militarism is becoming entrenched in America. Militarism — so long synonymous with goose-stepping Prussianism — is now to be made synonymous with Americanism, if big business has its way. A large section of the sturdy immigrants who helped to build this country came here to escape militarism. Now their grandsons face the same brutal regimentation here.

All this is part and parcel of the development of capitalism — the system which puts profits above all other considerations. The capitalist system has long outlived its usefulness. Capitalism offers no future to the people but depressions, imperialist wars, fascism, universal violence and a final plunge into barbarism.

To avoid such a fate, the workers of the United States must go into politics on their own account, independent of all capitalist politics. They must take power, establish a workers' and farmers' government and reorganise the economy of the country on a socialist basis. Socialist economy in the United States, eliminating capitalist wars, profits and waste, will be so productive as to ensure a rich living for all who are willing and able to work, and provide security and ample means for the aged and infirm.

We should also help the hungry people of the world to improve their standard of life. Socialist America will rapidly make that possible by helping them to secure their own freedom and develop their own economy. Eventually, the economy of the entire world will be united and planned on a socialist basis. This will bring universal peace — and undreamed of abundance for all people everywhere. The real upward march of humanity will begin.

The American working class can open up the way to this new world. They are the majority. They have the power in America. All that is necessary is for the working class to understand it — and to use it.

We firmly believe they will do so. We firmly believe the real America — the America of the workers, the people — will help save the world by saving herself.

We, the American Trotskyists — we, the national convention of the Socialist Workers Party, summon our America to her great destiny — not as conqueror but as liberator of the world.■

MAKING THE REVOLUTION

Cover of 1946 pamphlet containing Cannon's report on the "Theses on the American Revolution". The cover motif is by artist and Militant *cartoonist Laura Gray.*

Socialism & Democracy

Cannon gave the following talk to a meeting at the SWP's West Coast Vacation School, September 1, 1957. It was first published in the Fall 1957 International Socialist Review.

Comrades, I am glad to be here with you today, and to accept your invitation to speak on socialism and democracy. It is a most timely subject, and in the discussion of socialist regroupment it takes first place. Before we can make real headway in the discussion of other important parts of the program, we have to find agreement on what we mean by socialism and what we mean by democracy, and how they are related to each other, and what we are going to say to the American workers about them.

Strange as it may seem, an agreement on these two simple, elementary points, as experience has already demonstrated, will not be arrived at easily. The confusion and demoralisation created by Stalinism, and the successful exploitation of this confusion by the ruling capitalists of this country and all their agents and apologists, still hang heavily over all sections of the workers' movement. We have to recognise that. Even in the ranks of people who call themselves socialists, we encounter a wide variety of understandings and misunderstandings about the real meaning of those simple terms, socialism and democracy. And in the great ranks of the American working class, the fog of misunderstanding and confusion is even thicker. All this makes the clarification of these questions a problem of burning importance and immediacy. In fact, it is first on the agenda in all circles of the radical movement.

The widespread misunderstanding and confusion about socialism and democracy has profound causes. These causes must be frankly stated and examined before they can be removed. And we must undertake to remove them, if we are to try in earnest to get to the root of the problem.

Shakespeare's Marc Antony reminded us that evil quite often outlives its authors. That is true in the present case also. Stalin is dead; but the crippling influence of Stalinism on the minds of a whole generation of people who considered themselves

socialists or communists lives after Stalin. This is testified to most eloquently by those members and fellow travellers of the Communist Party who have formally disavowed Stalinism since the Twentieth Congress, while retaining some of its most perverted conceptions and definitions.

Socialism, in the old days that I can recall, was often called the society of the free and equal, and democracy was defined as the rule of the people. These simple definitions still ring true to me, as they did when I first heard them many years ago. But in later years we have heard different definitions which are far less attractive. These same people whom I have mentioned — leaders of the Communist Party and fellow travellers who have sworn off Stalin without really changing any of the Stalinist ideas they assimilated — still blandly describe the state of affairs in the Soviet Union, with all its most exaggerated social and economic inequality, ruled over by the barbarous dictatorship of a privileged minority, as a form of "socialism". And they still manage to say, with straight faces, that the hideous police regimes in the satellite countries, propped up by Russian military force, are some kind of "people's democracies".

When such people say it would be a fine idea for all of us to get together in the struggle for socialism and democracy, it seems to me it would be appropriate to ask them, by way of preliminary inquiry: "Just what do you mean by socialism, and what do you mean by democracy? Do you mean what Marx and Engels and Lenin said? Or do you mean what Stalin did?" They are not the same thing as can be easily proved, and it is necessary to choose between one set of definitions and the other.

This confusion of terminology has recently been illustrated by an article of Howard Fast, the well-known writer, who was once awarded the Stalin Prize. For a long time Fast supported what he called "socialism" in the Soviet Union, with his eyes shut. And then Khrushchev's speech at the Twentieth Congress, and other revelations following that, opened Fast's eyes, and he doesn't like what he sees. That is to his credit. But he still calls it "socialism". In an article in *Masses and Mainstream* he describes what he had found out about this peculiar "socialism" that had prevailed in the Soviet Union under Stalin and still prevails under Stalin's successors.

This is what Howard Fast said: "In Russia, we have socialism without democracy. We have socialism without trial by jury, habeas corpus or … protection against the abuse of confession by torture. We have socialism without civil liberty … We have socialism without public avenues of protest. We have socialism without equality for minorities. We have socialism without any right of free artistic creation. In so many words, we have socialism without morality."

These are the words of Howard Fast. I agree with everything he says there, except the preface he gives to all his qualifications — that we have "socialism" without this and

that, we have "socialism" without any of the features that a socialist society was supposed to have in the conceptions of the movement before Stalinism. It is as though Fast has discovered different varieties of socialism. Like mushrooms. You go out and pick the right kind and you can cook a tasty dish. But if you gather up the kind commonly known as toadstools and call them mushrooms, you will poison yourself. Stalinist "socialism" is about as close to the real thing as a toadstool is to an edible mushroom.

Now, of course, the Stalinists and their apologists have not created all the confusion in this country about the meaning of socialism, at least not directly. At every step for 30 years, the Stalinist work of befuddlement and demoralisation, of debasing words into their opposite meanings, has been supported by reciprocal action of the same kind by the ruling capitalists and their apologists. They have never failed to take the Stalinists at their word, and to point to the Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union, with all of its horrors, and to say: "That is socialism. The American way of life is better."

It is these people who have given us, as their contribution to sowing confusion in the minds of people, the delightful definition of the capitalist sector of the globe, where the many toil in poverty for the benefit of the few, as "the free world". And they describe the United States, where the workers have a right to vote every four years, if they don't move around too much, but have no say about the control of the shop and the factory; where all the means of mass information and communication are monopolised by a few — they describe all that as the ideal democracy, for which the workers should gladly fight and die.

It is true that Stalinism has been the primary cause of the demoralisation of a whole generation of American *radical* workers. There is no question of that. But the role of Stalinism in prejudicing the great American working class against socialism, and inducing them to accept the counterfeit democracy of American capitalism as the lesser evil, has been mainly indirect. The active role in this miseducation and befuddlement has been played by the American ruling minority, through all their monopolised means of communication and information.

They have cynically accepted the Stalinist definition and have obligingly advertised the Soviet Union, with its grinding poverty and glaring inequality, with its ubiquitous police terror, frame-ups, mass murders and slave-labour camps, as a "socialist" order of society. They have utilised the crimes of Stalinism to prejudice the American workers against the very name of socialism. And worst of all, comrades, we have to recognise that this campaign has been widely successful, and that we have to pay for it. We cannot build a strong socialist movement in this country until we overcome this confusion in the minds of the American workers about the real meaning of socialism.

This game of confusing and misrepresenting has been facilitated for the capitalists

and aided to a considerable extent by the social democrats and the labour bureaucracy, who are themselves privileged beneficiaries of the American system, and who give a socialist and labour colouring to the defence of American "democracy". In addition to all that, we have to recognise that in this country, more than any other in the world, the tremendous pressures of imperialist prosperity and power and the witch-hunt persecution have deeply affected the thinking of many people who call themselves radicals or ex-radicals. These powerful pressures have brought many of them to a reconciliation with capitalist society and to the defence of capitalist democracy, if not as a paradise, at least as a lesser evil and the best that can be hoped for.

There is no doubt that this drumfire of bourgeois propaganda, supplemented by the universal revulsion against Stalinism, has profoundly affected the sentiments of the American working class, including the bulk of its most progressive and militant and potentially revolutionary sectors.

After all that has happened in the past quarter of a century, the American workers have become more acutely sensitive than ever before to the value and importance of democratic rights. That, in my opinion, is the progressive side of their reaction, which we should fully share. The horrors of fascism, as they were revealed in the '30s, and which were never dreamed of by the socialists in the old days, and the no less monstrous crimes of Stalinism, which became public knowledge later — all this has inspired a fear and hatred of any kind of dictatorship in the minds of the American working class. And to the extent that the Stalinist dictatorship in Russia has been identified with the name of socialism, and that this identification has been taken as a matter of course, the American workers have been prejudiced against socialism.

That's the bitter truth, and it must be looked straight in the face. This barrier to the expansion and development of the American socialist movement will not be overcome, and even a regroupment of the woefully limited forces of those who at present consider themselves socialists will yield but little fruit, unless and until we find a way to break down this misunderstanding and prejudice against socialism, and convince at least the more advanced American workers that we socialists are the most aggressive and consistent advocates of democracy in all fields and that, in fact, we are completely devoted to the idea that socialism cannot be realised otherwise than by democracy.

The socialist movement in America will not advance again significantly until it regains the initiative and takes the offensive against capitalism and all its agents in the labour movement precisely on the issue of democracy. What is needed is not a propaganda device or trick, but a formulation of the issue as it really stands; and, indeed, as it has always stood with real socialists ever since the modern movement was first proclaimed 109 years ago. For this counteroffensive against bourgeois propaganda

we do not need to look for new formulations. Our task, as socialists living and fighting in this day and hour, is simply to restate what socialism and democracy meant to the founders of our movement, and to all the authentic disciples who followed them; to bring their formulations up to date and apply them to present conditions in the United States.

This restatement of basic aims and principles cannot wait; it is, in fact, the burning necessity of the hour. There is no room for misunderstanding among us as to what such a restatement of our position means and requires. It requires a clean break with all Stalinist and social democratic perversions and distortions of the real meaning of socialism and democracy and their relation to each other, and a return to the original formulations and definitions. Nothing short of this will do.

The authentic socialist movement, as it was conceived by its founders and as it has developed over the past century, has been the most democratic movement in all history. No formulation of this question can improve on the classic statement of the *Communist Manifesto*, with which modern scientific socialism was proclaimed to the world in 1848. The *Communist Manifesto* said:

> All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interest of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority.[25]

The authors of the *Communist Manifesto* linked socialism and democracy together as end and means. The "self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority" cannot be anything else but democratic, if we understand by "democracy" the rule of the people, the majority. The Stalinist claim — that the task of reconstructing society on a socialist basis can be farmed out to a privileged and uncontrolled bureaucracy, while the workers remain without voice or vote in the process — is just as foreign to the thoughts of Marx and Engels, and of all their true disciples, as the reformist idea that socialism can be handed down to the workers by degrees by the capitalists who exploit them.

All such fantastic conceptions were answered in advance by the reiterated statement of Marx and Engels that "the emancipation of the working class is the task of the workers themselves".[26] That is the language of Marx and Engels — "the task of the workers themselves". That was just another way of saying — as they said explicitly many times — that the socialist reorganisation of society requires a workers' revolution. Such a revolution is unthinkable without the active participation of the majority of the working class, which is itself the big majority of the population. Nothing could be more democratic than that.

Moreover, the great teachers did not limit the democratic action of the working

class to the overthrow of bourgeois supremacy. They defined democracy as the form of governmental rule in the transition period between capitalism and socialism. It is explicitly stated in the *Communist Manifesto* — and I wonder how many people have forgotten this in recent years — "The first step", said the *Manifesto*, "in the revolution by the working class, is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy."[27]

That is the way Marx and Engels formulated the first aim of the revolution — to make the workers the ruling class, to establish democracy, which, in their view, is the same thing. From this precise formulation it is clear that Marx and Engels did not consider the limited, formal democracy under capitalism, which screens the exploitation and the rule of the great majority by the few, as real democracy. In order to have real democracy, the workers must become the "ruling class". Only the revolution that replaces the class rule of the capitalists by the class rule of the workers can really establish democracy, not in fiction, but in fact. So said Marx and Engels.

They never taught that the simple nationalisation of the forces of production signified the establishment of socialism. That's not stated by Marx and Engels anywhere. Nationalisation only lays the economic foundations for the transition to socialism. Still less could they have sanctioned, even if they had been able to imagine, the monstrous idea that socialism could be realised without freedom and without equality; that nationalised production and planned economy, controlled by a ruthless police dictatorship, complete with prisons, torture chambers and forced-labour camps, could be designated as a "socialist" society. That unspeakable perversion and contradiction of terms belongs to the Stalinists and their apologists.

All the great Marxists defined socialism as a classless society — with abundance, freedom and equality for all; a society in which there would be no state, not even a democratic workers' state, to say nothing of a state in the monstrous form of a bureaucratic dictatorship of a privileged minority.

The Soviet Union today is a transitional order of society, in which the bureaucratic dictatorship of a privileged minority, far from serving as the agency to bridge the transition to socialism, stands as an obstacle to harmonious development in that direction. In the view of Marx and Engels, and of Lenin and Trotsky who came after them, the transition from capitalism to the classless society of socialism could only be carried out by an ever-expanding democracy, involving the masses of the workers more and more in all phases of social life, by direct participation and control.

And, in the course of further progressive development in all fields, as Lenin expressed it, even this democracy, this workers' democracy, as a form of class rule, will outlive itself. Lenin said: "Democracy will gradually change and become a habit, and

finally wither away", since democracy itself, properly understood, is a form of state, that is, an instrument of class rule, for which there will be no need and no place in the classless socialist society.

Forecasting the socialist future, the *Communist Manifesto* said: "In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association." Mark that: "an association", not a state — "an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all".[28]

Trotsky said the same thing in other words when he spoke of socialism as "a pure and limpid social system which is accommodated to the self-government of the toilers … and uninterrupted growth of universal equality — all-sided flowering of human personality … unselfish, honest and human relations between human beings".[29]

The bloody abomination of Stalinism cannot be passed off as a substitute for this picture of the socialist future and the democratic transition period leading up to it, as it was drawn by the great Marxists.

And I say we will not put the socialist movement of this country on the right track and restore its rightful appeal to the best sentiments of the working class of this country and above all to the young, until we begin to call socialism by its right name as the great teachers did. Until we make it clear that we stand for an ever-expanding workers' democracy as the only road to socialism. Until we root out every vestige of Stalinist perversion and corruption of the meaning of socialism and democracy, and restate the thoughts and formulations of the authentic Marxist teachers.

But the Stalinist definitions of socialism and democracy are not the only perversions that have to be rejected before we can find a sound basis for the regroupment of socialist forces in the United States. The definitions of the social democrats of all hues and gradations are just as false. And in this country they are a still more formidable obstacle because they have deeper roots, and they are tolerantly nourished by the ruling class itself.

The liberals, the social democrats and the bureaucratic bosses of the American trade unions are red-hot supporters of "democracy". At least, that is what they say. And they strive to herd the workers into the imperialist war camp under the general slogan of "democracy versus dictatorship". That is their slippery and consciously deceptive substitute for the real "irrepressible conflict" of our age, the conflict between capitalism and socialism. They speak of democracy as something that stands by itself above the classes and the class struggle, and not as the form of rule of one class over another.

Lenin put his finger on this misrepresentation of reality in his polemic against Kautsky. Lenin said: "A liberal naturally speaks of 'democracy' in general; but a Marxist

will never forget to ask: 'for what class?' Everyone knows, for instance (and Kautsky the 'historian' knows it too), that rebellions, or even strong ferment, among the slaves in antiquity at once revealed the fact that the state of antiquity was essentially a *dictatorship of the slaveowners*. Did this dictatorship abolish democracy *among*, and *for*, the slaveowners? Everybody knows that it did not."[30]

Capitalism, under any kind of government — whether bourgeois democracy or fascism or a military police state — under any kind of government, capitalism is a system of minority rule, and the principal beneficiaries of capitalist democracy are the small minority of exploiting capitalists; scarcely less so than the slaveowners of ancient times were the actual rulers and the real beneficiaries of the Athenian democracy.

To be sure, the workers in the United States have a right to vote periodically for one of two sets of candidates selected for them by the two capitalist parties. And if they can dodge the witch-hunters, they can exercise the right of free speech and free press. But this formal right of free speech and free press is outweighed rather heavily by the inconvenient circumstance that the small capitalist minority happens to enjoy a complete monopoly of ownership and control of all the big presses, and of television and radio, and of all other means of communication and information.

We who oppose the capitalist regime have a right to nominate our own candidates, if we're not arrested under the Smith Act before we get to the city clerk's office, and if we can comply with the laws that deliberately restrict the rights of minority parties. That is easier said than done in this country of democratic capitalism. In one state after another, no matter how many petitions you circulate, you can't comply with the regulations and you can't get on the ballot. This is the state of affairs in California, Ohio, Illinois, and an increasing number of other states. And if you succeed in complying with all the technicalities, as we did last year in New York, they just simply rule you out anyhow if it is not convenient to have a minority party on the ballot. But outside of all these and other difficulties and restrictions, we have free elections and full democracy.

It is true that the Negro people in the United States, 94 years after the Emancipation Proclamation, are still fighting for the right to vote in the South, and for the right to take a vacant seat on a public bus; or to send their children to a tax-supported public school, and things of that kind — which you may call restrictions of democracy in the United States.

But even so, with all that, a little democracy is better than none. We socialists have never denied that. And after the experiences of fascism and McCarthyism, and of military and police dictatorships in many parts of the world, and of the horrors of Stalinism, we have all the more reason to value every democratic provision for the protection of human rights and human dignity; to fight for more democracy, not less.

Socialists should not argue with the American worker when he says he wants democracy and doesn't want to be ruled by a dictatorship. Rather, we should recognise that his demand for human rights and democratic guarantees, now and in the future, is in itself progressive. The socialist task is not to deny democracy, but to expand it and make it more complete. That is the true socialist tradition. The Marxists, throughout the century-long history of our movement, have always valued and defended bourgeois democratic rights, restricted as they were; and have utilised them for the education and organisation of the workers in the struggle to establish full democracy by abolishing the capitalist rule altogether.

The right of union organisation is a precious right, a democratic right, but it was not "given" to the workers in the United States. It took the mighty and irresistible labour upheaval of the '30s, culminating in the great sit-down strikes — a semi-revolution of the American workers — to establish in reality the right of union organisation in mass-production industry.

And yet today — I am still speaking under the heading of democracy — 20 years after the sit-down strikes firmly established the auto workers' union, the automobile industry is still privately owned and ruled by a dictatorship of financial sharks. The auto workers have neither voice nor vote in the management of the industry which they have created, nor in regulating the speed of the assembly line which consumes their lives. Full control of production in auto and steel and everywhere, according to the specific terms of the union contract, is still the exclusive prerogative of "management", that is, of the absentee owners, who contribute nothing to the production of automobiles or steel or anything else.

What's democratic about that? The claim that we have an almost perfect democracy in this country doesn't stand up against the fact that the workers have no democratic rights in industry at all, as far as regulating production is concerned; that these rights are exclusively reserved for the parasitic owners, who never see the inside of a factory.

In the old days, the agitators of the Socialist Party and the IWW — who were real democrats — used to give a shorthand definition of socialism as "industrial democracy". I don't know how many of you have heard that. It was a common expression: "industrial democracy", the extension of democracy to industry, the democratic control of industry by the workers themselves, with private ownership eliminated. That socialist demand for real democracy was taken for granted in the time of Debs and Haywood, when the American socialist movement was still young and uncorrupted.

You never hear a "democratic" labour leader say anything like that today. The defence of "democracy" by the social democrats and the labour bureaucrats always turns out in practice to be a defence of "democratic" capitalism, or as Beck and

McDonald call it, "people's capitalism". And I admit they have a certain stake in it, and a certain justification for defending it, as far as their personal interests are concerned.

And always, in time of crisis, these labour leaders — who talk about democracy all the time, as against dictatorship in the "socialist countries", as they call them — easily excuse and defend all kinds of violations of even this limited bourgeois democracy. They are far more tolerant of lapses from the formal rules of democracy by the capitalists than by the workers. They demand that the class struggle of the workers against the exploiters be conducted by the formal rules of bourgeois democracy, at all stages of its development — up to and including the stage of social transformation and the defence of the new society against attempts at capitalist restoration. They say it has to be strictly "democratic" all the way. No emergency measures are tolerated; everything must be strictly and formally democratic according to the rules laid down by the capitalist minority. They burn incense to democracy as an immutable principle, an abstraction standing above the social antagonisms.

But when the capitalist class, in its struggle for self-preservation, cuts corners around its own professed democratic principles, the liberals, the social democrats and the labour skates have a way of winking, or looking the other way, or finding excuses for it.

For example, they do not protest when the American imperialists wage war according to the rules of war, which are not quite the same thing as the rules of "democracy". When the atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the most abominable atrocity in all history — the bombing of a defenceless civilian population and the wiping out of whole cities of men, women and children — the best these liberals, labour fakers and social democratic defenders of American democracy could offer was the plaintive bleat of Norman Thomas. You know, he was supporting the war, naturally, being a social democrat. But Norman Thomas rose up after Nagasaki and Hiroshima were wiped off the face of the Earth and said the bombs should not have been dropped "without warning". The others said nothing.

These professional democrats have no objection to the authoritarian rule of the military forces of the capitalist state, which deprives the rank-and-file soldiers of all democratic rights in life-and-death matters, including the right to elect their own officers. The dictatorial rule of MacArthur in Japan, who acted as a tsar over a whole conquered country, was never questioned by these professional opponents of all other dictators. They are against the dictators in the Kremlin, but the dictator in Japan — that was a horse of another colour. All that, you see, concerns war; and nothing, not even the sacred principles of "democracy", can be allowed to stand in the way of the victory of the American imperialists in the war and the cinching-up of the victory

afterward in the occupation.

But in the class struggle of the workers against the capitalists to transform society, which is the fiercest war of all, and in the transition period after the victory of the workers, the professional democrats demand that the formal rules of bourgeois democracy, as defined by the minority of exploiters, be scrupulously observed at every step. No emergency measures are allowed.

By these different responses in different situations of a class nature, the professional democrats simply show that their class bias determines their judgment in each case, and show at the same time that their professed devotion to the rules of formal democracy, at all times and under all conditions, is a fraud.

And when it comes to the administration of workers' organisations under their control, the social democrats and the reformist labour leaders pay very little respect to their own professed democratic principles. The trade unions in the United States today, as you all know, are administered and controlled by little cliques of richly privileged bureaucrats, who use the union machinery, and the union funds, and a private army of goon squads, and — whenever necessary — the help of the employers and the government, to keep their own "party" in control of the unions, and to suppress and beat down any attempt of the rank and file to form an opposition "party" to put up an opposition slate. And yet, without freedom of association and organisation, without the right to form groups and parties of different tendencies, there is and can be no real democracy anywhere.

In practice, the American labour bureaucrats, who piously demand democracy in the one-party totalitarian domain of Stalinism, come as close as they can to maintaining a total one-party rule in their own domain. Kipling said: "The colonel's lady and Judy O'Grady are sisters under the skin." The Stalinist bureaucrats in Russia and the trade-union bureaucrats in the United States are not sisters, but they are much more alike than different. They are essentially of the same breed, a privileged caste dominated above all by motives of self-benefit and self-preservation at the expense of the workers and against the workers.

The privileged bureaucratic caste everywhere is the most formidable obstacle to democracy and socialism. The struggle of the working class in both sections of the now divided world has become, in the most profound meaning of the term, a struggle against the usurping privileged bureaucracy.

In the Soviet Union, it is a struggle to restore the genuine workers' democracy established by the revolution of 1917. Workers' democracy has become a burning necessity to assure the harmonious transition to socialism. That is the meaning of the political revolution against the bureaucracy now developing throughout the whole

Soviet sphere, which every socialist worthy of the name unreservedly supports. There is no sense in talking about regroupment with people who don't agree on that, on defence and support of the Soviet workers against the Soviet bureaucrats.

In the United States, the struggle for workers' democracy is preeminently a struggle of the rank and file to gain democratic control of their own organisations. That is the necessary condition to prepare the final struggle to abolish capitalism and "establish democracy" in the country as a whole. No party in this country has a right to call itself socialist unless it stands foursquare for the rank-and-file workers of the United States against the bureaucrats.

In my opinion, effective and principled regroupment of socialist forces requires full agreement on these two points. That is the necessary starting point. Capitalism does not survive as a social system by its own strength, but by its influence within the workers' movement, reflected and expressed by the labour aristocracy and the bureaucracy. So the fight for workers' democracy is inseparable from the fight for socialism, and is the condition for its victory. Workers' democracy is the only road to socialism, here in the United States and everywhere else, all the way from Moscow to Los Angeles, and from here to Budapest.■

The Russian Revolution & the Black Struggle in the United States

This article was first published in the Summer 1959 issue of International Socialist Review, *under the title "The Russian Revolution and the American Negro Movement".*

All through the first 10 years of American communism, the party was preoccupied with the Negro question, and gradually arrived at a policy different and superior to that of traditional American radicalism. Yet in my published recollections of this period, the Negro question does not appear anywhere as the subject of internal controversy between the major factions. The reason for this was that none of the American leaders came up with any new ideas on this explosive problem on their own account; and none of the factions, as such, sponsored any of the changes in approach, attitude and policy which were gradually effected by the time the party finished its first decade.

The main discussions on the Negro question took place in Moscow, and the new approach to the problem was elaborated there. As early as the Second Congress of the Comintern in 1920, "The Negroes in America" was a point on the agenda, and a preliminary discussion of the question took place. Historical research will prove conclusively that CP policy on the Negro question got its initial impulse from Moscow, and also that all further elaborations of this policy, up to and including the adoption of the "self-determination" slogan in 1928 came from Moscow.

Under constant prodding and pressure from the Russians in the Comintern, the party made a beginning with Negro work in its first 10 years; but it recruited very few Negroes and its influence in the Negro community didn't amount to much. From this it is easy to draw the pragmatic conclusion that all the talk and bother about policy in that decade, from New York to Moscow, was much ado about nothing, and that the results of Russian intervention were completely negative.

That is, perhaps, the conventional assessment in these days of the Cold War when aversion to all things Russian is the conventional substitute for considered opinion. But it is not true history — not by a long shot. The first 10 years of American communism are too short a period for definitive judgment of the results of the new approach to the Negro question imposed on the American party by the Comintern.

Historical treatment of Communist Party policy and action on the Negro question, and of Russian influence in shaping it in the first 10 years of the party's existence, however exhaustive and detailed, cannot be adequate unless the inquiry is projected into the next decade. It took the first 10 years for the young party to get fairly started in this previously unexplored field. The spectacular achievements in the '30s cannot he understood without reference to this earlier decade of change and reorientation. That's where the later actions and results came from.

* * *

A serious analysis of the whole complex process has to begin with recognition that the American communists in the early '20s, like all other radical organisations of that and earlier times, had nothing to start with on the Negro question but an inadequate *theory*, a false or indifferent *attitude* and the adherence of a few individual Negroes of radical or revolutionary bent.

The earlier socialist movement, out of which the Communist Party was formed, never recognised any need for a special program on the Negro question. It was considered purely and simply as an economic problem, part of the struggle between the workers and the capitalists; nothing could be done about the special problems of discrimination and inequality this side of socialism.

The best of the earlier socialists were represented by Debs, who was friendly to all races and purely free from prejudice. But the limitedness of the great agitator's view on this far from simple problem was expressed in his statement: "We have nothing special to offer the Negro, and we cannot make separate appeals to all the races. The Socialist Party is the party of the whole working class, regardless of colour — the whole working class of the whole world." (Ray Ginger: *The Bending Cross*) That was considered a very advanced position at the time, but it made no provision for active support of the Negro's special claim for a little equality here and now, or in the foreseeable future, on the road to socialism.

And even Debs, with his general formula that missed the main point — the burning issue of ever-present discrimination against the Negroes every way they turned — was far superior in this regard, as in all others, to Victor Berger, who was an outspoken white supremacist. Here is a summary pronouncement from a Berger editorial in his

Milwaukee paper, the *Social Democratic Herald*: "There can be no doubt that the Negroes and mulattoes constitute a lower race." That was "Milwaukee socialism" on the Negro question, as expounded by its ignorant and impudent leader-boss. A harried and hounded Negro couldn't mix that very well with his Milwaukee beer, even if he had a nickel and could find a white man's saloon where he could drink a glass of beer — at the back end of the bar.

Berger's undisguised chauvinism was never the official position of the party. There were other socialists, like William English Walling who was an advocate of equal rights for the Negroes, and one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People in 1909. But such individuals were a small minority among the socialists and radicals before the First World War and the Russian Revolution.

The inadequacy of traditional socialist policy on the Negro question is amply documented by the historians of the movement, Ira Kipnis and David Shannon. The general and prevailing attitude of the Socialist Party toward the Negroes is summed up by Shannon as follows:

"They were not important in the party, the party made no special effort to attract Negro members, and the party was generally disinterested in, if not actually hostile to, the effort of Negroes to improve their position in American capitalist society." And further: "The party held that the sole salvation of the Negro was the same as the sole salvation of the white: 'Socialism'."

In the meantime, nothing could be done about the Negro question as such, and the less said about it the better. Sweep it under the rug.

Such was the traditional position inherited by the early Communist Party from the preceding socialist movement out of which it had come. The policy and practice of the trade union movement was even worse. The IWW barred nobody from membership because of "race, colour or creed". But the predominant AFL unions, with only a few exceptions, were lily-white job trusts. They also had nothing special to offer the Negroes; nothing at all, in fact.

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The difference — and it was a *profound* difference — between the Communist Party of the '20s and its socialist and radical ancestors, was signified by its break with this tradition. The American communists in the early days, under the influence and pressure of the Russians in the Comintern, were slowly and painfully learning to change their *attitude*; to assimilate the new theory of the Negro question as a *special* question of doubly-exploited second-class citizens, requiring a program of special demands as

part of the overall program — and to start doing something about it.

The true importance of this profound change, in all its dimensions, cannot be adequately measured by the results in the '20s. The first 10 years have to be considered chiefly as the preliminary period of reconsideration and discussion and change of attitude and policy on the Negro question — in preparation for future activity in this field.

The effects of this change and preparation in the '20s, brought about by the Russian intervention, were to manifest themselves explosively in the next decade. The ripely favourable conditions for radical agitation and organisation among the Negroes, produced by the Great Depression, found the Communist Party ready to move in this field as no other radical organisation in this country had ever done before.

* * *

Everything new and progressive on the Negro question came from Moscow, after the revolution of 1917, and as a result of the revolution — not only for the American communists who responded directly, but for all others concerned with the question.

By themselves, the American communists never thought of anything new or different from the traditional position of American radicalism on the Negro question. That, as the above quotations from Kipnis' and Shannon's histories show, was pretty weak in theory and still weaker in practice. The simplistic formula that the Negro problem was merely economic, a part of the capital-labour problem, never struck fire among the Negroes — who knew better even if they didn't say so; they had to live with brutal discrimination every day and every hour.

There was nothing subtle or concealed about this discrimination. Everybody knew that the Negro was getting the worst of it at every turn, but hardly anybody cared about it or wanted to do anything to try to moderate or change it. The 90% white majority of American society, including its working-class sector, North as well as South, was saturated with prejudice against the Negro; and the socialist movement reflected this prejudice to a considerable extent — even though, in deference to the ideal of human brotherhood, the socialist attitude was muted and took the form of evasion. The old theory of American radicalism turned out in practice to be a formula for inaction on the Negro front, and — incidentally — a convenient shield for the dormant racial prejudices of the white radicals themselves.

The Russian intervention changed all that, and changed it drastically, and for the better. Even before the First World War and the Russian Revolution, Lenin and the Bolsheviks were distinguished from all other tendencies in the international socialist and labour movement by their concern with the problems of oppressed nations and

national minorities, and affirmative support of their struggles for freedom, independence and the right of self-determination. The Bolsheviks gave this support to all "people without equal rights" sincerely and earnestly, but there was nothing "philanthropic" about it. They also recognised the great revolutionary potential in the situation of oppressed peoples and nations, and saw them as important allies of the international working class in the revolutionary struggle against capitalism.

After November 1917 this new doctrine — with special emphasis on the Negroes — began to be transmitted to the American communist movement with the authority of the Russian Revolution behind it. The Russians in the Comintern started on the American communists with the harsh, insistent demand that they shake off their own unspoken prejudices, pay attention to the special problems and grievances of the American Negroes, go to work among them, and champion their cause in the white community.

It took time for the Americans, raised in a different tradition, to assimilate the new Leninist doctrine. But the Russians followed up year after year, piling up the arguments and increasing the pressure on the American communists until they finally learned and changed, and went to work in earnest. And the change in the attitude of the American communists, gradually effected in the '20s, was to exert a profound influence *in far wider circles* in the later years.

* * *

The Communist Party's break with the traditional position of American radicalism on the Negro question coincided with profound changes which had been taking place among the Negroes themselves. The large-scale migration from the agricultural regions of the South to the industrial centres of the North was greatly accelerated during the First World War, and continued in the succeeding years. This brought some improvement in their conditions of life over what they had known in the Deep South, but not enough to compensate for the disappointment of being herded into ghettoes and still subjected to discrimination on every side.

The Negro movement, such as it was at the time, patriotically supported the First World War "to make the world safe for democracy"; and 400,000 Negroes served in the armed forces. They came home looking for a little democratic payoff for themselves, but couldn't find much anywhere. Their new spirit of self-assertion was answered by a mounting score of lynchings and a string of race riots across the country, North as well as South.

All this taken together — the hopes and the disappointments, the new spirit of self-assertion and the savage reprisals — contributed to the emergence of a new

Negro movement in the making. Breaking sharply with the Booker T. Washington tradition of accommodation to a position of inferiority in a white man's world, a new generation of Negroes began to press their demand for equality.

* * *

What the emerging new movement of the American Negroes — a 10% minority — needed most, and lacked almost entirely, was effective support in the white community in general and in the labour movement, its necessary ally, in particular. The Communist Party, aggressively championing the cause of the Negroes and calling for an alliance of the Negro people and the militant labour movement, came into the new situation as a catalytic agent at the right time.

It was the Communist Party, and no other, that made the Herndon and Scottsboro cases national and worldwide issues and put the Dixiecrat legal-lynch mobs on the defensive — for the first time since the collapse of Reconstruction. Party activists led the fights and demonstrations to gain fair consideration for unemployed Negroes at the relief offices, and to put the furniture of evicted Negroes back into their empty apartments. It was the Communist Party that demonstratively nominated a Negro for Vice-President in 1932 — something no other radical or socialist party had ever thought about doing.

By such and similar actions and agitation in the '30s, the party shook up all more or less liberal and progressive circles of the white majority, and began to bring about a radical change of attitude on the Negro question. At the same time, the party became a real factor among the Negroes, and the Negroes themselves advanced in status and self-confidence — *partly as a result of the Communist Party's aggressive agitation on the issue.*

The facts are not disposed of by saying: The communists had their own axe to grind. All agitation for Negro rights is grist to the mill of the Negro movement; and the agitation of the communists was more energetic and more effective than any other at that time — by far.

These new developments appear to contain a contradictory twist which, as far as I know, has never been confronted or explained. The expansion of communist influence in the Negro movement in the '30s happened despite the fact that *one* of the new slogans imposed on the party by the Comintern — the slogan of "self-determination" — about which the most to-do was made and the most theses and resolutions were written, and which was even touted as the main slogan, never seemed to fit the actual situation. The slogan of "self-determination" found little or no acceptance in the Negro community after the collapse of the separatist movement led by Garvey. Their trend

was mainly toward integration, with equal rights.

In *practice* the CP jumped over this contradiction. When the party adopted the slogan of "self-determination", it did not drop its aggressive agitation for *Negro equality and Negro rights on every front*. On the contrary, it intensified and extended this agitation. That's what the Negroes wanted to hear, and that's what made the difference. It was the CP's agitation and action under the *latter* slogan that brought the results, without the help, and probably despite, the unpopular "self-determination" slogan and all the theses written to justify it.

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The communists turned Stalinists, in the "Third Period" of ultra-radicalism, carried out their activity in the Negro field with all the crooked demagogy, exaggerations and distortions which are peculiar to them and inseparable from them. But in spite of that the main appeal to equal rights came through and found an echo in the Negro community. For the first time since the abolitionists, the Negroes saw an aggressive, militant dynamic group of white people championing their cause. Not a few philanthropists and pallid liberals this time, but the hard-driving Stalinists of the '30s, at the head of a big, upsurging radical movement generated by the depression. There was power in their drive in those days, and it was felt in many areas of American life.

The first response of many Negroes was favourable; and the party's reputation as a revolutionary organisation identified with the Soviet Union, was probably more a help than a hindrance. The Negro upper crust, seeking respectability, tended to shy away from anything radical; but the rank and file, the poorest of the poor who had nothing to lose, were not afraid. The party recruited thousands of Negro members in the '30s and became, for a time, a real force in the Negro community. The compelling reason was their policy on the issue of equal rights and their general *attitude*, which they had learned from the Russians, and their activity on the new line.

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In the '30s, Communist Party influence and action were not restricted to the issue of "civil rights" in general. They also operated powerfully to reshape the labour movement and help the Negro workers gain a place in it which had previously been denied. The Negro workers themselves, who had done their share in the great struggles to create the new unions, were pressing their own claims more aggressively than ever before. But they needed help, they needed allies.

The Communist Party militants stepped into this role at the critical point in the formative days of the new unions. The policy and agitation of the Communist Party at

that time did more, 10 times over, than any other to help the Negro workers to rise to a new status of at least semi-citizenship in the new labour movement created in the '30s under the banner of the CIO.

* * *

It is customary to attribute the progress of the Negro movement, and the shift of public opinion in favour of its claims, to the changes brought about by the First World War. But the biggest thing that came out of the First World War, the event that changed everything, including the prospects of the American Negro, was the Russian Revolution. The influence of Lenin and the Russian Revolution, even debased and distorted as it later was by Stalin, and then filtered through the activities of the Communist Party in the United States, contributed *more than any other influence from any source* to the recognition, and more or less general acceptance, of the Negro question as a *special* problem of American society — a problem which cannot be simply subsumed under the general heading of the conflict between capital and labour, as it was in the pre-communist radical movement.

It adds something, but not much, to say that the Socialist Party, the liberals and the more or less progressive labour leaders went along with the new definition, and gave some support to the claims of the Negroes. That's just what they did; they went along. They had no independent, worked-out theory and policy of their own; where would they get it — out of their own heads? Hardly. They all followed in the wake of the CP on this question in the '30s.

The Trotskyists, and other dissident radical groups — who also had learned from the Russians — contributed what they could to the fight for Negro rights; but the Stalinists, dominating the radical movement, dominated in the Negro field too.

* * *

Everything new on the Negro question came from Moscow — after the Russian Revolution began to thunder its demand throughout the world for freedom and equality for all national minorities, all subject peoples and all races — for all the despised and rejected of the Earth. This thunder is still rolling, louder than ever, as the daily headlines testify.

The American communists responded first, and most emphatically, to the new doctrine from Russia. But the *Negro people*, and s*ubstantial sections of American white society*, responded indirectly, and are still responding — whether they recognise it or not.

The present official leaders of the "civil rights" movement of the American Negroes,

more than a little surprised at its expanding militancy, and the support it is getting in the white population of the country, scarcely suspect how much the upsurging movement owes to the Russian Revolution which they all patriotically disavow.

The Reverend Martin Luther King did remark, at the time of the Montgomery boycott battle, that their movement was part of the worldwide struggle of the coloured peoples for independence and equality. He should have added that the colonial revolutions, which are indeed a powerful ally of the Negro movement in America, got their starting impulse from the Russian Revolution — and are stimulated and strengthened from day to day by the continuing existence of this revolution in the shape of the Soviet Union and the new China, which white imperialism suddenly "lost".

Indirectly, but all the more convincingly, the most rabid anti-sovieteers, among them the liberal politicians and the official labour leaders, testify to this when they say: The Little Rock scandal and things like that shouldn't happen because it helps communist propaganda among the dark-skinned colonial people. Their fear of "communist propaganda", like some other people's fear of the Lord, makes them virtuous.

It is now conventional for labour leaders and liberals — in the North — to sympathise with the Negro struggle for a few elementary rights as human beings. It is the Right Thing To Do, the mark of civilised intelligence. Even the ex-radicals, turned into anti-communist "liberals" of a sort — a very poor sort — are all now pridefully "correct" in their formal support of "civil rights" and their opposition to Negro segregation and other forms of discrimination. But how did they all get that way?

It never occurs to the present-day liberals to wonder why their counterparts of a previous generation — with a few notable individual exceptions — never thought of this new and more enlightened attitude toward the Negroes before Lenin and the Russian Revolution upset the apple cart of the old, well-established and complacently accepted separate-but-unequal doctrine. The American anti-communist liberals and labour officials don't know it, but some of the Russian influence they hate and fear so much even rubbed off on them.

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Of course, as everybody knows, the American Stalinists eventually fouled up the Negro question, as they fouled up every other question. They sold out the struggle for Negro rights during the Second World War, in the service of Stalin's foreign policy — as they sold out striking American workers, and rooted for the prosecution in the first Smith Act trial of the Trotskyists at Minneapolis in 1941, for the same basic reason.

Everybody knows that now. The chickens finally came home to roost, and the

Stalinists themselves have felt impelled to make public confessions of some of their treachery and some of their shame. But nothing, neither professed repentance for crimes that can't be concealed, nor boasts of former virtues that others are unwilling to remember, seem to do them any good. The Communist Party, or rather what is left of it, is so discredited and despised that it gets little or no recognition and credit today for its work in the Negro field in those earlier days — when it had far-reaching and, in the main, progressive consequences.

It is not my duty or my purpose to help them out. The sole aim of this condensed review is to set straight a few facts about the early days of American communism — for the benefit of inquiring students of a new generation who want to know the whole truth, however the chips may fall, and to learn something from it.

The new policy on the Negro question, learned from the Russians in the first 10 years of American communism, enabled the Communist Party in the '30s to advance the cause of the Negro people; and to expand its own influence among them on a scale never approached by any radical movement before that time. These are facts of history; not only of the history of American communism, but of the history of the Negro struggle for emancipation too.

* * *

For those who look to the future these facts are important; an anticipation of things to come. By their militant activity in earlier years, the Stalinists gave a great impetus to the new Negro movement. Then, their betrayal of the Negro cause in the Second World War cleared the way for the inch-at-a-time gradualists who have been leading the movement unchallenged ever since.

The policy of gradualism, of promising to free the Negro within the framework of the social system that subordinates and degrades him, is not working out. It does not go to the root of the problem. The aspirations of the Negro people are great and so are the energies and emotions expended in their struggle. But the concrete gains of their struggle up to date are pitifully meagre. They have gained a few inches, but the goal of real equality is miles and miles away.

The right to occupy a vacant seat on a bus; the token integration of a handful of Negro children in a few public schools; a few places open for individual Negroes in public office and some professions; fair employment rights on the books, but not in practice; the formally and legally recognised right to equality which is denied in practice at every turn — that's the way it is today, 96 years after the Emancipation Proclamation.

There has been a big change in the outlook and demands of the Negroes' movement since the days of Booker T. Washington, but no fundamental change in their actual

situation. This contradiction is building up to another explosion and another change of policy and leadership. In the next stage of its development, the American Negro movement will be compelled to turn to a more militant policy than gradualism, and to look for more reliable allies than capitalist politicians in the North who are themselves allied with the Dixiecrats of the South. The Negroes, more than any others in this country, have reason and right to be revolutionary.

An honest workers' party of the new generation will recognise this revolutionary potential of the Negro struggle, and call for a fighting alliance of the Negro people and the labour movement in a common revolutionary struggle against the present social system.

Reforms and concessions, far more important and significant than any yet attained, will be by-products of this revolutionary alliance. They will be fought for and attained at every stage of the struggle. But the new movement will not stop with reforms, nor be satisfied with concessions. The movement of the Negro people and the movement of militant labour, united and coordinated by a revolutionary party, will solve the Negro problem in the only way it can be solved — by a social revolution.

The first efforts of the Communist Party along these lines a generation ago will be recognised and appropriated. Not even the experience of the Stalinist betrayal will be wasted. The memory of this betrayal will be one of the reasons why the Stalinists will not be the leaders next time. ■

Theses on the American Revolution

The "Theses on the American Revolution" were drafted by Cannon and adopted by the 12th National Convention of the SWP, November 1946.

They affirm that, despite all the power of US imperialism, fresh from its victory in World War II, the "American Century" will fail. They reject any idea that the US is immune from the laws of the class struggle. The "American Theses" are a ringing declaration of confidence in the prospects for a socialist transformation in the United States and the ability of the working class to carry it through. The decisive intrument in this struggle is the leadership of a revolutionary workers party, the essential nucleus of which already existed in the SWP.

This not a conjunctural document. It is only concerned with presenting the most fundamental aspects of the question. In his convention report, Cannon stressed that "secondary questions of tactics and even of strategy, with all their importance, are left out … The theses deal only with analysis and perspectives — and these only in the broadest sense — because that is the fundamental basis from which we proceed *…Our theses … proceed in accord with the Marxist method and the Marxist tradition by analysing and emphasising first of all the objective factors that are making for revolution.* These are primary. These are fundamental."[32]

Developments in the US at the end of World War II certainly seemed to confirm the revolutionary optimism of the "Theses" and the expectation of the SWP convention that the US class struggle was moving toward a revolutionary situation.

The country experienced the greatest strike wave in its history — far greater than that of the 1930s. In the 1930s, the greatest number of workers on strike in any single year never exceeded two million but in 1945 some 6.5 million workers took part in strike action. The average yearly working days on strike in 1935-39 was 17 million; in 1945 it was 36 million — jumping to 116 million in 1946!

The SWP experienced rapid growth in this period. It built union fractions in key sections of industry. Its racial composition altered dramatically, with African-American workers constituting a quarter to a third of its membership. With a strong base of worker

cadres, the party began to think and plan in terms of developing from a propaganda group addressing itself to the most politically advanced workers into a party that could undertake to lead large numbers of workers in action.

The "American Theses" was drafted with the aim of educating the wave of new SWP recruits in the party's fundamental revolutionary perspectives.

However, with great rapidity, the strike wave ended. By the spring of 1947, industrial action was at its lowest ebb since the formation of the CIO in the mid-1930s.

The US ruling class was eventually able to stabilise the situation after the war for three main reasons:

- *The very real revolutionary prospects in Europe were derailed by the Stalinist and social-democratic misleaders. Furthermore, US imperialism provided large-scale aid for the reconstruction of West European and Japanese capitalism.*
- *The survival of capitalism thus assured, a long capitalist boom began in the imperialist countries.*
- *The Cold War anti-communist witch-hunt in the US had a chilling effect on political and cultural life. Getting underway in earnest in 1947, it penetrated deeply into the labour movement, resulting in the purging of all oppositional currents and intensifying the bureaucratisation of the union leaderships.*

However, the ending of the postwar upsurge and the conservatism of the later 1940s and '50s do not invalidate the basic revolutionary perspective outlined in the "American Theses".

I

The United States, the most powerful capitalist country in history, is a component part of the world capitalist system and is subject to the same general laws. It suffers from the same incurable diseases and is destined to share the same fate. The overwhelming preponderance of American imperialism does not exempt it from the decay of world capitalism, but on the contrary acts to involve it ever more deeply, inextricably, and hopelessly. US capitalism can no more escape from the revolutionary consequences of world capitalist decay than the older European capitalist powers. The blind alley in which world capitalism has arrived, and the US with it, excludes a new organic era of capitalist stabilisation. The dominant world position of American imperialism now accentuates and aggravates the death agony of capitalism as a whole.

II

American imperialism emerged victorious from the Second World War, not merely over its German and Japanese rivals, but also over its "democratic" allies, especially Great Britain. Today Wall Street unquestionably is the dominant world imperialist centre. Precisely because it has issued from the war vastly strengthened in relation to all its capitalist rivals, US imperialism seems indomitable. So overpowering in all fields — diplomatic, military, commercial, financial, and industrial — is Wall Street's preponderance that consolidation of its world hegemony seems to be within easy reach. Wall Street hopes to inaugurate the so-called "American Century".

In reality, the American ruling class faces more insurmountable obstacles in "organising the world" than confronted the German bourgeoisie in its repeated and abortive attempts to attain a much more modest goal, namely: "organising Europe".

The meteoric rise of US imperialism to world supremacy comes too late. Moreover, American imperialism rests increasingly on the foundations of world economy, in sharp contrast to the situation prevailing before the First World War, when it rested primarily on the internal market — the source of its previous successes and equilibrium. But the world foundation is today shot through with insoluble contradictions; it suffers from chronic dislocations and is mined with revolutionary powder kegs.

American capitalism, hitherto only partially involved in the death agony of capitalism as a world system, is henceforth subject to the full and direct impact of all the forces and contradictions that have debilitated the old capitalist countries of Europe.

The economic prerequisites for the socialist revolution are fully matured in the US. The political premises are likewise far more advanced than might appear on the surface.

III

The US emerged from the Second World War, just as it did in 1918, as the strongest part of the capitalist world. But here ends the resemblance in the impact and consequences of the two wars upon the country's economic life. For in other major aspects the situation has in the meantime drastically altered.

In 1914-18 continental Europe was the main theatre of war; the rest of the world, especially the colonial countries, was left virtually untouched by the hostilities. Thus, not only sections of continental Europe and England but the main framework of the world market itself remained intact. With all its European competitors embroiled in the war, the way was left clear for American capitalism to capture markets.

More than this, during the First World War capitalist Europe itself became a vast market for American industry and agriculture. The American bourgeoisie drained

Europe of her accumulated wealth of centuries and supplanted their Old World rivals in the world market. This enabled the ruling class to convert the US from a debtor into the world's banker and creditor, and simultaneously to expand both the heavy (capital goods) and the light (consumer goods) industries. Subsequently this wartime expansion permitted the fullest possible development of this country's domestic market. Finally, not merely did the American bourgeoisie make vast profits from the war but the country as a whole emerged much richer. The relatively cheap price of imperialist participation in World War I (only a few score billion dollars) was covered many times over by the accruing economic gains.

Profoundly different in its effects is the Second World War. This time only the Western Hemisphere has been left untouched militarily. The Far East, the main prize of the war, has been subjected to a devastation second only to that suffered by Germany and Eastern Europe. Continental Europe as well as England have been bankrupted by the war. The world market has been completely disrupted. Thus culminated the process of shrinking, splintering, and undermining that went on in the interval between the two wars (the withdrawal of one-sixth of the world — the USSR — from the capitalist orbit; the debasement of currency systems, the barter methods of Hitlerite Germany, Japan's inroads on Asiatic and Latin American markets, England's Empire Preference System, etc., etc.).

Europe, which defaulted on all its prior war and postwar debts to the US, this time served not as an inexhaustible and highly profitable market, but as a gigantic drain upon the wealth and resources of this country in the shape of lend-lease, overall conversion of American economy for wartime production, huge mobilisation of manpower, large-scale casualties, and so on.

With regard to the internal market, the latter, instead of expanding organically as in 1914-18, experienced in the course of the Second World War only an artificial revival based on war expenditures.

While the bourgeoisie has been fabulously enriched, the country as a whole has become much poorer; the astronomic costs of the war will never be recouped.

In sum, the major factors that once served to foster and fortify American capitalism either no longer exist or are turning into their opposites.

IV

The prosperity that followed the First World War, which was hailed as a new capitalist era refuting all Marxist prognostications, ended in an economic catastrophe. But even this short-lived prosperity of the '20s was based on a combination of circumstances which cannot and will not recur again. In addition to the factors already listed, it is

necessary to stress: (1) that American capitalism had a virgin continent to exploit; (2) that up to a point it had been able to maintain a certain balance between industry and agriculture; and (3) that the main base of capitalist expansion had been its internal market. So long as these three conditions existed — although they were already being undermined — it was possible for US capitalism to maintain a relative stability.

The boom in the '20s nourished the myth of the permanent stability of American capitalism, giving rise to pompous and hollow theories of a "new capitalism", "American exceptionalism", the "American dream", and so forth and so on. The illusions about the possibilities and future of American capitalism were spread by the reformists and all other apologists for the ruling class not only at home but abroad. "Americanism" was the gospel of all the misleaders of the European and American working class.

What actually happened in the course of the fabulous prosperity of the '20s was that under these most favourable conditions, all the premises for an unparalleled economic catastrophe were prepared. Out of it came a chronic crisis of American agriculture. Out of it came a monstrous concentration of wealth in fewer and fewer hands. Correspondingly, the rest of the population became relatively poorer. Thus, while in the decade of 1920-30, industrial productivity increased by 50%, wages rose only 30%. The workers were able to buy — in prosperity — proportionately less than before.

The relative impoverishment of the American people is likewise mirrored in national wealth statistics. By 1928 the workers' share of the national wealth had dropped to 4.7%; while the farmers retained only 15.4%. At the same time, the bourgeoisie's share of the national wealth had risen to 79.9%, with most of it falling into the hands of the Sixty Families and their retainers.

The distribution of national income likewise expressed this monstrous disproportion. In 1929, at the peak of prosperity, *36,000 families had the same income as 11 million "lower-bracket" families.*

This concentration of wealth was a cardinal factor in limiting the absorbing capacity of the internal market. Compensating external outlets for agriculture and industry could not be found in a constricting world market.

Moreover, the need to export raw materials and agricultural products tended to further unbalance American foreign trade. This inescapably led to a further dislocation of the world market, whose participants were debtor countries, themselves in need of selling more than they bought in order to cover payments on their debts, largely owed to the US.

While appearing and functioning in the role of stabilisers of capitalism, the American imperialists were thus its greatest disrupters both at home and abroad. The US turned

out to be the main source of world instability, the prime aggravator of imperialist contradictions.

In the interim between the two wars this manifested itself most graphically in the fact that all economic convulsions began in the Republic of the Dollar, the home of "rugged individualism". This was the case with the first postwar crisis of 1920-21; this was repeated eight years later when the disproportion between agriculture and industry reached the breaking point and when the internal market had become saturated owing to the impoverishment of the people at one pole and the aggrandisement of the monopolists at the other. The Great American Boom exploded in a crisis which shattered the economic foundations of all capitalist countries.

V

The economic crisis of 1929 was not a cyclical crisis such as periodically accompanied organic capitalist development in the past, leading to new and higher productive levels. It was a major historical crisis of capitalism in decay, which could not be overcome through the "normal" channels; that is to say, through the blind interplay of the laws governing the market.

Production virtually came to a standstill. National income was cut into less than half, plummeting from 81 billion dollars in 1929 to 40 billion dollars in 1932. Industry and agriculture sagged. The army of unemployed swelled 10-fold "normal", reaching the dizzy figure of 20 million. According to official estimates, based on 1929 averages, the losses in the years 1930-38 amounted to 43 million man-years of labour, and 133 billion dollars of national income.

By 1939 the national debt soared to 40 billion dollars, or 14 billion more than the highest point at the end of the First World War. The number of unemployed kept hovering at 10 million. Industry and agriculture stagnated. The foreign trade of the US in a reduced world market fell to less than half of its "normal" peacetime share.

What all these figures really express is the fearsome degradation of living standards of the workers and the middle class, and the outright pauperisation of the "underprivileged one-third" of the population. The wafer-thin layer of monopolists, naturally, did not suffer at all, but on the contrary utilised the crisis in order to gobble up even a larger share of the country's wealth and resources.

The bourgeoisie saw no way out of the crisis. They had no way out. They and their regime remained the main obstacle in the way not only of domestic but of world recovery. In its downward plunge, the American bourgeoisie dragged the rest of the capitalist world with it, and kept it down.

Decisive is the fact that despite all the "pump-priming", "brain-trusting", and

emergency "reforms", American capitalism was incapable of solving the crisis. The partial upswing of 1934-37 proved to be temporary and passing in character. The precipitous drop that occurred in 1937 revealed the abyss facing American capitalism. The threatening new downward plunge was cut off only by the huge expenditures made in preparation for the Second World War.

Only the war temporarily resolved the economic crisis which had lasted in both hemispheres for 10 years. The grim reality, however, is that this "solution" has solved exactly nothing. Least of all did it remove or even mitigate a single one of the basic causes for the crisis of 1929.

VI

The basis of the current American postwar prosperity is the artificial expansion of industry and agriculture through unprecedented government spending which is swelling constantly the enormous national debt. In its fictitious character the war and postwar boom of the early '40s far exceeds the orgy engaged in by European capitalism during 1914-18 and the immediate postwar years. The diversion of production into war industry on an unheard-of scale resulted in temporary shortages of consumer goods. The home and foreign markets seemed to acquire a new absorbing capacity. Universal scarcities and war havoc are acting as temporary spurs to production, especially in the consumers' goods field.

Overall there is, however, the universal impoverishment, the disrupted economic, fiscal, and government systems — coupled with the chronic diseases and contradictions of capitalism, not softened but aggravated by the war.

If we multiply the condition in which European capitalism, with England at its head, emerged from the First World War by 10 times and in some instances a hundred times — because of the vaster scale of the consequences of World War II — then we will arrive at an approximation of the actual state of American capitalism.

Every single factor underlying the current "peacetime" prosperity is ephemeral. This country has emerged not richer from the Second World War as was the ease in the '20s, but poorer — in a far more impoverished world. The disproportion between agriculture and industry has likewise increased tremendously, despite the hothouse expansion of agriculture. The concentration of wealth and the polarisation of the American population into rich and poor has continued at a forced pace.

The basic conditions that precipitated the 1929 crisis when American capitalism enjoyed its fullest health not only persist but have grown more malignant. Once the internal market is again saturated, no adequate outlet can be hoped for in the unbalanced world market. The enormously augmented productive capacity of the US collides

against the limits of the world market and its shrinking capacity. Ruined Europe herself needs to export. So does the ruined Orient, whose equilibrium has been ruptured by the shattering of Japan, its most advanced sector.

Europe is in dire need of billions in loans. In addition to lend-lease, Wall Street has already pumped almost $5 billion in loans into England; almost $2 billion into France; and smaller sums into the other satellite countries of Western Europe — without however achieving any semblance of stabilisation there. Bankrupt capitalist Europe remains both a competitor on the world market and a bottomless drain. The Orient, too, needs loans, especially China, which, while in the throes of civil war, has already swallowed up as many American dollars as did Germany in the early '20s.

At home, the explosive materials are accumulating at a truly American tempo. Carrying charges on the huge national debt; the astronomic military "peacetime" budget ($18.5 billion for this year); the inflation, the "overhead expenditures" of Wall Street's program of world domination, etc., etc. — all this can come from one source and one only: national income. In plain words, from the purchasing power of the masses. Degradation of workers' living conditions and the pauperisation of the farmers and the urban middle class — that is the meaning of Wall Street's program.

VII

The following conclusion flows from the objective situation: US imperialism which proved incapable of recovering from its crisis and stabilising itself in the 10-year period preceding the outbreak of the Second World War is heading for an even more catastrophic explosion in the current postwar era. The cardinal factor which will light the fuse is this: The home market, after an initial and artificial revival, must contract. It cannot expand as it did in the '20s. What is really in store is not unbounded prosperity but a short-lived boom. In the wake of the boom must come another crisis and depression which will make the 1929-32 conditions look prosperous by comparison.

VIII

The impending economic paroxysm must, under the existing conditions, pass inexorably into the social and political crisis of American capitalism, posing in its course point-blank the question of who shall be the master in the land. In their mad drive to conquer and enslave the entire world, the American monopolists are today preparing war against the Soviet Union. This war program, which may be brought to a head by a crisis or the fear of a crisis at home, will meet with incalculable obstacles and difficulties. A war will not solve the internal difficulties of American imperialism but will rather sharpen and complicate them. Such a war will meet with fierce resistance

not only by the peoples of the USSR, but also by the European and colonial masses who do not want to be the slaves of Wall Street. At home the fiercest resistance will be generated. Wall Street's war drive, aggravating the social crisis, may under certain conditions actually precipitate it. In any case, another war will not cancel out the socialist alternative to capitalism but only pose it more sharply.

The workers' struggle for power in the US is not a perspective of a distant and hazy future but the realistic program of our epoch.

IX

The revolutionary movement of the American workers is an organic part of the world revolutionary process. The revolutionary upheavals of the European proletariat which lie ahead will complement, reinforce, and accelerate the revolutionary developments in the US. The liberationist struggles of the colonial peoples against imperialism which are unfolding before our eyes will exert a similar influence. Conversely, each blow dealt by the American proletariat to the imperialists at home will stimulate, supplement, and intensify the revolutionary struggles in Europe and the colonies. Every reversal suffered by imperialism anywhere will in turn produce ever greater repercussions in this country, generating such speed and power as will tend to reduce all time intervals both at home and abroad.

X

The role of America in the world is decisive. Should the European and colonial revolutions, now on the order of the day, precede in point of time the culmination of the struggle in the US, they would immediately be confronted with the necessity of defending their conquests against the economic and military assaults of the American imperialist monster. The ability of the victorious insurgent peoples everywhere to maintain themselves would depend to a high degree on the strength and fighting capacity of the revolutionary labour movement in America. The American workers would then be obliged to come to their aid, just as the Western European working class came to the aid of the Russian Revolution and saved it by blocking full-scale imperialist military assaults upon the young workers' republic.

But even should the revolution in Europe and other parts of the world be once again retarded, it will by no means signify a prolonged stabilisation of the world capitalist system. The issue of socialism or capitalism will not be finally decided until it is decided in the US. Another retardation of the proletarian revolution in one country or another, or even one continent or another, will not save American imperialism from its proletarian nemesis at home. The decisive battles for the communist future of

mankind will be fought in the US.

The revolutionary victory of the workers in the US will seal the doom of the senile bourgeois regimes in every part of our planet, and of the Stalinist bureaucracy, if it still exists at the time. The Russian Revolution raised the workers and colonial peoples to their feet. The American revolution with its hundredfold greater power will set in motion revolutionary forces that will change the face of our planet. The whole Western Hemisphere will quickly be consolidated into the Socialist United States of North, Central, and South America. This invincible power, merging with the revolutionary movements in all parts of the world, will put an end to the outlived capitalist system as a whole, and begin the grandiose task of world reconstruction under the banner of the Socialist United States of the World.

XI

Whereas the main problem of the workers in the Russian Revolution was to maintain their power once they had gained it, the problem in the United States is almost exclusively the problem of the conquest of power by the workers. The conquest of power in the United States will be more difficult than it was in backward Russia, but precisely for that reason it will be much easier to consolidate and secure.

The dangers of internal counterrevolution, foreign intervention, imperialist blockade, and bureaucratic degeneration of a privileged labour caste — in Russia all of these dangers stemmed from the numerical weakness of the proletariat, the age-long poverty and backwardness inherited from tsarism, and the isolation of the Russian Revolution. These dangers were in the final analysis unavoidable there.

These dangers scarcely exist in the US. Thanks to the overwhelming numerical superiority and social weight of the proletariat, its high cultural level and potential; thanks to the country's vast resources, its productive capacity and preponderant strength on the world arena, the victorious proletarian revolution in the US, once it has consolidated its power, will be almost automatically secured against capitalist restoration either by internal counterrevolution or by foreign intervention and imperialist blockade.

As for the danger of bureaucratic degeneration after the revolutionary victory — this can only arise from privileges which are in turn based on backwardness, poverty, and universal scarcities. Such a danger could have no material foundation within the US. Here the triumphant workers' and farmers' government would from the very beginning be able to organise socialist production on far higher levels than under capitalism, and virtually overnight assure such a high standard of living for the masses as would strip privileges in the material sense of any serious meaning whatever. Mawkish

speculations concerning the danger of bureaucratic degeneration after the victorious revolution serve no purpose except to introduce scepticism and pessimism into the ranks of the workers' vanguard, and paralyse their will to struggle, while providing faint-hearts and snivellers with a convenient pretext for running away from the struggle. The problem in the US is almost exclusively the problem of the workers' conquest of political power.

XII

In the coming struggle for power the main advantages will be on the side of the workers; with adequate mobilisation of their forces and proper direction, the workers will win. If one wishes to deal with stern realities and not with superficial appearances, that is the only way to pose the question. The American capitalist class is strong, but the American working class is stronger.

The numerical strength and social weight of the American working class, greatly increased by the war, is overwhelming in the country's life. Nothing can stand up against it. The productivity of American labour, likewise greatly increased in wartime, is the highest in the world. This means skill, and skill means power.

The American workers are accustomed to the highest living and working standards. The widely held view that high wages are a conservatising factor tending to make workers immune to revolutionary ideas and actions is one-sided and false. This holds true only under conditions of capitalist stability where the relatively high standard of living can be maintained and even improved. This is excluded for the future, as our whole analysis has shown. On the other hand, the workers react most sensitively and violently to any infringement upon their living standards. This has already been demonstrated by the strike waves in which great masses of "conservative" workers have resorted to the most militant and radical course of action. In the given situation, therefore, the relatively high living standard of the American workers is a revolutionary and not, as is commonly believed, a conservatising factor.

The revolutionary potential of the class is further strengthened by their traditional militancy coupled with the ability to react almost spontaneously in defence of their vital interests, and their singular resourcefulness and ingenuity (the sit-down strikes!).

Another highly important factor in raising the revolutionary potential of the American working class is its greatly increased cohesiveness and homogeneity — a transformation accomplished in the last quarter of a century. Previously, large and decisive sections of the proletariat in the basic industries were recruited by immigration. These foreign-born workers were handicapped and divided by language barriers, treated as social pariahs, and deprived of citizenship and the most elementary civil

rights. All these circumstances appeared to be insuperable barriers in the way of their organisation and functioning as a united labour force. In the intervening years, however, these foreign-born workers have been assimilated and "Americanised". They and their sons today constitute a powerful, militant, and articulate detachment of the organised labour movement.

An equally significant and profound development is represented by the transformation that has taken place in the position occupied by the Negroes. Formerly barred and deprived of the rights and benefits of organisation by the dominant reactionary craft unions and, on the other hand, regarded and sometimes utilised by the employers as a reserve for strikebreaking purposes, masses of Negroes have since the '20s penetrated into the basic industries and into the unions. Not less than two million Negroes are members of the CIO, AFL, and independent unions. They have demonstrated in the great strike struggles that they stand in the front lines of progressiveness and militancy.

The American workers have the advantage of being comparatively free, especially among the younger and most militant layers, from reformist prejudices. The class as a whole has not been infected with the debilitating poison of reformism, either of the classic "socialist" variety or the latter-day Stalinist brand. As a consequence, once they proceed to action, they more readily accept the most radical solutions. No important section of the class, let alone the class as a whole, has been demoralised by defeats. Finally, this young and mighty power is being drawn into the decisive phases of the class struggle at a tempo that creates unparalleled premises for mass radicalisation.

XIII

Much has been said about the "backwardness" of the American working class as a justification for a pessimistic outlook, the postponement of the socialist revolution to a remote future, and withdrawal from the struggle. This is a very superficial view of the American workers and their prospects.

It is true that this class, in many respects the most advanced and progressive in the world, has not yet taken the road of independent political action on a mass scale. But this weakness can be swiftly overcome. Under the compulsion of objective necessity not only backward peoples but backward classes in advanced countries find themselves driven to clear great distances in single leaps. As a matter of fact, the American working class has already made one such leap which has advanced it far ahead of its old positions.

The workers entered the 1929 crisis as an unorganised, atomised mass imbued with illusions concerning "rugged individualism", "private initiative", "free enterprise", "the American Way", etc., etc. Less than 10% of the class as a whole was organised on

the trade union field (fewer than 3 million out of 33 million in 1929). Moreover, this thin layer embraced primarily the highly skilled and privileged workers, organised in antiquated craft unions. The main and most decisive section of the workers knew unionism only as "company unionism", remaining without the benefit, the experience, and even the understanding of the most elementary form of workers' organisation — the trade union. They were regarded and treated as mere raw material for capitalist exploitation, without rights or protection or any security of employment.

As a consequence, the 1929 crisis found the working class helpless and impotent. For three years the masses remained stunned and disoriented by the disaster. Their resistance was extremely limited and sporadic. But their anger and resentment accumulated. The next five years (1933-37), coincident with a partial revival of industry, witnessed a series of gigantic clashes, street fights and sit-down strikes — an embryonic civil war — the end result of which was a leap, a giant leap, for millions of workers from non-existence as an organised force to trade union consciousness and organisation. Once fairly started, the movement for unionism snowballed, embracing today almost 15 million in all the basic industries.

In one leap — in a brief decade — the American workers attained trade union consciousness on a higher plane and with mightier organisations than in any other advanced country. In the study and analysis of this great transformation, rather than in vapid ruminations over the "backwardness" of the American workers, one can find the key to prospective future developments. Under the impact of great events and pressing necessities the American workers will advance beyond the limits of trade unionism and acquire political class consciousness and organisation in a similar sweeping movement.

XIV

The decisive instrument of the proletarian revolution is the party of the class conscious vanguard. Failing the leadership of such a party, the most favourable revolutionary situations, which arise from the objective circumstances, cannot be carried through to the final victory of the proletariat and the beginnings of planned reorganisation of society on socialist foundations. This was demonstrated most conclusively — and positively — in the 1917 Russian Revolution. This same principled lesson derives no less irrefutably — even though negatively — from the entire world experience of the epoch of wars, revolutions, and colonial uprisings that began with the outbreak of the First World War in 1914.

However, this basic conclusion from the vast and tragic experience of the last third of a century can be and has been given a reactionary interpretation by a school of neo-

revisionism, represented by the ideologues, philosophers, and preachers of prostration, capitulation, and defeat. They say in effect: "Since the revolutionary party is small and weak it is idle to speak of revolutionary possibilities. The weakness of the party changes everything." The authors of this "theory" reject and repudiate Marxism, embracing in its place the subjective school of sociology. They isolate the factor of the revolutionary party's relative numerical weakness at a particular moment from the totality of objective economic and political developments which creates all the necessary and sufficient conditions for the swift growth of the revolutionary vanguard party.

Given an objectively revolutionary situation, a proletarian party — even a small one — equipped with a precisely worked out Marxist program and firm cadres can expand its forces and come to the head of the revolutionary mass movement in a comparatively brief span of time. This too was proved conclusively — and positively — by the experiences of the Russian Revolution in 1917. There the Bolshevik Party, headed by Lenin and Trotsky, bounded forward from a tiny minority, just emerging from underground and isolation in February to the conquest of power in October — a period of nine months.

Numerical weakness, to be sure, is not a virtue for a revolutionary party but a weakness to be overcome by persistent work and resolute struggle. In the US all the conditions are in the process of unfolding for the rapid transformation of the organised vanguard from a propaganda group to a mass party strong enough to lead the revolutionary struggle for power.

XV

The hopeless contradictions of American capitalism, inextricably tied up with the death agony of world capitalism, are bound to lead to a social crisis of such catastrophic proportions as will place the proletarian revolution on the order of the day.

In this crisis, it is realistic to expect that the American workers, who attained trade union consciousness and organisation within a single decade, will pass through another great transformation in their mentality, attaining political consciousness and organisation. If in the course of this dynamic development a mass labour party based on the trade unions is formed, it will not represent a detour into reformist stagnation and futility, as happened in England and elsewhere in the period of capitalist ascent. From all indications, it will rather represent a preliminary stage in the political radicalisation of the American workers, preparing them for the direct leadership of the revolutionary party.

The revolutionary vanguard party, destined to lead this tumultuous revolutionary movement in the US, does not have to be created. It already exists, and its name is the

SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY. It is the sole legitimate heir and continuator of pioneer American Communism and the revolutionary movements of the American workers from which it sprang. Its nucleus has already taken shape in three decades of unremitting work and struggle against the stream. Its program has been hammered out in ideological battles and successfully defended against every kind of revisionist assault upon it. The fundamental core of a professional leadership has been assembled and trained in the irreconcilable spirit of the combat party of the revolution.

The task of the SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY consists simply in this: to remain true to its program and banner; to render it more precise with each new development and apply it correctly in the class struggle; and to expand and grow with the growth of the revolutionary mass movement, always aspiring to lead it to victory in the struggle for political power.■

DEFENDING THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

Postwar witch-hunt moves into high gear: October 1947 HUAC (House Un-American Activities Committee) hearing into so-called communist activity in the movie industry.

Trade Unionists & Revolutionists

The great postwar labour upsurge came to an abrupt end in early 1947. The Cold War witch-hunt got underway in earnest.

On June 23, 1947, the Taft-Hartley Act was passed by Congress. Under this reactionary legislation, all union officials were forced to sign affidavits declaring that they were not communists. Systematically, union by union, the government went to work to witch-hunt radicals and militants out of the unions and out of their jobs.

Most of the victims were members of the Communist Party. The witch-hunting of the Stalinists was facilitated by their isolation within the unions. They received no support from the right wing because of their ties to the Soviet bureaucracy; and they received little support from the left because they had come to be hated for the patriotic, sellout line they had imposed within the unions during the war when they pushed no-strike pledges, signed the poorest labour contracts with the employers, and even engaged in strikebreaking.

While the Stalinists were the easiest target of the witch-hunt, the government extended it to all radicals and militants, including members of the SWP. By 1950, SWP members had been excluded from practically all leading posts in the unions. An atmosphere of fear pervaded the union halls. Red-baiting by the government, by employers and by the union bureaucrats was encouraging a lynch-mob mentality among the more conservative workers.

In these conditions, a section of the SWP's trade union activists led by Bert Cochran sought to shield themselves from the blows of the witch-hunters by seeking to downplay their socialist views and membership of the party. They argued that the SWP should scale down its public activities, not run candidates in elections, or even try to recruit new members to the party.

The evolution of the Cochran grouping showed that even revolutionary-minded workers, with long experience in the class struggle, were capable of succumbing to the anti-Marxist pressures that are generated in capitalist society, particularly during a period of protracted ebb of labour militancy.

Against this background, in 1952-53 a sharp internal struggle broke out in the party as the majority, led by Cannon, defended the SWP's revolutionary perspectives against a minority faction around Cochran.

The following speech was delivered by Cannon at a meeting of the majority faction

caucus of the New York branch of the SWP. It was first published in the Spring 1954 issue of Fourth International.

For several months we have been discussing the contrasting proposals of the two sides in our internal party conflict. It is time now, I think, to go a step further; to advance the discussion to an examination of the basic causes of the fight. You will recall that Trotsky did this in the 1939-40 fight with Burnham and Shachtman. At a certain stage of that struggle, after the positions of both sides were made clear — not only what they had to say but what they didn't say, how they acted, the atmosphere of the fight, and everything else — when it was fairly clear what was *really* involved Trotsky wrote his article "A Petty-Bourgeois Opposition in the Socialist Workers Party".[33]

That article summed up his judgment of the Burnham-Shachtman faction as it had revealed itself in the fire of the struggle — when it had become clear that we were not dealing, as sometimes happens, with a mere difference of opinion among cothinkers on a given point or two that might be settled by fraternal discussion and debate. Burnham and his supporters — and his dupes — were moved by a profound inner compulsion to break with the doctrine and tradition of the party. They carried their revolt against the party to the point of frenzy, as petty-bourgeois factionalists always do. They became impervious to any argument, and Trotsky undertook to explain the social basis of their faction and their factional frenzy. We must do the same now once again.

The social groupings in the present opposition are not quite the same as in 1940. In that fight it was a case of a few demoralised intellectuals based on a genuine petty-bourgeois social composition of a section of the party, especially in New York, but also in Chicago and some other parts of the country — a petty-bourgeois concentration revolting against the proletarian line of the party.

The social composition of the party today is far better and provides a much narrower base of support for an opportunist faction. As a result of the split with the Burnhamites and our deliberate concentration on trade union work, the party today is far more proletarian in its composition, especially outside New York. Despite all that, the real social composition of the party is by no means uniform; it reflects some of the changes which have taken place in the American working class. This has been strikingly demonstrated by the line-up of the party trade unionists in our factional struggle. The revolutionists among them — the big majority — on the one side, and the conservatised elements — a small minority — on the other, have chosen different sides instinctively

and almost automatically.

Since the consolidation of the CIO unions and the 13-year period of war and postwar boom, a new stratification has taken place within the American working class, and particularly and conspicuously in the CIO unions. Our party, which is rooted in the unions, reflects that stratification too. The worker who has soaked up the general atmosphere of the long prosperity and begun to live and think like a petty bourgeois is a familiar figure in the country at large. He has even made his appearance in the Socialist Workers Party as a ready-made recruit for an opportunist faction.

In our 1952 convention resolution, we explained the situation in the American working class as a whole in the two sections "The Causes of Labour Conservatism and the Premises for a New Radicalisation" and "Perspectives of a New Radicalisation". In my report at the national convention, I called those two sections "the *heart* of the resolution" and centred my report around them.

It appears to me now, in the light of the conflict in the party and its real causes, which are now manifest, that those sections of the convention resolution dealing with the class as a whole require further elaboration and amplification. We need a more precise examination of the stratifications within the working class, which are barely touched there, and of the projection of these stratifications in the composition of the unions, in the various inner-union tendencies, and even in our own party. This, I believe, is the key to the otherwise inexplicable riddle of why one proletarian section of the party, even though it is a small minority, supports a capitulatory opportunist faction against the proletarian-revolutionary line and leadership of the party.

Examples from history

This apparent contradiction — this division of working class forces — in party factional struggle is not new. In the classical faction struggles of our international movement since the time of Marx and Engels, there has always been a division, in the party itself, between the different strata of workers. The proletarian left wing by no means ever had all the workers, and the opportunist petty-bourgeois wing was never without some working-class support, that is, working class in the technical sense of wage workers. The revisionist intellectuals and the trade union opportunists always nestled together in the right wing of the party. In the SWP at the present time, we have a repetition of the classical line-up that characterised the struggle of left and right in the Second International before the First World War.

Trotsky told us on one of our visits with him — I think he also wrote it somewhere — that there was a real social division between the two factions of the original Social Democratic Party of Russia, which later became separate parties. The Mensheviks, he

said, had nearly *all* the intellectuals. With a few exceptions, the only intellectuals Lenin had were those whom the party had trained, a good deal like our own worker-intellectuals for the greater part. The intellectual — I mean the professional intellectual of the Burnham type, the man from the professor's chair, from the universities — was a rarity on Lenin's side, whereas the Mensheviks had shoals of them.

In addition, the Mensheviks had most of the skilled workers, who are always the privileged workers. The printers union was Menshevik even through the revolution. The railroad workers' bureaucracy tried to paralyse the revolution; it was only by military force and the aid of a minority that the Bolsheviks were able to prevent the Menshevik railroad workers' officialdom from employing their strategic position against the revolution.

Trotsky said that the Mensheviks also had most of the older workers. Age, as you know, is associated with conservatism. (In general, that is, but not always; there are exceptions to the rule. There are two different ways of measuring age. In ordinary life you measure it by the calendar, but in revolutionary politics you measure it by the mind and the will and the spirit — and you don't always get the same result.)

On the other hand, while the older workers, the skilled and the privileged, were with the Mensheviks, the unskilled workers and the youth were with the Bolsheviks; that is, those of them who were politicalised. That was the line of division between the factions. It was not merely a question of the arguments and the program; it was the social impulses, petty-bourgeois on one side, proletarian on the other, which determined their allegiance.

The same line-up took place in Germany. The prewar German Social Democracy in its heyday had a powerful bloc of opportunist parliamentarians, Marxologists who utilised their scholastic training and their ability to quote Marx by the yard to justify an opportunist policy. They were supported not merely by the petty shopkeepers, of whom there were many, and the trade union bureaucrats. They also had a solid base of support in the privileged stratum of the aristocracy of labour in Germany. The trade union opportunists in the German Social Democratic Party supported Bernstein's revisionism without bothering to read his articles. They didn't need to read them; they just felt that way. The most interesting facts on this point are cited by Peter Gay in his book on Bernstein and his revisionist movement, entitled *The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism*.[34]

All through the prewar fight over revisionism, then through the war and postwar days, through 1923 and 1933, the skilled, privileged trade unionists were the solid base of support of the opportunist Social Democratic leaders — while the communist revolutionaries, from the time of Liebknecht and Luxemburg all the way down to the

fascist catastrophe in 1933, were the youth, the unemployed, and the unskilled, less privileged workers.

If you will go back and read Lenin again, in case you've forgotten it, you will see how Lenin explained the degeneration of the Second International, and its eventual betrayal in the First World War, precisely by its opportunism based upon the adaptation of the party to the conservative impulses and demands of the bureaucracy and aristocracy of labour.

We had the same thing in the US, although we never had a Social Democracy in the European sense and the working class was never politically organised here as it was there. The organised labour movement, up to the '30s, was largely restricted to a privileged aristocracy of labour — as Debs and De Leon used to call it — of skilled craftsmen, who got better wages and had preferred positions, "job trusts", and so on. The chief representative of this conservative, privileged craft union stratum was Gompers.

On the other side, there was the great mass of the basic proletariat, the unskilled and semiskilled, the mass production workers, the foreign born, and the jobless youth. They were without benefit of organisation, without privileges, the outcasts of society. It was not without reason that they were more radical than the others. Nobody paid any attention to them except the revolutionists and radicals. Only the IWW of Haywood and St. John, Debs, and the left Socialists voiced their bitter grievances, did the organising work, and led the strikes of the mass production workers in those days. If the official labour bureaucracy intervened in the spontaneous strikes of the unorganised it was usually to break them up and sell them out.

The officials of the skilled unions did not welcome the great upsurge of the unorganised workers in the '30s. But they could not prevent it. When the spontaneous strikes and drives for organisation could no longer be ignored, the AFL began to assign "organisers" to the various industries — steel, rubber, auto, etc. They were sent however, not to lead the workers in a struggle but to control them, to prevent the consolidation of self-acting industrial unions. They actually wouldn't permit the auto workers in convention to elect their own officials, insisting that the AFL appoint them "provisionally". The same with the rubber workers and other new industrial unions.

These new unions had to split with the conservative labour fakers of the AFL before they could consolidate unions of their own. The drives behind the 1934-37 upsurge were the bitter and irreconcilable grievances of the workers; their protest against mistreatment, speedup, insecurity; the revolt of the pariahs against the pariah status.

This revolt, which no bureaucracy could contain, was spearheaded by new people

— the young mass production workers, the new, young militants whom nobody had ever heard of. They were the real creators of the CIO. This revolt of the "men from nowhere" reached its high tide in the sit-down strikes of 1937. The workers' victory in these battles definitely established the CIO and secured stability of the new unions through the seniority clause.

Conservatising influences

It is now 16 years since the sit-down strikes made the new CIO unions secure by the seniority clause. These 16 years of union security, and 13 years of uninterrupted war and postwar prosperity, have wrought a great transformation in the unprivileged workers who made the CIO.

The seniority clause, like everything else in life, has revealed a contradictory quality. By regulating the right to employment through time of service on the job, it secures the union militant against arbitrary discrimination and layoffs. It is an absolute necessity for union security. That is the positive side of the seniority clause. But, at the same time, it also gradually creates a sort of special interest in the form of steadier employment for those unionists who have been longest in the shop. That is its negative side.

In time, with the stretching out of their seniority rights and their upgrading to better jobs, a process of transformation in the status of the original union militants has taken place. In the course of 16 years, they have secured more or less steady employment, even in times of slack work. They are, under the rules, the last to be laid off and the first to be rehired. And in most cases, they have better jobs than newcomers to the shop. All of this, combined with war and postwar prosperity, has changed their material position and, to a certain extent, their social status.

The pioneer militants of the CIO unions are 16 years older than they were in 1937. They are better off than the ragged and hungry sit-down strikers of 1937; and many of them are 16 times softer and more conservative. This privileged section of the unions, formerly the backbone of the left wing, is today the main social base of the conservative Reuther bureaucracy. They are convinced far less by Reuther's clever demagogy than by the fact that he really articulates their own conservatised moods and patterns of thought.

But these conservatised ex-militants are only part of the membership of the CIO, and I don't think that our resolution at the convention deals specifically and adequately with that fact. In these mass production industries, which are real slave pens and hell holes, there are many others. There is a mass of younger workers who have none of these benefits and privileges and no vested interest in the piled-up seniority rights.

They are the human material for the new radicalisation. The revolutionary party, looking to the future, must turn its primary attention to them.

If we, counting on a new upsurge in the labour movement, look to those who led it 16 years ago, we could indeed draw a gloomy picture. Not only are they not in a radical mood now; they are not apt to become the spearhead of a new radicalisation. That will take youth, and hunger, and raggedness, and bitter discontent with all the conditions of life. We must look to the new people if, as I take it, we are thinking in terms of the coming American revolution and not limiting our vision to the prospect of a new shake-up in the bureaucracy and of caucus combinations with slick "progressive" fakers for little aims.

This new stratification in the new unions is a feature which the party can no longer ignore. All the more so, since we now see it directly reflected in our party. A number of party members in the auto union belong to this privileged upper stratum. That's the first thing you have to recognise. Some of the best militants, the best stalwarts of the party in the old times, have been affected by the changed conditions of their own lives and by their new environment. They see the old militants in the unions, who formerly cooperated with them, growing slower, more satisfied, more conservative. They still mix with these ex-militants socially, and are infected by them. They develop a pessimistic outlook from the reactions they get on every side from these old-timers, and, unknown to themselves, acquire an element of that same conservatism.

That, in my opinion, is the reason why they support a crudely conservative, pessimistic, capitulatory tendency in our internal faction fight. This, I am afraid, is not a misunderstanding on their part. I wish it were, for in that case our task would be easy. The miserable arguments of the Cochranites cannot stand up against Marxist criticism — provided one accepts the criteria of revolutionary Marxism.

But that's the rub. Our conservatised trade unionists no longer accept these criteria. Like many others, who "used to be radicals themselves", they are beginning to talk about our "Theses on the American Revolution" as a "crackpot" idea. They don't "feel" that way, and nobody can talk them out of the way they do feel.

That — and perhaps a guilty conscience — is the true explanation of their subjectivity, their rudeness and factional frenzy when one tries to argue with them from the principled standpoint of the "old Trotskyism". They do not follow Cochran out of exceptional regard for him personally, because they know Cochran. They simply recognise in Cochran, with his capitulatory defeatism and his program of retreat from the fighting arena to a propaganda circle, the authentic spokesman of their own mood of retreat and withdrawal.

Just as the older, more skilled and privileged German trade unionists supported

the right against the left, and as their Russian counterparts supported the Mensheviks against the Bolsheviks, the "professional trade unionists" in our party support Cochranism in our fight. And for the same basic reasons.

I, for my part, must frankly admit that I did not see this whole picture at the beginning of the fight. I anticipated that some tired and pessimistic people, who were looking for some sort of rationalisation to slow down or get out of the struggle, would support any kind of an opposition faction that would arise. That happens in every faction fight. But I didn't anticipate the emergence of a conservatised workers' stratum serving as an organised grouping and a social basis for an opportunist faction in the party.

Still less did I expect to see such a grouping strutting around in the party demanding special consideration because they are "trade unionists". What's exceptional about that? There are 15 million trade unionists in this country, but not quite so many revolutionists. But the revolutionists are the ones who count with us.

Losing faith in the party

The revolutionary movement, under the best conditions, is a hard fight, and it wears out a lot of human material. Not for nothing has it been said a thousand times in the past: "The revolution is a devourer of men." The movement in this, the richest and most conservative country in the world, is perhaps the most voracious of all.

It is not easy to persist in the struggle, to hold on, to stay tough and fight it out year after year without victory; and even, in times such as the present, without tangible progress. That requires theoretical conviction and historical perspective as well as character. And, in addition to that, it requires association with others in a common party.

The surest way to lose one's fighting faith is to succumb to one's immediate environment; to see things only as they are and not as they are changing and must change; to see only what is before one's eyes and imagine that it is permanent. That is the cursed fate of the trade unionist who separates himself from the revolutionary party. In normal times, the trade union, by its very nature, is a culture-broth of opportunism. No trade unionist, overwhelmed by the petty concerns and limited aims of the day, can retain his vision of the larger issues and the will to fight for them without the party.

The revolutionary party can make mistakes, and has made them, but it is never wrong in the fight against grievance-mongers who try to blame the party for their own weaknesses, for their tiredness, their lack of vision, their impulse to quit and to capitulate. The party is not wrong now when it calls this tendency by its right name.

People often act differently as individuals, and give different explanations for their actions, than when they act and speak as groups. When an individual gets tired and wants to quit, he usually says he is tired and he quits; or he just drops out without saying anything at all, and that's all there is to it. That has been happening in our international movement for 100 years.

But when the same kind of people decide as a group to get out of the line of fire by getting out of the party, they need the cover of a faction and a "political" rationalisation. Any "political" explanation will do, and in any case it is pretty certain to be a phony explanation. That also has been going on for about 100 years.

The present case of the Cochranite trade unionists is no exception to this rule. Out of the clear sky we hear that some "professional trade unionists" are suddenly against us because we are "Stalinophobes", and they are hell-bent for an orientation toward Stalinism. Why, that's the damnedest nonsense I ever heard! They never had that idea in their heads until this fight started. And how could they? The Stalinists have gotten themselves isolated in the labour movement, and it's poison to touch them. To go looking for the Stalinists is to cut yourself off from the labour movement, and these party "trade unionists" don't want to do that.

The people in Michigan who are hollering for us to make an orientation toward the Stalinists have no such orientation on their own home grounds. And they're perfectly right about that. I don't deny that people like Clarke, Bartell, and Frankel have heard voices and seen visions of a gold mine hidden in the Stalinist hills — I will discuss this hallucination at another time — but the Cochranite trade unionists haven't the slightest intention of going prospecting there. They are not even looking in that direction. What's amazing is the insincerity of their support of the orientation toward the Stalinists. That's completely artificial, for factional purposes. No, you have to say the orientation toward Stalinism, as far as the Michigan trade unionists are concerned, is a phony.

What is the next thing we hear? That they are full of "grievances" against the party "regime". I always get suspicious when I hear of grievances, especially from people whom you didn't hear it from before. When I see people revolting against the party on the ground that they've been badly treated by this terrible regime in our party — which is actually the fairest, most democratic and easy-going regime in the history of the human race — I always remind myself of the words of J. Pierpont Morgan. He said: "Everybody has at least two reasons for what he does — a good reason and the real reason." They've given a good reason for their opposition. Now I want to know what the hell is the real reason.

It can't be the party's hostility to Stalinism, as they say — because the Cochranite trade unionists wouldn't touch the Stalinists with a 10-foot pole, not even if you stood

behind them with bayonets and lighted firecrackers under their coat-tails.

It can't be the Third World Congress,[35] concerning which they are suddenly working up a lather. These comrades in Michigan have many admirable qualities, as has been shown in the past, but they're by no means the most internationalist-minded section of the party; not by far. They're not that section of the party most interested in theoretical questions. The Detroit branch, sad to say, has been most remiss in the teaching and study of Marxist theory, and is now paying a terrible price for it. This branch hasn't got a single class going; no class in Marxism, no class in party history, no class on the Third World Congress or anything else. So when they suddenly erupt with the demand that the Third World Congress be nailed to the party's masthead, I say that's another good reason, but it's a phony too.

The real reason is that they are in revolt against the party without fully knowing why. For the young militant, the party is a necessity valued above everything else. The party was the very life of these militants when they were young and really militant. They didn't care for jobs; they feared no hazards. Like any other first-class revolutionists, they would quit a job at the drop of a hat if the party wanted them to go to another town, wanted them to do this or that. It was always the party first.

The party is the highest prize to the young trade unionist who becomes a revolutionist, the apple of his eye. But to the revolutionist who becomes transformed into a trade unionist — we have all seen this happen more than once — the party is no prize at all. The mere trade unionist, who thinks in terms of "union politics" and "power blocs" and little caucuses with little fakers to run for some little office, pushing one's personal interest here and there — why should he belong to a revolutionary party? For such a person the party is a millstone around his neck, interfering with his success as a "practical" trade union politician. And in the present political situation in the country, it's a danger — in the union, in the shop, and in life in general.

The great majority of the party trade unionists understand all this as well as we do. The vulgar "trade unionist" appeal of the Cochranites only repels them, for they consider themselves to be revolutionists first and trade unionists second. In other words, they are party people, as all revolutionists are.

I think it's a great tribute to our tradition, to our cadres, to the leadership of our party, that we have succeeded in isolating Cochranism to a narrow section of the party membership. It's a great satisfaction, in these troubled and heavy times, to see the great majority of the party standing firm against all pressures. In the further course of the discussion, we will strike still heavier blows and chip off a few more here and there. We don't want to see anybody leave the party if we can help it.

But soul-saving is not our main occupation. We are determined to protect the

party from demoralisation, and we will do that. We are concerned with individuals only within that framework. The rescue of political derelicts can be left to the Salvation Army. For us, the party comes first, and nobody will be allowed to disrupt it.

This fight is of the most decisive importance because the prospect before our party is the prospect of war and all that goes with it. We see the dangers and the difficulties — as well as the great opportunities — which lie ahead of us, and just because of that we want to get the party in shape before the worst blows fall upon us.

The party line and perspectives, and the party leadership, will be settled in this fight for a long time to come. When harder times come, and when new opportunities open up, we don't want to leave any doubt in any comrade's mind as to what the party line is and who the party leaders are. These questions will be settled in this fight.

The Socialist Workers Party has the right, by its program and its record, to aspire to a great future. That's my opinion. That was the opinion of Trotsky. There is a line in the document of the Cochranites that sneers at the 1946 SWP convention and at the "Theses on the American Revolution" adopted there. It says: "We were children of destiny, at least in our own minds." In that derision of the party's aspiration, the whole pessimistic, capitulatory ideology of Cochranism is contained.

In 1929, when Trotsky was deported to Constantinople, the victory of Stalinism was complete, and he was isolated and almost alone. Outside the Soviet Union, there were only about 200 people supporting him in the whole world, and half of them were the forces we had organised in the US. Trotsky wrote us a letter at that time in which he hailed our movement in the United States. He said our work was of world historical significance because, in the last analysis, all of the problems of the epoch will be settled on American soil. He said that he didn't know whether a revolution would come here sooner than in other places, but in any case it was necessary to prepare by organising the nucleus of the party of the future revolution.

That's the line we have been working on. Our cadres have been raised on that doctrine. When I read in the Cochranite document that cynical dismissal of our revolutionary aspirations, I remembered a speech I made to our young comrades 13 years ago in Chicago. The occasion was our Active Workers Conference, held just a month or so after the death of the Old Man,[36] when everybody felt bereft; when the question in the minds of all, here and all over the world, was whether the movement could survive without Trotsky.

At the end of the conference, I gave a speech and I said to the young activists there: "You are the real men of destiny, for you alone represent the future." In the 1946 convention theses we put the same concept.

That has been the position of all our militants who are standing together through

this long, hard battle. A young comrade in California, one of the leading party activists, pointed the Cochranite sneer out to me and said: "What about that? If I didn't think our party has a great future, why should I be willing to devote my life and everything I have to the party?" Anyone who low-rates the party and crosses off its future ought to ask himself what he is doing in the party. Is he here on a visit?

The party demands a lot, and you can't give a lot and risk everything unless you think the party is worth it. The party is worth it, for it is the party of the future. And this party of the future is now once again getting its share of historical luck. Once again, as in 1939-40, it has the opportunity to settle a fundamental conflict in open discussion before a war, on the eve of a war.

Before World War II the party was confronted with a faction which threatened its program and, thereby, its right to exist. We didn't have to jump immediately into the war before the question was settled. We were working in the open while the rest of our comrades in Europe were underground or in concentration camps. We here in America were privileged to conduct a debate for the whole International over a period of seven months.

The same thing is happening again now. We ought to recognise this historical luck and take advantage of it. The best way to do this is to extend and amplify the discussion. I will repeat what Comrade Dobbs said, that our aim is not to split the party but to break up the split and save the party. We will try to prevent a split by a political fight which hits the opposition so hard that it can have no perspectives in a split. If we can't prevent a split, we will reduce it to the smallest possible size.

Meantime, we will develop the party work on all fronts. No party work is going to be sabotaged. If the attempt is made, we will move our forces in everywhere and take over. We will not permit the party to be disrupted by sabotage or derailed by a split, any more than we did in 1940. We have made a good start, and we won't stop until we have won another complete victory in the struggle for a revolutionary party. ■

Internationalism & the SWP

Most of the minority faction around Bert Cochran in the 1952-53 struggle within the SWP consisted of a layer of the party's trade union activists who were becoming conservatised as a result of the impact of the postwar capitalist boom and the Cold War anti-communist witch-hunt.

However, there was a second component of the minority faction, centred principally in New York. Its prominent leaders were George Clarke and Mike Bartell. They held views very close to those of Michel Pablo, at that time the secretary of the Fourth International.

The FI was founded on the expectation that powerful revolutionary upsurges would follow in the wake of the Second World War, and that in these upsurges the small Trotskyist forces would be able to win the leadership of the masses away from the Stalinised communist parties. While the first aspect of this prognosis proved to be correct, because of the central role of the Soviet Union, headed by the Stalinist bureaucracy, in defeating Nazi Germany, the prestige of Stalinism was actually strengthened among the radicalised masses. In the wake of the war, and on the basis of the mass revulsion to capitalism which it generated, Stalinist regimes came to power in Eastern Europe and China. In France and Italy, the Stalinist parties experienced massive growth in membership and influence, despite their participation in bourgeois coalition governments that demobilised the postwar revolutionary upsurges.

The durability of Stalin's bureaucratic regime in the USSR and the extension of Stalinist rule to Eastern Europe and China led Pablo to hypothesise that in a third world war, fought between the Soviet bloc and the imperialist powers, the Kremlin would be forced to defend itself by ordering its supporters in the capitalist countries to lead anti-capitalist revolutions. This bureaucratic left turn by the Stalinist leaderships would radicalise the worker-student ranks of the communist and social-democratic parties.

Since a third world war was believed to be fast approaching — some of the Cochranites predicted its outbreak would occur in 1953, when the US would have completed its military preparations — there would not be time to build independent revolutionary Marxist parties capable of leading the radicalised workers in this "war-revolution" scenario. Therefore the tactic required was entry by the existing Trotskyist organisations into the Stalinist parties or the Stalinist-influenced "left" factions in the social-democratic parties.

But this was to be an entry unlike previous entries by the Trotskyists into mass reformist parties — to rapidly fuse with leftward moving currents in their ranks and then to break away to found a larger independent Marxist party. Rather, it was to be an entry for an indefinite period. Hence this tactic was termed entryism sui generis*, i.e., of a unique kind. (When the conjunctural prognosis upon which the tactic of "deep entry" was predicated — the imminent prospect of a third world war — proved to be wrong, Pablo found a new justification for it, i.e., that in countries with mass social-democratic or Stalinist parties the* only *way to build new revolutionary parties was for the Trotskyists to enter these parties to* wait *for the development of a mass left-wing current within these parties, and then to prepare a split that would draw away the majority of their ranks into an independent Marxist party.)*

Pablo's New York supporters favoured a policy of entry by the Trotskyists into the US Communist Party, which, unlike the Stalinist parties in France or Italy, for example, had no mass base in the working class. The Cochranites proper — the trade unionists centred in Detroit and Chicago — anxious to shield themselves from the Cold War anti-communist witch-hunt, wanted nothing to do with the Communist Party or any of its peripheral organisations or groups. Yet, for factional purposes, they combined with the Clarke-Bartell group. What united both wings of the minority faction was that they both denied the need for and perspective of building an independent revolutionary party in the United States. The Cochranites sought to win support for their liquidationist perspective within the SWP by arguing that they had the support of the "international movement".

The following is the text of a speech by Cannon, principal leader of the majority faction in the SWP, delivered at a meeting of the majority faction caucus of the New York branch on May 18, 1953 outlining the SWP majority's approach to international relations between revolutionaries. It is taken from Defending the Revolutionary Party *(Education for Socialists, National Education Department, SWP: New York, 1966). We have added subheads for ease of reading.*

* * *

A month after this speech was made, a pro-Pablo faction in the British section of the Fourth International sought, in the name of "international democratic centralism", to place the majority faction of the section's leadership, headed by Gerry Healy, under "discipline" to follow the line of Pablo's International Secretariat in the internal discussion in the British section. According to Healy, offers were made to him by members of the International Secretariat to call off the factional fight against him in Britain if he supported Pablo against the SWP majority.

On September 23, 1953, a letter from Pablo's International Secretariat to Healy barred

him from opposing the line of the pro-Pablo majority of the IS until the Fourth World Congress, to be held in 1954. In addition, he was ordered to cease all collaboration aimed at organising a faction, and was informed that the minority faction in the British section was no longer bound by the section's discipline.

Pablo's actions caused the leadership of the SWP to publish an "open letter" calling for the formation of an anti-Pabloite faction within the Fourth International.

Even before this, the Bureau of the International Secretariat (consisting of Pierre Frank, Ernest Mandel and Pablo) sent a circular letter on November 15, 1953 to all sections of the FI informing them that if the Cochran-Clarke-Bartell faction was expelled from the SWP for its disloyal acts this would place the SWP "outside our movement". With the publication of the SWP leadership's "open letter" the pro-Pabloite factions in the SWP and in the sections opposed to Pablo proceeded to declare their opponents "expelled from the Fourth International". A month later, a meeting of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International, attended only by Pablo's supporters, approved these decisions. As a result, the world Trotskyist movement was split into two public factions.

Despite the fact that the political disagreements between the two factions — their differing assessments of the role of the Soviet bureaucracy and the Stalinist parties — had narrowed by 1957, the split was to last until 1963. A major factor prolonging the split was Pablo's insistence that the International had to function as a highly centralised world party, a view that Cannon and the SWP leadership opposed as unrealistic. Cannon argued that the weakness of the FI's national sections made it impossible for the key leaders of the FI to get together frequently, much less operate from a common centre.

In Cannon's view, it was the leaderships of the national sections that constituted the real international leadership of the movement. It was the national sections that had to develop leaderships capable of building parties that could lead proletarian revolutions. The International could not substitute for such national leaderships. Rather, its task was to help develop them by facilitating collaboration between national revolutionary parties.

We have heard that the Cochranites are claiming in the party that they have the support of what they call "the international movement". Some comrades have asked, "What about that?" Now we are internationalists from way back. We started our movement 25 years ago under the banner of internationalism. The thing that brought us to Trotsky, and got us thrown out of the Communist Party, was our belief in Trotsky's program of international revolution against the Stalinist theory of "socialism in one country".

Our very first impulse, when we found ourselves out on the street in 1928, was to begin searching for international allies with whom we could collaborate. We couldn't find many of them, because the Opposition had been completely smashed in the Soviet Union. Trotsky himself was in exile in Alma Ata. And in America, as far as we knew for sure, we were about the only representatives on the international field of the banner of the exiled Trotsky.

But eventually we established contacts with some German and some French groups; and in the spring of 1929 Trotsky was deported from the Soviet Union to Constantinople. We wrote to him there as soon as we heard about it, received an answer from him, and in cooperation with Trotsky began to tie together the first threads of the new — and what eventually became the Fourth — International.

On the record, I believe the American Trotskyists can be described, above all others, as *internationalists* — to take a phrase from Comrade [Joseph] Hansen — *through and through*.[37]

International collaboration

The question of the attitude of the international movement toward us is an important one — with this understanding: that *we* are a *part* of the international movement, despite the fact that we have no formal affiliation, and *we* are going to have something to say about what the international movement decides on the American question, and every other. We don't consider ourselves an American branch office of an international business firm that receives orders from the boss. That's not us. That's what we got in the Comintern. That's what we wouldn't take. And that's why we got thrown out. We conceive of internationalism as *international collaboration*, in the process of which we get the benefit of the opinions of international comrades, and they get the benefit of ours; and through comradely discussion and collaboration we work out, if possible, a common line.

Now it isn't possible that the international movement supports the minority in this fight, any more than it is possible that it supports the majority, because the international movement — as *we* understand it, that is, the membership in all corners of the world — hasn't yet heard about the fight, is only just beginning now to get the first bulletins, and cannot possibly have decided the question. The thing narrows down to the claim — if what we have heard is correct — that the International Secretariat, which consists of a few people in Paris, supports the minority.

If that's so, we know nothing about it. We haven't been told that. And we don't like the very suggestion that the IS is taking a position on the American question behind the backs of the official leadership. The very suggestion that that is possible casts an

insult upon the IS, upon its responsibility, and even upon its integrity. Because it is not possible to function as an international organisation without proceeding through the official elected leadership in each and every party. As I said, we know nothing of any such decision there. They have never even intimated anything of the sort to us.

In the eight years since the international organisation was reconstituted after the war, with headquarters in Paris, they have never once intimated any serious conflict or any lack of confidence in the American party and its leadership. On the contrary, they have always recognised the SWP as the firmest base of political support of the international leadership. And that has been the case ever since 1929, when the new international took its first "embryonic" — to use the Cochranites' term — form.

Ever since 1929, when the international leadership was a man named Trotsky in Constantinople and half of his troops in the whole world were those we had organised in the United States, the International has been, in the essence of the matter, not just a mechanical combination of different parties and groups. There has been an *axis* in it, an axis of leadership. And in the 11 years from 1929 to 1940, that axis was the collaboration of Trotsky and the American Trotskyist leadership.

That's the essence of the matter. Trotsky made no secret of it. We were his firmest base of support. We weren't by any means "hand-raisers", as Burnham said in "The War and Bureaucratic Conservatism".[38] We had more than one disagreement with Trotsky. But in the general work he carried out, in his efforts to bring about a selection of forces and to get rid of misfits and people who had wandered into our movement by mistake, and in his fight for a clear political line — he always had the support of the American party.

The First World Congress of the Fourth International (there had been several pre-congresses of the International Communist League, as it was called) was being organised in 1938. Trotsky leaned so heavily on the Americans, and was so anxious to strengthen their authority in the International, that when he drew up the Transitional Program for this founding congress, he wrote it first *for the SWP*. He asked us to adopt it *first* and then to sponsor it at the congress. Thus the very first programmatic document of the Fourth International appeared as the resolution of the National Committee plenum of the SWP held in New York. We spoke at the world congress as reporters on the Transitional Program.

We had gone to Mexico City a couple of months before — a whole delegation, at Trotsky's request — to talk over with him the contents of the program and work it out together. The points were laid down, discussed and agreed upon. Trotsky then wrote the draft and sent it to us. We called a plenum and discussed it and adopted it. That's the story of the Transitional Program — the technical aspects of how it appeared as the

resolution of the SWP.

Up to the time of Trotsky's death, and particularly after he came to Mexico, the SWP — we should be proud to say it — became Trotsky's own adopted party. He was so much concerned with us and our future, and so confident that we had a great future before us, that he gave thought to all kinds of little problems of the party. As national secretary, I had a continuous correspondence with Comrade Trotsky about practically everything that arose in the course of our work. One suggestion after another would pour out from him to us. If we disagreed, we would write back, or send delegates down to visit him. So that in the most intimate sense, the leadership of the international movement in that period was, as we called it, the Trotsky-American axis.

From 1940 — after the death of Trotsky and the suppression of our movement in most parts of Europe by the war — the centre of the international movement, its vocal party, was in the United States — the SWP. We no longer belonged to the Fourth International because the Voorhis law outlawed international connections. Our role, therefore, could only be advisory and consultative. But even in that capacity, we were regarded throughout the entire world as the informal representatives of Trotskyist internationalism.

Fight against Stalinophobia

Since 1945, with the close of the war and the re-establishment of the movement in Europe and the setting up of the International Executive Committee and International Secretariat there, the same relationship in essence as previously governed our collaboration with Trotsky, has prevailed in the new Paris-American axis on all the big political questions. In the first period after the war, the Russian question aroused a great dispute in our ranks throughout the world. There was a big wave of Stalinophobia, which had understandable reasons. For with the end of the war, the terrible stories about the Stalinist slave-labour camps and the monstrous conduct of the Stalinist armies in Eastern Europe and Eastern Germany came out.

Those tales of horror — which were not exaggerated but were the living truth — created such revulsion in the ranks of the advanced workers throughout the world, that there was a big echo in our ranks, and great hesitation in our own ranks in Europe. There was a split in France over the Russian question in the immediate postwar period. Comrades said, "We can't any longer call that a workers' state. That's a slave-labour state" — and so on.

At that time, the really strong, decisive force supporting two or three of the leading comrades in Europe, which really decided the Russian question once again in favour of defence of the Soviet Union, *was the SWP*. As far as I know, the first really outspoken,

categoric, unambiguous declaration on the question came in a speech by me, made in agreement with our party leadership, on the anniversary of the Russian Revolution, in November 1945 in New York. This speech was printed in the paper and was supported as a program by our cothinkers in Europe. It was a factor in stopping all hesitation and in clarifying, once again, the fact that we were defenders of the Soviet Union.

I did not defend the Soviet Union's slave-labour camps or any of those horrors. I said, paraphrasing Trotsky: "We do not defend what is degenerate and reactionary. But we see, in face of all of that, that the power of the nationalised economy was strong enough to prevail during the war and still stands. That's what we see, that's what we defend." That is how we defined our position on the Russian question at that critical time.

In 1947 there was another wave of Stalinophobia, especially in the most advanced circles. We began to get reports not only of what had happened in Europe but what had happened inside the Soviet Union itself. What those monstrous, unbelievably treacherous scoundrels had done! We began to get such stories as those of Margaret Buberman, the wife of Heinz Neumann — both of them lifetime Communists. He was a former leader of the German CP — not a Trotskyist — and had been shot by the Russians because of some political disagreement. His poor wife was thrown into a concentration camp in Russia and kept there three years. And then, when the Soviet-Nazi pact was signed and the war started, she and a carload of other veteran German communists were put into a freight car, shipped to the border, and handed over to Hitler as a goodwill gesture from Stalin and his gang. And she then spent five more years in Hitler's concentration camps!

Stories like that came out, one after another — and then began this new wave of Stalinophobia. Morrow and Goldman fell victim to it. They said: "This is too much! We can no longer defend the Soviet Union as a workers' state." There were new hesitations also in Europe.

That is when I wrote the pamphlet *American Stalinism and Anti-Stalinism* — which these fools are now attacking in their document as some kind of evidence of Stalinophobia. But the whole thing was *directed against* the Stalinophobes, page after page, chapter after chapter. It was written in reply to Ruth Fischer, who had come out in Shachtman's paper denouncing us because of our position on the Soviet Union and calling for a united front of everybody against the Stalinists. I wrote that pamphlet to show that we would unite only with genuine socialists against Stalinism — not with red-baiters and reactionaries.

When Stuart returned from Europe shortly thereafter, I asked him, "How did they receive my pamphlet in Europe?" He replied, "When it came out in the paper, they

received it as support of *the line*, which again strengthened the position of our international movement for the defence of the Soviet Union, with no struggle against Stalinism except on a working-class basis".

Our relations with the leadership in Europe at that time were relations of closest collaboration and support. There was general agreement between us. These were unknown men in our party. Nobody had ever heard of them. We helped to publicise the individual leaders, we commended them to our party members, and helped to build up their prestige. We did this, first because we had general agreement, and second because we realised they needed our support. They had yet to gain authority, not only here but throughout the world. And the fact that the SWP supported them up and down the line greatly reinforced their position and helped them to do their great work.

We went so far as to soft-pedal a lot of our differences with them — and I will mention here tonight some of the many differences, known for the most part only in our leading circles, that we have had in the course of the last seven years.

Differences with Pablo leadership

One difference was a tendency on their part toward "Cominternism" in organisational matters — a tendency to set up the International as a highly centralised body on the order of the early Comintern, which could make decisions, enforce orders, and so forth in the old Comintern fashion. We said to them all the time: "*You can't do that.* The International is too weak, you are too weak. You can't have that kind of an International under present conditions. If you try it, you will only end up in weakening your own authority and creating disruption."

The old Comintern of Lenin's time had the concept of a highly centralised international organisation from the first days, but there was a reason for it then. The reason was that there had been a revolution in Russia, and the whole world movement of socialism was reacting to it. The leaders of the Russian Revolution had an absolutely *decisive* moral and political authority. There were Lenin and Trotsky and Zinoviev and Radek and Bukharin — new great names that the revolutionary workers of the world were recognising as the authentic leaders of the revolution. These were the men who set up, with the aid of a few others, the Comintern, the Third International.

They had state power in their hands. They had unlimited funds, which they poured out generously to subsidise and support the foreign parties. When there was a difference of opinion in any party, with two or three factions growing up, they could subsidise delegations to travel from any part of the world to Moscow. The differing groups could have full representation before the executive body to discuss the issues. The

international leaders could get a real picture on the spot, hearing the representatives of the different tendencies themselves, before offering advice. And that's what they mainly offered in the early days — advice, and very few orders.

Speaking of representation, I was a delegate to Moscow five times. And every time I was there, delegates from other factions in the American CP were also there. At the Sixth Congress in 1928, we had about 20 delegates from the US, representing all three factions, and the whole expense was paid by the Comintern.

After the degeneration of the Russian party and the emergence of Stalinism, the centralism of the Comintern — which Trotsky and Lenin had handled like a two-edged sword, which they didn't want to swing carelessly — became in the hands of Stalin an instrument for suppressing all independent thought throughout the movement.

Instructed by the past experience, we understood the dangers for the present international movement. We believed it would be absolutely wrong to try to imitate a highly centralised international organisation when we were so weak, when the ability to send delegates from different parties for common consultation was so limited, and when we could communicate only by correspondence. Under these conditions, we believed it would be better for the centre there to limit itself primarily to the role of ideological leader, and to leave aside organisational interference as much as possible, especially outside of Europe.

In Europe, where the parties are close at hand, it might be organised a little more tightly. But even there, we had misgivings. Comrades who were there several times had misgivings about the tendency toward organisational centralisation and discipline, even as applied to the different national parties close at hand in Europe.

That's one difference we had — a sort of running, smouldering difference. We did not press our criticisms to the very end, although we had many. Such interventions as they made in this country were unfortunate. It was a double mistake that they made in the case of Morrow and in the case of Shachtman. We here have had 100 times more experience — I don't say it in boastfulness, but that's the fact — 100 times more experience in dealing with faction fights and splits than they have had. Besides, we knew the people we were dealing with.

You who were in the party at the time know the story. Morrow, who had done a lot of good work in the party before, began in 1945-46 to develop Stalinophobia. I don't know how others deal with that. But I'm the kind of political doctor who says, when I find a case of Stalinophobia, that I've never seen anybody with a cure for it, and it's time to isolate and quarantine it. That disease leads straight to social patriotism and reconciliation with imperialism. That's what Stalinophobia is.

Stalinophobia led Morrow to begin to betray the SWP. He suddenly discovered that the party he used to love and admire so much was no good whatsoever. He was as much against the party record as "The Roots of the Party Crisis"[39] is. The party was not only wrong then, but always had been. Next, he began sidling up to the Shachtmanites, acting disloyally and carrying information to the Shachtmanites when we were in struggle with them. He even went so far as to report to them about our Political Committee meetings in which we discussed our struggle with the Shachtmanites, telling them what we said and what we were planning.

One of our young comrades went over one evening to the Shachtmanite headquarters to buy a pamphlet or a copy of *Labor Action* and there was Morrow, sitting with half a dozen grinning Shachtmanites and regaling them with a report of our own Political Committee meeting that he had just come from. We had a number of illustrations of that kind of disloyalty. Finally we yanked up little Felix — what is he called, the Joan of Arc, the hero-martyr of the Cochranites? — we just yanked him up and said to him in a plenum resolution: "You've been doing so and so, which isn't right, not loyal. We censure you for that, and we warn you to cease and desist."

That's all — just a little slap on the wrist. A few months went by, and he didn't cease and desist, and we got more evidence of treachery on his part. Finally, we reported it to the party. There was no rough stuff, just a general education of the party on the facts. Then we came to the convention in 1946, the convention where we adopted the "Theses on the American Revolution", against which he spoke. (I don't know whether there is any coincidence in this or not, but he spoke against it.) And when his case of discipline came up, the convention declared that in view of the fact that loyalty to the party had been violated by Morrow, that he had been warned and had not heeded the warning, he was hereby chucked out, expelled, by the unanimous vote of our convention.

That's the way we do things in the Socialist Workers Party. You know, it's deceptive. This is such an easygoing party that some people who haven't been in any other party don't know what a paradise they've got.

So easygoing, so democratic, so tolerant. Never bothers anybody for anything, never imposes any discipline. Why, our National Control Commission[40] has gone by three conventions without having anything to report. The only time the good-natured somnolence of the SWP begins to stir into action on the disciplinary front is when somebody gets *disloyal*. Not if he makes a mistake, not if he fiddles around, but if he begins to get *disloyal* and to betray the confidence of the party — then comes the surprise! All of a sudden this somnolent, tolerant party gets out the axe and comes down with it — and off goes the offender's head!

That's what happens when you betray the confidence and the loyalty of our party.

And it causes a little shock — especially on the head that rolls! But it's a literal fact that the only time we ever expelled anybody for anything was for violating discipline after repeated warnings not to do it. That's the only time.

Over in Paris, the International Secretariat — which was under the pressure of the right wing in the French PCI,[41] who were in alliance with Morrow — the IS had no sooner seen what we had done than, without waiting for our report, they adopted a resolution which without saying so directly amounted to disagreement with the unanimous decision of our convention. It gave the Morrowites a new lease on life in the party. We thought: "That's not right, boys. You ought to consult us first. You ought to take into account the fact that the 1500 people represented at our convention have some rights to be considered. If you want to be democratic, then you ought to pay some attention to what the majority thinks."

It was a very rash, precipitate action by a small group in Paris. We just told them: "Please don't do that any more." And we didn't pay any attention to their intervention on Morrow's behalf. The only result of their action was to stir into new life a group of former Morrowites in San Diego. They had just about reconciled themselves to the convention decision. But on the assumption that the International was supporting their faction, they stirred into new life, and we lost the San Diego group of the SWP on that account.

Our next difference was in the case of Shachtman. We entered into negotiations for unity with Shachtman in 1947. We laid down strict conditions, which the Shachtmanites signed on the line. First, during the period of the unity negotiations neither side would attack the other. Second, neither side would admit into its ranks any member of the other side — in other words, we weren't going to raid each other during the unity negotiations. Third, neither side would admit into its ranks anyone who had been expelled by the other side.

A little time went by, and the Shachtmanites promptly printed Ruth Fischer's letter denouncing the SWP for its attitude on Stalinism. Then they printed a letter from Weber, a deserter from our party, in which he said the SWP by its policy on Stalinism was even abetting the GPU. What did we do? We looked first at the signed agreement: "What does it say there, point one, two, three?" We checked and found that the agreement had been violated. Decision: Negotiations off — finished. And we just put a little notice in the paper: "In view of the fact that the Shachtmanites have violated the agreement in this and that respect, negotiations are hereby discontinued — goodbye."

That's all. It was settled by the unanimous vote of our committee. We knew exactly what we were doing. The Shachtmanites were not loyal in their unity negotiations, and we didn't propose to let them monkey with our party. We have learned how to handle

these questions. It isn't a gift from any divine power. It isn't any great genius on our part. It's just that we have had so much experience with faction fights and splits, that we know what to do with them. It becomes a trade — just like laying bricks with Pete — our 30-year man with a trowel.

Do you know what the comrades over in Europe did then? Germain, with the agreement of Pablo — and again without consulting our people and even without a majority of the people there knowing it — decided that they would be more clever than we were. Without consulting us, Germain addressed a letter to Shachtman saying that he was sorry negotiations were broken off but hoped they would be resumed, and that he personally would stand for unity and support the unity movement in the International. It was an open invitation to Shachtman to grab hold of this rope and make more trouble for us in the party and in the international movement.

As I said, that was done without consultation with us. Comrade [Morris] Stein[42] heard about it only after the letter had been sent — and we didn't even get a copy of the letter. I don't attribute this to any malevolence on their part, just to their inexperience. They don't know how to deal in the formalities of organisation as well as they should.

Now, if Shachtman had known what the score was, he could have used this letter to advantage. But there he became a victim of his own cleverness. He thought he knew too much to be caught in another "Cannon trick". He was convinced that Cannon had put Germain up to this letter in order to inveigle Shachtman again — but he was out of our clutches and he was going to stay out. He disregarded the letter with a sneer. So nothing happened. No harm came. But we noted it — all of this within the framework of our general agreement and collaboration, we noted it as an error on their part, and we let them know that that is not the right way to proceed.

Another difference arose in connection with the developments in the French party. A few months after the world congress, where the French party had supposedly accepted the congress decision, we suddenly heard that there was a split — or a partial split — in the PCI. The International Secretariat had intervened, upset the majority of the Central Committee, and placed a representative of the IS as impartial chairman over a parity committee. This meant, in effect, that they had removed the elected leadership of the French party. Did you know that that really happened?

Well, when we heard that we hit the ceiling. We didn't sympathise at all politically with the French majority, which I believe *was* fooling around with the world congress decisions. But we thought: "How are you going to build an International if you think you can upset an elected leadership of a national party?"

It hit me especially, because I am one of those people who, when he gets burned,

like the child, always fears the fire. I had been burned by that very thing in 1925, when the Comintern *by cable* upset a convention majority of the Communist Party of the United States and ordered us to set up a parity National Committee. Or rather, they didn't order it, but that's what the representative of the Comintern here, a man named Gusev, said the cable meant — that we must set up a parity National Committee (even though we had a two-to-one majority) and that he would be impartial chairman. We innocently accepted this decision of the all-high Comintern. The two-to-one majority went into a parity commission with Gusev as chairman in the name of the Comintern. His first action was to constitute a new Political Committee by throwing his vote to the others, thus giving the Lovestoneites a majority in the Political Committee.

So we had had experience with this kind of manipulation, and I didn't like it in the French case. I was fuming, as all of our people were. But the question was: What are we going to do? We were confronted with an accomplished fact, and any attempt to intervene to straighten out an absolutely dangerous precedent in the organisational procedure might help a right wing in the French party that we didn't agree with politically.

As the situation developed further, Renard, one of the French majority, appealed to me in a letter. I didn't answer him for months. I didn't see how I could write on the French question without referring to this organisational monstrosity that had been committed by the International Secretariat. I finally wrote my answer to him out of purely political considerations, and didn't mention the organisational violation at all. He had raised it in his letter, and I think that's the first time I ever answered a political letter and just pretended I hadn't read certain sections — those sections where he complained about the organisational violations.

We disagreed with that procedure. Then there was another difference. When Pablo wrote his article about "centuries of degenerated workers' states", we again had the most violent disagreement. We said, "What in the world is he talking about — 'centuries of degenerated workers' states'? In a world where capitalism is collapsing, revolution is on the order of the day, and revolution is going to be victorious — is it going to take centuries to liquidate the bureaucratic excrescences?"

I told Comrade Stein that I was going to have to write against that, that I didn't believe in that at all. But he said, "If you write against that you will strike at Pablo's prestige and you will make his position impossible. If it appears in the International that Cannon is attacking Pablo, the whole alliance will appear to be broken. The thing is so fragile that you just can't do that."

There were repercussions in the party ranks also. When Arne Swabeck came to the plenum a few days later he said: "What is this — centuries of degenerated workers'

states?" And he told us that a girl comrade got up in the Chicago branch and asked: "What is this? If there are going to be centuries of Stalinism, what's the sense of my going out and selling 10 papers on the street corner." A very good question. And I heard of the same sort of thing in San Francisco.

But we kept quiet about all this in the party. I did speak about it in the Political Committee at some length, when we were discussing the draft resolution of the Third World Congress. My remarks were incorporated in the minutes to be sent over there, so they would know what we thought about this and know that we would not support any implication in the congress resolution of centuries of Stalinism after the revolution. That's as far as we went.

There was another complication, as you know, with the Johnsonites, who were hollering about "Cannonism vs. Pabloism", and trying to exploit the alleged differences. That's the kind of situation you often get into in politics. If you are going to be like Breitman and weigh everything on the finest scale, allow two points here and two points there, you'll never be a political leader. You have to decide which is the *main* issue and which side you are on, and subordinate the others.

I didn't want to give the Johnsonites any handle, any chance to exploit *my* name in their fight against the main line of the coming world congress. So at the 1950 convention, instead of speaking against the "centuries of degenerated workers' states" which I would have liked to do, I went out of my way to say that this talk of "Cannonism vs. Pabloism" is not right, because we are in fundamental agreement on the main line. Murry Weiss, in agreement with me, did the same thing in the Los Angeles discussions. And we took the wind out of the Johnsonites' sails.

I have spoken of all this to show that we have had differences, and fairly serious ones, but that we have considered them to be within the framework of an *overall agreement*. We appreciate the great work the leaders in Paris have done, especially their important contributions to the analysis of the postwar world. We appreciate the fact that they are working with a narrow organisational base, and that they are entitled to loyal support and collaboration.

These have been the general considerations. I cite them to show that if there is a Pablo cult in the party, we don't belong to it. No one has the right to assume that we, with all our respect for the work of Pablo, consider ourselves puppets who can be pulled on a string. That's not our conception of proper international relations. When Comrade Warde [Novack] was travelling in Europe, while this fight was brewing in our party, he had definite instructions as to what we wanted. They asked him, "What shall we do?" His answer was: "It's up to you what you do, but my advice is, let it alone. The American party is a living organism, there are very experienced people there, just

let it alone and see how it develops. Wait till everything becomes clear and then, if you want, express your opinion. But *don't jump in*, and above all don't make any *decisions*, because you might make the wrong ones."

That was our general attitude. The whole implication of their questions was: *"What can we do to help you deal with this new faction?"* Our answer was: "Nothing, we don't need any help. And if we needed help, it would be very bad; because if we can be elected and placed in leadership only with the help of outside forces, we are not the real leaders of the party. And we won't accept leadership on that basis."

These were the reasons for our not wanting intervention on their part. First, we didn't need their support. Second, we don't want leadership that is not the natural and normal and voluntary selection of the rank and file. And third, if they *should* intervene with any kind of decision to support the Cochranites, we would have to tell them that *we would pay no attention whatsoever*.

Internationalism vs 'Cominternism'

Now don't take that to indicate some kind of anti-international sentiment; that's just putting the cards on the table. Why wouldn't we pay any attention? Because we don't believe parties that will permit proconsuls to be imposed upon them as leaders are worth a damn. We don't think a revolutionary party anywhere amounts to much until it is able to throw up a cadre of indigenous leaders who have grown up out of its struggles, who are known to its members and trusted by them. You can't monkey with the question of leadership.

We came out of the Comintern, as I said, and we remembered the crimes of the Comintern. "Socialism in one country" was not the only crime. One of the greatest crimes was the destruction of the self-acting life of the individual Communist parties. The Stalinist Comintern overthrew the indigenous leaders everywhere. Where they couldn't overthrow them directly, they would conspire against them, set factions on foot with secret backing to undermine and finally get rid of all the independent characters in the leadership.

That is what they did in this country. They first got rid of the so-called Cannon group of leaders (the Trotskyists); then they got rid of the Lovestoneite leaders; and then they tamed the Fosterite leaders and reduced them to the ignoble status of functionaries. When they had reduced the whole party to a docile herd, they said who should be the leader — Browder. It was only under those conditions that Browder could become the leader. He was a man of such weakness of decision, such lack of independent character, that he couldn't *fight* his way to leadership. He became an *appointed* leader and ruled the party all these years as nothing more than a proconsul

of Moscow. That he had no power of his own was proved when they got ready to ditch him: they just snapped their fingers — and out went Browder.

That's the kind of business we don't like. We didn't have anything like that with Trotsky. Not at all. Trotsky wrote about this question once — I am not quoting literally because I don't have the document before me, but I remember it almost word for word — about the Comintern practice of getting rid of leaders. He didn't mean only Trotskyist leaders; he referred also to Germany, for example, where the right wing, the Brandlerites, were thrown out by organisational machinations and a new set of puppets put in. Trotsky said: "Leadership is the natural outgrowth of a living party organism. It cannot be arbitrarily removed by outside forces without leaving a gaping wound that does not heal."

That's what Stalinism did to all the Communist parties throughout the world — it inflicted wounds that never healed. After Stalinism came to power, there was never anywhere a really authoritative, native leadership that had grown up out of the struggles of the party and stood on its own feet. That's why the CP leaderships so easily became puppets of Moscow.

Now, we got thrown out of the Comintern in 1928 for our independent opinions. We wouldn't support the line of the Comintern, which we thought was wrong. We asked the privilege of expressing our opinion in discussion. We didn't create any disruption. We just said that we thought Trotsky was right in the dispute and we would like, after the election campaign was over, the privilege of a limited organised discussion where we could present our point of view — and they threw us out of the party.

Relations with Trotsky

We remembered that, and we didn't want any of that in the new International. We wondered, especially I personally, how it was going to be in the new International with Trotsky. Was he going to push us around like manikins, or would he give us a little leeway and show us a little respect? I wondered.

Our first experience was very good. Friendly letters, advice, full and careful explanations, from 1929 until 1932. Then we had a little case, the case of B. J. Field, whom I wrote about in my *History of American Trotskyism* as the leader later on of the hotel strike. But two years before that, he belonged to our party. He organised a private study class outside of the branch activities, selected his own students, and refused to submit his curriculum to the branch executive committee. The branch executive committee — which looked in the constitution and saw that it says the branch controls all activities within its jurisdiction — called on Field to submit his curriculum and let the committee know how things were going there.

Well, the branch was a little touchy — personally I didn't have anything to do with it — but anyhow Field refused. Here was a big shot intellectual, who had worked on Wall Street journals, who had condescended to join a little Trotskyist movement — and now all of a sudden a bunch of young, unimportant people wanted to put him under discipline. So he said, "No". They said "*Yes*. It says so in the constitution, and everything goes by law here." He insisted, No. So they put him on trial in the New York branch (I remember the meeting well, and so does Sylvia [Bleecker]) — put him on trial, heard the report of the committee — and chucked him out. That's all. Expelled him.

It wasn't a very good case, and it would have been better if it could have been adjusted. But the branch said, "Against the constitution" — and out he went. So Field, this man with his great knowledge and ability — he decided he was going to show these New York yokels a few things. And he *was* a very learned man, a statistician of distinction, a good writer, a really first-class intellectual who knew economic data thoroughly because he had dealt with it all his life.

Anyhow, he decided — and he had the funds — to take a personal trip to Constantinople, he and his wife, to visit Trotsky. Trotsky, who was so isolated, of course welcomed all visitors then. Field had all kinds of data that the Old Man was thirsting to get hold of, so as to give them some political interpretation. Being a man of action, he immediately sat Field down, got him to write out his data and collaborated with him on it. And the first thing we know, a number of long, serious, important articles on the economic situation in America and its perspectives appeared in the French Trotskyist paper under the name of B.J. Field — who had just been expelled from our organisation!

We said to ourselves: "Oh, now it has come!" And that's when I got what you might call my Irish up. I said, "If Trotsky thinks he's going to treat our organisation that way, he's got another guess coming". We sat down and wrote him a letter and told him: "This B. J. Field who was working in your secretariat and whose articles you are having published in Europe: (1) has been expelled from the New York branch of the Communist League; (2) the constitution of our party says so and so, and he violated the constitution and was expelled; (3) it is inadmissible for any other party in the International to give access to its ranks or to its press to an expelled member of our party, because that is an act of hostility against our discipline. We therefore demand that you discontinue your collaboration with B.J. Field, and that the French organisation does the same."

I will admit that this was the greatest emotional crisis of my life. I fully expected that Trotsky was going to write back an arrogant letter and tell us what a bunch of

shoemakers we were; that the importance of Field's articles so far outweighed the constitution of the NY branch that we should wake up and recognise what time of day it was. I thought I could never accept that, because that would reduce the American party to nothing but a puppet; and you could never build a party that hasn't any rights of its own, any rights to enforce its own discipline.

We waited with resignation for the answer. And then the letter came from the Old Man, a most conciliatory letter: "I'm so sorry, it was a big mistake on my part. I was so eager to get this material that I didn't realise I was violating anything. By no means do I want to infringe upon the disciplinary regulations of the NY branch. I will discontinue collaboration with Field unless I have your specific approval to continue. Your criticism is correct" — and so on.

"But at the same time", he said, "Mr. Field has a lot of economic knowledge, and the very fact that he came to see me shows he has a will to do something in our movement. I would propose, if it is agreeable to you, that when he returns to New York you do not take him back into the organisation, but allow him to work as a sympathiser for six months. Test him, and if he behaves himself properly for six months, then consider admitting him back into the party."

That's the way our fight with Trotsky over authority and autonomy was settled. And I tell you it was a happy day when we got that letter. That convinced me that we could get along with Trotsky, that we could live with him, that we could have a party of our own which would have its own leaders, and that even the great Trotsky would have respect for our rights. That was the first incident.

Now, the minority did us a great favour when they printed the stenogram of our 1940 discussion with Trotsky. I am going to speak about that in the debate,[43] so I won't go into it in detail here. But one thing that discussion shows is that, instead of our being mere puppets and hand-raisers of Trotsky, as they say, who visited him in Mexico just to ask, "What are the orders?" — and then clicking our heels and saying "Righto" — instead of that, we had a big argument and discussion, a real difference of opinion.

Not only that, but a discussion which ended with Trotsky's saying in effect: "If you don't agree on this, I will not raise the question for discussion in the party. I will leave it to your judgment as to what you do about the candidacy of Browder." And so on.

Trotsky spoke with me later, in personal conversation, and said: "I won't do anything about it at all. You settle it. I don't want to create any discussion." He didn't want to let the party get the slightest intimation that he was against the leadership. The discussion concerned a question of tactics, and an important one — but in it he showed his attitude of absolute loyalty to us.

We never had to fear that someone might go around saying, "Trotsky is against

the party leadership." We never had to fear that we might suddenly get a blow in the dark. Not from Trotsky. When Trotsky had anything to say to party leaders, he would write. He would write to me, as national secretary, about it. When he had any correspondence with people with beefs in the party — and he had a lot — he would always send me a copy of his letter. So we always knew what was going on, and I never had any ground to fear that there was some kind of an underhanded, double game being played. That wasn't our experience with Trotsky.

Now that's the kind of relationship we want. We don't want any orders. We didn't want orders from Trotsky, and certainly do not want them from people lesser than Trotsky. No orders for the Socialist Workers Party. Advice, counsel, collaboration — fine. But Cominternist instructions will never be accepted by this leadership. The kind of relationship we had with Trotsky is the kind we want: collaboration — and that's all we'll accept.

Collaboration, not orders

Many have tried to give us orders. I think there is a Jewish proverb that says, "If you live long enough you will see everything". And one of the things one learns as he gets experience in life, is that there are a number of people in this world who have the habit of mistaking good nature and patience for stupidity. We have always been good-natured and patient in international relationships, and more than once it has been taken for stupidity; and people who were not quite qualified to give us instructions undertook to do so. If we have any difficulty now, it won't be the first time.

I think some of you remember Logan. He was secretary of the International Secretariat, he had been secretary to Trotsky, and he was a learned man. But he undertook to instruct the American leadership as to what to do. We said, "No, no. We won't take that." Then there was the German group called the IKD, the "Three Theses" retrogressionists, who wrote theses a mile long. I couldn't even read them, to say nothing of understanding them. They were awfully long theses — and those people demanded we carry them out right away. I said, "No, no. First, I haven't read them; second, I don't understand them; third, I don't agree with them. And fourth, if you are so smart that you can write stuff I can't understand, you are just too damn smart for our party."

And then there was Munis — you remember the great God Munis, in Mexico, who sent us all those wonderful orders and commands and criticisms, and all the rest. We patiently printed them, I'm sorry to say, we patiently printed a lot of the stuff that preposterous, bombastic jackass wrote on the assumption that he was the successor to Trotsky. But we didn't accept it.

And finally there was Natalia [Sedova]. Natalia actually, I believe, fell victim to the propaganda of the Shachtmanites and the Goldmanites — that all you have to do to get Cannon lined up is to put forth some international authority that he respects — remember how he always just followed Trotsky? So they needled Natalia into sending me instructions on what to do. You know the sad, tragic result of that: we couldn't accept instructions even from Natalia.

As a matter of fact, we are not going to accept it from anywhere, from anyone, under any circumstances. We regard the International Secretariat — who are a group of comrades we esteem — we regard them as collaborators, but *not as masters and not as popes*. We are going to speak out against the revelation of the minority that all you have to do is quote a sentence from Pablo and that settles everything. Pablo is not our pope. He is just a collaborator. He is welcome to give us advice.

But what if Pablo and the IS should come out in support of the minority? If such a thing should occur — and I'm not saying it will; I'm just assuming that the absolutely incredible arrogance of the Cochranites is based on some rumour that they are going to have the support of the IS— if that should occur, it wouldn't oblige us to change our minds about anything. We wouldn't do so.

I was disturbed when I heard some comrades saying that if there should be a decision of the IS in favour of the minority, it might swing some of our people over to the minority. I remember what Trotsky wrote when he was fighting in the Russian party and the Comintern to mobilise the comrades to dare to have a thought and stand up for it. In his appeal to the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, Trotsky said: "That party member who changes his opinion at command is a scoundrel." He meant by that that such a member is disloyal to the party; because the least the party can expect from the most inexperienced, the newest rank-and-file member is that he be honest with the party, tell the party honestly what he thinks, and not change his opinion when he gets the command from this or that leader, or this or that committee.

That is not to say that the party member doesn't have to obey discipline. But one's opinions should be sacred to himself. I hope it will be this way in our party, no matter where the instructions come from — from the Political Committee, from the plenum or from the convention. No one should change his mind because authority tells him to. That is not the mark of a revolutionist. You are obliged to submit to discipline, you are obliged to carry out the decisions of the majority. But if you think you are right, then, as Trotsky said, you bide your time until new events occur and a new discussion opens up.

Trotsky said that a Bolshevik is not only a disciplined man but also an independent thinking man, who will raise his point of view again and again, until either he convinces

the party he is right, or the party convinces him that he is wrong.

We understand what the fight in our party here means. This party, comrades, is the most important party in the whole world. Not because we say so, not because we are braggarts, as Cochran says whenever anyone puts in a good word for the party. It is because we are operating *in that section of the capitalist world which is not collapsing*. We are operating in that section of the world which is a concentration of all the power of capitalism — the United States. The revolutions taking place in other parts of the world — in China, Korea, and other areas of the colonial world — those revolutions cannot be definitive. They can only be provisional — so long as capitalism rules the United States.

That is what Trotsky meant when he said, in his first letter to us in 1929, that in the final analysis all the problems of this epoch — all the problems of capitalism and socialism — will be settled on American soil. If that is true — and it certainly is — then those who set out to build the revolutionary party within the citadel of imperialist power, where the issues will be finally decided — those who set out to build the revolutionary party here, with confidence in the revolutionary future, are by that fact building the most important party in the world.

They are the people of destiny — not in the sneering phrase of the contemptible Cochranite document, which makes a joke of the assertions of our 1946 convention — but in the real essence of the matter. If that is the case; if this party is in a crisis, and we know what the crisis is about; if it is a crisis not only of program and perspectives, the perspectives of the country and the labour movement and the party; if that is involved, and not some little difference over this or that; and if involved also is the problem of leadership, which is the decisive question of every party and every workers' movement, and every revolution, in the last analysis — if all that is involved, then this fight has to be carried through to its conclusion by the people who know what the fight is about, who know the people, who know the answers, and who are determined to carry out the answers.

That is what we are committed to. We hope to have the sympathy and support of the whole international movement. But if we don't have the sympathy and support of one individual here or there, or one group or another, that doesn't mean we give up our opinions and quit our fight. Not for one moment. That only means that the fight in the SWP becomes transferred to the international field. Then we take the field and look for allies to fight on our side against anyone who may be foolish enough to fight on the side of Cochran. Then it would be a fight in the international movement.

I am absolutely sure that we will be victorious here, and I don't see any reason why we wouldn't be victorious on the international field if it should come to a fight. We

hope to avoid such a fight. We are not looking for it. We have no tangible evidence to prove that there is any conspiracy against us, or any actions against us, on the international field. But if a fight should come, we will be prepared for it. That is the way we size this thing up.■

Factional Struggle & Party Leadership

The split between the SWP and its international allies — who constituted themselves as the International Committee of the Fourth International — and the International Secretariat faction of Michel Pablo, lasted for a decade.

But Pablo's loss of his principal supporters — Ernest Mandel, Pierre Frank and Livio Maitan — plus the latter's support for the Hungarian anti-bureaucratic revolt of 1956 and the Cuban Revolution, paved the way for reunification of the majorities of both public factions of the Fourth International. This took place in 1963. Two years later Pablo split from the FI.

The factional struggle in the SWP itself was to last 18 months — from April 1952 until early November 1953, when the Cochranite faction was expelled from the party for systematically boycotting party activity. After their expulsion from the SWP, the Cochranites set up their own organisation whose activity consisted almost solely of promoting the American Socialist*, the magazine they founded. But after about five years together they disintegrated as an organised group.*

Below is the text of a speech delivered by Cannon on the last day of the November 2-3, 1953 National Committee plenum of the SWP, following the expulsion of the Cochranite faction. In his speech, Cannon not only sums up the results of the struggle, but discusses its implications for the sort of leadership needed by a revolutionary socialist party. The text is taken from Fourth International*, November-December 1953. We have put in our own subheads for ease of reading.*

We all recognise, comrades, that we have come to the end of the long faction fight in the party. Nothing remains now but to sum up the results.

This has been a long faction fight, and it was not brought to a definitive conclusion until it was fully ripe. The Cochranite minority were given a whole year to carry on underground factional work and organisation in the party. A whole year. Then we

finally dragged them out into the open; and we had intensified discussion for five months, with more internal bulletins published even than in the great fight of 1939-40. Then we had the May plenum and the truce, which the Cochranites signed but did not keep.

Then five more months of struggle during which the Cochranites developed their positions to their logical conclusion and showed themselves in action as an anti-party, anti-Trotskyist tendency. They organised a campaign of sabotage of party activities and party funds, culminating in the organised boycott of our 25th anniversary meeting. Then we came to this November plenum where the Cochranite leaders were indicted for treachery and suspended from the party. And that's the end of the faction fight in the SWP.

In the face of the record nobody can justly say that we were impatient, that anything was done hastily, that there wasn't a free and ample discussion, that there were not abundant proofs of disloyalty before discipline was invoked. And above all, nobody can say that the leadership hesitated to bring down the axe when the time came for it. That was their duty. The rights of a minority in our democratic party have never included, and will never include, the right to be disloyal. The SWP has no place and no room for strikebreakers.

Fusions & splits

Trotsky once remarked that unifications and splits are alike methods of building the revolutionary party. That's a profoundly true remark, as experience has shown. The party which led the Russian Revolution to victory was the product of the split with the Mensheviks in 1903, several unifications and splits along the road, and the final unification with Trotsky in 1917. The combination of the splits and the unifications made possible the party of victory in the Russian Revolution.

We have seen, in our own experience, the same principle working out. We began with a split from the Stalinists. Unification with the Musteites in 1934 and later with the left wing of the Socialist Party were great milestones in the building of our organisation. But these unifications were of no more importance, and stand rather on an equal plane, with the split of the leftist sectarians in 1935[44] and of the revisionist Burnhamites in 1940, and with the split of the new revisionists today. All these actions have been part of the process of building the revolutionary party.

This law enunciated by Trotsky, that both unifications and splits are alike methods of building the party, is true however only on the condition that both the unification and the split in each case is properly motivated. If they are not properly prepared and properly motivated they can have a disrupting and disorganising effect. I can give you

examples of that.

The unification of the Left Opposition under Nin in Spain with the opportunist Maurin group, out of which was formed the POUM, was one of the decisive factors in the defeat of the Spanish revolution. The dilution of the program of Trotskyism for the sake of unification with an opportunist group robbed the Spanish proletariat of that clear program and resolute leadership which could have made the difference in the Spanish revolution in 1936.

Conversely, the splits in the French Trotskyist organisation before World War II, several of them, none of which were properly motivated — contributed to the demoralisation of the party. It has been our good fortune that we have made no false unifications and no false splits. Never have we had a split in which the party did not bound forward the day after, precisely because the split was properly prepared and properly motivated.

The party was not ready for a split when our plenum convened last May. The minority at that time had by no means extended their revisionist conceptions into action in such a manner as to convince every single member of the party that they were alien to us. For that reason we made big concessions to avoid a split. By the same reasoning, because everything was clear and everything was ripe in November, we made the split here — without the slightest hesitation. And if, in the reminiscences of the fight, you give the party leadership credit for their patience and forbearance in the long struggle, don't forget to add that they deserve just as much credit for the decisive, resolute action taken at this plenum to bring things to a conclusion.

The Shachtmanite & Cochranite splits

I think it would be useful for us to make a comparison of this split, which we consider to be progressive and a contribution to the development of the revolutionary party in America, with the split of 1940. There are points of similarity and of difference. They are similar insofar as the basic issue in each case was revisionism. But the revisionism of 1940 was by no means as deep and definitive as the revisionism that we have split with today. Burnham, it is true, had abandoned the program of Marxism, but he did it openly only in the last stages of the fight, when he took off the mask. And Shachtman did not go along fully with him. Shachtman, up to the point of the split, did not openly revise our program on the Soviet Union, which was the central issue in dispute.

He left the question open and even stated in one of his last documents that if the imperialists would attack the Soviet Union he would come out for defence. As for the third leader, Abern, he did not yield anything theoretically to revisionism at all. He still considered himself an orthodox Trotskyist, and thought the whole fight was over the

organisation question. He was greatly mistaken, but the definitive struggle between orthodox Trotskyism and revisionism was by no means as clear-cut and deep in 1940 as it is this time. That was shown by the fact that when Burnham carried his revisionism to its logical conclusion and abandoned the movement altogether a couple of months later, Shachtman and Abern drew back.

The two splits, this one and that of 1940, are similar in that they were both unavoidable. The differences in each case had matured to the point where we could no longer talk the same language or live in the same party. When the Shachtmanites gave us their plain ultimatum and demanded that they be allowed to have their own paper, their own magazine, their own public expression, they were only expressing their deepest conviction that they had to talk a different language from ours, that they could not conscientiously circulate what we wrote in our press along orthodox lines. And since we could not tolerate that, the split was unavoidable.

The present split is different from 1940 in that it is more definitive. There is not a single member of this plenum who contemplates any later relations in the same party with the strikebreakers of the Pablo-Cochran gang. Any doubt on this score is excluded. It is an absolute certainty that from yesterday morning at 11 o'clock, when they left the hall — not with a bang but a giggle — that they left for good. The most that can be contemplated is that individual members who have been caught in the undercurrents may drift back to the party one by one, and of course they will be received. But as far as the main core of the minority faction is concerned, they have broken forever with us. The day they were suspended from the party, and released from further obligations to it, was probably the happiest day of their lives.

The Shachtmanites, on the other hand, continued to protest for a long time that they would like to have unity. And even six or seven years after the split, in 1946 and 1947, we actually conducted unity negotiations with the Shachtmanites. At one time in early 1947 we had a unification agreement with them, illustrating the point I made that the split of 1940 was by no means as definitive and final as is the split today. We are finished and done with Pablo and Pabloism forever, not only here but on the international field. And nobody is going to take up any of our time with any negotiations about compromise or any nonsense of that sort. We are at war with this new revisionism, which came to full flower in the reaction to the events after the death of Stalin in the Soviet Union, in East Germany, and in the French general strike.

There are differences between the two splits in other respects, very important ones, and more favourable for the party. First, as to the size of the split. In 1940 the Shachtmanites had not less than 40% of the party and a majority of the youth organisation. If you count the youth, who were not voting members of the party, it was

almost a 50-50 split. This group takes out a bare 20%. That is one difference.

A second difference is that in 1940 the split was a split of the leading cadre right down the middle. Not just a sloughing off of some people that you can easily get along without. For years in the central leadership of the party, the central political nucleus had been Burnham, Shachtman, and Cannon. They took two out of the three. They had a majority of the Political Committee of the party as it was constituted up to the outbreak of the fight in September 1939. We had to reorganise the Political Committee at the plenum in October 1939 in order to establish the majority rule in the PC.

Shachtman and Burnham were by no means mere ornaments in the Political Committee. They were the editors of the magazine and of the paper, and they did practically all the literary work. There was a division of labour between them and me, whereby I took care of the organisational and trade union direction, administration and finances — and all the rest of the chores that intellectuals don't like to bother with as a rule — and they did the writing, most of it. And when they were on the right line they wrote very well, as you know.

So in 1940 there was a real split, not only in the political leadership, but in the working cadre as well. At the time of the split, there was a lot of apprehension on the part of some of our comrades. What in the devil would we do without these first-class intellectual forces, efficient writers, and so on? And there was great jubilation on their part, and a profound conviction that we would never be able to get along, because they took all the writers.

Why, practically all the comrades who are now leading the party and doing all the work of the leading cadre — very few of them were even members of the National Committee at that time. Those who were members, were only getting their first experience and had not yet gained recognition as writers, orators, and politicians. Comrade Dobbs, for example, coming out of the mass movement, had been in New York only a couple of months. A number of other comrades, who were members or alternates of the National Committee,[45] had not yet considered themselves or been considered as actual members of the leading political cadre of the party. In 1940, the split of the cadre went right down the middle.

And then there was a third feature of the 1940 split. The petty-bourgeois opposition went out of the party with the majority of the youth, who, as Comrade Dobbs said, have more bounce to the ounce. They were confident that with their dynamism, with their ability to jump and run, with their conception of a "campaign party", and with their writers — they would soon show that they could build a party faster, bigger, better — and in every other California way — than we could. We didn't agree with them, but that's what they started with.

And don't forget, they started almost the next week with a new party. They called it the "Workers Party" and they came out with a new weekly paper and with a magazine which they stole from us. For a considerable period they thought they were serious rivals of ours in the struggle for the allegiance of the workers' vanguard in this country. That is what we were up against in 1940. We had to take a new cadre of previously inexperienced comrades and push them into places of responsibility in the Political Committee and the press, and begin their training for leadership in the fire of struggle.

The 1953 split is quite different in various respects. First, I mentioned size. It is much smaller. Second, the cadre is not split down the middle this time, as might appear to some people when they see these names — Cochran, Clarke, Bartell, Frankel, and so on. They are talented people; they were part of the cadre, but not an indispensable part. We have had five months of experience of the "cold split" since the May plenum to test that out. During that entire period the Cochranites have done no constructive party work whatever. Inspired by the Great God Pablo, they have devoted their efforts exclusively to factionalism, obstruction of party work, and sabotage of party finances. And what has been the result? We have found in the five months since the May plenum that these people are in no way indispensable to the literary work of the party, to the political work of the party, to the organisational work of the party, or to the financial support of the party.

The party has been rolling along without them and despite them for five months. The split of the cadre turned out to be a splinter. We tested it out for five months in a cold split before we finally confronted it in a hot split, and we know. There will be absolutely no disruption in the leadership, no scurrying around to find who is going to fill the places vacated by these former Trotskyists turned revisionists. The places are already filled, filled to overflowing, so to speak. Everything is going OK. That's the experience of the drawn-out cold split since May.

Third, nobody can imagine these people even daring to contemplate the idea of launching a new party and an agitational paper. First of all, they don't believe in their own capacity to build a party. Second, they don't believe in the capacity of anybody to build a party. And in the third place, they don't believe in a revolutionary vanguard party. So they are not going to confront us with a rival party claiming to be the Trotskyist vanguard and the nucleus of the future mass party of the revolution.

They are, in their own maximum optimistic plans, aiming at a small propaganda circle which will publish a little magazine, in which they will observe and analyse and explain things for the benefit of the "sophisticated political elements", i.e., the Stalinists and "progressive" labour skates. Sideline critics, observers, analysts, and abstainers — that is the kind of an opposition they will present to us. No rival party.

They will not be an obstacle to us in our struggle as a party in election campaigns — because they don't believe in election campaigns. In the first period after we split with the Shachtmanites, they used to run their own candidates against us in New York and other places; and in general they tried to compete with us, their party against our party. That will not be the case with the Cochranites. If we want to have any debates with these people, I think we will have to hunt them up wherever they may be hiding. And in some places that is going to be a difficult proposition, especially in Detroit and San Francisco.

Test of leadership

A factional struggle is a test of leadership. Factional struggle is a part of the process of building the revolutionary party of the masses; not the whole of the struggle, but a part of it.

Some comrades, especially mass workers, who want to be all the time busy with their constructive work, who are upset and irritated by arguments, squabbles, and faction fights, have to learn that they can't have peace in the party unless they fight for it. Factional struggle is one way of getting peace.

The party, as you know, enjoyed internal peace and solidarity over that entire period from 1940 to 1951; 11 years, barring that little skirmish with Goldman and Morrow, which did not amount to much — 11 years of peace and normal internal life. This long peace carried the party through the war, the trial and the imprisonment of the 18,[46] the postwar boom, and the first period of the witch-hunt. That internal peace and solidarity didn't fall from the sky. It was not "given" to us. We fought for it and secured it by the factional battle with the petty-bourgeois opposition in the eight months from September 1939 to April 1940.

Every serious factional struggle, properly directed by a conscious leadership, develops in progressive stages; it has a beginning, a middle, and an end; and at every stage of the struggle the leadership is put to a test. Without a conscious leadership, factionalism can devour and destroy a party. Headless factionalism, sometimes even the smallest squabble, can tear a party to pieces. We have seen this happen more than once. Everything depends on the leaders, on their consciousness. They must know how and when to begin the faction fight, how to conduct it, and how and when to finish it.

The first two stages of the struggle against the revisionist-liquidators in the SWP — the beginning and the middle — are already behind us. Now comes the end. We will have plenty of time to reflect on the experiences of the first two stages later. I think it would be ill-advised and worse than a waste of time, at this stage of final action in

finishing the fight, to begin reminiscing and examining how many mistakes were made, and who made this and that mistake, and so on.

The essential thing is that the leading cadre of the party as a whole saw the problem in time, took hold of the situation and brought it out in the open, for five months of free discussion. Then, at the May plenum we offered the minority a truce in order to give them a chance to reconsider their course or to establish the issues more clearly in objective discussion. Then, when the Cochranites broke the truce, we went through five months of the "cold split", and finally brought it to an end at the plenum.

All that was done successfully, without disrupting or demoralising the party. That is the essential thing. We can leave for later the reminiscences or examinations or analyses of whether a little mistake was made here and there by this one or that one. That does not count now. The third point is what counts now — how to finish the faction right. And here again it is a question of leadership.

The party question

Leadership is the one unsolved problem of the working class of the entire world. The only barrier between the working class of the world and socialism is the unsolved problem of leadership. That is what is meant by "the question of the party". That is what the Transitional Program means when it states that the crisis of the labour movement is the crisis of leadership. That means that until the working class solves the problem of creating the revolutionary party, the conscious expression of the historic process, which can lead the masses in struggle, the issue remains undecided. It is the most important of all questions — the question of the party.

And if our break with Pabloism — as we see it now clearly — if it boils down to one point and is concentrated in one point, that is it — it is the question of the party. That seems clear to us now, as we have seen the development of Pabloism in action. The essence of Pabloist revisionism is the overthrow of that part of Trotskyism which is today its most vital part — the conception of the crisis of mankind as the crisis of the leadership of the labour movement summed up in the question of the party.

Pabloism aims not only to overthrow Trotskyism; it aims to overthrow that part of Trotskyism which Trotsky learned from Lenin. Lenin's greatest contribution to his whole epoch was his idea and his determined struggle to build a vanguard party capable of leading the workers in revolution. And he did not confine his theory to the time of his own activity. He went all the way back to 1871, and said that the decisive factor in the defeat of the first proletarian revolution, the Paris Commune, was the absence of a party of the revolutionary Marxist vanguard, capable of giving the mass movement a conscious program and a resolute leadership. It was Trotsky's acceptance

of this part of Lenin in 1917 that made Trotsky a Leninist.

That is written into the Transitional Program, that Leninist concept of the decisive role of the revolutionary party. And that is what the Pabloites are throwing overboard in favour of the conception that the ideas will somehow filter into the treacherous bureaucracy, the Stalinists or reformists, and in some way or another, "In the Day of the Comet", the socialist revolution will be realised and carried through to conclusion without a revolutionary Marxist, that is, a Leninist-Trotskyist, party. That is the essence of Pabloism. Pabloism is the substitution of a cult and a revelation for a party and a program.

Problem of party leadership

The problem of the party has another aspect. The problem of the party is the problem of the leadership of the party. I believe, that just as truly as the problem of the party is the problem the working class has to solve before the struggle against capitalism can be definitively successful — the problem of the party is the problem of the leadership of the party.

You cannot build a revolutionary party without the program. We all know that. In time the program will create the party. But herein is precisely the role of conscious leaders — to save time. Time is "of the essence" in this epoch when years count for centuries. It is certainly difficult to build a party without leadership, without cadres. As a matter of fact, it can't be done.

Look over the world, look over all the experiences of the last quarter of a century, in one country after another, where the writings and teachings of Trotsky were available, where the program was known, and what do you see? Where they lacked the leaders to build the party, where they lacked cadres, the party did not amount to much. On the other hand, those parties which threw up leaders capable of working together as a cadre remained firm and solid and consciously prepared their future.

The leading cadre plays the same decisive role in relation to the party that the party plays in relation to the class. Those who try to break up the historically created cadres of the Trotskyist parties, as the Pabloites are doing in one country after another, are in reality aiming to break up the parties and to liquidate the Trotskyist movement. Take note: I said "trying" and "aiming", I didn't say "succeeding". They will not succeed. The Trotskyist parties will liquidate the liquidators, and the SWP has the high historic privilege of setting the example.

Given the program, the construction of leading cadres is the key to the construction of revolutionary parties; and the former requires an even higher degree of consciousness and a more deliberate design than the latter. Of course, every party in

every generation since the Communist Manifesto has had a leadership of a sort. But there has been very little consciousness about its selection, and for that reason, among others, the real problem remained unsolved. The experiences of the past in this respect are rich in lessons on the theme of what not to do.

The present generation of the revolutionary vanguard, which has the benefit of Lenin and Trotsky, has the supreme duty now to examine the tragic mistakes of the past in this respect in order to avoid them and to replace haphazard methods by a conscious theory and a deliberate design in the construction of leading cadres.

Different types of leadership

First, and perhaps worst, of the kinds of party leadership which we have seen and known, even in the Fourth International, is the unplanned leadership of talented individual stars, pulling in opposite directions, squandering their energies in personal rivalries, quarrelling over trifles, and incapable of organising a sensible division of labour.

That has been the tragic experience of many sections of the Fourth International, in particular of the French section. I don't know how things are in France today, but I do know that the French section of the Fourth International will never become a real party until it learns to discipline its individual star performers and make them work together.

A second kind of leadership is the leadership of a clique. In every leadership clique there is a certain coordination, a certain organisation and division of labour, and it sometimes looks good — while it lasts. But a clique is bound together by personal associations — what Trotsky, who hated cliques, called "chumminess" — and has in it, by that very fact, a fatal flaw — that it can be broken up by personal quarrels. That is the inevitable fate of every political clique.

There is no such thing, and can be no such thing as a permanent clique, no matter what good friends and chums may be drawn together in a tight, exclusive circle and say to themselves: "Now we have everything in our hands and we are going to run things fine." The great winds and waves of the class struggle keep beating upon this little clique. Issues arise. Personal difficulties and frictions develop. And then come personal quarrels and squabbles, meaningless faction fights and senseless splits, and the clique ends in disaster. The party cannot be led by a clique. Not for very long, anyway.

There is a third method of leadership which I will confess to you frankly I noticed only after I passed my 60th birthday. That is the leadership of a cult. I will admit that I lived 60 years in this world before I stumbled over the fact that there are such things as political cults. I began rubbing my eyes when I saw the Johnsonites operating in our

party. I saw a cult bound to a single person, a sort of Messiah. And I thought, "I'll be damned. You're never too old to learn something new."

A cult requires unthinking fools for the rank and file. But that is not all. In order for a cult to exist, it is not enough for a leader to have personal followers — every leader has personal influence more or less — but a cult leader has to be a cultist himself. He has to be a megalomaniac who gets revelations outside the realm of reality. A megalomaniacal cult leader is liable to jump in any direction at any time, and all the cultists automatically follow, as sheep follow the bellwether, even into the slaughterhouse.

That is what happened with the Johnsonites. The cult followed Johnson, not simply for his theory of the Soviet Union — other people have that theory; a lot of people in the world have that theory about "state capitalism". The Johnsonites were personal cultist followers of Johnson as a Messiah; and when he finally gave the signal for them to jump out of this party for reasons known only to himself, but allegedly because of some personal grievance he imagined, of which they had no knowledge and which they had just heard about, they all left the party at the same hour, Eastern Standard Time. That is a cult. The Pabloite cult, like any other, is capable of jumping in any direction at any time, whenever the leader gets a revelation. You cannot trust the party of the workers' vanguard to a cult or a cultist leader.

There is a fourth method of leadership which has been very common. I have seen much of it in my time — that is the leadership of a permanent faction. Here is something that we have to be on our guard about, because we have just gone through a very severe faction fight, and in the course of the fight we have become tightly bound together. It is absolutely necessary for the leadership to see clearly what a temporary faction is, what its legitimate purposes are, what its limits are, and the danger of the faction hardening into permanence.

There is no greater abomination in the workers' political movement than a permanent faction. There is nothing that can demoralise the internal life of a party more efficiently than a permanent faction. You may say: that is contradicted by the experience of Lenin. Didn't he organise a faction in 1903, the Bolshevik faction, and didn't that remain a hard and fast faction all the way up to the revolution? Not entirely. The faction of Lenin, which split with the Mensheviks in 1903, and subsequently had negotiations with them and at various times united with them in a single party, but nevertheless remained a faction, was a faction only in its outward form.

In the essence of the matter, the nucleus of the Bolshevik Party of the October Revolution was the Lenin Bolshevik faction. It was a party. And the proof of the fact that it was a party and not an exclusive faction of Lenin was that within the Bolshevik

faction there were different tendencies. There were left-wing and right-wing Bolsheviks. At times some of them openly polemicised with Lenin. The Bolsheviks even had splits and reunifications among themselves. Lenin did not consider the Bolshevik faction something he was going to keep with him all his life as a closed corporation.

In the decisive days of 1917 when he brought out his April theses, he showed that his conception was really that of a party by uniting with Trotsky, which made all the difference in the world. It was a party action. And a few months later, when Zinoviev and Kamenev, the very closest collaborators of Lenin, went wrong on the insurrection, he combined with Trotsky to smash them. Lenin's faction was in reality a party.

We have seen factions which grew out of a separate struggle, crystallised and hardened, and held together after the issues which brought them into being no longer existed. That happened in the old Communist Party.

Its leading cadre, as a whole, was a fusion of people with different backgrounds. There were the New Yorkers, and some others, who came out of the Socialist Party, whose experience had been in the field of parliamentary socialism, election campaigns, and so on — a purely "political" grouping. Ruthenberg, Lovestone, etc., represented this background. There was another tendency in the party represented by the "Westerners" — those who had a syndicalist background, a background of work in the trade union movement, in strikes, in the "direct action" of the class struggle. Foster, Bill Dunne, Swabeck, myself, etc., represented this origin.

We naturally formed different tendencies — each partly right and partly wrong — and from the beginning were always in skirmishes with each other. Eventually these tendencies hardened into factions. Then later, after several years of experience, we learned from each other and the real differences narrowed down. But the faction formations remained. Time after time, the two factions would agree on what was to be done, agree on every resolution for the convention, and still the factions would continue to exist.

In such circumstances the factions degenerated into gangs struggling for power, and the degeneration of the Communist Party was greatly facilitated by that. The Comintern should have helped us to unify the cadre, but instead it fed the flames of factionalism in order to fish in the troubled waters to create its own Stalinist faction. Those were bitter times. I began to rebel against that sterile kind of struggle and I made several attempts — years before we were thrown out of the party for Trotskyism — I made several attempts to break up the politically senseless faction formations. A number of us broke away from the Foster gang and formed a separate grouping and united with a group that Weinstone had split off from the Lovestoneites, with the same revolt against this purposeless gang factionalism. We formed a "middle grouping"

with the slogan: "Dissolve the factions".

We carried on a fight for a couple of years to dissolve the factions into the party. But by that time both the Lovestoneites and the Fosterites had become so hardened in the gang and clique spirit that it was impossible to do it. That contributed to the degeneration of the Communist Party, because permanent factions become cliques and they exclude everybody else. If a permanent faction happens to get control of the leadership of the party and runs the party as a faction, it is bound to exclude others from any real place in the leadership. By that very fact it drives the others into the organisation of counter-cliques and counter-factions, and there is no longer a single cadre in the leadership of the party. We saw that happen in the CP. We have to learn something from that experience.

Cadre concept of leadership

In our party, basing ourselves on our experiences and our studies, we have had a conception of the leadership not as a number of uncoordinated individual stars; not as a clique; not, in God's name, as a cult; and not as a permanent faction. Our conception of the leadership is that of a leading cadre.

It is a conscious design, patiently worked at for years and years. A leading cadre, in our conception, has the following basic characteristics: It consists of people who are first of all united on the program, not on every single question that arises in daily work, but on the basic program of Trotskyism. That is the beginning.

The second feature is that the leading cadre is an *inclusive* and not an *exclusive* selection. It does not have a fixed membership, but deliberately keeps the door open all the time for the inclusion of new people, for the assimilation and development of others, so that the leading cadre is flexibly broadening in numbers and in influence all the time.

Our cadre has another feature. It constructs the National Committee as a widely democratic representation of the party. I do not know how the leadership is constructed in other parties, but our party here is not led exclusively by the central political working group in New York. The leadership, we have always emphasised, is not the Secretariat.[47] It is not the Political Committee. It is not the Editorial Board. It is the National Committee plenum. The plenum includes the Secretariat, the Political Committee, and the Editorial Board, *plus* the leading comrades from all the districts of the party.

These district representatives, as you know, are not handpicked in New York and promoted by special manoeuvres. We all know how to do that sort of thing and deliberately refrain from doing it. The central leaders never interfere with the deliberations of the nominating commission at party conventions. The district

representatives are freely selected by the delegates from their districts and confirmed by the nominating commission. They really represent their branches or locals, and when they sit in the plenum you have a really democratic representation of the entire party. That is one reason why our plenums have such a commanding authority in the party.

When the plenum meets, we can say that we are the leadership because we really are. It is a small convention every time we have a plenum of the National Committee. That is part of our deliberate program of constructing a representative leadership which is democratically controlled.

A third feature of our conception of the cadre, which we work on consciously and deliberately all the time, is to cultivate among all the leading people the ability to work together; not to be individual stars; not to be wiseacres who make problems of themselves — but people who fit into a machine; work with others; recognise the merits and respect the opinions of others; recognise that there is no such thing as an unimportant person, that anybody who stands for the program and is sent into the National Committee by his branch or local has got something to give. The task of the central leaders of the party is to open the door for him, find out what he can do, and help him to train himself to do better in the future.

The ability to work together is an essential feature of our conception of the leading cadre, and the next feature is that of a division of labour. It is not necessary for one or two wise guys to know everything and do everything. It is much better, much firmer, much surer if you have a broad selection of people, each one of whom contributes something to the decisions and specialises in work for which he is qualified, and coordinates his work with others.

I must say, I take great satisfaction in the way the leading cadre of our party has evolved and developed in the period since the open fight with the Pablo-Cochran revisionists began. I think they have given the world movement a model demonstration of a strong group of people, of varied talents and experiences, learning how to coordinate their efforts, divide the labour between them, and work collectively so that the strength of each one becomes the strength of all. We end up with a powerful machine, which combines the merits of all its individual members into a multiplied power.

And you not only combine the merits and get good out of them. You can sometimes also get good and positive results from a combination of faults. That also takes place in a properly organised and coordinated cadre. That thought was expressed to me in a letter from Trotsky. What I am telling you here is not exclusively what I have seen and experienced and thought up in my own head. It is not only our experience, but also a great deal of personal instruction from Trotsky. He formed the habit of writing to me

very often after he found out that I was willing to listen and did not take offence at friendly criticism.

He kept advising me all the time about the problems of leadership. As far back as 1935 and 1936, in the fight with the Musteites and the Oehlerites, he gave us such advice. He always referred to Lenin, how Lenin had put his cadre together. He said, Lenin would take one man who had an impulse for action, smelled opportunities, and had a tendency to run ahead of himself, and balance him off against a man who was a little more cautious — and the compromise between the two produced a balanced decision, which redounded to the benefit of the party.

He told me, for example, in one letter where he was advising me to be very careful and not to make an exclusive slate for the National Committee, and not to eliminate people who have some faults which I especially don't like, such as hesitation, conciliationism, and indecisiveness in general; he said, you know Lenin used to say about Kamenev, that he was a constitutional vacillator; he always tended at the moment of decision to "soften up", to vacillate and conciliate. Kamenev, as a matter of fact, belonged to the faction of Bolshevik conciliators in the period after 1907 to 1917, with a tendency toward conciliation with the Mensheviks, but he remained in the Bolshevik Party.

And Lenin used to say — as Trotsky explained it to me — we need Kamenev in the Central Committee because his tendency to waver and conciliate is the reflection of a certain tendency of that kind in the party ranks that we want to keep our finger on. When Kamenev speaks we know that there is a certain sentiment within the party of the same kind that we have to take into consideration. And while we do not accept Kamenev's wavering and conciliationism, we go slow and take it into account, because when we move we want to take the whole party with us. If he raises too many objections, we stop awhile and devote a little more time to education in the party ranks to make sure that our ranks will be solid.

Our strength is in our combination, both of our faults and of our virtues. That, taken on the whole, is what I call the cadre concept of leadership. This cadre, for the last year almost, has been constituted as a faction — that is, the great majority of the cadre. We have engaged in a faction struggle. But what was that cadre organised into a faction for? It was not the whole cadre; it was the majority, but not all. It didn't include the comrades from Buffalo and Youngstown — there were some differences there at first but they have been virtually eliminated in the course of the struggle; the decisions of this plenum are all unanimous. But at the start, the majority of the cadre constituted itself into a faction, meeting by itself, making its own decisions, and so on.

However, this faction was not formed for the purpose of having a faction. It was

not formed as a permanent combination of good fellows who are going to stick together from now to doomsday and not let anybody else join. It is not a gang, nor a clan, nor a clique. It is just simply a politico-military organisation formed for a certain purpose. But what was the purpose? The purpose was to defeat and isolate the revisionist faction of Pablo-Cochran. That aim has been achieved.

That being the case, what is the duty of this faction now? Are we going to hold together for old time's sake, form a sort of "Grand Army of the Republic" — the only ones allowed to wear ribbons, demand special privileges and honours? No. The duty of this faction now is to say: "The task is finished, the faction is no longer needed, and the faction must be dissolved into the party." The leadership of the party belongs henceforth to the cadre as a whole, assembled at this plenum. All problems, all questions for discussion, should be taken directly into the party branches.

I would like to start off this new stage of party life by announcing here in the name of the majority faction of the National Committee its unanimous decision: the majority faction that was formed for the purposes of the struggle, having accomplished its task, hereby dissolves itself into the party.■

AFTER THE REVOLUTION

From Diego Rivera's 1933 mural Man at the Crossroads.

America Under the Workers' Rule

The following talk was delivered at the Friday Night Forum of the SWP in Los Angeles on January 16, 1953. It was the fifth in a series of lectures by Cannon on "America's Road to Socialism".

At this time the United States was in the depths of the Cold War: Eisenhower was beginning his first presidential term, the Korean war was raging, the anti-communist witch-hunt was at its height, the labour movement was conservatised and passive and the left small and isolated. Yet — despite heavy losses — the SWP tenaciously held on and remained true to its revolutionary program. In his talks Cannon reaffirmed his confidence in the socialist perspective, in particular, the ability of the American working class to successfully challenge US imperialism in a struggle for power and to create a new society.

Cannon's lecture was serialised in the Militant*, March 23 and 30, 1953. We have added the subheads.*

Last week we discussed the coming struggle for power which will decide the question: Who shall be master in the American house? Our analysis showed that the advantages in this coming struggle lie on the side of the workers, and that their victory can be expected. This victory of the workers in the showdown struggle with the capitalists and their fascist gangs will culminate, at a certain point, in the establishment of a workers' government to rule the country.

Differences with anarchists

Right at this point our differences with the anarchists are brought out most sharply. We don't hear so much about anarchism now as we did in my early days in the movement. Anarchism was then taken more seriously as a revolutionary tendency, but it made a miserable showing under the actual tests of war and revolution. Anarchism, in essence, is nothing but opportunism turned inside out, but it sometimes appears to be its opposite; and impatient workers, recoiling violently against a pusillanimous and compromising leadership, are often attracted to the high-sounding verbal radicalism

of anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists and mistake it for the real thing. It is possible, therefore, that in the course of coming developments in America, anarchism could experience a certain revival. That could cause a great deal of confusion just when clarity of program will be supremely important.

The differences between Marxists and anarchists are very serious and caused many polemical disputes and splits in the past, ever since the days of Marx and Bakunin in the First International. There were many points at issue in this great historic controversy, but the central point was the question of the state. The anarchist theory was that capitalism and the state would be abolished at the same time, in one operation. For them the revolutionary victory was synonymous with the abolition of the state.

The Marxists said, no, you are running ahead of yourselves. Marxism also envisages a society in which there will be no classes and no state, but does not agree with the contention that the state can be abolished in one step at the moment of the workers' victory. A transition period will follow when the workers will need a state for their own historic class purposes. Marxism regards the state as the instrument of class rule. It is not the general, impartial representative of all the people, as it is represented to be and as, unfortunately, many people think it is. The state, in its essential features, is the instrument of one class for the suppression of another.

That's the character of the present state in this country. Marxism gives the same basic definition to the state that will be set up following the workers' victory. The workers' state — in the transition period between capitalism and socialism — will have the same characteristics, in some respects, as the one that exists today. It will be a class instrument; its chief purpose will be to suppress one class in the interests of another. So far, it's the same thing as the Eisenhower state, with this slight difference: The state we envisage after the victory of the workers will be a governmental instrument of coercion in the hands of the working-class majority to suppress any attempt of the capitalist minority to re-establish their system of exploitation. The workers' state will be like the present state only turned upside down and put to the service of a different class.

The main features and role of this new state in the transition period are not for us a subject of imaginative speculation. The nature of society in the transition period between capitalism and socialism, and the kind of state, of government, it would require, were clearly foreseen and elaborated theoretically by Marx and Engels a long time ago; and the theory was applied in practice in the Russian Revolution of 1917 by Lenin and Trotsky. We have both Marxist theory and serious experience to go by in stating confidently what the general characteristics of the new state will be and what its tasks will be.

In drawing up their conclusions from the experience of the Paris Commune of 1871, the first attempt of the workers to set up a state of their own, Marx and Engels stated their theoretical conclusions on the nature of the state in the transition period with absolute clarity. Between the capitalist society of the present and the communist society of the future — they said — there lies a transition period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. During this period the corresponding political state can only be the rule of the workers, the dictatorship of the workers, as every state is, in essence, the dictatorship of one class over another.

That is precisely the way Lenin and Trotsky, who were orthodox disciples of Marx and Engels, understood the question and proceeded resolutely to apply it in practice in the Russian Revolution of November 1917. The theory of Marx and Engels on the question of the state and revolution has been powerfully reinforced by the experience of the great Russian Revolution.

So we can sum up this point by saying with absolute certainty that the working class, victorious in the showdown struggle with the capitalists and their fascist gangs, will not disband all government forms. On the contrary, it will take hold of society and set up its own government, its own state, and use all the concentrated power of this state to suppress any attempt at counterrevolution by the capitalists. At the same time it will use the power of the new state to reorganise the economy and direct it into new channels and new forms.

Workers' government

Certain things have been demonstrated in the Russian Revolution which prior to that time were maintained, and could be maintained, only theoretically.

On the positive side of that great historical experience, we can put down first, the demonstration that it is possible — as previously asserted by Marxism, but unproved — for the working class not only to remove the capitalists from power, but to set up a governmental machine to serve their own purposes and to maintain their power. Today, if anyone says, "It can't be done", the answer is: "It has already been done, and done successfully even under the most unfavourable conditions."

If anyone says: "This idea of a workers' government sounds good but it wouldn't work. The 62 million workers in this country wouldn't be strong enough to supersede the capitalists in power and set up a government of their own; they wouldn't know how to run a government; they have never been to school in statesmanship; they didn't study civics in college." If anyone says that, the answer is: Only four or five million workers — that's all the industrial proletariat amounted to in tsarist Russia — four or five million workers were sufficient, at the time of social crisis, to overthrow

the whole edifice of tsarism and capitalism and set up a government of their own. Moreover, they were able to maintain their power, not only against all the capitalists and landlords of Russia, but against the entire capitalist world which blockaded them and tried to overthrow them by military force.

Our programmatic statement that the workers will set up a government of their own in this country can hardly be dismissed as a utopian speculation — not after the demonstration of the Russian Revolution. Our confident assertion has the verification of practical experience as well as the scientific theory of Marxism behind it.

The second fact on the positive side of the Russian experience is the colossal achievement in the field of production. Tsarist Russia was the most backward of the big capitalist countries. Capitalist large-scale industry was only feebly developed there; it was far behind that of America, England, France, and Germany. But even with such a poor foundation to build on, it was demonstrated that production can not only be kept going without capitalists and landlords, but can be increased and multiplied. In the brief space of 35 years since the Russian Revolution, the most backward land of great capitalism has become the second industrial power in the world. That is attributed, and can only be attributed, to the elimination of capitalist private ownership, the nationalisation of industry, and construction of planned economy.

In these two achievements of the Russian Revolution we have the practical demonstration, first, that the workers can rule; and second, that nationalised industry and planned economy can increase the productivity of the people. That is the touchstone of all social systems. The social system which can raise the productivity of labour, so that more things are produced with less expenditure of labour power, is the more progressive system. It is bound to prevail and to displace any less productive social system.

The negative sides of the evolution of the Soviet Union since 1917 have been the product of specific Russian conditions. We have no reason whatever to minimise or ignore the deformations of the Soviet state under Stalinism, truly monstrous and revolting as they are. But we should try to understand the causes of these excrescences before jumping to the conclusion that a workers' state in America would necessarily suffer the same degeneration.

There are great differences between the Russia of 1917 and the America of the present day, and these differences will all work in favour of the American workers when they come to power. In Russia the greatest difficulties began after the revolution. The overthrown minority of capitalists and landlords didn't submit. They organised a counterrevolutionary struggle which developed into a civil war, before the new state had a chance to consolidate. While Lenin was reading those great history-making

decrees in the first Soviet assembly after the Bolsheviks had taken power, the counterrevolutionists were already mobilising their armies, with the money and military support of the outside capitalist world. For five years — from 1917 until 1922 — the main efforts of the new workers' government in this backward country, further impoverished and ruined by the world war, had to be devoted to a military struggle to maintain the new regime.

The *immediate* result was not a development of the productive forces but a further disorganisation and disruption. Everything had to be subordinated to the demands of the war for survival against a world of enemies. There was a scarcity of the barest essentials of life. Daily life became a scramble for an extra piece of bread. Out of this economic circumstance, a bureaucracy arose, took shape, and crystallised into a privileged caste — as is always the case when there is scarcity. This bureaucracy, after a long internal struggle, eventually gained the domination of the country.

That is the negative side of the Russian experience, based on the economic backwardness of the country and its isolation in a hostile capitalist world. The attempt to march forward progressively and harmoniously, from the proletarian revolution to a socialist society, in a backward country surrounded and isolated in a hostile capitalist world, proved to be a rather difficult undertaking. It culminated, for an historical period, in the deformation of the workers' state into a bureaucratic police state.

But even under these adverse circumstances — and this is the point to remember — the new system of nationalised industry and planned economy could not be destroyed. Over a period of 35 years the new system of economy — the greatest achievement of the revolution — has proved its viability and its capacity to develop and expand the productive forces at a rate and on a scale never equalled by capitalism even in its heyday. That is the touchstone.

Things will go differently in this country, and there will be both difficulties and advantages in the difference. The difficulties will come first. The capitalist class in this country is stronger than it was in Russia; it has more resources: and it will fight with the desperate fury of an outlived class in its last stronghold. But once the power has been taken by the workers in this country, everything will be changed in their favour. And for the same reason.

Where Russia was poor and industrially backward, America is rich and highly developed. Capitalism has done its historic work in this country, and for that we should be duly appreciative. You see, we're not anti-capitalist 100%; we're procapitalist as against feudalism, and chattel slavery, and industrial backwardness in general. We are procapitalist in recognising the progressive historic role capitalism played in developing the forces of production, as illustrated to the highest degree in this country.

But in making this acknowledgement, we add a postscript: Capitalism has exhausted its progressive role; now it must leave the stage to a higher system. Capitalism has done its work here, so that when the workers come to power they will fall heir not to a ruined, backward, hungry country, but to the richest country with the most highly developed productive plant in the whole world. That's what the new government of the workers in America will have to start with.

Form of government

What will be the form of the new workers' government? I wouldn't undertake to say positively, any more than I would undertake to say positively just how the transfer of the governmental power from the capitalists to the workers will take place. The two questions are connected, to a certain extent. Many variants are possible, depending on the strength of each side at the time of the showdown, and the disposition of the capitalists in particular.

If somebody says: "I would prefer to see the change effected by the workers' getting the majority in a fair election and taking power peacefully" — well, I wouldn't say I'm opposed to that. I would say, if it can be done, if the democratic forms are maintained and it can be done peacefully, that would probably be the most economical way of transforming the government.

Of course, even in such a case, you would have to do a very serious job of fixing up the constitution to make it fit the new needs. But that could all be done, provided the capitalists, contrary to the disposition of all ruling classes in the past, will agree peacefully to submit to the will of the majority.

But if history tells us anything, it is doubtful, to say the least, that they would agree to that. As the workers approach a position of political strength, where their majority in a fair election becomes a threatening prospect, it is possible, and even probable, that the capitalists will disregard democratic processes, organise fascist gangs and try to settle the question with armed force. The workers then will be obliged to set up their own defence battalions. In such circumstances it is quite possible, due to the stupidity, arrogance, unfairness, and historic blindness of the capitalists, that there will be some scuffling before the government is changed.

But it will be changed just the same, and however it may be changed, the new government will probably approximate the occupational or workers' council form; or will eventually be remodelled along that line. The present form of representation in the government by territorial units will probably be replaced by representation of occupational units. The delegates in the congress will directly represent the workers in the shops, the factories, the farms and so on; not to omit the military units, which will

also have a hand in the new regime as long as they continue to exist.

The workers' council form of government will be preferred because it is more representative and more democratic than the present form of American government. The new government will be primarily concerned with the problems of economy. The workers will have a means of exerting direct pressure and influence through their own delegates in the occupational councils all the way up from the local to the regional and to the federal assemblies.

The council form is more representative than the present form of government. For example, I don't think there are many sitting in this room who ever saw the congressman from their district, or even know his name. But there are very few of you who don't know the name of your shop steward in the factory where you work, and the delegates in the central bodies of your unions. They have something to do with your daily work and welfare and you have to see them almost every day. They are not something remote, like the government in Washington, but directly connected with the workers whom they represent. You can visualise the council form of government as just that sort of thing on an expanded scale.

The workers in factories elect their delegates to a local council, the local units combine in a regional body; the regional councils elect their delegates to the federal body. Control comes directly back, not to an election that takes place every two or four years, but to a shop council whose members can meet every day if they want to, right on the ground, and let their representative know what they want. Certainly the council form of government is more representative, more flexible and more democratic than the present form of government could ever be imagined to be. That's why I think it is reasonable to assume that the workers' government in this country will take this form.

Nationalise banks and industry

What will be the first tasks of this new workers' government? Again, this is not speculative; it is not a mystery. The Marxists face this problem with an answer which was first theoretically outlined by our great masters; which has been demonstrated already in practice; and is now incorporated into the program of every revolutionary party in the world. The first task of the new government, once it has established its authority and its power, will be to abolish private property in the means of production. This will be done by one law, or by one decree, declaring that the banking system and all the key industries — all the big factories, mines, and factory farms; all the means of communication and transportation, public utilities, etc. are henceforth public property.

I don't mean every little shop, corner store, and small farm. I mean the great industries which have already been organised on a colossal scale. They will be maintained

and operated just as they are, with one small difference. Instead of a clique of non-producers directing them for private profit, as at present, they will be nationalised and made the property of the workers' government, to be operated for public use and need, and not for anybody's personal profit.

Will these industries be acquired by compensation to the present owners, or by confiscation? This question used to be debated very heatedly in the socialist movement in the old days, but it is not really a question of principle; not in this country, at any rate. We say today: "It all depends." It is not necessarily more radical to say: "We won't give them a cent, we'll just confiscate." It is not necessarily wiser to say: "It would be better to compensate." I take a position in the middle and say that whether the capitalists receive any compensation for the industries they claim to own — but which in reality they stole from the people — whether they get compensation or an order of expropriation without compensation — will depend on how they behave themselves.

If they want to submit to the majority and be reasonable, I think the government could easily agree to give them a certain compensation to avoid further trouble. America is rich enough. The workers' government could afford to hand out a few million, even a few billion, in order to prevent the development of a civil war. The government could do that, and might do it. It depends on the capitalists.

If they get nasty and continue fighting against the sovereign will of the majority, then they won't get anything. I take it for granted that once the workers have been victorious in a revolution and have set up their own government, they aren't going to be fooling any more. Everything is going to be serious and decisions will have to be carried out.

The next day after the nationalisation of industry, or maybe on the same day, the new workers' government will lay official hands on all the gold buried in the ground at Fort Knox, and use this gold as the basis for American money. This will be the ironic paradox of history: that it took the workers' government to establish a sound dollar in the United States, based on gold reserves, of which, thank God, we have plenty in Fort Knox and other depositories. We can also thank the present rulers for accumulating them for us. Eventually, money will be dispensed with altogether. The fully developed socialist society will have no use for it. But in the meantime, the workers' government will have a sound dollar regulating the national economy, and no inflation.

Industry will be nationalised and operated according to a plan. Will that apply to all kinds of private property, to small farms, to small businesses, little stores? We don't think so. We don't think the new government would have any interest whatever in expropriating all the little corners of American industry and production. It would be wiser to let the small farmer keep his farm and continue to work on his own hook, and

to let the little shops continue to operate.

The government will be busy with the great problem of nationalising coal and steel and auto and rubber and all the rest of the big industries and the railroads. The small farms and businesses can fit into the new scheme and supplement it; fill in the crevices of the national economy. The new government would have every interest, not only in permitting it, but in encouraging it and helping out with credits, etc., until the small farmers and small businessmen decide of their own account that they can do better and live better by participating in the uniform national scheme and sharing in its benefits. It won't take them long.

But there are farmers and farmers. What about the factory farms such as those we have here in California — the great mass-production ranches, where hundreds and even thousands of agricultural workers are exploited in virtual slavery? They won't be left in the hands of parasitical bankers and absentee owners. They will be taken over by the state and developed as models of the new type of agriculture — the factory in the field.

The future belongs to this type of agriculture. In time, the historical anachronism of isolated, privately operated small farms will be preserved only here and there as relics of a backward age. Agriculture will be developed just as all other industry has developed, on the factory system with modern labour-saving machinery, with the scientific methods of soil culture, fertilising, and so on. The aim will be to produce the greatest amount of food with the minimum of labour. The people, including the present farmers and agricultural workers, will get the benefit of it in the form of a higher standard of living, less hours of labour, and more leisure for living, for culture, and just to fool around and have a little fun.

Must 'deliver the goods'

The aim of the workers' government from the very start will be to increase production, eliminate waste, and improve the living standards of the people. And it will have to make good on this solid, practical ground. It will not be enough to say in government bulletins: "The new regime is morally superior to the old one. The new officials are more honest than the others." All this will be perfectly true, but, by itself, will not suffice. The new regime will stand or fall, like all social systems in history, by this basic criterion: Does it raise and improve the productivity of labour, or does it turn it backward? The new regime will have to "deliver the goods".

The American people will not be satisfied with official propaganda. They are from Missouri and they will say: "Show me". They will want better homes and furniture; more and better food and clothes; more tickets to good shows and circuses. Every

citizen will want his own automobile and a good five-cent cigar; maybe also, for all I know, a better supply of fine wines and liquors. The new government will have to produce and deliver all that; that will be its first aim. And that's why it will nationalise industry, and reorganise production according to a unified economic plan.

Will this be superior to the present system? Will production be increased with less waste? That's for sure. After the Russian experience there can't be the slightest doubt about it. Today American industry operates blindly, without a general plan. The sole incentive for the operation of each and every factory in this country is the private profit of the owners. There's no general coordination. There's no concern about what's going on in other industries or in other parts of the same industry. There's no concern about whether the people need this or that, or don't need it. The sole driving motive for the operation of each and every individual corporation is the private profit of the owners.

The decisions on production are made, not by consumers, what the people need and want; not by the workers, what the workers would like to make; not by scientists and technicians who know best of all, perhaps. The main decisions on production under capitalism — what shall be produced, how, where, and when — are made by financial magnates remote from the factories, remote from the people, whose sole motive is profit in each case.

What are the results of this system, which Marxists call the anarchy of capitalist production? One result is wasteful competition. Another result is the preservation of obsolete machinery and methods and the suppression of new patents. Twenty years ago the technocrats exposed the shocking fact that some of the most important patents for labour-saving methods and new processes are locked up in the safes of corporations. They bought the patents and suppressed them in order to prevent the development of more efficient methods by competitors which would render some present methods and products obsolete and reduce the profits they now make.

Consider the waste represented by the conspicuous consumption of the capitalist social parasites. That is absolute waste. The huge share of the product of American labour that goes to these non-producers is all pure waste.

That's not all. Consider the waste of militarism and war. Just think of it! Sixty billion dollars a year wasted on the military budget at the present time, under the present system, which they say is the best in the world and the best that can ever be. Sixty billion dollars a year, wasted on military apparatus and preparation for war.

There is the waste of advertising, which is not only direct waste, but also irritation, which is another form of waste. You get so mad listening to the phony commercials that it makes you nervous, sets you to quarrelling with your wife, and undermines your efficiency on the job. That's waste of human energy. I would say, only 10% of

advertising is useful — that 10% which comprises announcements, explanations of new processes and so on, which will be used under the new society. The other 90% of advertising is devoted to lying, ballyhoo, faking and conning the people, and trying to get them to favour one identical product over another, or to buy something they don't need and that won't do them any good, and then buy something else to overcome the effects. That is pure waste.

And then, there's another waste connected with advertising, as with so many other non-productive occupations — the waste of human material, which really shouldn't be squandered. Just think of all the people prostituting their personalities in the advertising racket. Writers concoct slick copy, artists draw false illustrations, and radio announcers wheedle, deceive, and lie to promote crooked advertising campaigns. That is a waste of human personality, causing neuroses based upon the justified conviction of the individual that he is an absolutely useless person.

There are millions of such people, engaged in all kinds of useless, non-productive occupations in this present society. Advertising is only one of them. Look at all the lawyers in this country. What are they good for? Look at all the landlords, lobbyists, salesmen, promoters, ward-heelers, thieves, and swindlers — the million-headed horde of non-productive people in all kinds of rackets, legitimate and illegitimate. What are they good for? What do they produce? All that is economic waste, inseparable from the present system.

Costliest of all the results of the anarchy of capitalist production is the waste of economic crises — the periodic shutting down of production because the market has been saturated and products cannot be sold at a profit. This is what they euphemistically call a "depression" — an unavoidable cyclical occurrence under capitalism.

I wonder what the future man, the really civilised man, will think when he reads in his history books that there was once a society, long ago, where the people might be hungry for the products of farms and factories. And the workers in the factory might be eager to produce and needing the work so that they could live. But because the hungry people couldn't buy the products, the workers weren't allowed to work and produce them, and the factories were shut down, and agricultural production was artificially restricted.

What will the people of the future think of a society where the workers lived in constant fear of unemployment? There is hardly one sitting in this room tonight, I venture to say — there is hardly a worker anywhere who knows for sure whether he will have a job six months from now or not. He can work all his mature life, 40 or 50 years, and he's never free from that fear. His having a job depends, not on his willingness to work, nor on the need of the people for the products of his labour; it depends on whether the owners of the

factories can find a market for the products and make a profit at a given time. If they can't, they shut down the factory, and that's all there is to it.

The workers' government will put a stop to this monstrous squandering of the people's energies and resources, which is the direct result of the anarchy of capitalist production. Just by cutting out all this colossal waste — to say nothing of a stepped-up rate of productivity which would soon follow — the socialist reorganisation of the economy will bring about a startling improvement of the people's living standards.

The first condition will be to eliminate all private profits of non-producers; to eliminate all conflicting interests of private owners of separate industries; to stop production for sale and profit and organise planned production for use.

When Marxists used to adumbrate the future along these lines, there was always some wise guy to say: "Ha! Blueprint! Utopia! It can't be done!" But that's precisely what was done in Russia, which had been the most backward of the capitalist countries. First they nationalised industry. Then they set up a central plan, and by means of planned economy they eliminated the wastes of capitalism and developed production faster than any other country in the world, until they became the second industrial power. And now the same thing is being done in China and in Eastern Europe. It is no longer a speculative prospect. What has already been done in other countries, can and will be done in our own country.

Planned economy

As one of its first acts, the new workers' government will appoint a central planning board to organise and regulate the entire economy of America according to one general comprehensive plan. What will be the composition of this planning board? Certainly no loudmouthed politicians, no bankers, no lawyers; I doubt whether there will be any preachers. But I would say, representatives of the unions, farm cooperatives, economists and statisticians, scientists, technicians, and consumers will be appointed as a matter of course.

What will be the aims of the plan? The central planning board will concern itself with the problem of the maximum utilisation of all the resources and productive capacities in the country for one single purpose, according to one single criterion: what the people want and need.

The new workers' government, no doubt, will call in the atomic scientists and ask them to develop this new power for useful productive purposes. The prospect staggers the imagination. But from what has already been demonstrated in the field of destruction with the atomic bomb and the hydrogen bomb, we can easily recognise not only the possibility, but the probability that the atomic scientists will show the

economic planning board how to take this new discovery and put it to work for the production of power for peaceful uses. It is easily conceivable that the whole problem of power will be revolutionised. We can visualise a great system of power stations generated by atomic energy, taking the burden of labour from the shoulders of half a million coal miners and transferring it to atomic-powered machines.

All science will be pooled and directed to a single aim: production for the benefit of all — in agriculture as well as in industry. There will be a revolution in the production of food when the economic side of it is lifted out of this terrible backwardness of private ownership and operation for profit and handed over to the direction of agricultural scientists, seed specialists, soil experts, and so on. They will go to work in earnest, unfettered by any private interest, and learn how to refertilise soil, and increase its yields. An army of chemists will be mobilised to attack all problems of economical and abundant food production. They will solve the problem of converting salt water into fresh water cheaply, and make the deserts bloom. One thing is absolutely certain, from what one can read of the scientific advances already made in this field and experiments in progress: The productivity of the farms, of the land, can be increased many times and there can be food in abundance for all.

There will be a great expansion of scientific and technical schools in this country where every talented youth will be entitled to go, free of charge, at the expense of the state. The opportunity to acquire a scientific or technical education will not be simply a privilege of one whose father is well-to-do, but will be the natural inheritance of any talented young person who wants to pursue a line of science to serve the people.

Vast sums will be set aside for medical education, research and experiment. Not the grudging donations, here and there, from conscience-stricken philanthropists; not the present stingy appropriations from dollar-conscious legislatures. Just take all the money we spend on militarism and wars, and try to imagine what could be done if we spent only a small part of it on a program for health; a program to educate more doctors, and to make the doctors better; to enable them to live better and to get out of the moneymaking "business", which most doctors are in, and attend to the business of healing the sick alone. The workers' government, in its earliest period, will put a stop to this monstrous social crime of a shortage of doctors, while millions of ailing people go without proper medical attention.

The workers' government will open up new medical schools and research laboratories and put vast sums at their disposal. No shaking of tin cans and asking people to "give a dime" to fight infantile paralysis. The government will appropriate billions and send an army of eager and devoted scientists into battle against polio, cancer, heart disease, and other enemies of the human race. A comprehensive program

for public health will come under the head, not only of humanity and of morality, but also of economy. When the people's health is taken care of better they will be more productive at work, and more goods of all kinds will roll out of the factories and farms.

We can say positively, on the basis of experience already accumulated under unfavourable conditions in the Soviet Union, that the early, the first, results of planned economy — eliminating all private profits and other waste, consciously employing more scientific methods, safeguarding the people's health — will be to double the present income of the workers, if they want to take it all. Or they may, and probably will, elect to take part of it to make a 50% improvement in their living standards and devote the other 50% to rebuilding and modernising the factories and expanding the productive plant.

I'm not speaking now of the socialist society. I'm speaking of the first years, maybe of the first five-year plan of the workers' government. The first five-year plan will work such miracles in the field of production as to raise the problem of "superabundance", and what to do about it. The result of superabundance, or overproduction, as it is called, under the present system, is "depression": idle plants, and idle men; hunger; misery; homes broken up; children's education arrested; hopelessness for millions of people. The superabundant production resulting from the operation of planned economy, very likely in the period of the first five-year plan, will appear to the people as a blessing, rather than a threat. They certainly will not even think of shutting down the factories and throwing people out of work.

The "problem" can be dealt with in various ways. The first and most natural reaction of the workers will be formulated in a question: "If we're all doing well and living good, producing more than we really need in an eight-hour day — then why the hell should we work so long?" This question will arise in the councils of the workers in the shops at the bottom, and will be carried up through their delegates all the way to the top of the government.

And the logical answer will go along with the question: "Let's shorten the working day. Why should we work eight hours when we can produce all we need in four?" That may appear to be a simple answer to a complicated question, but many things will be simplified when the anarchy of capitalist production for profit is replaced by planned production for use.

'Missionaries'

That's only the beginning. You can count on a shorter work day, and there will still be abundance and superabundance. Then another question will logically arise in the minds of the enlightened citizens of free and prosperous socialist America. They will

not be narrow-minded, ignorant, and selfish isolationists, but will regard themselves as citizens of the world, concerned with all the affairs of the world and all its peoples, and will seek fraternal association with them on the basis of equality.

It goes without saying that they will grant immediate independence or statehood to the Puerto Rican people, whichever they prefer, and renounce all imperialist privileges and concessions extorted from other peoples by the deposed capitalist regime. They will go farther and say: "We've got human kinfolk in South America and Central America and in foreign lands, who haven't had the benefit of the great capitalist development of industry before they came to power. They're still working with inadequate machinery, tools, and implements. Why shouldn't we help them to rise to our standards, not only as a simple act of human solidarity, but also to put a firmer foundation under the world system of socialist cooperation?"

The American workers will so decide, freely and voluntarily. I can see them doing that out of the generosity of spirit and the world outlook which the vision of socialism has given to them. I can see them deciding, freely and voluntarily, to work, say, an extra hour or two a day, for a certain period, to produce agricultural machinery, fertilisers, automobiles, trucks, machines to make machines, and other things to speed up the industrialisation of the undeveloped countries. And this will not be a loan or a piddling "Point Four" with strings attached. They will simply say to their kinfolk in less-favoured lands:

"This is a little donation from the workers of the Socialist United States of America to help you catch up with us, and put a firmer foundation under the Socialist United States of the World."

"Missionaries" will be sent along with the machinery; not sky pilots this time, flanked by soldiers, but scientists and technicians accompanied by doctors. Such a gesture of solidarity, manifested practically in the voluntary labour of the workers for an extra hour or two a day, for a certain period, as a free donation to help industrialise Central and South America, Africa and Asia, will be one of the means whereby the workers in this country will take care of their "superabundance" during the early period of the new workers' government.

The American way of life, which we hear a great deal about, will certainly begin to change under the workers' government. The people will not occupy themselves only with the economic side of things. The government will consider the welfare of the people in all other respects too. Again, I'm not talking of socialism. I'm talking of the first period of the workers' government in this country.

Guarantee security

The government will enact a program of social legislation which will make the Roosevelt reforms appear as mere handouts in comparison. The new government will not offer a miserable pension to a worn-out work horse, if and when he reaches the age of 65, if he has worked steady all his life up to then. It will not offer the worker a small dole against absolute starvation when his factory shuts down without asking him what he thinks about it. No, the workers' government will have nothing to do with such mockeries of social welfare. In workers' America — from the beginning of the workers' government, without waiting for the full development of socialism — no child, not one, will be born under a cloud of fear as to whether he is going to have enough to eat or not; or dependent upon whether his parents are in good health; or if they have some accident; or if the old man falls out of work.

By the law and the constitution the workers' government will guarantee economic security to every child from the moment of birth. The right to live securely; to have his health taken care of; to be removed from all fears of unemployment, of poverty, and of old age — will be automatically assured to every child by virtue of the fact that he was born in this country under a workers' government. Not only a right to live and to have food and clothes and a snug roof provided; but to have education. Education, as much as he wants, and as much as his talent calls for. Each and every person, without any exception.

That will be a very simple and natural and easy thing to do, because socialist America will have the means, the abundance, the booming productivity — and all this will be produced for use, for the benefit of all. The system of planned economy under the workers' government will provide the people with abundance, and what is no less important, the time to enjoy it and get the full good out of it. I have spoken of the four-hour day, but that would be only the beginning, the first step, which is more than possible with the productive machinery as it is today. But the productivity of labour under the new, more efficient system will be expanded all the time.

And since there will be no need to pile up profits for the benefit of non-producers; since there will be no need to find ways of wasting the surplus — the natural, logical, and inevitable conclusion will simply be to cut down the hours of labour progressively to the time actually needed to produce what is needed. The greatest boon, and the precondition for changing the American way of life into a truly humane, cultured, and civilised way of life, will accrue from the progressive shortening of the working day.

When the workers first began to fight for the 10-hour day in this country — I read in my histories of the American labour movement — the employers put on a tremendous campaign against it. They argued on moral grounds — "morality" of the

capitalists is always happily married to their profit interests. They said: "If you cut down the hours of labour, if the worker doesn't work 12 hours a day, he will spend all his spare time getting drunk. The workers need to be working from dawn to dusk in order to keep sober and keep out of trouble." That's what they said. We won't hear such arguments in the future. When people get accustomed to leisure, they soon learn what to do with it.

The citizen of socialist America will gradually move into a new state of affairs where his main preoccupation is no longer his struggle for individual existence — as it is today — but what he is going to do with that wonderful gift of leisure, the greatest gift, I think, of all. Leisure is the premise for all cultural development. Without leisure you have no rights. What's the use of being told you should do this, and you should do that, you should develop your mind and let your soul expand — when you're so preoccupied with work and trying to make a living and keep your family out of the poorhouse that you have no time for anything else? What you need is time! And for that you need an efficient system of planned economy to shorten the hours of necessary labour and give everyone the time and the leisure to think and reflect and loaf and invite his soul, as the poet said. A big start in this direction will be made already in the early period of the workers' government.

Democratic through and through

The regime of the workers' government in this country will be a democratic regime — democratic through and through. The abundance which the planned economy will provide for all, plus the time for leisure, for education and cultural development in general, will be the surest safeguards against a usurping bureaucracy, infringing on the rights and liberties of the people as in the case today in the Soviet Union.

When there is plenty for all, there is no material basis for a privileged bureaucracy and the danger, therefore, is largely eliminated. That will be the situation in rich and highly developed America under the workers' rule. From the very beginning, we will go in for real workers' democracy in this country; because, among other things, democracy is not only better for ourselves, for our minds, and for our souls, but is also better for production. Democracy will call out the creative energy of the masses. When all the workers participate eagerly in the decisions, and bring together their criticisms and proposals based upon their experience in the shops, higher production will result. Faults in the plans will be corrected right away by the experience of the workers; misfits and incompetents in the leading bodies will be recalled by the democratic process; officious "bosses" will be given the boot.

An educated and conscious working class will insist on democracy. And not the

narrowly limited and largely fictitious democracy of voting every four years for some big-mouthed political faker picked for you by a political machine, but democracy in your work. That's where it really counts. Every day you will have something to say about the work you're doing, how it should be done and who should be in charge of it, and whether he's directing it properly or not. Democracy in all cultural activities. Democracy in all spheres of communal life from A to Z.

I say, an educated American working class that has made a revolution will not tolerate bureaucratic tyrants of any kind. Another thing. The tradition of frontier democracy is deep in the blood of the American worker. He thinks he was born with certain inalienable rights and, by God, no brass hat, fascist gangster, or Stalinist bureaucrat is going to take them away from him. That sentiment will be another powerful point of resistance to any infringements on democracy.

The monstrosity of Stalinism arouses fears of the same thing in this country. These fears, in my opinion, are progressive, provided they don't lead to prostration before capitalism; because if you have capitalism you are going to have fascism, and that means a police state in its worst and most reactionary form. But that will not be a great danger, either — when the showdown comes. The American workers will take care of the fascists as well as the Stalinists. There will be no police state. There will be democracy, flowering as never before in the history of the world. But that does not mean that there will not be some repressions, if they are necessary. This workers' state, while it lasts, will still be a state; and the state is an instrument of force, used by one class to repress another. The workers' government must rule, and it is not going to promise anybody that it is something to fool with. Counterrevolution will not be tolerated. But outside that, the new workers' regime will be easygoing and tolerant, make itself scarce and keep its nose out of people's private affairs.

The scientists and technicians will easily be won over to enthusiastic participation in the great work of the new regime. For the first time they will be really free men, not only well rewarded in a material way, but respected and given their heads; not subjected to distrust and suspicion and not required to sign loyalty oaths; not regarded as second-rate citizens, mere hirelings at the command of some ignorant moneybag. The scientists will be honoured as servants of the people, heroes whom the youth will strive to emulate. The scientists and technicians will come over with great enthusiasm to the new regime. There can be no doubt about it.

I don't think the new regime will have any serious trouble with religion. There may be some opposition from organised religion as an institution; the church bigwigs, especially the reactionary, fascist-minded Catholic hierarchy, will probably try to play a counterrevolutionary role in the actual struggle for power. But it won't do them any

good. The workers will know where their real interest lies and act accordingly. People have a way of reconciling their religious convictions with their class interests. Besides, if they want texts, they can find plenty of sanction in the Bible for revolutionary action against moneychangers who profane the temple and exploiters who grind the faces of the poor.

Bill Haywood used to say: "No matter what the priest says about turning the other cheek, an Irish Catholic is a handy man on a picket line. When he's on strike fighting for his job and for his union, he finds a way of reconciling it with his religion." That's the way it will be in the revolution, and after. The communicants of the churches will find no difficulty in lining up with the mass of their fellow workers when it comes to a showdown fight for their own interests, for their own future.

And after the revolution, what interest will the workers' government have in suppressing religion, in persecuting people for their religious beliefs? None whatever, as far as I can see. Of course, the churches, as institutions, will be deprived of the support of the capitalist interests. They will have to get out of the real estate business and the charity racket; nobody will need charity. Each church, each religion will have to stand or fall on its appeal to its communicants. It will have to defend its dogmas against scientific criticism, which will also be free. But the new society will have no interest whatever in any kind of persecution of religious sentiments.

Pension off capitalists

Counterrevolution can hardly be a serious threat to the workers' government in America. The workers are an overwhelming majority in this country, and their strength is multiplied by their strategic position in the centres of production everywhere. How is there going to be any kind of a counterrevolution against a government with such a broad and solid social base? I don't think the American capitalists will try it. The real exploiters are a very small minority. They couldn't get enough fools to do their fighting for them, and they are opposed in principle to doing their own fighting. The defeated capitalists will benefit from their own helplessness, and Trotsky thought it would not be necessary or wise to treat them harshly.

The little handful of recalcitrant capitalists who don't like what is happening will not have to stay and watch if they don't want to. The workers' government of rich America could easily afford to give them an island or two, for their exclusive habitation, and pension them off and get them out of the way. How big is Catalina Island here? That might be just the place for them. It will not be necessary to kill them off. Just send them to Catalina. Let them take their bonds and stock certificates with them — as mementos of bygone days — and give them enough caviar and champagne to finish

out their useless lives, while the workers go on with their work of constructing a new and better social order. That's what Trotsky said.

War, and the threat of war, which made Soviet Russia's path so difficult, will be no problem for the American workers' government. Where would the danger come from? In Russia the danger of war was real and actual. But what country could attack the United States? If we are not the last capitalist nation to join the march toward socialism, our coming in will seal the doom of capitalism everywhere. The remnants of the whole world system will fall like a house of cards. The world victory of socialism will put an end to all national rivalries and antagonisms and, therewith, to all national wars.

The victorious American revolution will not stop very long with the 48 states. All the countries north and south of our borders will follow the United States in revolution, if they have not preceded it. In a matter of months, the new workers' government in the United States will join with Canada, with Central America, and with South America, in one great hemispheric federation — the Socialist United States of all the Americas. This new All-American Federation will work out a single economic plan for the entire hemisphere. This cooperative hemispheric plan will bring modern industrialisation and scientific agriculture to all the countries south of the border, and raise up all the hungry people to full participation in a new and more abundant life in a better, more humane, and more plentiful society.

These tremendous developments — beginning with increased production and plenty of material goods for all, and then spreading into all fields of human concern and endeavour, will bring the people, by progressive steps, to the threshold of a new stage of society, without classes and without a state, and without any form of compulsion.

As the victorious people approach that new and higher stage of society, all the repressive features of the state will wither away and die out for lack of function. There will be no class to repress. All will be free and equal. The state itself will wither away. The government of men will be replaced by the administration of things. The transition period between capitalism and socialism will merge — without another revolution and without social convulsions of any kind, but simply by an inexorable process of development — into the socialist society.

That is the indicated line of social evolution in the United States, my friends — speeded up, as it will be, by a timely third American revolution. That is America's predestined road. We who see that, and strive to help it along, feel power and victory on our side, for we are in league with the future. In my opinion, to work for that future — with the sure knowledge that social evolution is working with us — is the most important, the most inspiring and the most satisfying occupation of all. The goal we strive for is worthy of anything we do for it or pay for serving it.■

What Socialist America Will Look Like

The following was the final lecture in a six-part series by Cannon on "America's Road to Socialism". It was given at the SWP's Friday Night Forum in Los Angeles, January 23, 1953 and first published in the Militant *on July 27 of the same year. We have added the subheads.*

We Marxists conceive of socialism, not as an arbitrary scheme of society to be constructed from a preconceived plan, but as the next stage of social evolution. The preceding lectures dealt with the struggle for socialism, which develops in succeeding stages foreseen, understood, and consciously organised by the revolutionary party on the basis of a program. The subject of this lecture — "What Socialist America Will Look Like" — carries us beyond our formal program.

Our discussion tonight deals with the socialist society itself, which will grow out of the new conditions when the class struggle will have been carried to its conclusion — that is, to the abolition of classes and consequently of all class struggles. Our preview of the socialist society, therefore, is not a program for struggle, but a forecast of the lines of future development already indicated in the present.

The architects and builders of the socialist society of the future will be the socialist generations themselves. The great Marxists were quite sure of this and refrained from offering these future generations any instructions or blueprints. Their writings, however, do contain some marvellous flashes of insight which light up the whole magnificent perspective. The insights of these men of transcendent genius will be the guiding line of my exposition tonight.

Auguste Blanqui, the great French revolutionist, said: "Tomorrow does not belong to us." We ought to admit that, and recognise at the same time that it is better so. The people in the future society will be wiser than we are. We must assume that they will be superior to us, in every way, and that they will know what to do far better than we

can tell them. We can only anticipate and point out the general direction of development, and we should not try to do more. But that much we are duty bound to do; for the prospect of socialism — what the future socialist society will look like — is a question of fascinating interest and has a great importance in modern propaganda.

The new generation of youth who will come to our movement and dedicate their lives to it will not be willing to squander their young courage and idealism on little things and little aims. They will be governed by nothing less than the inspiration of a great ideal, the vision of a new world. We are quite justified, therefore, in tracing some of the broad outlines of probable future development; all the more so since the general direction, if not the details, can already be foreseen.

In attempting an approximate estimate of what life will be like under socialism, we run up against the inadequacy of present-day society as a measuring rod or basis of comparison with the future. One must project himself into a different world, where the main incentives and compulsions of present-day society will no longer be operative; where in time they will be completely forgotten, and have merely a puzzling interest to students of an outlived age.

Material premise of socialism

Socialism will undoubtedly bring about a revolutionary transformation of human activity and association in all fields previously conditioned by the division of society into classes — in work, in education, in sports and amusements, in manners and morals, and in incentives and rewards.

But all these changes, which can be anticipated and predicted, will begin with and proceed from the revolutionary transformation of the system of production and the consequent augmentation and multiplication of the productivity of labour. This is the necessary material premise for a society of shared abundance. The revolutionary reorganisation of the labour process — of the manner of working and of regulating, measuring, and compensating the labour time of the individual — will take place first and should be considered first, because it will clear the way for all the other changes.

Here at the start we lack an adequate standard of comparison. The necessary amount of productive labour time which will be required of each individual in the new society cannot be calculated on the basis of the present stage of industrial development. The advances in science and technology which can be anticipated, plus the elimination of waste caused by competition, parasitism, etc., will render any such calculation obsolete. Our thought about the future must be fitted into the frame of the future.

Even at the present stage of economic development, if everybody worked and there was no waste, a universal four-hour day would undoubtedly be enough to

provide abundance for all in the advanced countries. And once the whole thought and energy of society is concentrated on the problem of increasing productivity, it is easily conceivable that a new scientific-technological-industrial revolution would soon render a compulsory productive working day of four hours, throughout the normal lifetime of an individual, so absurdly unnecessary that it would be recognised as an impossibility.

All concepts of the amount of necessary labour required from each individual, based on present conditions and practices, must be abandoned in any serious attempt to approach a realistic estimate of future prospects and possibilities in this basic field. The labour necessary to produce food, clothing, shelter, and all the conveniences and refinements of material life in the new society will be operative, social labour — with an ever-increasing emphasis on labour-saving and automatic, labour-eliminating machinery, inventions and scientific discoveries, designed to increase the rate of productivity.

Withering away of labour & money

This labour will be highly organised and therefore disciplined in the interests of efficiency in production. There can be no anarchy in the cooperative labour process; but only freedom *from* labour, to an ever-increasing extent as science and technology advance productivity and automatically reduce the amount of labour time required from the individual.

The progressive reduction of this labour time required of each individual will, in my opinion, soon render it impractical to compute this labour time on a daily, weekly, or even yearly basis. It is reasonable to assume — this is my opinion, but only my opinion, and not a program — that the amount of labour time required of the individual by society during his whole life expectancy, will be approximately computed, and that he will be allowed to elect when to make this contribution. I incline strongly to the idea that the great majority will elect to get their required labour time over with in their early youth, working a full day for a year or two. Thereafter, they would be free for the rest of their lives to devote themselves, with freedom in their labour, to any scientific pursuit, to any creative work or play or study which might interest them. The necessary productive labour they have contributed in a few years of their youth will pay for their entire lifetime maintenance, on the same principle that the workers today pay for their own paltry "social security" in advance.

On the road to that, or some similar arrangement, beginning already in the transition period which we discussed last week, there will be an evolutionary change of labour regulations, calculations, and payments. Emerging from capitalism, the transitional society, will carry over some capitalist methods of accounting, incentives,

and rewards. People first will work for wages. They will be paid in money, backed by the gold in Fort Knox, for the amount of work performed. But after a certain period, where there is abundance and even superabundance, the absurdity of strict wage regulation will become apparent. Then the gold will be taken out of Fort Knox and put to some more useful purpose, if such can be found.

When people will have no further use for money, they will wonder what to do with all this gold, which has cost so much human labour and agony. Lenin had a theory that under socialism gold could be used, maybe, to make doorknobs for public lavatories, and things like that. But no Marxist authority would admit that in the socialist future men will dig in the earth for such a useless metal.

The accounting arrangements automatically registered by money wages based on gold will at a certain stage be replaced by labour certificates or coupons, like tickets to the theatre. But even that, eventually, will pass away. Even that kind of accounting, which would take up useless labour and be absolutely purposeless, will be eliminated. There will be no money, and there will not even be any bookkeeping transactions or coupons to regulate how much one works and how much he gets. When labour has ceased to be a mere means of life and becomes life's prime necessity, people will work without any compulsion and take what they need. So said Marx.

Does that sound "visionary"? Here again, one must make an effort to lift himself out of the framework of the present society, and not consider this conception absurd or "impractical". The contrary would be absurd. For in the socialist society, when there is plenty and abundance for all, what will be the point in keeping account of each one's share, any more than in the distribution of food at a well-supplied family table? You don't keep books as to who eats how many pancakes for breakfast or how many pieces of bread for dinner. Nobody grabs when the table is laden. If you have a guest, you don't seize the first piece of meat for yourself, you pass the plate and ask him to help himself first.

When you visualise society as a "groaning board" on which there is plenty for all, what purpose would be served in keeping accounts of what each one gets to eat and to wear? There would be no need for compulsion or forcible allotment of material means. "Wages" will become a term of obsolete significance, which only students of ancient history will know about. "Speaking frankly" — said Trotsky — "I think it would be pretty dullwitted to consider such a really modest perspective 'utopian'."

The ethic of capitalism and its normal procedure, of course, are quite different. But don't ever, dear comrades, make the mistake of thinking that anything contrary to its rules and its ethics is utopian, or visionary, or absurd. No, what's absurd is to think that this madhouse is permanent and for all time. The ethic of capitalism is: "From

each whatever you can get out of him — to each whatever he can grab." The socialist society of universal abundance will be regulated by a different standard. It will "inscribe on its banners" — said Marx — "From each according to his ability — to each according to his needs." I speak now of the higher phase of socialist society, which some Marxist authorities prefer to call communism.

Removal of insecurity

In the present society people are haunted by insecurity Their mental health is undermined by fear for their future and the future of their children. They are never free from fear that if something happens, if they have a sickness or an accident for which they are not responsible, the punishment will be visited upon their children; that their children will be deprived of an education and proper food and clothing.

Under such conditions this "human nature", which we hear so much about, is like a plant trying to flower in a dark cellar; it really doesn't get much chance to show its true nature, its boundless potentialities. In the socialist society of shared abundance, this nightmare will be lifted from the minds of the people. They will be secure and free from fear; and this will work a revolution in their attitude toward life and their enjoyment of it. Human nature will get a chance to show what it is really made of.

The present division of society into classes, under which the few have all the privileges and the many are condemned to poverty and insecurity, carries with it a number of artificial and unnatural divisions which deform the individual and prevent the all-around development of his personality and his harmonious association with his kind. There is the division between men's work and women's work, to say nothing of men's rights and women's rights. There is the division of race prejudice between the Negroes and the whites, which is cruelly unjust to the former and degrading to the latter. There is the division between manual and intellectual labour, which produces half-men on each side. There is the division between the city and the country, which is harmful to the inhabitants of both.

These divisions are not ordained for all time, as some people may think. They are the artificial product of class society and will fall with it. And a great fall it will be.

Emancipation of women

The emancipation of women will begin in the very first days of the workers' government, and very probably will be fully completed before the socialist society emerges from the transition period. The first condition for the real emancipation of women is their economic emancipation. That must presuppose the scientific organisation of housework, like all other work, so that women too can have time and

leisure for cultural activity and the free choice of occupation. That will imperatively require the establishment of communal kitchens, housekeeping services, nurseries and kindergartens.

The average poor housewife in this country is made to think that she was born into this glorious world for the chief purpose of fighting dust and wrestling pots and pans. That's not true. Women are capable of participating in all avenues of activity, in all trades, in all sciences, in all arts. Enough have already broken through to demonstrate that.

One thing I'm absolutely sure is going to happen early in the period of the workers' government, maybe during the first five-year plan. Under the slogan of more efficiency in production, reinforced by moral arguments which are powerful in the case — the rights of women to leisure and freedom for cultural and spiritual growth — there will be a tremendous popular movement of women to bust up this medieval institution of 40 million separate kitchens and 40 million different housewives cooking, cleaning, scrubbing, and fighting dust.

Thirty or 40 million women every day of the year trudging to the market, each one loading her separate basket and lugging it home to cook 30 or 40 million different meals for 30 or 40 million different families. What a terrible waste of energy, waste of productivity; to say nothing of the cultural waste; to say nothing of the imposition upon the women victims. The enlightened socialist women will knock the hell out of this inefficient, unjust and antiquated system. The mass emergence of the socialist women from the confining walls of their individual kitchens will be the greatest jail break in history — and the most beneficent. Women, liberated from the prison of the kitchen, will become the free companions of free men.

The drudgery of housework will be organised like any other division of labour, on an efficient communal basis, so that women can begin to have some leisure too. Cooking and house cleaning, like any other work, can be done much better, much quicker, in an organised, scientific manner. Proper airconditioning and dust-catching "precipitrons" — which will be standard equipment for every home — will take care of most of the house cleaning automatically.

I cannot see why the average housewife, who isn't specially trained for it or specially adapted to it, should want to bother with it. I cannot see why cooking, house cleaning, and janitor work shouldn't be one of the national divisions of labour, for which various people take their turns in the process for a certain number of hours a day, a certain number of weeks in a year, however it may be allocated. Or if some people prefer to live communally, as many have found it advantageous, they'll do that and simplify things still more.

By this forecast I do not mean to draw a picture of regimentation. Just the opposite, for any kind of regimentation such as that imposed by the present social order will be utterly repugnant to the free and independent citizens of the socialist future. They will live the way they want to live, and each individual — within the limits of his general obligation to society — will decide for himself. Better, in this case, say "herself" — for old-fashioned reactionaries who ignorantly think they know what "woman's place" is, will run up against the hard fact — for the first time since class society began — that women will have something to say about that, and what they will say will be plenty.

What kind of homes will the people have under socialism, what kind of home life? I don't know, and neither does anyone else. But they will have the material means and the freedom of choice to work out their own patterns. These two conditions, which are unknown to the great majority today, will open up limitless vistas for converting the "home" from a problem and a burden into a self-chosen way of life for the joy of living.

Homes will not be designed by real-estate promoters building for profit — which is what the great bulk of "home building" amounts to today. The people will have what they want. They can afford to have it any way they want it. If some of them want a house of their own in the country, and if they want to have their cooking and their house cleaning done on the present basis, nobody will stop them. But I imagine they will evoke public curiosity and quizzical glances. People will say: "They've got a perfect right to do that but they don't have to."

Every man can have his little house as he has it now, and his little wife spending her whole time cooking and cleaning for him — providing he can find that kind of a wife. But he will not be able to buy such service, and he'll be rather stupid to ask for it. Most likely his enlightened sweetheart will tell him: "Wake up, Bud; we're living under socialism. You've been reading that ancient history again and you've a nostalgia for the past. You've got to break yourself of that habit. I'm studying medicine, and I have no time to be sweeping up dust. Call up the Community Housecleaning Service."

Eradication of racism

I must also break the news to the Southern crackers and their Northern cousins, and other members of the Jim Crow fraternity, that under socialism America will no longer be "a white man's country". It will belong to the coloured people too. They will own as much of it as anyone else and share to the full, without let or hindrance, all its bountiful prosperity and abundance, all its freedoms, rights and privileges — without any exceptions whatever.

The socialist society based on human solidarity will have no use for such unscientific and degrading inhuman notions as the idea that one man is superior to another

because, many thousands of years ago, the ancestors of the first lived in an environment that produced in the course of time a lighter skin colour than was produced by the environment of the ancestors of the second.

The Jim Crow gangsters who strut around in self-satisfied ignorance as representatives of the "superior" race may have to learn their mistake the hard way, but they will learn — or "be learned" — just the same. The Negroes will play a great and decisive role in the revolution, in alliance with the trade unions and the revolutionary party; and in that grand alliance they will demonstrate and conquer their right to full equality.

The Negroes will very probably be among the best revolutionists. And why shouldn't they be? They have nothing to lose but their poverty and discrimination, and a whole world of prosperity, freedom, and equality to gain. You can bet your boots the Negroes will join the revolution to fight for that — once it becomes clear to them that it cannot be gained except by revolution. The black battalions of the revolution will be a mighty power — and great will be their reward in the victory.

As in the emancipation of women, the emancipation of the Negroes will begin with the absolute and unconditional abolition of every form of economic discrimination and disadvantage, and proceed from that to full equality in all domains. Race prejudice will vanish with the ending of the social system that produced and nourished it. Then the human family will live together in peace and harmony, each of its sons and daughters free at last to make the full contribution of his or her talents to the benefit of all.

Revolution in cultural life

The present big and crowded, ugly, unhealthy cities — I was asked at a previous lecture — what will happen to them? They will be no more. Once the transition period has been passed through, once all the problems of abundance and plenty have been solved, the people will want also to live right in the larger sense — to provide for their cultural and aesthetic aspirations. They will have a great hunger and thirst for beauty and harmony in all the surroundings of their lives. These monster cities we live in today are blights of modern society. They will certainly give way to planned cities interlinked to the countryside. Everybody will live with the natural advantages of the country and the cultural associations of the town. All the Marxist authorities were emphatic on this point. The crowded slums and the isolated, godforsaken farm houses will be demolished at about the same time.

A new science and new art will flower — the science and art of city planning. There is such a profession today, but the private ownership of industry and real estate deprives it of any real scope. Under socialism some of the best and most eager students

in the universities will take up the study of city planning, not for the profitable juxtaposition of slums and factory smokestacks, but for the construction of cities fit to live in. Art in the new society will undoubtedly be more cooperative, more social. The city planners will organise landscapers, architects, sculptors, and mural painters to work as a team in the construction of new cities which will be a delight to live in and a joy to behold.

Communal centres of all kinds will arise to serve the people's interests and needs. Centres of art and centres of science. Jack London in the *Iron Heel*, speaking in the name of an inhabitant of the future socialist society, referred as a matter of course to the numerous "Wonder Cities" which had been given poetic names — "Ardis", "Asgard" and so on; wonder cities designed for beauty, for ease of living, for attractiveness to the eye and to the whole being.

Farming, of course, will be reorganised like industry on a large scale. The factory farm is already in existence to a large extent in the West. Tens of thousands of acres in single units are operated with modern machine methods and scientific utilisation of the soil, for the private profit of absentee owners. These factory farms will not be broken up. They will be taken over and developed on a vaster scale. Eventually the whole of agricultural production be conducted on the basis of factory farms. The agricultural workers will not live in cultural backwardness, in lonely, isolated farm houses. They will live in the town and work in the country, just as the factory worker will live in the country and work in the town.

The separation between manual and intellectual labour will be broken down. The division between specialised knowledge of single subjects and ignorance on the rest which is a characteristic feature of capitalism, will be eliminated. The half-men, produced by these artificial divisions, who know only one thing and can do only one thing, will give way to the whole men who can do many things and know something about everything.

There will be a revolution in art. The class society, which splits the population into separate and antagonistic groups of the privileged and the deprived, splits the personality of the artist, too. A few selected people have the opportunity to study and practice art, remote from the life of the people. At the same time, not thousands, but millions of children have the spark of talent, or even of genius, snuffed out before it has a chance to become a flame. Children of the poor, who like to draw already in school, soon have to put all those ideas out of their minds. They can't afford to be drawing pictures. They have to learn some trade where they can make a living, and forget about their artistic aspirations.

In the new society everybody will be an artist of some sort or other, and every

artist will be a worker. Education will be for intellectual pursuits and manual occupations simultaneously, from childhood to old age. Marx was of the emphatic opinion that children should engage in productive labour from the age of nine, not at the expense of their "education" but as an essential part of it. From an early age, children will learn to use tools and to make something useful to the people. The child will have the satisfaction of learning by doing, and the satisfaction of being useful and productive even when he's a child.

Then older people will begin to treat him more respectfully. They will regard him, also, from an early age, as a human being, as a citizen, as a producer who shouldn't be treated as a baby any longer. He will be reasoned with and talked to and treated as an equal, not beaten or scolded or shouted at, or pushed into a corner. Marx said: "Children must educate their parents." And in some respects they will do that, too, when they get a fair chance.

There will be such a revolution in the relations of children and parents as we can hardly conceive of in this monstrous class society of the present. Parents often think they have been endowed by some mysterious supernatural power with the right to abuse and mistreat children. Primitive man never had such rights, never dreamed of such things. It is only due to the degeneration which followed the introduction of private property that the mistreatment of children and the double mistreatment of women became the rule. Primitive man in his natural state never knew such things. And the future society will know them still less.

Every child who has a talent for music or drawing or sculpting or moulding or writing — and there is no such thing as a child without some talent — can become an artist of one sort or another. One who has an instinct and feeling for words can become a writer. There will be poets who will glorify the great theme of human solidarity, and they will not be starved and ridiculed as they are in this ignorant society. The poets will be honoured, perhaps above all, because they have more insight than any others.

All-sided cultural development under socialism will not be some special gift or opportunity for favoured individuals, but the heritage of all. The socialist man will have the most priceless of all possessions. He will have time. He will have leisure. He will have time and the means to live, to play, to grow, to travel, to realise to the full the expression of his human personality. And that will not be the exception, but the rule. There will be a whole race of people enjoying and expressing all those things.

I have a theory — again a personal opinion and not a program — that there will be two kinds of labour under socialism. All, without exception, will participate in the organised productive process, the source of the people's maintenance and abundance.

But that will take up only a small amount of time, as already indicated. Then, I visualise another form of purely voluntary labour, unorganised, anarchistic, practiced as a means of artistic self-expression, and freely given for the general good or as a service of friendship.

Resurgence of handicrafts

Handicrafts, once the basic form of production, were virtually wiped out by the development of capitalism because of their comparative inefficiency, and many of the old skills of the artisans have been lost. The cooperative machine process, which produced more things faster and easier, eliminated handicraft as a serious factor in the productive process, and this progressive historical development can never be reversed.

But under socialism, where machine industry will be developed to the highest degree, producing even more abundantly many times over than at the present stage of its development, I can foresee a revival, a new flowering of handicrafts on a new basis. If this is theoretically inadmissible as a form of labour in the socialist society, perhaps my speculative suggestion can be considered under the heading of art.

I spoke before of the artificial division between intellectual and manual labour, and the half-men this division produces. The whole man of the socialist future will not be content merely to know what he reads in books, or to write books, or to confine himself exclusively to any other purely intellectual occupation. He will be trained from childhood to use his hands productively and creatively, and he will have plenty of time to exercise his skills in any way he sees fit; to do what he wants to do, what he likes to do.

I should imagine that under such conditions man, the tool-using animal, will assert himself once again. There will be a resurgence of freelance cabinetmakers, shoemakers, hand tailors, bookbinders, etc. These artisans of the future won't compete with machine industry — that would be anachronistically absurd — but will ply their crafts as a special form of recreation and artistic self-expression, and to make gifts for friends. If they want to do it that way, who is going to stop them?

In the present society very few get a chance to do the work they really want to do, and thereby they are deprived of life's most solid satisfaction. "Blessed is he who has found his work", said Carlyle. But how many are so blessed? Most people do what seems best to make a living. Those who are able to choose their work, and to persist in it at all costs, are very rare.

Taking the present society as it is, I personally have had the work I wanted, that I thought the time required, the occupation I was made for — that of a professional revolutionist. But in a socialist society, where there will be no need and no room for

social struggles or revolution, the likes of me would have to find another trade. I have thought that under such circumstances I would be a cabinetmaker, as my grandfather was, a man who took pride in his fine work with wood and tools. Another would be a bookbinder, another a shoemaker, another a tailor — there are a lot of fine old crafts which will challenge the ingenious and the tool minded.

Under socialism people will not fear to love their neighbour lest they be taken advantage of, nor be ashamed of disinterested friendship, free from all self-interest and calculation. There will be powerful impulses to give things to each other, and the only possible way of giving will be by doing, by making. There will be no chance to "buy" a present for anybody — because nothing will be for sale; and besides, everybody will be free to take anything he needs from the superabundant general store of material things rolling from the assembly lines. Presents, to mean anything, will have to be *made*, outside the general process. I think they will be, and such gifts will be really treasured and displayed on special occasions.

I imagine that when a man goes to his wedding, he'll wear a coat of many colours, like Joseph in the Bible, handmade for him by a friend who is an expert tailor, who has made it for him as a service of love. On holidays, he'll wear a handmade shoe, moulded to his own foot by a friend who is a craftsman, who takes pride in his perfect work. And when he, in turn, wants to present a gift to a friend, he will make it for him.

Your house, the house of the well-regulated family, will have as the things it is proudest of, certain things specially made for you by people who like you. This easy chair made to your own measure by your friend so-and-so. This hand-mortised hardwood bookcase made for you by a cabinetmaker, as a gift. And those pictures and decorations on the walls — they were not machine stamped at the factory, but hand painted especially for you by an artist friend. And your important and most treasured books, which came well-bound from the print shops of the socialist society, have been rebound in fancy leather, by an old-fashioned bookbinder, a real craftsman. He does this outside his general contribution to the cooperative labour process, as a form of creative self-expression and as an act of friendship. I think it will be a great joy and satisfaction to be an expert craftsman in the coming time.

Transformation of morality

Morality, which in class society is either a hypocritical cover for material self-interest, or an escapist withdrawal from the harsh realities of the class struggle, will be changed inside out. The advancement of individual special interests at the expense of others — the highest standard of capitalist society — is summed up in the slogan: "Getting Ahead" — which means, getting ahead of others. It is the root cause of lying, demagogy,

and deception, which are the central features in every election campaign, in advertising, and in all mediums of information and communication. The people are bombarded with lies every day of their lives. Capitalist morality itself is a lie.

There can be no doubt whatever that the new society will have a different morality. It will be a social morality based on human solidarity, having no need of lies, deception, demagogy, and hypocrisy. Those who cannot conceive of any human relationship without the "getting ahead" philosophy of capitalism say socialism would not "work" because people would have no incentives. They really have a low opinion of the human race. Incentives will not be lacking. But they will be different.

For one thing public opinion, uncontaminated by phony propaganda, will be a powerful force, as it was in the unspoiled primitive societies before people knew anything about private property and special class interests. The desire to be approved by one's associates will be a powerful incentive. In the new society the most useful people will be acclaimed, not the most "successful" in the business of getting ahead of others; not the rich exploiters, the slick fakers, the lying politicians, and the generals famed for slaughter.

The youth will venerate heroes of a new type — the scientist, the artist, the poet; the inventor who discovers a means of shortening the labour time necessary in this or that occupation; the agricultural expert who discovers a new way of breeding seed and making bigger crops. The applause and approval of the people will be the highest incentive and the highest reward of the socialist man.

Scope for ambition will not be lacking either. The socialist people will be completely alive and animated by driving ambitions. But their ambitions will have a different motivation and a different direction. Struggle is the law of life, and so it will be under socialism. But under socialism the struggle of men against each other for personal gain will give way to the struggle for ideas; to competition and rivalry in serving and advancing the general good of all; and to their cooperative struggle to complete the conquest of nature.

The people will struggle cooperatively — and through the competition of alternate plans — to move mountains, to change the course of rivers, to control climate, and to get the full benefit of all its changes. They will organise huge migrations with the seasons. Why should only the birds have the right to move south when it gets cold in the north? The rich have already claimed this right. The people who own New York, for example, don't live there much of the time. They spend their summers in Bar Harbour, Maine, where it's cool and breezy, and their winters in Florida, on the sunny beach. Some of them travel to other countries with the changing seasons. They stop over in New York only in the spring and fall when the New York weather is better than

that of Maine or Florida. That, it seems to me, is a very sensible way to live — if you can afford it.

A world without violence

Under socialism, everybody will be able to afford to live comfortably and to travel freely, without passports. Can you imagine people living in Chicago in the wintertime, when they might be in California on a six-months vacation? Nobody ever saw the sun in Chicago from Labour Day to the Fourth of July; but here — I am told — it shines every day in the year — even when it's raining.

Some people who have lived in a frost-bound place all their lives may continue for some years, even under the new society, just from tradition, habit, and ignorance. But once you get them to come to the Land of the Sundown Sea on a trial journey, and see what California is like on the 23rd day of January, they will never be the same again. And the daring souls, the pioneers who will find this out, will write letters back and the word will pass, and the idea will grow up amongst the people in the frozen north: "Why shouldn't we, with all our abundance — we can afford it, we have plenty — why shouldn't we travel around and enjoy climate with the seasons — just like the birds."

The people will have ambition, under socialism, to explore the great universe and to unlock its secrets, and to extract from their knowledge new resources for the betterment of all the people. They will organise an all-out war against sickness and disease and there will be a flowering of the great science of medicine. They will look back with indignation, when they read in their history books that at one time people had to live in a society where there was a shortage of doctors, artificially maintained. I believe it can be said with certainty that among the heroes of the new society, whom the youth will venerate, will be the doctors of all kinds who will really be at the service of man in the struggle for the conquest of those diseases which lay him low. Man's health will be a major concern, and sickness and disease a disgrace, not to the victim, but to the society which permits it.

Having conquered nature, having solved the problems of material existence, having taken care of the problem of health, the socialist man will begin finally — as Trotsky forecast in his brilliant work *Literature and Revolution* — to study, to know, and to conquer himself. The study and mastery of the body and the mind will bring the socialist man to physical and mental harmony and perfection, to the realisation in life of the old aspiring motto: "a sound mind in a sound body" — producing a new race, the first worthy of the name of man.

Under socialism there will be no more private property, except for personal use. Consequently there can be no more crimes against private property — which are 90%

or more of all the crimes committed today — and no need of all this huge apparatus for the prevention, detection, prosecution, and punishment of crimes against property. No need of jails and prisons, policemen, judges, probation officers, lawyers, bondsmen, social workers, bureaucrats; no need for guards, bailiffs, wardens, prosecutors, stool pigeons, informers, and professional perjurers. No need for this whole mass of parasitical human rubbish which represents the present-day state and which devours so much of the substance of the people.

With the end of classes and their conflicting interests there will be no more "politics", because politics is essentially an expression of the class struggle; and no more parties, as they are now known, for parties are the political representatives of classes. That is not to say there won't be differences and heated debates. Groupings, we must assume, will arise in the course of these disputes. But they will not be based on separate class interests.

They will be "parties" based on differences of opinion as to what kind of an economic plan we should have; what great scheme of highways should be developed; what system of education; what type of architecture for the wonder cities. Differences on these, and numerous other questions of public interest and general concern, will give the competitive instincts of the people all kinds of room for free expression. Groupings will be formed and contend with each other for popular support without "politics" or parties in the old sense of class struggle and the conflict of material interests.

In the classless society of the future there will be no state. The Marxist formula that the state will wither away and die out has a profound ultimate meaning, for the state is the most concentrated expression of violence. Where there is violence, there is no freedom. The society of the free and equal will have no need and no room for violence and will not tolerate it in any form. This was the profound conception of the great Marxists.

I recall that when I was very young, I read Jack London's *Iron Heel* and got from there for the first time, in one single reference, a glimpse of the socialist future wherein violence will be unknown. In a footnote to the manuscript in this great book about the ruthless class war in capitalist society, ostensibly written by an editor in the socialist society, the author calls attention to an enigmatic expression in the story. One of the characters is described as having the build of a prizefighter, and the editor thought it was necessary to explain to the citizens of the socialist society what prizefighting meant. This footnote reads: "In that day it was the custom of men to compete for purses of money. They fought with their hands. When one was beaten into insensibility, or killed, the survivor took the money." That had to be explained in the socialist society because they wouldn't know it otherwise.

Trotsky, in his last testament, written in anticipation of death, said: "Life is beautiful. Let the future generations cleanse it of all evil, oppression and violence and enjoy it to the full."[48] Just ponder those words — Trotsky was a writer who weighed every word. His last injunction to the people who would follow him was: "Cleanse life of all violence."

In a talk with Gorky, Lenin said the same thing in almost the same words: "Our ideal is not to use force against anyone."

It is difficult for us to comprehend such a possibility, living in a society where even the smallest children are taught that they have to fight and scramble to protect themselves in a hostile world. We can hardly visualise a world without violence. But that's what socialism means. That was the ultimate meaning of our farseeing teachers when they said that the state will wither away and eventually die out. They meant that eventually all violence of people against each other will wither away and cease to be.

The people will turn their attention then to that most important problem of all — the problem of the free development of the human personality. Then human nature will begin to change, or rather, to assert its real self. People will recover some of the virtues of primitive society, which was based on solidarity and cooperation, and improve them and develop them to a higher degree.

The Golden Future

Leisure is the condition for all cultural development. "The glory that was Greece", justly celebrated in song and story, was the first great confirmation of this law. Ancient Greece, borrowing from other civilisations, produced the first truly cultured class. In some important respects it touched the highest peaks our race has yet known; and in the Golden Age of Pericles it came to its fullest flower. Its attainments in literature, the drama, sculpture, architecture, philosophy; in the beginnings of science and in the graces and amenities of civilised intercourse — are the original pattern from which Western civilisation stems.

But that glorious Greece had a fatal flaw. Its leisure — and therefore its culture — were limited to a very narrow stratum of privileged aristocrats. It lacked the technological basis for *universal* leisure and culture. The society of ancient Greece rested on a base of dehumanised slave labour. It was surrounded by a world of barbarism. It was constantly embroiled in wars and eventually went down in ruins, and nothing was left of it but what is scratched on stone and preserved on parchment. A few ruins of the marvellous sculpture and architecture still stand to give an intimation of what was known and done 2500 years ago.

Socialist society will stand immeasurably higher than that of ancient Greece, even in its Golden Age. Machines and science will be the slaves, and they will be far more

productive, a thousand, 10,000 times more productive, than the human slaves of ancient Greece. Under socialism, all will share in the benefits of abundance, not merely a favoured few at the top. All the people will have time and be secure for an ever higher development.

All will be artists. All will be workers and students, builders and creators. All will be free and equal. Human solidarity will encircle the globe and conquer it and subordinate it to the uses of man.

That, my friends, is not an idle speculation. That is the realistic perspective of our great movement. We ourselves are not privileged to live in the socialist society of the future, which Jack London, in his far-reaching aspiration, called the Golden Future. It is our destiny, here and now, to live in the time of the decay and death agony of capitalism. It is our task to wade through the blood and filth of this outmoded, dying system. Our mission is to clear it away. That is our struggle, our law of life.

We cannot be citizens of the socialist future, except by anticipation. But it is precisely this anticipation, this vision of the future, that fits us for our role as soldiers of the revolution, soldiers of the liberation war of humanity. And that, I think, is the highest privilege today, the occupation most worthy of a civilised man. No matter whether we personally see the dawn of socialism or not, no matter what our personal fate may be, the cause for which we fight has social evolution on its side and is therefore invincible. It will conquer and bring all mankind a new day.

It is enough for us, I think, if we do our part to hasten on the day. That's what we're here for. That's all the incentive we need. And the confidence that we are right and that our cause will prevail, is all the reward we need. That's what the socialist poet, William Morris, had in mind, when he called us to

Join in the only battle
Wherein no man can fail,
For whoso fadeth and dieth,
Yet his deeds shall still prevail.■

Notes

The Revolutionary Party

1 Trotsky, "What Next? Vital Questions for the German Proletariat", *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany* (Pathfinder Press: New York, 1971), p. 163.

2 Trotsky, "The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International", *The Transitional Program & the Struggle for Socialism* (Resistance Books: Chippendale, 1999), p. 24.

3 *ibid.*, p. 25.

4 *ibid.*, p. 44.

5 *Dynamics of World Revolution Today* (Pathfinder Press: New York, 1974), p. 29.

Eugene V. Debs and the Socialist Movement of His Time

6 Cannon, "Mass Work and Factional Struggle", *Speeches to the Party* (Pathfinder Press: New York, 1973), pp. 305-306.

7 Quint, *The Forging of American Socialism* (University of South Carolina Press: Columbia, 1953).

8 Kipnis, *The American Socialist Movement 1897-1912* (Columbia University Press: New York, 1952).

9 Shannon, *The Socialist Party of America* (Macmillan: New York, 1955).

10 Debs, *Writings and Speeches of Eugene V. Debs* (Hermitage Press: New York, 1948)

11 Ginger, *The Bending Cross* (Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick, 1949).

12 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 7 (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1965), pp. 344-345.

13 Krupskaya, *Memories of Lenin* (International Publishers: New York, 1970), p. 95. (The translation here differs a little from that quoted by Cannon.)

The IWW — the Great Anticipation

14 Brissenden, *The IWW: A Study of American Syndicalism* (Columbia University Press: New York, 2nd edition, 1920).

15 IWW, *Proceedings of the First Convention of the Industrial Workers of the World* (New York Labor News: New York, 1905).

16 De Leon, *Socialist Reconstruction of Society* (New York Labor News: New York, 1941).

17 Debs, *Writings and Speeches of Eugene V. Debs* (Hermitage Press: New York, 1948).
18 St. John, *The IWW: Its History, Structure and Method* (IWW Publishing Bureau: Cleveland, 3rd edition, 1913).
19 Gambs, *The Decline of the IWW* (Columbia University Press: New York, 1932).
20 ECCI, "Open Letter to the Industrial Workers of the World [Extracts]", *The Communist International 1923-1943 Documents*, Vol.1 (Frank Cass & Company: London, 1971).
21 Haywood, *Bill Haywood's Book* (International Publishers: New York, 1929).

The Fifth Year of the Russian Revolution

22 During the 1919 steel strike, Gary, Indiana was occupied by federal troops under Major General Leonard Wood. Martial law was declared and hundreds of strikers were arrested and deported in an effort to break the strike.
23 The Russian Revolution occurred on November 7 by the modern calendar but on the old-style Julian calendar in use in Russia in 1917 (which is 13 days behind), it took place on October 25. Thus it has gone into history as the October Revolution.

Our Aims and Tactics in the Trade Unions

24 The May 1924 convention of the Illinois district of the United Mine Workers saw the *Daily Worker* correspondent expelled from the convention by a vote of 234 to 169, expelled militant miners' leader Alex Howat receive a much warmer reception than union president John L. Lewis and anti-Lewis bureaucrat Frank Farrington stripped of his appointive powers.

Socialism and Democracy

25 Marx & Engels, "The Manifesto of the Communist Party", *The Communist Manifesto and Its Relevance for Today* (Resistance Books: Chippendale, 1998), p. 55.
26 Marx, "General Rules of the International Working Men's Association", Marx & Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2 (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1969), p. 19.
27 *ibid.*, p. 62.
28 *ibid.*, p. 63.
29 We have been unable to find the source of this quotation.
30 Lenin, "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28 (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1965), p. 235.

The Russian Revolution and the Black Struggle

31 Ginger, *The Bending Cross* (Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick, 1949).

Theses on the American Revolution

32 Cannon, "The Coming American Revolution", *The Struggle for Socialism in the "American Century"* (Pathfinder Press: New York, 1977), pp. 291, 294..

Trade Unionists and Revolutionists

33 Trotsky, *In Defence of Marxism* (Pathfinder Press: New York, 1973).

34 Gay, *The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism: Eduard Bernstein's Challenge to Marx* (Columbia University Press: New York, 1952).

35 The Third World Congress of the Fourth International was held in 1951. The Cochranites claimed their positions were in line with the resolutions adopted by the congress, which had been supported by the SWP leadership.

36 The Old Man was a term of affection for Trotsky.

Internationalism and the SWP

37 In one of his articles in the SWP internal bulletin in the 1952-53 faction fight, Hansen characterised Stalinism as "counterrevolutionary through and through". The Cochranites often cited this phrase as evidence that he didn't understand the contradictory nature of the Soviet bureaucracy.

38 "War and Bureaucratic Conservatism" was one of the main documents of the minority faction headed by James Burnham, Max Shachtman and Martin Abern that split from the SWP in 1940 to set up the rival Workers Party, arguing that the USSR represented an historically new form of class exploitation — "bureaucratic collectivism".

39 "The Roots of the Party Crisis" was the main document produced by the Cochranite faction. It is reprinted as an appendix in Cannon's *Speeches to the Party* (Pathfinder Press: New York, 1973).

40 The Control Commission was a body elected by the SWP national convention to review charges of violation of party discipline and to make recommendations for action on disciplinary matters to the national party bodies.

41 Parti Communiste Internationaliste (Internationalist Communist Party), at that time the French section of the Fourth International.

42 Morris Stein was the SWP's representative to the International Secretariat at the time.

43 This refers to Cannon's debate with Mike Bartell held on May 24, 1953. The complete stenogram of the 1940 discussion with Trotsky can be found in *Writings of Leon Trotsky (1939-40)* (Pathfinder Press: New York, 1973). In the discussion, Trotsky advocated that the SWP give critical support in the presidential elections to the Communist Party candidate, Earl Browder.

Factional Struggle and Party Leadership

44 A reference to a faction in the Workers Party of the United States (a predecessor of the SWP) which opposed on principle the Trotskyists' temporary entry into the reformist Socialist Party. The entry aimed to link up with and win over a new left wing of young workers and students that had emerged in the ranks of the SP under the impact of the depression and the rise of fascism in Europe.

45 Alternates to the National Committee were candidate members of the SWP NC who filled vacancies in the full membership of the NC in a ranked order determined by the party's convention.

46 During World War II 18 leaders of the SWP and the Minneapolis branch of the Teamsters Union were jailed for their opposition to the war. (See Cannon et al, *Socialism on Trial* [Resistance Books: Chippendale, 1999].)

47 The Secretariat was a subcommittee of the Political Committee responsible for the day-to-day administration of the SWP National Office.

What Socialist America Will Look Like

48 Trotsky, "Testament", *Writings of Leon Trotsky (1939-40)* (Pathfinder Press: New York, 2nd edition, 1973).■

Glossary

Abern, Martin (1898-1949) — Founding member of Communist Party and member of central leadership almost continuously from 1920; secretary of the CP youth organisation 1922-24. Expelled with Cannon in 1928 for Trotskyism. Founding member of the Communist League of America. Split from SWP with Shachtman group in 1940.

AFL-CIO — American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organisations, formed from merger of AFL and CIO in 1955. The AFL, formed in 1881, was based on craft unions. The CIO began as a committee of the AFL, but broke away in 1936 when the conservative AFL leaders refused to organise the radicalising unskilled workers in basic industry. The CIO unions later became conservatised due to the prolonged post-World War II boom and the anti-communist witch-hunt of the late 1940s and early '50s.

American Civil War (1861-65) — Fought to preserve the Union in the face of the secession of the southern Confederate states. In essence a struggle for supremacy between the northern industrial capitalists and the southern plantation owners. In order to prevail the Republican government of Abraham Lincoln (1809-65) was forced to adopt more radical measures. The Emancipation Proclamation (1862), freeing all slaves in the Confederacy, was the key element in making an active appeal to the black population of the South to join the struggle. By the war's end about one-eighth of the Union forces were black and proportionately more blacks than whites fought. More than 600,000 were killed — only slightly less than the total US deaths in the two world wars, the Korean War and the Vietnam War combined.

American revolution (1775-83) — Popular struggle in which American colonies won independence from Britain and established a republic.

April theses — Put forward by Lenin on his return from exile to Petrograd in 1917; published in *Pravda* on April 7 as "The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution"; initially opposed by most of the Bolshevik leadership, they were adopted by a party conference later that month. The theses oriented the party away from the conciliationist line toward the bourgeois Provisional Government

taken by Stalin and Kamenev toward a struggle for a revolutionary government based on the soviets.

Bartell, Mike — See *Zaslow, Milton*.

Beck, David — Took over presidency of Teamsters Union from Daniel J. Tobin in October 1953.

Berger, Victor (1860-1929) — Leader of Socialist Party right wing; first SP member in US Congress 1910; held racist views on blacks and Asians.

Bernstein, Eduard (1850-1932) — A leader of the opportunist wing of the German Social-Democratic Party (SPD) and the Second International; after Engels' death in 1895 came forward as chief advocate of revising Marxism to accommodate the liberal bourgeois social-reformist practice of the right-wing of the SPD.

Blanqui, August (1805-81) — Revolutionary socialist prominent in French radical and workers movement of 19th century, he was associated with the idea of the seizure of power by a small, conspiratorial armed group, irrespective of objective conditions or mass consciousness. Despite being in jail during the period of the Paris Commune, he was elected to its leadership. Although he spent almost half his life in prison, he remained devoted to the cause of ordinary people.

Bleeker, Sylvia (1901-1988) — Youthful participant in Russian Revolution, emigrated to US; joined CP, expelled 1930 for Trotskyism; longtime SWP member, active in union movement.

Bolsheviks — Majority faction of Russian Social Democratic Labor Party formed at 1903 Second Congress; led by Lenin; became separate party in 1912; led the 1917 October Revolution that established first workers' state; later changed name to Communist Party.

Braverman, Harry (1920-76) — Pseudonym: *Harry Frankel*. SWP member from 1937 until left with Bert Cochran in 1953. Became a director of Monthly Review Press; wrote *Labor and Monopoly Capital* (1974).

Breitman, George (1916-86) — Joined Workers Party of the United States 1935; member SWP NC from 1939; editor of the *Militant* 1941-43, 1949-54; editor of *Writings of Leon Trotsky* series (Pathfinder Press, New York); produced numerous works on Malcolm X and black struggle.

Browder, Earl (1891-1973) — General secretary US Communist Party 1930-45; scapegoated for CP's wartime collaborationist policy and replaced in 1945; expelled for "opportunism" 1946.

Brown, John (1800-59) — Militant opponent of slavery in US; in 1859 led raid on the federal armoury at Harpers Ferry in Virginia, intending to spark a slave insurrection; the raid failed, he was captured, convicted of treason and executed. The anthem

John Brown's Body commemorates Harpers Ferry raid.

Bryan, William Jennings (1860-1925) — US politician; 1896 Democratic presidential candidate; backed by anti-plutocratic Populist Party; later Woodrow Wilson's secretary of state; assisted government prosecutor in 1925 anti-evolution Scopes Monkey Trial in Tennessee.

Budenny, Semyon (1883-1973) — Former tsarist NCO; Red Army cavalry commander in civil war; one of few Soviet military leaders to escape Stalin's purges.

Burnham, James (1905-?) — Philosophy professor; member American Workers Party leadership; elected to NC of Workers Party in 1934; split from SWP with Max Shachtman in April 1940 but rapidly moved further right; wrote *The Managerial Revolution* (1942).

Carlyle, Thomas (1795-1881) — English writer and historian, idealist philosopher; supported Tories; after 1848 became a reactionary; his writings preached the cult of heroes and criticised the English bourgeoisie from the standpoint of reactionary romanticism.

Clarke, George (1913-64) — Joined Communist League of America 1929; elected to NC 1934; seaman during World War II, later editor *Fourth International* and then SWP representative in Europe; left SWP with Bert Cochran in 1953; died in car accident.

Cochran, Bert (1917-84) — Joined Trotskyist movement 1934; elected to National Committee 1938; a leading SWP trade unionist; split from SWP 1953; author of a number of books on US labour and politics.

Comintern — Communist or Third International; founded in 1919 as the revolutionary alternative to the class-collaborationist Second International. Guided by Lenin and the Bolsheviks in its early years it later became bureaucratised under Stalin. Following the coming to power of the Nazis in Germany without any serious opposition from the Communist Party, and the Comintern's endorsement of the ruinous policy of the German CP, Trotsky concluded that the Comintern was bankrupt as a revolutionary organisation. In 1935 the Comintern adopted the class-collaborationist Popular Front policy, supporting bourgeois coalition governments in Spain and France and the Roosevelt administration in the US. The Comintern was dissolved by Stalin in 1943 as a sign to his wartime imperialist allies of his non-revolutionary intentions.

Corey, Lewis (1892-1953) — Pseudonym of Louis C. Fraina. A founder of US Communist Party but expelled in 1922 after failing to account for some Comintern funds; economist; member Lovestone group in late '30s; renounced Marxism 1940.

Cuban Revolution — After two years of fighting against the forces of pro-US dictator Fulgencio Batista, rebel forces led by Fidel Castro (b 1925) and his July 26 Movement entered Havana on January 1, 1959; a workers and farmers government was established which carried out fundamental democratic reforms; widespread nationalisations of capitalist property toward the end of 1960 signified the establishment of a socialist state. The July 26 movement, the student-based Revolutionary Directorate and the Stalinist Popular Socialist Party later merged to form the Integrated Revolutionary Organisation, in 1965 renamed the Communist Party of Cuba.

Curran, Joseph (1906-?) — President of National Maritime Union, worked closely with CP in 1930s and during the war but afterwards broke with the Stalinists and moved sharply rightwards.

Debs, Eugene V. (1855-1926) — Railway union leader (1878-1894); Socialist Party founder and outstanding spokesperson from 1901; member of IWW 1905-08; five-times SP presidential candidate. Supported 1917 Russian Revolution but refused to join Communist Party.

De Leon, Daniel (1852-1914) — Pioneer US Marxist; main leader and theoretician of Socialist Labor Party from the mid-1890s; in 1905 helped found the Industrial Workers of the World but left it in 1908; SLP came to oppose working in conservative AFL trade unions and engaged in passive, legalistic propaganda rather than involvement in actual social struggles.

Dixiecrats — White supremacist Southern Democrats; after Mason-Dixon line, the border between Pennsylvania and Maryland, regarded as the boundary of "the South".

Dobbs, Farrell (1907-83) — Longtime leader of US SWP. Joined Trotskyist movement in 1934 and was a leader of the Minneapolis truck drivers strikes of that year. Indicted in Minneapolis "sedition" case and jailed. Served as SWP national secretary 1953-72; four times party presidential candidate (1948-60). Author of four-volume history of the Trotskyists in the Minneapolis Teamsters struggles of the 1930s.

Dunne, William F. (Bill) (1887-1953) — Older brother of Vincent Dunne; early leader of Communist Party; close collaborator of Cannon in CP but stayed in after Cannon's expulsion in 1928; expelled in 1946 for "left deviationism".

East German revolt (June-July 1953) — Took place three months after Stalin's death; walkout of construction workers protesting against increased work norms led to a general strike and countrywide turmoil; contained and crushed only by the intervention of Soviet forces.

Eastman, Max (1883-1969) — US radical; sympathiser but not member of CP; early

sympathiser of Trotsky and Left Opposition; translated number of Trotsky's books; broke with Marxism in 1930s and went to right, eventually becoming an editor of *Reader's Digest*.

Eisenhower, Dwight D. (1890-1969) — US general and politician; victorious Republican candidate in 1952 presidential elections; re-elected 1956.

Emanicipation Proclamation — See *American Civil War*.

Engels, Frederick (1820-95) — Co-founder with Karl Marx of the modern socialist workers' movement; co-author of the *Communist Manifesto* (1848), a leader of the revolutionary-democratic movement in Germany in 1848-49, outstanding theorist and populariser of scientific socialism.

Farrington, Frank (1873-1939) — Head of United Mine Workers in Illinois 1914-26; opposed to John L. Lewis; suspended from UMW 1926 for collusion with a coal company.

Fast, Howard (1914-?) — Radical US novelist specialising in historical novels and biographies with progressive themes such as *Citizen Tom Paine* (1943), *Spartacus* (1951) and *The Passion of Sacco and Vanzetti* (1953). Joined Communist Party 1943. Victim of McCarthy witch-hunt. Awarded Stalin Peace Prize 1954. Publicly broke with CP 1957.

FBI — Federal Bureau of Investigation, the US political police agency. Headed by fanatic anti-communist J. Edgar Hoover (1895-1972) from 1924 until his death. Over the years the FBI targeted the CP and the SWP and other radical and labor organisations and, especially in the sixties and seventies, the Black Panthers, civil rights organisations and activists such as Malcolm X and Martin Luther King.

Field, B.J. (1900-77) — Joined Communist League of America 1931; expelled for indiscipline 1932; readmitted 1933 but expelled again in 1934 for indiscipline during New York hotel workers' strike.

Fischer, Ruth (1895-1961) — A founder of Austrian CP 1918, then a leader of German CP after 1919; member Comintern Executive Committee 1924-26; expelled from CP in 1927 as Zinoviev supporter; joined Trotskyist movement in mid-1930s but left in 1937; after World War II lived in exile in US.

Flynn, Elizabeth Gurley (1890-1964) — IWW activist from 1906; a founder of ACLU 1920; a leader of International Labor Defence in 1920s; joined CP 1937; jailed under Smith Act 1955-57; headed CP 1962.

Foster, William Z. (1881-1961) — Joined CP 1921, became close collaborator of Cannon but went with Stalinists and endorsed Cannon's expulsion in 1928; party's presidential candidate 1924, 1928 and 1932; CP chairman 1945-47 after Browder purged.

Fourth International — Formed by exiled Russian revolutionist Leon Trotsky and his cothinkers in 1938 as an alternative to the Stalinised Comintern. He hoped that out of the crisis of the coming war the small organisation would grow to become a powerful force. However, the outcome of the Second World War was a strengthening of Stalinism and the continued isolation of the Trotskyist forces. At the end of 1953, in a context of the Cold War, the International split into two factions, the International Committee, to which the US Socialist Workers Party and the British group of Gerry Healy adhered, and the International Secretariat, among whose prominent leaders were Michel Pablo, Pierre Frank and Ernest Mandel. The split was healed at the 1963 Reunification Congress, but Healy and Pablo did not participate.

Frank, Pierre (1905-?) — A founder and leader of French Trotskyism; a leader of Fourth International in postwar period; adhered to International Secretariat in 1953-54 split in FI; elected to United Secretariat at 1963 Reunification Congress.

Frankel, Harry — See *Braverman, Harry*.

Garvey, Marcus (1887-1940) — Jamaican-born leader of Pan-Africanist movement in US in after World War I; advocated black pride and return to Africa; subjected to government persecution, he became increasingly conservative.

Genoa Conference — 1922 meeting to discuss European economic crisis; first postwar diplomatic gathering to which Germany and Soviet Union were permitted to attend; the conference was deadlocked but during it German and Soviet representatives met in nearby Rapallo agreed on important initiative on German-Soviet relations.

Germain, Ernest — See *Mandel, Ernest*.

German revolution (1918-19) — In September 1918 the German military front in the West collapsed; in October sailors in Kiel mutinied; workers' and soldiers' councils spread across country; the SPD took over the government but plotted to contain the revolutionary upsurge; in January1919 Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were murdered by counterrevolutionary troops.

Goldman, Albert (1897-1960) — US CP member late 1920s; joined Trotskyist movement 1933; elected SWP National Committee 1938; Trotsky's lawyer in US; defendant and chief defence lawyer in 1941 Minneapolis "sedition" trial; one of 18 jailed Trotskyists; after war, with Felix Morrow argued for unity with Max Shachtman's Workers Party; left SWP in 1946; renounced Marxism and supported US aggression in Korea.

Gompers, Samuel (1850-1924) — US trade unionist, a founder of the American Federation of Labor; president from 1886 to 1924, an advocate of class collaboration with the capitalists.

Gordon, Sam (1910-82) — Pseudonym: *Stuart*. Joined US Trotskyist movement 1929; elected to Workers Party National Committee 1934; SWP representative in Europe after war; lived in England from 1952.

Gorky, Maxim (168-1936) — Russian writer and revolutionary; sympathiser of Bolsheviks but opposed to 1917 revolution; went abroad 1921-31; on his return headed Writers Union; supported Stalin regime.

Goulart, João (1918-76) — Brazilian politician; president 1961-64; ousted in army coup.

Gusev, Sergei (1874-1933) — Old Bolshevik; sided with Stalin in civil war military disputes with Trotsky; Comintern representative to US Communist Party 1925.

Hansen, Joseph (1910-1979) — Joined Trotskyist movement 1934; secretary to Trotsky in Mexico 1937-1940; returning to the US, he played leading role in SWP until his death; editor of *Intercontinental Press* from 1963.

Haymarket martyrs — During the 1886 mass campaign for the eight-hour day in Chicago, a bomb exploded during a rally in Haymarket Square; in the aftermath both cops and workers were killed. At a frame-up trial five workers were condemned to death; three others were jailed until being pardoned in 1893, the original charges now widely admitted to have been baseless.

Haywood, William D. (1869-1928) — A founder of IWW (1905), secretary treasurer of the Western Federation of Miners (1900-1908). Framed for 1905 murder of Idaho governor and spent 15 months in jail. A leader of Socialist Party left wing before World War I. General secretary IWW from 1914. Convicted of sedition during war, he fled to Moscow in 1921; died in Soviet Union.

Healy, Gerry (1915-89) — Joined British Trotskyist movement 1937; most prominent British Fourth International figure in 1950s and early '60s; worked with US SWP in International Committee faction during FI split; headed in ultraleft, sectarian direction and broke with FI in 1963; led Workers Revolutionary Party sect until 1985 meltdown when he was expelled for sexual misconduct.

Herndon case — In 1932, Angelo Herndon, a 19-year-old black Communist who helped organise an interracial hunger march in Atlanta, Georgia, was arrested and charged with the capital crime of "attempting to incite insurrection"; he was sentenced to 20 years hard labour; in 1937, after a mass defence campaign, the Supreme Court struck down the Georgia insurrection law and Herndon was freed.

Hill, Joe (1879-1915) — Pseudonym of Joel Hoagland, Swedish immigrant worker; joined IWW around 1910 and became its most prominent songwriter; organiser of Utah copper miners; framed for 1914 murder and executed by firing squad the next year.

Hillquit, Morris (1869-1933) — A founder of SP in 1901; centrist leader; directed 1904 purge of left in alliance with right wing; organised massive 1919 purge of tens of thousands of leftwingers.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki — The first and (so far) only cities subjected to nuclear bombing. On August 6, 1945 the US airforce dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, killing and wounding some 150,000 people and destroying the city; on August 9, a second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, killing some 75,000 people.

Hook, Sydney (1902-?) — A leader of Muste's American Workers Party but did not take part in 1934 fusion with Trotskyists; became right-wing social democrat and supporter of Cold War; polemicised against Marxism, especially in field of philosophy.

Hoover, Herbert C. (1874-1964) — US politician, president 1929-33; believed in spontaneous market-led recovery following 1929 economic crash.

Hoover, J. Edgar — See *FBI*.

Howat, Alexander (1876-1945) — Militant leader of United Mine Workers in Kansas 1906-21; Socialist Party member; expelled from UMW by John L. Lewis 1921; collaborated with CP in several areas; won union reinstatement in late 1920s but expelled again in 1930.

IKD — Internationalist Communists of Germany, a group of Trotskyist exiles. In 1943 put forward "Three Theses" document which asserted that, in view of the crushing of European labour movement by fascism, the struggle for the restoration of bourgeois democracy would take precedence over any fight for socialist objectives for an entire historical period.

International Labor Defence — Created in 1925 by Communist Party on initiative of James P. Cannon; charter was to build united-front defence for class-war victims, regardless of political affiliation. Cannon was its secretary from its inception until his expulsion from CP in 1928. The ILD played a major role in the campaign to save Sacco and Vanzetti.

Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) — Founded in Chicago in 1905 as a revolutionary union movement by the Socialist Party, the Socialist Labor Party and the Western Federation of Miners. Opposed US involvement in World War I; subjected to heavy government repression; declined rapidly with rise of Communist Party.

James, C.L.R. (1901-89) — Pseudonym: *Johnson*. West Indian active in Trotskyist movement in Britain and the US; moved to US and joined SWP 1938; left with Shachtman 1940; rejoined 1947 but left again in 1951 during Korean War. Wrote *Black Jacobins* and *World Revolution*.

Jim Crow — System of apartheid imposed on blacks in the southern US following fall of post-Civil War Reconstruction governments; state measures were augmented by vigilante terror (pogroms, lynchings etc); system destroyed by mass civil rights struggle in 1950s and '60s.

Johnson — See *James, C.L.R.*

July 26 Movement — See *Cuban revolution*.

Kamenev, Lev (1883-1936) — Old Bolshevik; allied with Zinoviev and Stalin against Trotsky 1923-25; with Zinoviev and Trotsky formed United Opposition 1926-27; capitulated and expelled from party December 1927; executed following first Moscow trial in 1936.

Kassim, Abd al-Krim (1914-63) — Iraqi military officer; took power from pro-Western monarchy in 1958 coup; fought Kurdish national movement; killed in Ba'athist coup.

Kautsky, Karl (1854-1938) — One of the leaders and theoreticians of the German Social Democrats and the Second International; in 1914, when World War I broke out, adopted a pacifist position; chief ideologist of centrism (Kautskyism), an opportunist trend that used Marxist terminology to justify the class-collaborationist reformism of the SPD; founding member of the centrist Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD) in 1917; an undersecretary in Germany foreign ministry after November 1918 revolution; opponent of the 1917 Russian Revolution; rejoined the SPD in 1922.

Khrushchev, Nikita S. (1894-1971) — Joined CP 1918; allied with Stalin; became Politburo member 1939; became dominant figure following Stalin's death in 1953; in "secret speech" at 1956 20th Congress of CPSU, denounced Stalin and the "personality cult"; later in year Soviet forces crushed the Hungarian workers' uprising. These two events provoked crisis in world communist movement with thousands of members leaving, especially in Western CPs. Deposed by Brezhnev in 1964.

King, Martin Luther (1929-68) — US civil rights leader; advocate of non-violent direct action; played major role in struggle against Jim Crow laws in the South; targetted by FBI; assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee in 1968.

Knights of Labor (1878-93) — Most powerful US labour organisation before the 1930s CIO; rival to the craft-based American Federation of Labor; sought to organise all workers; engaged in political action, producers cooperatives as well as strikes; peaked with 700,000 members in 1886 but were finished by the mid-1890s.

Korean War (1950-53) — Bloody imperialist war in which US-led forces fought to control peninsula and prop up hated Syngman Rhee dictatorship; results were

devastation of country, freezing of post-World War II dividing line of 38th parallel, brutal anti-communist regime entrenched in South, Stalinist dictatorship in North.

Krupskaya, Nadezhda (1869-1939) — Old Bolshevik; companion and collaborator of Lenin; after revolution played leading role in Soviet education; joined with Zinoviev and Trotsky in United Opposition in 1926-27 but later capitulated to Stalin.

Ku Klux Klan — US white supremacist terrorist organisation. First founded after Civil War to oppose Reconstruction and new rights being granted to blacks in the South; its influence has gone up and down since then; Catholics, Jews and leftists have joined blacks on its hate list.

Language federations — Groupings of branches of the old US Socialist Party made up of different non-Anglo-Celtic immigrant workers or members from non-English speaking national backgrounds, e.g., Finnish, Russian, German etc.

Left Opposition — Faction in CPSU formed by Trotsky in 1923 to fight for revolutionary line and workers' democracy; became international grouping from 1930; led to founding of Fourth International in 1938.

Lenin, V.I. (1870-1924) — Founder and leader of the Bolshevik Party; principal leader of the October 1917 Russian Revolution; founder of the Communist International; outstanding Marxist theorist of 20th century.

Lewis, John L. (1880-1969) — President of the United Mineworkers from 1920 to 1969; the main leader of the CIO from its inception in 1935 to his resignation in 1940.

Little Rock — Capital of Arkansas; in 1957 the scene of the first big clash over school desegregation in US; moderate Democrat governor Orval Faubus had been elected with NAACP and AFL-CIO support but in office he became a hardline segregationist; he refused to integrate state schools in line with 1954 Supreme Court ruling; Eisenhower sent federal troops to confront racist mobs threatening students and protesters.

Lloyd-George, David (1863-1945) — British Liberal politician from Wales, famous for his flamboyance and demagogy. Prominent in wartime governments, prime minister 1916-1922. After the war he co-authored the Versailles Treaty.

Logan — See *van Heijenoort, Jan*.

London, Jack (1876-1916) — A well-known US socialist writer (*The Iron Heel*, *People of the Abyss*, *The Call of the Wild* etc.); his lifelong socialist convictions were compromised by prejudice against non-whites.

Lovestone, Jay (1898-1990) — A founder of US Communist Party; central leader in 1920s; general secretary 1927-29; expelled 1929. Led Right Opposition group until disbanded in 1940. Became anti-communist and chief foreign policy advisor to AFL-CIO president George Meany, Cold War supporter and CIA collaborator.

Luce, Henry R. (1898-1957) — US publishing magnate; co-founded *Time* (1923) and later edited it; founded *Fortune* (1931), *Life* (1936) and *Sports Illustrated* (1954). In 1941 *Life* editorial, coined phrase "American century".

Luxemburg, Rosa (1871-1919) — Outstanding figure in the international working-class movement, one of the leaders of the revolutionary left-wing in the Second International; helped initiate Polish Social-Democratic movement; from 1897 onwards actively participated in the German Social-Democratic movement and led its revolutionary left wing; one of the founders of the Communist Party of Germany; in January 1919 was arrested and murdered by counterrevolutionaries.

MacArthur, Douglas (1880-1964) — US military commander in Far East in World War II; headed US military occupation of Japan (1945-51); commanded US-UN forces in Korean war but sacked by Truman when he risked war with China.

MacDonald, David J. — Succeeded Philip Murray after his death in 1952 as president of the United Steelworkers of America.

Maitan, Livio — A leader of Italian Trotskyists and Fourth International in post-World War II period.

Mandel, Ernest (1923-95) — Pseudonym: *Ernest Germain*. Joined Belgian Trotskyist movement 1940; active in wartime resistance; arrested and deported 1944; after war played leadership role in Fourth International; went with Pablo in 1953-54 split; after 1963 reunification, leader of United Secretariat; author of *Marxist Economic Theory* and *Late Capitalism*.

Marx, Karl (1818-83) — Co-founder with Frederick Engels of scientific socialism; leader of the Communist League 1847-52; co-author of the *Communist Manifesto*; central leader of the International Working Men's Association (the First International) 1864-76; author of *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*.

Maurin Julia, Joaquin (1897-?) — An early leader of the Spanish CP; formed Workers and Peasants Bloc which in 1935 merged with former Left Opposition group led by Andrés Nin to form the centrist POUM; arrested by Franco forces after civil war but survived and went into exile, withdrawing from political activity.

Mensheviks — Literally "of the minority"; originated in split at 1903 2nd congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party in opposition to the Bolsheviks (literally, "of the majority") led by Lenin. Afterwards, it was used to designate the pseudo-Marxist petty-bourgeois reformist current within the Russian socialist movement. The Mensheviks claimed allegiance to Marxism, but believed that the working class should combine with the liberal bourgeoisie to overthrow Tsarism and establish a bourgeois "democratic republic". In 1912 the Bolshevik faction led by Lenin expelled the Mensheviks from the RSDLP. They supported and

participated in the bourgeois Provisional Government in 1917. During the civil war that followed the Bolshevik-led overthrow of the Provisional Government by the soviets (councils) of workers', soldiers' and peasants' deputies in November 1917, one wing of the Mensheviks supported the counterrevolutionary White armies.

Montgomery Bus Boycott — Pioneer US civil rights struggle in Montgomery, Alabama. In December 1955 black woman Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat to a white man; she was arrested and the black community organised a mass boycott of the bus line; Martin Luther King was invited by local organisers to help lead the campaign; the boycott was successful and the buses were integrated.

Morgan, John Pierpont (1837-1913) — Leading pre-World War I US industrialist and financier; Morgan is one of handful of financial groups which controls the US economy.

Morris, William (1834-96) — British artist, poet and active socialist.

Morrow, Felix (1906-?) — Joined CP 1931; joined Trotskyist movement 1933; elected to SWP National Committee 1938; one of 18 Trotskyists convicted and jailed in 1941 Minneapolis "sedition" trial; after war, with Albert Goldman argued for unity with Max Shachtman's Workers Party; expelled 1946 for disloyalty; moved to right in Cold War; supported US aggression in Korea.

Mother Jones (1830?-1930) — Born Mary Harris in Ireland; emigrated to US with family; married union stalwart George Jones 1861; began heavy involvement, which lasted for the rest of her life, in labor and radical movement; a founder of the IWW (1908); as "Mother" Jones became a leader and symbol of the miners' struggle.

Moyer and Haywood trial — In 1906 William D. Haywood, leader of the IWW and the Western Federation of Miners, Charles H. Moyer, president of the WFM and another WFM member, were arrested for the bomb murder of a former Idaho governor the previous year. A national campaign spearheaded by Eugene V. Debs aroused a mass protest movement leading to the 1907 acquittal of the defendants.

Munis, Grandizo — A leader of Spanish Trotskyists during 1936-39 civil war; escaped to Mexico; ultraleft and sectarian evolution led to 1947 break with Fourth International; jailed in Spain in 1950s; exile in France in 1960s.

Muste, A. J. (1885-1967) — Protestant minister and pacifist. Became involved in labour movement and founded American Workers Party (1933); fused with Communist League (1934) to form Workers Party of the United States, a predecessor of SWP. Opposed entry into Socialist Party; broke with Marxism in 1936 and returned to church. In 1960s played a leading role in movement against Vietnam war.

Nehru, Jawaharlal (1889-1964) — Indian politician; first prime minister (1947-64); followed policy of neutrality during Cold War; developed state sector.

Neumann, Heinz (1902-37?) — A central leader of German Communist Party during Hitler's rise to power; a theorist of the party's suicidal ultraleft line; fled to Soviet Union in 1933; arrested there in 1937 and disappeared.

New Economic Policy (NEP) —Introduced in Russia in 1921; designed to help country recover after devastation of civil war struggle; permitted limited and strictly controlled private entrepreneurial activity in agriculture, trade and industry and encouraged foreign investment.

New Left — Amorphous semi-anarchist movement that arose in US in 1960s; rejected old left parties, especially Trotskyists of SWP and the lessons of the past; particularly associated with Students for a Democratic Society which broke up in later '60s, with many activists turning to Maoism-Stalinism and terrorism (Weatherpeople).

Nin, Andrés (1892-1937) — A founder of Spanish Communist Party; expelled 1927 for supporting Left Opposition; broke with Trotsky 1935 when merged Spanish section of International Left Opposition with Joaquín Maurín's Workers and Peasant Bloc to form centrist POUM; supported Popular Front in 1936 elections and took post in Catalan regional government; arrested by Stalinists in Barcelona in June 1937 and murdered.

Novack, George (1905-92) — Pseudonym: *William F. Warde*. Joined US Trotskyist movement 1935; active in defence work and civil liberties cases; elected to SWP National Committee 1941; author of numerous works on history and Marxist philosophy.

Oehler, Hugo (1903-83) — Communist Party trade unionist in 1920s; supporter of James P. Cannon; joined Trotskyist movement 1930; elected to National Committee 1931. Formed sectarian opposition faction 1934; expelled 1935. Formed Revolutionary Workers League which lasted into 1950s.

Pablo, Michel — Pseudonym of Michel Raptis. Greek Trotskyist; secretary of Fourth International from 1946; leader of International Secretariat faction in 1953-54 split in FI; took part in 1963 Reunification Congress but split in 1965.

Parsons, Lucy (1853?-1942) — Early US anarchist; led lifelong fight to vindicate Haymarket martyrs (including her husband, Albert Parsons); founding member IWW; collaborated with CP from mid-1920s until her death.

People's Front — See *Popular Front*.

Pericles (c 495-429 BC) — Dominant Athenian politician and general during period of city state's greatest political and cultural supremacy; responsible for construction of the Parthenon and other great buildings.

Popular Front — The Anti-Fascist People's Front was proclaimed by the Stalinist leadership of the Communist International in 1935. The objective of this policy

was to defeat the rise of fascism in Europe by forming coalition governments of communists and liberal capitalist parties that would enter into diplomatic-military alliances with the Soviet Union. The Popular Front governments in both France and Spain in the thirties served to brake the revolutionary movement of the masses and preserve the capitalist order in a period of severe crisis.

Populism — Movement that developed around the Populist Party, founded 1892 by Western farmers and workers opposed to the policies of the industrialists and financiers who controlled the federal government; in the 1892 presidential elections the Populist candidate received over 1.5 million votes; the movement peaked in 1896 when the Democratic Party ostensibly adopted its aims and the Populists endorsed Democrat presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan; it faded as a mass force by the turn of the century.

Potsdam Conference (July-August 1945) — World War II conference between imperialist powers and Soviet Union; together with previous Tehran and Yalta meetings, laid down postwar European settlement; recognised Soviet authority in Eastern Europe; divided Germany into Soviet and Western zones.

POUM — Workers Party of Marxist Unification. Centrist party prominent in Spanish civil war; formed in 1935; led by Andrés Nin and Juan Andrade; supported bourgeois Popular Front government but outlawed in June 1937. Strongly criticised by Trotsky.

Renard, Daniel — A leading member of the PCI, the French Fourth International section, at the time of the 1953-54 split in the FI.

Reunification Congress (of the Fourth International) — See *Fourth International.*

Reuther, Walter (1907-70) — A leader of Detroit autoworkers in mid-1930s; president United Auto Workers 1946; president CIO 1952; helped organise merger of AFL and CIO in 1955 but took UAW out in 1968.

Rockefeller, House of — Capitalist dynasty begun by John D. Rockefeller (1839-1937), founder of the Standard Oil trust; one of the handful of financial groups which control the US economy.

Roosevelt, Franklin Delano (1882-1945) — US politician; president 1933-45; put forward "New Deal" for dealing with the economic problems posed by the Great Depression of 1929-33 and the political problems posed by a working-class radicalisation; this consisted of various relief projects and legislative reforms like the National Recovery Act (NRA); died in office; succeeded by Harry Truman.

Ruthenberg, Charles E. (1882-1927) — Joined Socialist Party 1909; early leader of Communist Party; imprisoned for sedition 1920-22; CP national secretary after release; allied with Lovestone from 1923; died suddenly in early 1927.

Rykov, Aleksey (1881-1938) — Old Bolshevik; underground organiser in tsarist Russia

for most of 1902-17; first commissar for internal affairs after October 1917 revolution; after Lenin's death, head of Soviet government 1924-30; adhered to Right Opposition around Bukharin; executed following final Moscow trial in 1938.

St. John, Vincent (1876-1929) — A leader of Western Federation of Miners; a founder of IWW and its general secretary 1908-14; leading proponent of "direct action"; jailed during World War I witch-hunt.

Schlesinger Jnr., Arthur — Liberal US historian; booster of Kennedy administration; his *The Thousand Days* (1966) won the Pulitzer Prize.

Scottsboro case — In 1931, nine black men were tried for the rape of two white women and eight were sentenced to death; through the International Labor Defence, the CP initially played the main role in a huge worldwide defence effort and won wide influence in the black community; in 1937, the defence agreed to a deal whereby four defendants were freed and five served their sentences; the last defendant was not freed until 1950.

Sedova, Natalia (1882-1962) — Born in Ukraine; active in radical movement in late 1890s; joined Lenin's *Iskra* group in Switzerland; companion of Trotsky from 1902; active in 1905 and 1917 revolutions; after October Revolution, worked in Commissariat of Education. After Trotsky's death in 1940, began to develop differences with Fourth International over Soviet Union; in 1951 during the Korean war, publicly broke with the FI, declaring that capitalism had been restored in the USSR.

Shachtman, Max (1903-72) — A leader of the US Communist Party in the 1920s, in 1928 he was expelled with Cannon and Martin Abern for Trotskyism. He was a central leader of the Trotskyist movement until he split from the SWP in April 1940 with Abern and James Burnham to form the Workers Party. In 1958 he dissolved the WP into the Socialist Party. In the '60s he was a supporter of the Vietnam War.

Sit-down strikes — 1936-37 factory occupations by US workers in the vehicle building (automobile) industry won union recognition and established the United Auto Workers as a powerful force and gave a big impetus to the national organising drive of the new CIO.

Smith Act — Reactionary 1940 law named after its sponsor, Representative Howard W. Smith of Virginia. Criminalised advocacy of revolutionary ideas.

Socialist Labor Party — Founded 1877; Daniel De Leon central leader from mid-1890s; came to oppose working in conservative AFL trade unions; engaged in passive, legalistic propaganda rather than involvement in actual social struggles; an isolated sect by 1920s.

Socialist-Revolutionary Party — SRs or Social Revolutionaries; founded in 1900; advocated anti-tsarist revolution to establish peasant-based "socialism". The right-wing, which oriented toward an alliance with the liberal bourgeois Constitutional Democrats (Cadets), was led by Aleksandr Kerensky, who became head of the landlord-capitalist Provisional Government in 1917. Toward the end of 1917 the SR Party split into pro- and anti-Bolshevik wings. The Left SRs supported the October Revolution and participated in the Soviet government until July 1918 when they organised an attempted coup against the Bolsheviks. During the Russian Civil War both wings of the SRs aligned themselves with the monarchist-led White armies against the Soviet workers' and peasants' republic.

Spanish revolution — Under the impact of severe economic crisis and widespread popular unrest, the Spanish monarchy fell in 1931 and a republic was proclaimed. The Spanish working class defended the republic in numerous clashes with monarchists and other rightist elements. The succession of republican governments however continued their anti-labour measures, such as the crushing of the general strike in Seville in 1931, and the use of the army to subdue the uprising of Asturian miners in 1934. In 1936, after the army generals, led by Francisco Franco and backed by the bourgeoisie, launched a military-fascist uprising, the Spanish workers responded by launching a revolutionary movement, seizing factories, setting up workers' militias, etc. However, all of the organisations of the Spanish left participated in the Popular Front government which sought to contain the revolutionary workers' movement and rebuild a bourgeois state machine, a course of action which led to its defeat by the fascists in the 1936-39 civil war. Among the largest of these organisations were the (Social-Democratic) Socialist Party, the Anarchists, the (Stalinist) Communist Party, and the POUM (Workers Party of Marxist Unification, a centrist organisation led by ex-Trotskyists).

Stalin, Joseph (1879-1953) — Joined the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party in 1896 and sided with the Bolsheviks in the 1903 split; became general secretary of the Russian Communist Party in 1922; central leader and spokesperson for the privileged party-state bureaucracy that came to power in the USSR in the 1920s.

Stein, Morris (1903-?) — Pseudonym of Morris Lewitt. Joined Trotskyist movement 1930; elected to Workers Party of US National Committee 1934; acting national secretary of SWP while 18 Minneapolis defendants were in jail in 1944-45; organisational secretary after war; withdrew from politics in early '60s.

Stuart — See *Gordon, Sam*.

Sukarno (1902-70) — Indonesian radical nationalist leader; jailed and exiled by Dutch; cooperated with Japanese occupation during World War II; first president

Indonesian republic 1945; assumed dictatorial powers 1962; proclaimed president for life 1963; deposed in 1965 anticommunist coup; kept under house arrest until death.

Swabeck, Arne (1890-1986) — Danish immigrant; member IWW 1918-20; a leader of 1919 Seattle general strike. Founder of US Communist Party and a leader from 1921; supporter of James P. Cannon; expelled 1928. Founder and longtime leader of Trotskyist movement. Became a Maoist in late 1950s; expelled from SWP in 1967 for disloyalty.

SWP — Socialist Workers Party; formally founded in 1938; the continuator of the US Trotskyist movement launched by James P. Cannon in 1928 following his expulsion from the Stalinised Communist Party. Despite its tremendous record over the decades and its key leadership role in the movement against the Vietnam war, in the early 1980s it made a sharp sectarian turn under its leader, Jack Barnes, and underwent a massive decline, losing most of its members and influence. Continues to be associated with newspaper *Militant* and publishing house Pathfinder Press.

Taft-Hartley Act — Passed in 1947, this anti-labour law outlawed the closed shop, gave government wide powers to intervene in the internal affairs of trade unions and to halt strikes.

Thomas, Norman (1884-1968) — Presbyterian minister and Christian socialist; Socialist Party member from 1918; reformist leader of the SP from 1933; six-time SP presidential candidate 1928-48.

Tresca, Carlo (1878-1943) — Prominent Italian-American anarchist, labour leader and journalist. A leader of the IWW before World War I, and a close associate of Sacco and Vanzetti, the famous anarchist frame-up victims. Assassinated in New York by unknown persons, most likely acting either for Mussolini or Stalin. A longtime friend of James P. Cannon.

Truman, Harry (1884-1972) — Democratic vice-president under Roosevelt, became president in April 1945 on Roosevelt's death. Responsible for nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Launched Cold War in 1947 with Truman Doctrine of "containing" communism and Marshall Plan to rebuild and rearm Western Europe.

Twain, Mark (1835-1910) — Pseudonym of Samuel Clemens; US novelist.

Uritsky, Mikhail (1873-1918) — Went with Mensheviks in 1903; internationalist during World War I; joined Trotsky's Mezhrayonka group and then Bolsheviks after 1917 fusion; elected to Central Committee; Left Communist and opponent of Brest-Litovsk peace; head of Petrograd Cheka 1918, assassinated by SRs.

van Heijenoort, Jan (1912-?) — Pseudonym: *Logan*. French Trotskyist; 1932-39 served as one of Trotsky's secretaries in Turkey, France, Norway and Mexico; supported

Goldman and Morrow in 1945-46 dispute in SWP; left Fourth International 1946; became philosophy professor.

Volodarsky, V. (1890-1918) — Member Ukrainian Social Democratic party from 1905; active in US 1913-17; returned to Russia 1917; joined Trotsky's Mezhrayonka group then Bolsheviks following fusion; member of leadership of Petrograd Soviet after October 1917 revolution; popular agitator; assassinated by SRs.

Wallace, Henry (1888-1965) — Vice-president during Roosevelt's third term. Opposed Truman's Cold War anti-Soviet campaign, wanted a deal with Stalin. Stood in 1948 elections as presidential candidate of the Progressive Party. Strongly backed by the Communist Party and CP-controlled unions. Later Wallace deserted the Progressive Party and backed Truman's intervention in Korea.

Washington, Booker T. (1856-1915) — Born a slave in US; became most prominent black leader in 19th century; a conservative, he encouraged blacks to aim at economic equality through personal enrichment rather than fight for social and political rights.

Weinstone, William (1897-1985) — A supporter of the Ruthenberg-Lovestone faction in US CP until 1929; editor of CP's *Daily Worker* 1931-32.

Weiss, Murry (1915-90) — Joined Trotskyist movement 1932; elected SWP National Committee 1939; leader of Los Angeles SWP; editor *Militant* 1954-56 and of *International Socialist Review* 1959-63; left party in mid-'60s.

White Guards — Name applied to counterrevolutionary forces in Russian Civil War; it derived from the White Guard organised in Finland in 1918 to combat the revolutionary forces there. White was the colour associated with monarchy ever since the French revolution; the Bourbon flag was white.

Wolfe, Thomas (1900-38) — US novelist; *You Can't Go Home Again* was the title of a posthumous work.

Zaslow, Milton — Pseudonym: *Mike Bartell.* Member of SWP before World War II; left with Max Schachtman 1940 but rejoined 1941. Elected to SWP NC 1944; left with Bert Cochran 1953.

Zimmand, Seval (1891-1967) — Emigrated to US from Romania 1913; became prominent liberal journalist; in 1922-23 he was special correspondent for the *New York Evening Post* in Europe and the Soviet Union; author of a number of books on social and political topics.

Zinoviev, Gregory (1883-1936) — Old Bolshevik; head of Comintern 1919-26; allied with Kamenev and Stalin against Trotsky 1923-25; formed United Opposition with Zinoviev and Trotsky 1926-27; capitulated to Stalin 1928; executed following 1936 Moscow show trial. ■

James P. Cannon (1890-1974) is the outstanding figure in the history of revolutionary socialism in the United States in the 20th century.

His political career spanned more than 60 years. Active before World War I in the IWW and the Socialist Party, in the postwar period he became a founder of the Communist Party and one of its central leaders. Expelled in 1928 as the party succumbed to Stalinism, he founded the US Trotskyist movement and was its principal leader and inspirer for the next several decades.

The 20th century saw the explosive drive of US capitalism for world empire and domination (the "American century") but Cannon represents another voice, one of intransigent opposition and unyielding struggle for socialism and the interests of working people. This volume contains an inspiring and representative selection of his writings spanning almost 40 years.

Resistance books