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The Global Class War and the Destiny of American Labor

by Sam Marcy, Buffalo



Is There an Independent Destiny for the American Working Class?

I propose to discuss in this article what I believe to be the basic and underlying issues in the current discussion. The first one is: Is there an independent destiny for the American proletariat? The second one is: What is the historical fate of Stalinism in the new epoch of global class war, and how does this affect the task of the American vanguard, the SWP?

Let us consider the first issue. Is it possible for the American proletariat to carve out for itself an independent destiny, an independent road toward socialism separate and apart from Europe and Asia? Is it possible to strike out on an entirely new path, which will lead to the broad highway of the American Revolution? After all, is it not true that the American working class is still virgin soil, and really has no allegiance to any political party in the sense that the Europeans, or the Asians, or the Latin Americans have? Is it not possible to start from a new beginning, brush aside the Stalinists as well as the debris of the various socialist sects and begin anew, dig deeper and deeper into the trade unions, and conduct the struggles there in the spirit of the independent class politics of Lenin? If we divorce ourselves from the fate of Europe and Asia, will we not get the ear of the workers more readily? If the workers hate Stalinism and Russia, be it for good or for bad reasons, of what concern is it to us if they will follow us on our path to socialism?

In Europe and Asia there is a complex -- or contradictory combination -- of revolution and reaction. Such is the situation in Russia, Eastern Europe and China. Is it not far better to disregard the whole complexity? Why take the onus of Europe's curses on our back? Why carry a burden which is not necessary, and certainly not acceptable, to the American workers today and perhaps not even adaptable to the American scene? Will we gain more by linking up our fate with the revolutions of the East and of Europe, or by withdrawing from them? Does what is described as the revolutionary complex in Europe and Asia hinder or help us? Is the revolutionary reality of Europe and Asia a magnet through which we can draw the most advanced elements into our party, or is this revolutionary reality not overshadowed and outweighed by the dark spectre of Stalinism? Will we gain more by drawing upon the revolutionary reality in Europe and Asia, or will we lose more as a result of the terrific obstacles which Stalinism puts in our way as a bar to the American worker?

I have raised this series of questions in a particularly sharp manner because I think it has a close relevance to the present discussion. I have raised these questions because I have felt for a long time that sooner or later the process of uneven development in the revolutionization of the world proletariat would place these questions on the agenda in the American party. This would happen because of the tardiness in the radicalization of the American working class and the fact that the revolutionary center of gravity is still in the East. The revolutionary center of gravity has been moving with giant strides, but thus far, further and further East, so that by now it has fully in its grip not only the continent of Asia, but Africa and the Middle East. The tidal wave of world revolution abroad is in sharp contrast to the reactionary trend that has dominated this country for several years now. That is why the above series of questions must be put on the agenda and fully examined.

Let us begin with the most elementary question. Is the American proletariat an independent social entity? Obviously the answer is no. But let us pursue it a little further with the aid of a quotation from Lenin.

The Link in the Chain

Lenin wrote:

"The whole of political life is an endless chain composed of an infinite number of links. The

whole art of the politician consists in finding and taking firm hold of the link that it is most difficult to take from you, the most important at the given moment and the one which best guarantees to you the possession of the whole chain."

Lenin's reference to the link and the chain offers an almost perfect analogy of the relationship between the American proletariat and the world-wide proletariat. The American proletariat is the link, the world proletariat is the chain. The American proletariat is historically the most important and decisive link for the fate of the whole chain. But—and this is of the greatest importance—the link is indissolubly connected and intertwined with the whole chain. Separate the link from the chain and neither the link nor the chain exists. If the American proletariat were a social entity not connected with the chain, then we could consider the question of an independent destiny. But the American proletariat is an inseparable and completely inter-dependent link, not merely of the world proletariat, but of an entire global class camp. Unless we view the American working class in this light, we cannot see it in proper historical perspective, nor can we analyze the course of its ultimate destiny. In order to fully answer the questions posed, it is absolutely necessary to consider the new world setting.

I have introduced in the above paragraph the conception of the global class camp, the camp of which the American working class is an indispensable and key part whose fate, let me repeat, is completely tied up with it. The conception of our class camp is different today from any other period in the history of the working class. There was a period in the history of the working class when its camp was confined almost exclusively to the exploited proletariat. That was in the period prior to the October Revolution when it had relatively few allies among the oppressed masses in the colonies and dependent countries when the latter slept the sleep of centuries. Of course they were always allies in a social sense but not politically articulate. In the epoch that saw the rise of the victorious revolution in the USSR headed by Lenin and Trotsky, the Soviet Union was at the head of the camp of the exploited which already included millions of awakened colonial masses. In the epoch of Stalinist degeneration and the consequent isolation of the Soviet Union, the isolated workers state introduced a monstrous distortion, mutilation and atomization within the camp of the world proletariat. In the present epoch our class camp is not only constituted differently because it is a new historical period, but because it has a number of characteristics which distinguish it from the previous epoch.

In What Manner is Our Class Camp Different than in the Previous Epoch?

In the first place, the camp of the proletariat today, unlike the previous epoch, has the bulk of the oppressed peoples in the colonies and dependent countries within its camp as allies. The mass of peasants, semi- and non-proletarian elements of the backward countries, which in previous epochs were the reserve of imperialist reaction, can now be regarded not merely in a social but in the political sense as well, as having been attracted to and daily becoming more and more part and parcel of the camp of the proletariat. The revolutionary ferment all over the colonial world is testimony to this fact. Our class camp is numerically much larger, much more politically conscious than in all previous epochs. The second characteristic of our class camp is that it has state allies, states where the working class, if not in a political sense, then certainly in a social and historic sense, holds the ruling power. The third characteristic of our camp, as differentiated from the Stalinist epoch proper, is that the deformity and mutilation introduced by the Stalinist leadership at the head of this camp is now on the threshold of its exit from the historical scene; whether this be a matter of months, or a few years is not of great moment. What is of great moment is that the conditions for its existence are slipping from under its feet. The fourth characteristic of our class camp is that the new state allies, China and Eastern Europe, by their very existence, have so thoroughly undermined the foundations of the imperialist structure that it can virtually be said that the world relationship of forces has been definitely and irretrievably turned in favor of our camp. However, this turn in the relationship of forces does not automatically decide the fate of our camp, but merely sets the stage for the inevitable struggle.

Our camp, the camp of the exploited, is still characterized by the same deficiencies which have characterized the exploited, oppressed and subjugated classes in all previous historical epochs. It lacks, first and foremost, at its head, a leadership willing, capable and ready to insure victory in the unfolding conflict with imperialism. As in all previous historical epochs, the exploited classes are still blinded by the class enemy's poisonous ideology of sectionalism and narrowmindedness, the purveyors of which are the labor lieutenants of capitalism and the Stalinist bureaucracy. Our camp needs unity but in large part is characterized instead by totalitarianism. It needs revolutionary internationalism but instead is consistently being injected with the chauvinism of imperialism or the no less virulent chauvinism of the Moscow oligarchy. This entire class camp

with all its shortcomings, with all its dire failings, with all the terrible handicaps of treacherous leadership, is nevertheless moving onward, not consistently, not uniformly, not everywhere with the same tempestuous revolutionary sweep, but it is moving steadily and invading the fortresses of imperialism. Our class camp, it becomes plainer every day, constitutes an invincible and wholly viable social formation. The struggle that it is conducting is many-sided. It fights its battles not only economically and politically but, as is now evident, with military means.

The Global Class War

Actually, there has been a global war on ever since Korea. The bourgeoisie has long been aware of this, and its most authoritative representatives are applying the conception of the global war with every new turn of the situation. Let us examine this war before we resume our main point, the relationship of the American proletariat to the entire class camp.

On May 4, 1953, the *New York Times*, in an editorial on the crisis in Indo-China, wrote:

"Thus what might seem at first glance to be a small jungle war in the hinterland of a little and obscure state in the interior of Southeast Asia comes into perspective as part of a great global conflict that is both physical and ideological. It cannot be divorced from other developments in that conflict. It must be seen, therefore, in (this) light . . ."

Thus we see from this authoritative organ of the big bourgeoisie that they regard the war from an exclusively global viewpoint, and the bourgeoisie has so regarded it for quite a long time. Of course, the bourgeoisie does not in so many words characterize the global struggle as a global class war. Why should it? The bourgeoisie must always mask the class character of its precatory wars in the interests of cuping the masses.

I believe I was the first one to show that the global war was in reality a global class war. I did this in a memorandum submitted as material for a pre-convention discussion entitled *Memorandum on the Unfolding War* on October 29, 1950. (Internal Bulletin Vol. XII, No. 4) In this memorandum I stated:

"The fact that the opening phase of the war may manifest itself (or rather conceal itself), even if only initially and temporarily, as a war between nations, should not in the slightest degree obscure its clearcut class character. It is not a war between the nations but a war between the classes . . . in this war the geographical boundaries are social boundaries, the battle formations are class formations, and the world line of demarcation is the line rigidly drawn by the socialist interests of the world proletariat. Every worker must know his place as well as his duty."

We must now come back to the elementary generalization made earlier to the effect that the American proletariat is not an independent social entity but, on the contrary, an unbreakable link in the class chain. It must share its fate and its destiny, and since its role is enormous and decisive within the camp, all the heavier are its responsibilities to the camp.

Revolutionary Internationalism vs. "Socialist" Isolationism

If the global class war has done one thing on the American scene, it has definitely and forever ended that variety of bourgeois isolationism of which the old Senator Borah was a typical representative. The present day bourgeois "isolationists" are thoroughly internationalist and profoundly class-conscious of the vital interests of the entire bourgeois camp. They defend the world bourgeois camp regardless of the political clique which may head this or that capitalist government, whether it be in Formosa or Belgium. Their isolationism is merely a mask, a trick and device to put across a thoroughly internationalist and imperialist approach. Their viewpoint is global in character. They seek to fight the socialist revolution on a world scale. The difference of opinion among them does not really rotate around the issue of nationalism vs. internationalism, but on which section of our class camp they should open their next military operation. The most sober and the most irreconcilable statesmen of the camp of Wall Street show the most profound class consciousness when they defend every landlord, every bourgeois, every kindred social group on the globe against the invasions of the revolutionary movement.

But how does this concern the American working class? Can we not prosecute the class struggle at home in a way that would not involve the issues raised above?

Let us take a typical union on the vast industrial Niagara frontier, where a membership meeting is in progress. The union is the IUE-CIO representing the Westinghouse local, a local by no means distinguished for its lack of militancy. One of the issues on the agenda is the McCarran Act, which is a good issue for the militants to fight on. But the resolutions all emanate from the CIO National Office. What is the line of the resolutions? They call for amendment of the Act, but not of those provisions which victimize radical workers and call for the deportation of others. They call for amending the Act so that certain categories of displaced persons like ex-landlords, ex-generals, ex-businessmen, ex-bankers and "people with skills and abilities" from the "Iron Curtain" countries can have easier access to the USA. The resolutions aim to strengthen "democracy" at home by fighting the "Reds" abroad. This is "internationalism," the internationalism of the Wall Street banker as transmitted by his labor lieutenants in the ranks of the workers.

This variety of internationalism has been raging to a lesser or greater degree for several years now, and as long as the global class war continues, such a variety of internationalism is bound to continue. We cannot circumvent it, we cannot get around it, and we cannot chart out a course which would avoid it. (We are not here concerned with what our sparsely placed fractions can do under present conditions; we are talking about our approach to this question from a longer term perspective). To the line of imperialist internationalism brought in by the labor fakers, we must have a proletarian, internationalist line which combats it effectively. This calls for an intransigent global class line, which meets the issues raised by the labor fakers in a class manner. If we do not do this, then we are leaving the arena to the Stalinists.

To project a line whereby we avoid taking such a position is charting a course for "socialist" isolationism, a pale reflection of the hoary bourgeois isolationism that has long vanished from the American scene. It is no effective answer to the imperialist-minded labor bureaucracy, who are lining up the workers to fight the "Reds" on a global scale to safeguard the "free world." Their politics are geared to save the "free world" from "world communism." There can hardly be any national issue in the labor movement of any scope which is not directly affected by the labor bureaucracy's line on "communism." Even the simplest and most elementary issue on Jim Crow or housing, or even any municipal issue which takes on some sharpness and momentum, like the issue of loyalty oaths for tenants in federally subsidized housing projects, immediately takes on the aspect of a fight against communism, i.e. the global class struggle. This is how internationalism is an issue to the American workers every day in the year.

To fight this issue effectively does not mean waiting for the powder kegs, which American imperialism is preparing all over the world, to explode on the home front. It does not mean waiting for the development of purely national issues to arise on the domestic scene, which can be separate and apart from the world struggle. All national issues of any real momentum will be increasingly connected with the international struggle. Our program, tactics, and strategy must be geared to this.

[As Trotsky said in *The Third International after Lenin*,

"In our epoch, not a single communist party can establish its program by proceeding solely or mainly from conditions and tendencies of developments in its own country . . . The revolutionary party of the proletariat can base itself only upon an international program corresponding to the character of the present epoch, the epoch of the highest development and collapse of capitalism. An international communist program is in no case the sum total of national programs or an amalgam of their common features . . . In the present epoch, to a much larger extent than in the past, the national orientation of the proletariat must and can flow only from a world orientation and not vice versa. Herein lies the basic and primary difference between communist internationalism and all varieties of national socialism."]

"The Road to Peace"

Now let us see how far the line of our party has been in accord with the conception of the emergence of two irreconcilable class camps in global conflict for hegemony over society. Let us examine Comrade Cannon's pamphlet, "The Road to Peace According to Lenin and According to Stalin." Comrade Cannon's pamphlet was not written in some by-gone era of peaceful development. It was published in 1951 in the midst of the era of the global class war. The author's point of departure is not the existing world of social relationships. True enough, there is a passage where Comrade Cannon makes allusion to "the class struggle of the workers merging with the colonial revolutions in common struggle against imperialism," but he does not indicate

that this concrete world we are living in is torn by two irreconcilable class camps whose struggle has already broken out in military warfare, where the casualties are already counted in the millions, where the fighting is on opposite sides of the class barricades.

But Comrade Cannon's pamphlet, as the subtitle indicates, is "according to Lenin and according to Stalin." It is the road to peace according to Lenin that we are interested in. The road to peace, as Lenin taught us, is through ruthless and implacable class war. The war in Korea is a class war. It has to be waged in that manner. Nowhere in his pamphlet does Comrade Cannon ever characterize the war as a class war. One has to infer it or guess it. Nor does he view it as part of a general class war. Comrade Cannon points out that according to Lenin, war in the epoch of imperialism is inevitable. That is true. And it is also good criticism of the perfidious Stalinist theory of co-existence. But it is not sufficient criticism of Stalin's road to peace to say that co-existence is a delusion, and that war is inevitable. It must also be shown that we, the Leninists, are for the road to peace in this concrete global class war through the vigorous, unrelenting and energetic prosecution of the war. Our road to peace is fighting the war to a finish through the combined efforts of the exploited and oppressed in our camp. This also is not shown in Comrade Cannon's pamphlet. The American proletariat is not depicted as an inseparable detachment of one army in one class camp whose aim is overall victory over the class enemy. Furthermore, Comrade Cannon does not deal with Korea as a phase of the class war. He does not see the battlefield in Korea as a picket line or one of a series of world picket lines demarcating the socialist interests of the global class struggle. In effect, he does not deal with the war from a thoroughly revolutionary internationalist point of view.

Comrade Cannon's pamphlet is largely devoted toward exposing the treacherous co-existence theory of the Stalinists. That, of course, is excellent criticism. But merely demolishing this theory opens up no perspective. Stating that the war is inevitable is correct, but it does not by itself indicate a solution. General references to "the struggle for socialism" are also inadequate. To give "the struggle for socialism and against the war" a concrete meaning, one must clearly and unambiguously show the road of thorough-going revolutionary defeatism in the camp of imperialism, and the road of revolutionary defensism in relation to the USSR, Eastern Europe, China and the rest of the colonial world. One must make absolutely clear that these two complementary tactics of the world proletariat flow from one strategic line of defending the socialist interests of the entire class camp from imperialist attack. This too is not shown in Comrade Cannon's pamphlet. He therefore shows no effective revolutionary alternative as against the Stalinist tactic of the treacherous, vacillating, collaborationist line known as "co-existence."

It may be claimed that Comrade Cannon's pamphlet was directed to the broad masses of workers. Hence the sharp revolutionary formulations outlined above would be unsuitable. But Comrade Cannon's pamphlet aims to demolish the theory of co-existence. There are only two groups in the USA at the present time who are against the theory of co-existence, the extreme Right and the extreme Left. By the nature of the pamphlet, it could only be directed toward those radical workers who are against the capitalist status quo, against co-existence from the Left. And to these workers it is insufficient to merely give as the alternative to co-existence the theory of the inevitability of war, without posing in the sharpest form the complementary tactics of revolutionary defeatism and revolutionary defensism. Otherwise, the theory of the inevitability of war assumes a fatalistic and utterly passive character.

The Defence of the USSR

It has been traditional in our movement to include a section on the unconditional defense of the USSR in any document or popular pamphlet which deals with war. Comrade Cannon's pamphlet, dealing precisely with this question, the question of war, in order to continue this tradition, should contain such a section. But all that we can find in Comrade Cannon's pamphlet is a bare reference to the "heritage of October." No one except a party member could possibly infer from this isolated phrase that our movement is for the unconditional defense of the USSR.

Such a section—on the defense of the USSR—is all the more necessary, particularly because Comrade Cannon goes into such detail in his descriptions of the monstrous crimes of Stalinism. Where one deals in such meticulous detail with the degeneration of the Soviet state and Stalinism, it is all the more important to make crystal clear our defensist position on the USSR. I am not for splashing all over the pages of the *Militant* blazing headlines of unconditional defense of the USSR. But every worker who is thinking at all about politics sooner or later approaches us with this question: "Where do you stand on Russia?"

The Soviet Union is a contradictory phenomenon. It is a revolutionary social system with a counter-revolutionary leadership. Comrade Cannon expounds on the concentration camps, frame-ups, etc. What he says is true. But this truth alone is insufficient.

There was a time when we were practically the only group in the labor movement consistently explaining this truth from the revolutionary point of view. But today the bourgeoisie has seized upon this aspect of the Soviet state and broadcast it to the four corners of the earth. Today this is practically all the American worker hears. It is drummed into his ears day in and day out by the tremendous capitalist apparatus of radio, television, the press and the pulpit. He identifies the reactionary aspect of the Soviet Union with the entire social system, just as the capitalist class wants him to do. Hence, it is all the more obligatory to emphasize the other side of the Soviet Union, its class character, its new social system. It is necessary to explain that it is a living, viable workers' state, an historic gain of the working class, a conquest to be defended.

Unfortunately this is not at all indicated in Comrade Cannon's pamphlet. Nor is it indicated in his Los Angeles speeches, which are replete with references to the planned economy of what is characterized as the "nationalized sector" without mentioning that we defend the boundaries of this "sector." We are taking too much for granted if we assume that the American workers will gather that we defend the Soviet Union, by merely rendering acknowledgement of a superior type of economy.

It is not so much that we have to emphasize the defense of the USSR from the point of view of military defense, although that too will be of importance at a later date. Most important in the emphasis of the defense of the USSR is its pointed method of showing to which class camp we belong. By continually emphasizing defense of the USSR as well as China and Eastern Europe, we make crystal clear that we are an inseparable part of the entire world camp. It is in this connection that the posing of the defense of the USSR is more important and more urgent in our propaganda and agitation than ever before.

By consistently and persistently elaborating our defensist position on the USSR, Eastern Europe and China, we are affirmatively showing our class solidarity with our class camp. Now since the issues of conciliationism toward Stalinism and Stalinophobia are being raised, is not this the best way to demarcate and differentiate ourselves from Stalinism—to crushingly answer these mutually opposing accusations, to show that we not only fight Stalin but are the most vigorous, most loyal and most determined defenders of the USSR?

Comrade Hansen's Article

In this connection, a lead article by Comrade Hansen on the death of Stalin contains the same flaw as Comrade Cannon's pamphlet. As a matter of fact, an examination of our weekly paper for the past several years indicates a steady and undiminished tendency to play down the revolutionary defense at a time when it is most necessary and essential. Rare is the occasion when any mention ever appears in our press of the defense of the USSR. It might almost be said that it only lives in the memory of those who knew our position of old. At a time when the USSR is playing such a tremendous role on the international arena, and at a time when it is most necessary to expose the real character of the Stalinists, we ought to make clear that we are not only for the defense of the USSR, but that we are its most determined, most devoted and most loyal defenders. We ought to make clear that our defense of the Soviet Union is not only revolutionary, but effective; and the bureaucracy is vacillating, one-sided, nationalistic, and in the long run disastrous. This is our point of departure as against the Stalinists.

Comrade Hansen's article on Stalin describes his historical role as the agent of counter-revolution and goes through the familiar crimes of Stalin, covering his long and infamous career as the leader of the Soviet bureaucratic caste. I, of course, have no quarrel with his depicting the crimes of the bureaucracy. But nowhere in this article does Comrade Hansen really indicate defense of the USSR. It is wrong and impermissible that his vague reference to the defense of the USSR is written in such a way that only a Trotskyist with years of party membership could possibly guess that we are for this defense. We are, of course, for the defense, not only in the sense that the workers of the world in capitalist countries should defend it against imperialism, but that in the USSR we are the best soldiers in any such struggle, and the most ardent defenders of the social base of the USSR. From Comrade Hansen's article, no one would conclude that we defend the USSR as we defend a labor union against the bureaucrats, that is, by defending it heart and soul against its class enemy and its own misleaders.

Such a bold position, it will be objected, will put us way out on a limb, particularly in a country where the reaction is so severe. This objection may be valid to some extent. Still, tactics could be adjusted. The main strategical conceptions, however, must be made clear as daylight, even if it means our temporary isolation.

This general point is a hundred times more valid in relation to China and Korea. Aside from the initial error that was made in our approach to Korea, the clearcut character of the struggle on the Asian continent as a class struggle, as a struggle between imperialism and the world-wide working class and its allies among the oppressed colonial peoples is still not being made clear enough or sharp enough to demarcate us from all varieties of pacifists, liberals, or Stalinist supporters. We must make plain that in the struggle in Korea, or any other place on earth, between the two class camps, we pursue a line of revolutionary defeatism. Moreover—and this is very important from the point of view of our differentiation from the Stalinists and all sorts of pacifists—we wish to facilitate the victory of our side, our class side, regardless of its temporary leadership. At the same time, we mercilessly expose all the reactionary, wrong, inadequate policies pursued by the Kremlin and foisted upon the leaderships of the colonial masses in Asia, and counter-pose the revolutionary, Leninist-Trotskyist line to victory. It is to be noted that the Minority's attack on Comrade Cannon's pamphlet does not refer to this vital question.

The need for strengthening our position on the defense of the Soviet Union has been apparent for several years. As long ago as December 7, 1948, Comrade Cannon addressed a letter to me on some official business, in the course of which he asked me for my opinion of his "Proposals for a Propaganda Campaign." I replied to Comrade Cannon on December 14, 1948 as follows:

"Your project should include a more consistent, more clearcut exposition and rearmament of our own evaluation of the USSR and Stalinism in general. This means to re-interpret the expansion of Stalinism on the European continent and in Asia strictly in the terms and analysis made by Trotsky in "In Defense of Marxism." In my view everything that has happened in Europe and Asia can still be accurately gauged with the yardstick employed by Trotsky in his analysis of the 1939 events in Finland and in Poland. It appears to me that there has been some backsliding on this question as evidence by our co-thinkers' theses (1947) which we amended at the last plenum (1948). But the very necessity for the amendments shows that we were approaching a danger signal." (The reader will note by the dates that I was referring to our co-thinkers' thesis of 1947, and not the 1951 thesis which is the one involved in the current discussion).

"We stand for the position of unconditional defense of the Soviet Union," my letter continued, "and all territories of the so-called satellites where the means of production have been nationalized and planned economy introduced. Nothing that has happened on the international arena has in the slightest degree invalidated our position . . ."

In this letter I also suggested that our magazine "should regularly carry polemical material against the Shachtmanites, notwithstanding their numerical insignificance in the labor movement." One of the main thoughts motivating this whole letter was a fear of adaptation to the dominant trend of reaction in American society.

The defense of the Soviet Union must be implemented in our activity as well as in our propaganda. It is difficult, of course, to find a way to the masses with this important principle. But the way must be found.

The Rosenberg Case

The Rosenberg Case offers in every respect an accurate gauge of my position toward Stalinism and the Soviet Union in relation to the American Scene. Let us first discuss the position from the point of view of principle.

Suppose we assume that the Rosenbergs are "guilty" of stealing important documents, etc., of engaging in so-called espionage. We all know that espionage is an element inseparable from the conduct of the foreign affairs of any state, be it a workers' state or an imperialist one. It would be the sneeriest nonsense to assert that any state does not spend enormous amounts of money for such purposes. Even a state with a revolutionary leadership would of necessity have its intelligence department. Why do governments exchange naval, military, and air attaches if not for such purposes? The U.S. Government publicly boasts

that it spends hundreds of millions of dollars for espionage in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. It is no accident that Walter Bedell Smith, now one of the under-secretaries of State, is the former head of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and was formerly ambassador to Moscow.

Now we are living in the epoch of a global class war, a war which can only end in the demolition of one of the contenders. It is a ruthless and implacable war to the death. Espionage is an inescapable concomitant in the preparation and prosecution of such a war.

If the Rosenbergs, let us assume, had admitted that they did steal these documents—which is not so in this case—from a class point of view they would have committed no crime. We do not advocate these tactics. They are not necessary for the class struggle in the USA, and needless to say, we do not collaborate in any of these activities. But in the global class war which spans the continents and the oceans these cases are bound to be legion. Accordingly, from the class point of view and to the extent that circumstances permit, we must defend them.

If we are to do this, we cannot merely be "me too" supporters. A party which takes its position on this question clearly, boldly and courageously from the point of view of principle must not merely give support: It must attempt to seize the initiative in the matter, whenever that is available. It is claimed that the *Daily Worker* also kept silent for a time about the case. But it seems to me that is all the more reason why we should have taken the lead. That would have been an excellent medium for exposing the Stalinists.

Now the question that immediately arises on the basis of the Rosenberg line I have presented above is: would it not put us completely out on a limb? That indeed is a crucial question. Still, if we regard ourselves as having the revolutionary alternative to Stalinist methods; if we regard ourselves as being the genuine expression of the independent class politics of the proletariat on a world scale; if our party is the historical instrument for giving expression to the needs of the working class, as against the perfidious methods of the Stalinists: then in taking this bold position on the Rosenberg Case, first of all from the point of view of the class principle and secondly from the point of view of the defense of civil rights in general, we would be presenting a clear and independent class alternative as distinguished from the Stalinists.

Another question that would be raised as an objection to this line is that it would tend to isolate us even more than we are now. But even if that were the case, it would in the long run pay off. Had we boldly taken the initiative in the Rosenberg Case, it is clear on the basis of what subsequently happened, our standing with the radical elements might have been appreciably better than it is today. I do not think it would necessarily have accomplished a great deal as far as concerns party growth, but it might have added to our periphery, and it certainly would have served as an excellent example.

The Rosenberg Case is an outstanding example of our problems in relation to Stalinism on the American scene. The Stalinists appear in the eyes of most radical workers as the extreme Left. Unfortunately, our party is almost unknown to broad sections of the radical workers of America. A problem for the party is to be able to distinguish itself from the CP, not as another variety of radicalism but as the revolutionary expression of Marxism and as the real Communists in contrast to the Stalinists, who are the real "pinks." To be able to do this in a period of reaction is a truly gargantuan task. But unless we make ourselves clear on just such questions, we shall run the risk of not winning the vanguard to our side. I repeat: we cannot be mere supporters of the Rosenberg Case. We are either the best, the most devoted, the most conscious, the most conscientious fighters in just such cases, or we are in danger of appearing as simply another variety of radicals, while the Stalinists will appear as the "real McCoy."

We should have made our class position clear in the Rosenberg Case. We should boldly have taken the initiative in this matter ahead of the Stalinists and carried on the fight in such a manner as to show to all the world the difference in approach between genuine Communism and its Stalinist counterfeit.

As the Rosenberg Case demonstrates, the party has a tremendous problem in relation to Stalinism. It is not so much that they steal our thunder. It is that we are not utilizing the vast reserves of our revolutionary Marxist position and are drifting along rather than driving a conscious line.

To pursue the case a little further: I understand from the *New York Times* that there was a Rosenberg rally at the Triborough Bridge Auditorium in New York which was attended by 10,000 people—a tremendous audience considering the period we are living in. Now my approach to this ques-

tion is as follows: did we do our utmost to reach these people with our message and literature in the traditional manner? Did we do all in our power to penetrate the mass of this audience with our ideas? If we did not then it was a gross error.

Did either the Majority or Minority leaders propose any concrete course of action in relation to this rally? I don't know. But I do know that if in Buffalo there were a meeting of this character, were it to consist of only thirty people, our party would be there "the fastest with the mostest." This goes not merely for Stalinist peripheral organizations but for any organization where advanced or liberal elements are gathered. And this goes hand in hand with our trade union line and in no way contradicts it.

The Rosenberg Case is a world case by now. In treating the Rosenberg Case, what is important for us as the class vanguard is to present the proletarian world point of view. This is our most valuable asset, our method of presenting it from the class point of view, particularly as against Stalinism, which presents it from the point of view of formal bourgeois democracy only.

Of course, we also defend the Rosenbergs from the point of view of elementary bourgeois democratic rights, and we participate in any organization which defends bourgeois democratic rights from reactionary incursions. But we cannot regard any such case exclusively from the viewpoint of bourgeois democracy, since in that case we lose our specific class approach.

The Rosenberg Case—and I am merely using it as a vehicle to express my position and not so much because of its importance—should also be regarded in another light: from the point of view of the current discussion on propaganda. The case offered an opportunity for action, for live action. I understand that there were about a thousand people in a picket line in front of the White House, demanding clemency from Eisenhower. In such an action we should participate, because it gives us an opportunity to test ourselves in combat, an opportunity to fight. For without live action, without testing, without experience through combat, without matching in action our class line against our opponents, we have no opportunity of learning and gauging our results.

I view such an action as the "hard" line against Stalinism. I view it as a field for combat. There is nothing worse, on the other hand, than merely to watch the developments of the Rosenberg Case or any other similar case without intervening; for it is inactivity, passivity, watching the world go by without taking any action even on the smallest, the tiniest and most modest scale—idleness, which becomes the transmission belt for all sorts of moods leading to demoralization.

In 1947 the Stalinists projected the idea of a "vetocade" to Washington to protest against the imminent passage of the Taft-Hartley Bill. At that time the CP in the Buffalo area had a considerable influence in the labor movement. We immediately sought to seize the initiative in this vetocade, and while we didn't obtain the entire initiative, our comrades did a magnificent job, tested themselves in ideological hand-to-hand combat with the Stalinists; and to this day this "vetocade" remains not only one of our most valuable experiences but also a testimonial to our approach, an approach motivated by a desire to enter into combat, to engage in class struggle activities of any type, and to make crystal clear our independent class and political approach.

The Willie McGee Case, which was also under the sponsorship of the Stalinists, is another example. Here too we seized the initiative in our area. We gathered thousands of signatures, distributed 6,000 Militants, and carried out a motorcade in the heart of the Negro area.

If there really were any illusions in regard to Stalinism or any type of conciliationism, as Comrade Cannon claims, then it would be all the more obligatory to participate in such actions. For it is only through experience that illusions are demolished.

Let me cite here something which I consider another tactical slip-up on the part of our party. On January 29, 1949 I wrote to Comrade Stein proposing that the Political Committee offer Comrade Cannon as a defense witness, an expert on revolutionary Marxism, as a method of intervening in the CP trials. Our purpose, I stated then, would be, along with taking the initiative in this intervention, to show the revolutionary Marxist line in contradistinction to the Stalinists.

And in a post script written one day later I point out that this would "show our solidarity with the Stalinists as against the capitalist frame-up." "Of course," the letter continued, "the Stalinists will never accept us as defense witnesses. Their refusal then could be publicly utilized not only to expose them but also to offer to the labor movement generally an example of our united front tactics in relation to defending all working class victims of capitalist persecution." I further suggested that the party submit what is known as an *amicus curiae* brief. The Stalinists themselves would have had no say in either accepting or

rejecting this brief. But even without acceptance of the brief, the mere fact of its presentation, which would necessarily have been reported in the capitalist press of the nation, would have shown to the workers of America where we stood. In spite of the Stalinist leadership, indeed, right over the heads of the Stalinist leadership, it would have been a clear appeal to the better elements of the Stalinist rank and file and one that could hardly be distorted.

While I did not anticipate earth-shaking results from this proposed tactic, still it would have been a method directed toward strengthening and refurbishing our revolutionary position before the world. Comrade Stein and the Secretariat, however, did not accept the proposal; and I feel that this a regrettable further addition to what has already been said concerning the Rosenberg Case.

To sum up the Rosenberg Case, the fact that it became such a tremendous issue on the American scene specifically, as well as on the world scene, indicates how utopian and visionary it is to seek out an independent course for the American workers, separate and apart from engaging in such struggles as this. This case demonstrates how inextricably interwoven are the politics of the American scene with those of the world struggle. In particular it demonstrates how interlinked are the politics of our party with our entire class camp, of which American labor is one of the links. And, as we said at the very beginning of our article, an indispensable link, and historically the most decisive.

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Before going further with the question of the independent destiny of the American working class, let us consider for a moment the question of the American Stalinists, and our tactics toward them. This flows from the first question. But it interacts with it also. And its consideration will help us to view the matter from another side.

The Trotsky Conversations

The Trotsky conversations as reported in the stenogram (Internal Bulletin, Vol. 15, No. 10) throw a fresh light on Stalinism and our attitude toward it. The 1940 discussions with Trotsky are in every way illuminating and rich in content. It is in these conversations that we see the problem of problems: our relation and attitude toward the Stalinists when they are in their "left" turn. More than thirteen years have elapsed since then, years which have been characterized not only by war but by revolution as well. It is in the light of the new world reality that we must view these conversations and not merely in the light of the conditions as they existed in 1940.

In a note to the discussion by Comrade George Clarke, he states that what is significant in the attitude of Trotsky's opponents toward giving Browder critical support is that it "duplicates almost word for word today the furious opposition to proposals of a far more restricted nature than critical support of a CP presidential candidate. The contrast is further highlighted," says Clarke, "by the fact that the Stalinist movement has been in a pseudo-left turn for more than five years, and the ferment in their ranks is obviously more deepgoing than in the brief period of the Stalin-Hitler Pact."

That there is and has been ferment in the Stalinist movement today as it was during the time of the Trotsky conversations is only too clear to require further proof. What we must do before considering the validity of any tactical orientation toward the Stalinists is to determine the social character of the "ferment" within the CP. Is the ferment or the dissatisfaction in the Stalinist ranks due to the CP's pacifist line, its policy of "co-existence," its lack of a revolutionary proletarian line against war? In other words, is the ferment in the Stalinist movement due to the urgings of the rank and file for a more revolutionary line, or is it due to the fact that under the furious blows of reaction the CP cannot hold its followers even with a mildly pseudo-leftist anti-war line? (To make it clearer, is the ferment in the CP due to the fact that the rank and file are seeking a more revolutionary line, and are dissatisfied with the pacifist, co-existence line of the CP?) If we examine the ferment in the CP in this light we can only come to the conclusion that the ferment is primarily due to the blows of the reaction and the severity of the witch-hunt. In my opinion, the dissatisfied and disoriented elements in the Stalinist movement are in the main leaving the Stalinist ranks not because they want a more revolutionary line but because they can't stand up under the pressure of the reaction and the witch-hunt. Of course, into the ranks of the CP peripheral organizations have come new layers, who have just been awakened to political life, and it is from these that we can make our greatest

gains. But we must not confuse this question with the questions of the general social character of the ferment in the various CP organizations. Thus the social character of the ferment as a whole in the CP ranks is not at all like the ferment in the ranks of the SP in the early Thirties when the ranks were seeking a revolutionary progressive line under the impetus of a wave of radicalism throughout the country. Nor is it the type of ferment which was present in the CP ranks in the late Thirties when the CP was pursuing a rabidly Rightist course toward fighting fascism in words while doing nothing about it in deeds.

Our party organized a giant demonstration in the heart of New York City to fight the fascists. The CP was for fighting them only in words, but the mood of the rank and file was for action, and at least on that occasion we carried the day. The workers responded by the thousands, and to this moment we consider that a glorious chapter in our party's history.

So the real question before us is: can we gain substantially from the ranks of the Stalinist movement in a period of reaction when the ranks are disintegrating, not because of a revolutionary or progressive ferment, but primarily due to inability to stand up under the blows of reaction? This aspect of the question of our approach to the Stalinists is not adequately examined in the Minority document. Now I am all for having a tactical approach toward the Stalinists and for working in any of their peripheral organizations, particularly in such key cities as New York, Los Angeles and Chicago—where they are probably five or ten times the size of our own organization.

My motivation for this approach is not based on any revolutionary ferment that exists in these organizations. Nor is it based on the fact that the labor movement is at the present time in a state of quiescence. I would be for it even if it were in a state of resurgence. My motivation is based on our strategical orientation as the world revolutionary vanguard whereby we seek out an opponent political class current in any area where we can find it for the purposes of irreconcilable combat. We regard ourselves as the world vanguard of the proletariat, as the leader of our entire class camp on a global scale, and we must engage our antagonist who also leads a global class current and constitutes our most formidable political rival in the same class camp. We must combat them in the spirit of revolutionary competition for the hegemony of this camp. Even more important than that, is that by seeking out our political rival, we are practicing and perfecting our revolutionary program.

In order to further elaborate this point let us examine the Trotsky conversations in some detail. Comrade Cannon opens the conversation: "The Stalinists are the problem." Why? "Because," says Cannon, "the workers are unable to distinguish the real difference between us." The Stalin-Hitler Pact seemed to disintegrate them, "but it (the CP) was losing just the democrats." But how about the militants? "They," says Comrade Cannon, "are more devoted than ever (to the CP). They believe that the party now has 'the revolutionary line.'" And that exactly was the situation in 1940. There was ferment in the CP ranks, but they were losing only the pink democratic elements. The militants became more loyal than ever. And that is essentially the situation today, only magnified a hundred-fold by the fury of the reaction.

Elsewhere in the conversation Comrade Cannon says, "The problem is to get the CP out of the road." But how? Trotsky proposes critical support for Browder. Cannon says this will compromise us in the eyes of the non-Stalinist workers. Trotsky proposes that we "turn our political face to the Stalinists." Cannon says, "It has many complications." What were the complications? Among them it "would disrupt our work among the progressive trade union elements." Trotsky answers, "You are afraid to become compromised in the eyes of the Rooseveltian trade unionists." Further, Trotsky shows firm conviction that if we turn our political face to the Stalinists we will make headway with them. Trotsky says, "I ask for two or three hundred Stalinist workers. That is the minimum requirement." The discussion is finally terminated by Comrade Hansen leading off with a question: "I am wondering if Comrade Trotsky considers that our party is displaying a conservative tendency in the sense that we are adapting ourselves politically to the trade union bureaucracy." And Trotsky replies, "To a certain degree I believe it is so."

Analyzing the conversations in the light of the present international situation, several facts emerge from the conversations which have a direct bearing on the controversy today.

In 1940, as we see by the conversations, the CP was in ferment. But like today it was not in revolutionary ferment. As Cannon puts it, they were "losing just the democrats." And that's what they are losing now. These are the elements that are in ferment, moving away from the CP. And these elements, with the exception of layers of newly awakened political elements, are not likely to be moving in our direc-

tion. Was Comrade Trotsky right then in proposing that we turn our political face to the Stalinists? Yes, because otherwise we would face a greater danger of adapting ourselves at that time toward the conservative trade union leaders and today to the general dominant trend toward reaction. Was Comrade Trotsky over-optimistic in his perspective of getting "a minimum of at least two or three hundred Stalinist workers?" Yes, he was. It could not have been done for the reason that the genuine revolutionary elements in the CP "were more devoted than ever" to it—on the basis of the new pseudo-leftist line. And this is substantially the situation today.

Should we nevertheless "turn our political face to the Stalinists?" Yes. Not because we will necessarily gain a lot, but because there is a field of combat for us, where we test our general revolutionary program.

What new problem arises out of an examination of the Trotsky conversations in the light of the present Stalinist turn to the left on a world scale? It is this: when the Stalinists make a "left turn," particularly in a period of reaction accompanied by severe repressions, our task in relation to the Stalinists becomes not easier but tremendously more difficult, for their "leftist" line gives the false impression that their line is the same as our own. Hence differentiation from the Stalinists becomes an utmost necessity. It being a period of reaction, however, the differentiation in a revolutionary direction tends more to isolate us among the broad masses while not bringing appreciable gains from the CP. Thus, even under the best of circumstances, and even if we had Lenin and Trotsky themselves as the leadership in the party we would still face a tremendous problem. The problem of differentiation from the Stalinists is a double-edged sword. If we use Trotsky's approach to the question, that is, of turning our political face to the Stalinists, it means of course a strengthening of our revolutionary line and a sharpening of our class approach. The gains, of course, from the Stalinists would be modest indeed. But if we do not carry out this approach, we run the risk of veering a course toward adaptation.

This course toward adaptation would also be a "differentiation" from the Stalinists, but it is the kind of differentiation which would make us appear the more "moderate" organization or an organization that "just preaches socialism in general." Hence the correctness of Trotsky's line. It teaches us that in a period of reaction the revolutionary vanguard may become more isolated, lose a lot more influence in the ranks of the broad masses; but its supreme merit is that it retains and strengthens the revolutionary capital of the party, its revolutionary theory and its revolutionary practice. In this way the vanguard builds for the future.

What Comrade Trotsky said in his *Stalinism and Bolshevism* (p. 9) is exactly in point:

"If an unfavorable relation of forces prevents it (the vanguard) from holding the positions that it has won, it must at least retain its ideological positions, because in them is expressed the dearly-paid experience of the past."

The Wallace Question

If one were to chart an independent destiny for the American working class, if one were looking for a road separate and apart from the Stalinists and away from Europe's and Asia's road then it would first appear that the Wallace movement could have served as a pathway for it. There is no question that the Wallace movement had elements of the classical American populism. But how did it really develop? It was merged with a current that was global in character. What gave it such a character? It was the Stalinists. The Wallace movement reproduced the "genuine" type of popular American radicalism, but under the given social setting it inevitably took on political coloration from the world scene.

In the "Roots of the Party Crisis" the Minority fails to mention the Wallace question. They begin with the "auto crisis" at the August 1947 Plenum and then jump to the 1949-50 discussion on Eastern Europe. The first was a trade union turn with which the present Majority finally went along. The second was a very good theoretical discussion on the events in Eastern Europe.

But the first concrete step in the party's course toward adaptation to the dominant trend of reaction was the unfortunate February 1948 Plenum, known as the "Wallace Plenum." The Minority's bulletin fails to mention the "Wallace Plenum." I do not believe this failure is merely due to the present Minority's taking a wrong position (along with the Majority) at that time. It is not necessary for anyone to beat his breast and enumerate every mistake. Nor is it the intention of this document especially to expose mistakes. Since the question of the "roots" of the crisis has been raised, however, we must not hesitate to go to the real root of the problem. The Minority document fails to do this.

This failure is because the Minority misunderstood, and still misunderstands, the real nature of the Wallace-type groupings, and their full significance in the present global class struggle. Everything the Minority says about the Huberman tendency and the Compass Clubs was a hundred times more true of the Wallace movement. The Wallace question was a big issue in every CIO union. Support of Wallace in the UAW or steel locals did not mean orienting toward the imperialist-minded bureaucracy but directly counter to them, and being branded as "communist," as pro-Soviet and being red-baited. It did not mean giving up the independence of the party, but asserting the party's independence of the trade union bureaucracy in a most uncompromising manner.

The party took the line of least resistance on the Wallace question, certainly at least as far as the trade union and mass work was concerned. Since the question of mass work as opposed to "propaganda" work has been posed so sharply, it is all the more important in the interests of a fruitful analysis to search out the meaning of the position taken at the "Wallace Plenum."

Wallace himself, of course, may be dismissed as an inconsequential individual like Norman Thomas, whom Trotsky called a "political misunderstanding." Comrade Cannon's characterization of Wallace and his Idaho singing partner as capitalist politicians was correct, but beside the point. The real question was: what was the class character of the Wallace movement?

There were two principal answers to this question at the Plenum. The Majority held it was a third capitalist party. A minority composed of Swabeck, Mills and Bartell at first viewed it as an emerging labor party. Both were wrong.

The Wallace movement at that time literally encompassed millions of workers and middle class individuals throughout the country. It was no secret to anybody who was at all acquainted with political trends in the country that the Stalinists were its core, were practically directing the movement, and constituted the bulk of its activists. The movement had a tremendous appeal to whatever was progressive in the liberal or radical movement. But as soon as the party constituted itself and selected its candidates, a barrage of red-baiting and hysteria descended upon it such as this country has rarely seen. It was no exaggeration to say the Wallace party was literally red-baited to death.

The Wallace party was not really a political party at all. It was a Stalinist-directed, working-class and middle-class movement with an essentially working-class character. At the same time it had a much looser and broader character than their other "fronts," with greater opportunities for us to work in. It was not at all a "Popular Front" of the Blum type.

The Wallace movement was a progressive-radical movement in spite of Wallace. The international situation, and the intimate involvement of the U.S. in that situation, foreshadowed that the movement would be red-baited to death. This red-baiting did not occur merely because of the presence of the Stalinists in the movement, but more especially because of the influence of their line upon the movement. Anything remotely pro-Soviet was, and still is, bound to be red-baited. But could a large radicalized grouping of some millions in America today avoid the Soviet question and concentrate only on the question of wages, housing, etc., alone? Of course not. The Americans for Democratic Action who are much more middle class in character with much less of a mass base and who repeat many of the purely liberal aspects of Wallace-ism, have not avoided the Soviet question. They take a clearly anti-Soviet position.

Once again—the international problems are intertwined with the national in the most concrete and intimate way. It is not only that the general world economic and political problems of American imperialism will break its hold at home and create the opening for the American workers. (This is the general schema in Comrade Cannon's internationalism). It is also the specific and immediate effect of the struggle abroad on the struggle at home. For instance, in the fight against the boss, and in the fight within the union about how to fight the boss, the "red" issue has never been absent. And today the "red" issue is interlinked with the Soviet issue. If the rank and file did not so link it, the right wing leaders would do it for them. The global class struggle flares up within the national borders again and again—not, so far, with the fury or clear class polarity that it does abroad, it is true. Nor did the Wallace movement (certainly not as much as the Rosenberg Case) confront us with letters a foot high saying: "I am the Russian question in a new disguise."

Wallace's Russian program was the mildest form of conciliation toward the Soviet Union. Regardless of his charlatany and unworkable program he gathered around him many supporters who

were genuinely sympathetic to the Soviet Union. And is it so remarkable that this was combined with all the "American" aims—the economic struggle—Taft-Hartley—the Negro question, etc.? This is not an accidental vagary, or twist, of Stalinism: it is a verification of the interdependent destinies of the American and world-wide working classes.

Comrade Cannon's position was that it would be "crossing class lines" to give critical support to Wallace. He advocated the "unconditional independence" of the party as the key to winning the masses for revolution. (But without a clear understanding of the above interdependence, the independence of the party could not be clearly understood either). It would not have been "crossing class lines" to give critical support to Wallace. It would only have been supporting Wallace as Lenin said "a rope supports a hanged man." It would have been reaching out our hand toward elements of our own class we could not reach in any other way except through critical support of Wallace. (This, as everybody on the NC knows, was my position, and it flowed from the international orientation I also elaborated at that Plenum).

The Wallace Plenum misjudged an important juncture of recent history. More than that, it laid the basis for the party's adaptation toward the reaction in the following period. Were some of the majority comrades sectarian in their outlook? Possibly they were. But basically, the line was an adaptation to the red-baiting opposition to the Wallace movement. Were Comrades Clarke and Cochran, who voted with the Majority six months after the "Auto Plenum," sectarian in their outlook? This is a point they should ponder over themselves.

The minority at the "Wallace Plenum"—at that time the Chicago NC members—saw a radical and militant movement in which our party could do useful and fruitful work. Their political tactic of critical support was correct. Unfortunately, the Chicago comrades did not foresee the direction this new movement was fated to take. By projecting a "labor party" orientation they had in reality projected a period of upsurge. They had not perceived that, in one sense, the Wallace movement was a last flickering of radicalism under the spreading blanket of reaction. Most of all, they did not see the Wallace movement in the light of the new global setting that ultimately was to decide its fate.

The Minority line today, in this important respect, closely approximates the Chicago minority's line of February 1948. True, the present Minority would not be so rash as to predict great gains from the Stalinist milieu. But they see it outside of its global framework, aside from its interdependency, and hence, one-sidedly. It is not only that there are less numbers in this milieu today than in the Wallace movement; it is also that the people themselves are much less receptive (to us), even if they are more political than the much larger group in the Wallace movement was.

The Majority today seems to continue the same line of adaptation that they presented at the "Wallace Plenum," thus making the party more dependent on the present anti-Soviet prejudices of the working class. The present discussion is proceeding too much like the too-much-forgotten Wallace discussion. It is proceeding in a masked or half-blinded manner, in which the participants have thought out neither their full motivations, nor the full consequences of their positions. The Majority's adaptation to the rightward trend is obviously not conscious or deliberate, but its objective effect is the same.

The Minority, however, while correct in their tactical approach, are wrong from the point of view of political analysis. The very fact that they characterize the trouble as sectarian Stalinophobia would indicate that they see more in the Stalinist milieu than is really there.

The fact that the Minority persist in characterizing the Majority as "sectarian" surely cannot be ascribed to excessive diplomacy, softness, politeness, etc. on their part. It would appear, rather, that they see the field for activity, the movement of the workers, etc. in a different quarter than the Majority, and that they feel the Majority are "missing the bus" in a practical sense.

To repeat: it is not a sectarian, pathological fear or hatred of Stalinism which motivates the Majority. It is fear of the reaction, and fear of the generally reactionary mood which pervades most strata of the labor movement. It is not an abnormal psychological phenomenon, but a perfectly understandable, if somewhat obscured, political phenomenon.

It is not because the Majority are separate and apart from the labor movement; it is precisely because the Majority are oriented toward the American labor movement. The motive and purpose of this orientation is of course laudable enough taken by itself. But as we all know, the American workers are

temporarily permeated with the mood of reaction. Unfortunately, the Majority is showing a tendency to cater to this mood.

The Minority, on the other hand, are repeating the error of the Chicago minority on the Wallace question. In spite of their correct tactical approach they have not, apparently, absorbed the full meaning of the Wallace discussion, nor of the conversation with Trotsky which they themselves have published.

The question of the independence of the party (which arose in the Wallace discussion), its real independence, its Bolshevik independence, faced a really fundamental test at the time of the "Yugoslav Affair."

The Yugoslav Question and the Independence of the Party .

Some time after the break of Tito from Stalin, our movement had projected the idea that the international climate was becoming more favorable for the construction of genuine revolutionary parties and that "the parallel crisis of Stalinism and imperialism" created the favorable objective conditions for the development of independent revolutionary movements away from Stalinism. The Tito affair, according to our co-thinker's document pointed in that direction and probably was the precursor for other such movements. Between this period and the period of the Third World Congress, our movement's orientation was one for independent revolutionary developments separate from and against the Stalinists.

Tito's break with Stalin was in itself, as an initial step, progressive and revolutionary. But for us to project the further perspective of possibly converting the Titoist Communist Party into a genuine revolutionary party was simply a lapse into utopianism. However, certain external and purely superficial events and pronouncements of the Tito regime impelled our co-thinkers to believe that nothing less than a conversion of the Tito party into an adherent of our movement was in sight. In a lead article in the *Militant*, the May Day Manifesto of the Yugoslav CP was hailed as "the second greatest event in the history of the working-class movement." Actually this Manifesto had nothing in it whatever that would warrant such a conclusion except a phrase about "a return to the road of Lenin" without indicating what the road was.

Aside from the fact that at the time of this article in the *Militant* there was already on the mainland of China a new workers' state, which in reality had been the greatest event in working-class history since the October Revolution, the article had a completely erroneous perspective in relation to Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav CP. If ever I felt our movement could be completely disoriented I felt that this was the occasion. I made my position clear at the Midwest Party Conference held in Cleveland in May of that year. Later I wrote a letter to Comrade Warde of the Secretariat. This letter offers a clue to my position in the present internal discussion. I quote from the letter of June 12, 1950:

"Regarding the Yugoslav question, I have not seen a scintilla of objective evidence from the Yugoslav or world press, which would in any way indicate a real turn in the political policy of the Yugoslav leadership. Our uncritical attitude towards the Titoists is wrong, dangerous and without any justification from the point of view of the objective realities of the Yugoslav CP. It is a dangerous illusion to believe that the leadership is moving in our direction, or making any visible turn in their political policy.

"I have read Gabe's and Germain's resolutions, and while I believe that Gabe's resolution is far more acceptable than Germain's, I do not think that it is at all adequate, since he leaves out entirely the question of our attitude towards the Tito leadership. The PC should draw up a resolution which should encompass the following points: 1) That Yugoslavia is a workers' state, and that an actual social revolution has taken place there, because the bourgeoisie has been crushed, expropriated, and their political power smashed. The old capitalist state apparatus was shattered in the period from 1944-46, and a new one erected based upon the support of the workers and peasants (the mutation of state form took place in the period 1944-46). 2) The world proletariat must defend the Yugoslav state against the encroachments of the Soviet bureaucracy and against world imperialism. 3) The Yugoslav leadership pursues a national socialist, not a Trotskyist, course in their foreign and domestic policies. They base themselves fundamentally on the immediate exigencies of Yugoslavia and not on the world revolution as the fundamental lever. They indicate no recognition of the dependence of the Yugoslav state on the world revolution. Their foreign policy is adherence to the United Nations, not adherence to the Fourth International. 4) Our attitude towards the Yugoslav leadership should not be qualitatively

different than towards any other labor bureaucracy. We support the progressive aspects of their struggle against imperialism and the Stalinist bureaucracy. But we must at the same time consistently and mercilessly expose their reactionary policies, such as a) support of the United Nations, b) "reliance on ourselves and only on ourselves" as Tito says, c) the failure to boldly repudiate Stalinist dogmas of socialism in one country, class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, d) bourgeois pacifism instead of revolutionary struggle against imperialist war.

"Our perspective with respect to the Yugoslav CP should be one of building a left wing from the ranks of that party, and not in fond hopes of regenerating the old leadership. This does not mean that we should neglect to collaborate with them any more than we do with the other labor bureaucracies. To this, however, must be added the inescapable corollary of unconditional independence of our party and freedom to criticize in the course of the collaboration.

"I have noted that there is a little more moderation in the last 2 issues of the Militant on the Yugoslav question. I would advise still further moderation. At any rate this is far safer and will not put us out on a limb should there be a sudden turn in the Tito leadership which would be exceedingly embarrassing to us and disorient our membership."

On June 22, Comrade Warde replied:

"By this time you will have received another informative report on internal developments in Yugoslavia. I believe that your attitude toward the leadership there is entirely too rigid. Moreover, it flies in the face of established facts. The fact is that we are already in a bloc with them and our collaboration on many important issues is daily becoming closer and closer. Our attitude has never been an uncritical one and we have conceded not an iota in principle in effecting this collaboration. Where we believe they are incorrect, we have pointed that out in a friendly tone and a comradely fashion.

"Your appraisal of the evidence about their development differs from mine and that of most comrades who have followed it closely. It appears to us undeniable that a genuine turn toward the left, that is, toward the Leninist standpoint has been taken by them. How far they will go and at what pace we do not know, but we would be very poor politicians if we did not do all in our power to facilitate their progress toward our positions and to try and have them come over all the way. Both our actions and criticisms have been an influential factor in that respect in the past period and will have an even greater influence in the period ahead. The important thing for us is to take full advantage of the opportunities opening up along the line of my report. This is the biggest political opportunity we have ever had."

I have quoted this correspondence in full because it has a direct connection with the current controversy. Then, as now, the reaction was raging, not to the same degree, but none the less surely; and the mass movement in this country, while it was not as quiescent as it is now, was by no means in a militant mood. Nationally, and particularly insofar as it concerned Local New York, the policy had been to seek out all Yugoslav organizations and organize brigades to Yugoslavia, since Yugoslavia was our "biggest political opportunity." This was as good a time as any to counterpose to the Yugoslav orientation mass work in the trade union movement, as our main task. But the proper approach was to take the issue of Titoism on its merits. I was then, as I am now, for the perspective of sinking our roots deeper, deeper, and deeper into the mass of trade union workers, no matter how difficult the situation may be. I did not counterpose the main arena of our work, the trade unions, as against our "biggest political opportunity." That, however, is only one lesson of the Yugoslav experience. One other lesson was that our movement was searching and probing everywhere (and correctly so) for opportunities, but the objective situation on a world scale had not opened up such possibilities as yet.

The biggest lesson, however, was with respect to the unconditional independence of our party. The Tito episode was really a case in point. No one raised it except myself in the above letter. If the Majority comrades feel that the unconditional independence of the party is so important in the current controversy, I should think that was the time to have raised it—at a time when we ran the danger of becoming the tail to Tito's kite. The Titoist movement had no real appeal to the working masses anywhere in the world, precisely because the Titoists had no internationalist perspective and offered nothing to the communist workers abroad which was even a shade different from what the Stalinists and reformists offered. The other important factor in

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The Tito experience is that it offered the happy alternative of circumventing the struggle against Stalinist movements everywhere by a "new independent road." Would that that were so! Unfortunately, that was not the case. It indeed would be a happy alternative if it had objectively existed, but it did not.

In our struggle to vanquish Stalinism, we cannot chart out an illusory independent road whereby we would avoid them. Our path towards the masses on a world scale, and to a narrower extent in the USA, is blocked by the Stalinists; and it is in mortal combat (and not aversion) that we will come out victorious. That of course does not depend on our efforts alone but on the turn in the objective conditions, which are changing all over the world. An attempt to chart out on the American arena an independent road is just as illusory as on the world arena. As Comrade Cannon said in 1940 to Comrade Trotsky, "The Stalinists are the problem. We've got to get them out of the road." We cannot do this by circumventing them, by excluding ourselves, by seeking an illusory independent road toward the American workers. We must meet them in combat, in irreconcilable struggle, with the recognition that they are a global class current, and that their defeat will be the product of the joint efforts of all the workers and oppressed peoples in our entire class camp. This will be done and it can be done.

repeat:

The Tito experience showed that it was wrong to project false hopes based on non-existent conditions.

It is just as false that we chart out an independent course towards the American workers without reckoning with the global class current of Stalinism. We must invade their arena, always conscious that we are fighting a global social phenomenon. We must orient toward the American working class as a sector in the global camp which is indissolubly bound to that camp and dependent on it in no less degree than the entire camp is dependent on it.

On the other hand we must not conceive the Stalinist milieu in this country as merely "an area for fruitful work," "an area where there are advanced people" or proceed on the basis "that the labor movement is dormant." Whether the labor movement is dormant or insurgent, our work, our struggle against Stalinism must go on, not merely because we think it is a good source for recruiting, but because we are in revolutionary competition with them as one global class current against another for hegemony of the world camp of all the proletarians and oppressed peoples.

We cannot proceed to vanquish Stalinism on the American arena merely on the basis of its American peculiarities.

Perspective on the American Revolution

"In the present epoch," said Trotsky in *The Third International after Lenin*, "to a much larger extent than in the past, the national orientation of the proletariat must and can flow only from a world orientation and not vice versa. Herein lies the basic and primary difference between communist internationalism and all varieties of national socialism."

The above words of Trotsky in no way contradict his statement that "America is the foundry where the fate of man will be forged." I quoted this last statement and elaborated on it in the memorandum which I presented to the 1950 Convention. To some comrades, the remarks seemed to be out of place because the discussion was on Eastern Europe and Yugoslavia. But I felt they had a relevance to the discussion, as I feel they have a relevance to the present one. However, they cannot be lifelessly applied to the American scene. Only the comprehension of the dialectical inter-unity of both these Trotsky concepts and their concrete application on the field of the American class struggle, will serve to accomplish our historic tasks.

May 20, 1953