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POLITICAL RESOLUTION

(Draft of the Political Committee)

The Perspective of United States Imperialism

1. In common with every other great power, the course of United States imperialism is set directly toward the second world war. The entire life of the nation is being grooved into the war channel. Every political, economic and social issue is being more and more subordinated to the war preparations.

2. After six years, the New Deal, as a primarily internal program of huge governmental expenditures and subsidies, liberal demagoguery and social concessions to the farmers and workers, has ended in definitive collapse. The intolerable economic crisis continues. The business cycle refuses to turn upward for more than fitful and unsatisfying periods. The impossibility of a solution on the New Deal basis, and the fatuousness of any proposed solution on the basis of old-fashioned, Chamber-of-Commerce Republicanism, have become apparent. Internal measures having failed and offering no hope, the United States bourgeoisie turns to external measures, to the war. It plans to solve its problems through acquiring a greater share in the world market, in particular by gaining monopoly control over Latin America and a major position in the Far East. Indeed, it aims at nothing short of world hegemony. In the present stage of the war preparations, Roosevelt has taken aggressive leadership. His New Deal has ended, and will not be revived except occasionally in his holiday words or in those of his agents. The New Deal has been transformed into the War Deal.

3. Because of the needs both of the war and of tottering U.S. industry, the War Deal is also a deal of social reaction. The months since Munich and the November elections have witnessed a trans-

growing reactionary wave. This has been marked above all by the sharpest and most brutal attack since 1929 on the unemployed and by the sustained drive against the democratic rights of labor. In the period ahead this attack and this drive will continue, and it is planned to climax them by the imposition of totalitarian military dictatorship on the day that war begins.

The Struggle Against the War

4. The character of the present period dictates unequivocally the main task of the party: The struggle against the war. Just as the bourgeoisie subordinates every other question to preparation for the war, so must the party subordinate every question to the struggle against the war. What is required is not a temporary or episodic campaign, but a sustained, deliberate and enduring policy. The S.W.P. must aim to be and to become known to the masses as: the anti-war party.

5. In accordance with our analysis of the nature of capitalist war as an integral phase of capitalism, the struggle against the war cannot be conceived as a "special" campaign, but must, rather, infuse all of our activities: trade union work no less than our press; youth and defense and unemployed work no less than our occasional manifestoes.

6. We must recognize that our opponents within the labor movement - the social-reformists, Stalinists, and the labor bureaucracy - are separated from us now not by mere ideological divergences but by their having become part of the war machine. They have joined the camp of the class enemy. Our attack against them must correspondingly increase in sharpness and intransigence. We must reveal them to the workers in their full and true light.

7. Our press and platforms must be constantly used to make clear the character of the coming war. We must continue to support

the popular referendum on war declaration, as a means for reinforcing anti-war sentiment among the masses, for putting forward our own program, and for exposing the anti-democratic nature of the war-makers. Similarly, with the demand for "No Secret Diplomacy!" and with exposures of the secret maneuvers of the State Department we must show the war as a conspiracy against the people. Our unqualified opposition to all imperialist armaments, to all varieties of "national defense", must be modified in no way whatever in the face of prejudices seeking some patriotic loophole. With our slogan of "All War Funds to the Unemployed", we sum up both our analysis of bourgeois armaments and their relation to the reactionary drive against the masses.

8. The first aim of U.S. imperialism in the war is monopoly control over Latin America, and the U.S. plans also to use Latin America as a strategic base and a source of raw materials and personnel in the conduct of the war. Our struggle against the war cannot be divorced from the firmest and widest support of the Latin American masses in their own struggle against U.S. imperialism. During the past year, the Fourth International, which is the sole organization supporting on a world scale the anti-imperialist movements of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples, has made notable progress in a number of Latin American countries. The S.W.P. must in the next year vastly increase its concentration upon Latin American work, and must link this with what has been almost entirely lacking in the past: political activity among the Latin Americans resident within the United States.

Democratic Rights

9. During the past eight months there has taken place a growing attack upon the democratic rights of labor, an attack required by the bourgeoisie equally as part of the war preparations and in order to aid the suffering business cycle. The illegality of sit-downs

has been made explicit by the courts. The courts, State Legislatures, Congress and the police are engaged in a nation-wide drive to limit or smash the rights of picketing, boycotts, closed shop, strikes, demonstrations, and through a variety of other means strive to hamstring labor organization. This attack will not diminish but on the contrary will increase in intensity during the next period.

10. These democratic rights are indispensable to the very existence of organized labor, both in the struggle against the war and in the fight for jobs and food. The end term of the present series of attacks, from the point of view of the bourgeoisie, is the total wiping out of labor's rights through a war-time military dictatorship or through outright fascism. We must understand and explain the present attacks in this sense.

11. The party must, consequently, bring to the forefront during the coming period the question of the defense of the democratic rights of labor. The struggle against war and reaction is intimately and acutely bound up with this question. In the defense of democratic rights, broad united fronts of action are both possible and desirable. In localities where it is feasible, the party should take the initiative in forming committees for the defense of the democratic rights of labor. As the tactic for defending democratic rights, the party should advocate the wide use of militant methods of mass action - strikes, demonstrations, marches, etc. - in place of the hopeless confinement of tactics to parliamentary and legalistic maneuvers.

The Fight for Jobs

12. The continuance of the unparalleled economic crisis, the persistence of the army of unemployed at a level of twelve or more millions, and the drive of reaction against the unemployed, place the fight for jobs squarely and enduringly in the front rank of the problems of the working class and of the party. Short of the

actual outbreak of war itself, which would temporarily absorb (under a dictatorial regime) a considerable percentage of the unemployed in either the war industries or the army, there is not the slightest prospect of a major economic upturn. Even the vast armament outlays of the pre-war Roosevelt program have a comparatively minor effect on U.S. economy as a whole. Chronic and staggering crisis for the masses of the people has become the normal condition of U.S. capitalism.

13. The older program of "immediate demands" and restrained and legalistic methods of fighting for them are no longer adequate to rouse the masses to struggle or to make any headway against the onslaught of social and economic reaction. We must be bold, open and resolute in advancing the broad and positive slogans of our "transitional program": a job and a decent living for every worker; the opening of idle factories under workers' control; the 30 hour week and \$30 minimum weekly wage; \$20,000,000,000 public works program; expropriation of the Sixty Families; etc.

14. We must take care not to permit the transitional program to become a mere literary exercise. It is not intended as a finished document valid as a whole and just as it stands for all times and occasions. In the first place, it must be lifted out of the pages of our press and thrust into the midst of the unions and other mass organizations. In the second place, it must be understood as a method for linking the party with the actual struggles of the masses. The conception of the transition program must be used to give depth and extension to issues which arise naturally out of the living experience of the masses. The popular movement for a referendum on war is a prominent example of such an issue. Another, extremely important at present, is the drive for a 30 hour week begun by the electrical workers and the plumbers and, in a somewhat different form, by the auto workers. This 30 hour week movement is a concretization of the

transition demand for a "sliding scale of hours", and should receive the full and active support of the party,

The Communist Party

15. The Communist Party must occupy a central place in the propaganda and general activities of the party in the coming period. The total of all other opponent organizations - Social Democratic Federation, Socialist Party, Lovestoneites, etc. - does not add up to a small fraction of the importance of the Communist Party. Insufficient attention to the Communist Party, almost equal attention to other opponent groups, have been one of the most serious weaknesses in the work of the party during the past year. The Communist Party is far and away the greatest obstacle in this country to the building of the revolutionary movement.

16. It is necessary to dispel certain illusions, shared to one or another extent by our own membership, with respect to the Communist Party. It is false that the Communist Party consists only of bureaucrats and hopeless petty bourgeois. In its ranks and especially in its sympathizing circles it includes many genuine and militant workers, as its influence in the trade unions proves. It is deceptive to consider that the C.P. is characterized through and through and in every respect by an iron monolithism. The framework of the party is wholly monolithic. But in the heart of that monolithic framework there have grown in the present period profound conflicts and paradoxes, springing from the conflicting and paradoxical social and political situation of international Stalinism. These internal conflicts are the compelling sources of splits and defections from the Stalinist movement. It is even false to believe that splits have not taken place in the Stalinist movement. Especially in recent times, after the Third Moscow Trial, after Munich, after the fall of Barcelona, what might be described as slow and passive - but very extensive-

splits have occurred. But these splits have led the dissident Stalinists, with a few exceptions, only to complete retirement from political activity or to bourgeois politics.

17. The basis for influencing the Communist Party, for recruiting its members and sympathizers and for hastening its dissolution as an obstacle to the growth of the revolutionary movement, is present. What is required for success is a conscious, deliberate and sustained policy on our part. We must root out all traces of a defeatist or passive attitude toward Stalinism, and orient boldly on the perspective of major and fruitful work in that arena.

The Struggle against Fascism.

18. In the months since Munich and especially since the fall of Barcelona, and with the failure of the 1938 upturn in business to extend into 1939 - thus signaling the definitive collapse of the New Deal's policies, the fascist and semi-fascist movements in this country have been growing rapidly in numbers and boldness. The nationwide notoriety achieved by Hague through his use of fascist and semi-fascist methods symbolizes this development. The nation-wide series of meetings and mobilizations by the Nazi Bund provided a kind of dress rehearsal for native movements. The Silver Shirts have been especially active in small towns and villages. It is reported that there are now more than 800 fascist and near-fascist organizations in the United States. At the present time the most successful and advancing of these is the Coughlin movement, which, since Coughlin's reappearance on the scene after two years of quiet, has taken on a more and more openly fascist character. Though it is doubtful that a movement led by a Catholic priest can be the authentic fascist movement in this country, Coughlin's followers are being prepared in ideology and methods for fusion into the definitive fascist movement of the not too distant future.

19. It is absolutely inadmissible to neglect or minimize the importance of the current growth of U.S. fascism. Fascism in this country is capable of spreading like wildfire, of strangling the labor movement before it is aware what is happening. The great army of disillusioned unemployed and the disinherited youth are particularly and immediately vulnerable. Europe has taught that in order to defeat fascism the labor movement must never let fascism get a step in advance, that it must anticipate and prepare for the fascist developments before they take place.

20. It is the immediate duty of the party to prepare educational and propaganda material in its press and in cheap pamphlets dealing with the native fascist and near fascist movements. This material should be put in the most popular and simple form, directed especially toward the youth and the unemployed, and must aim at mass circulation to combat the fascist ideas directly on the ground where they chiefly germinate.

21. The struggle against fascism at home, however, cannot even now be confined to propaganda and agitation. It is necessary to fight the fascist movements in action from the very beginning. Our slogan "For Workers Defense Guards against Fascism" cannot any longer be confined to agitation, but must be put into concrete effect. A beginning has been made in a few localities. But the party must now attempt in every section of the country where it has branches to begin the actual organization of at least skeleton defense units, which will work indefatigably to broaden their base, especially through union support. Ideally these should be based on and built through the unions, as in Minneapolis. But where this is not possible, the party must nevertheless lead the way and itself take the initiative in forming, together with sympathizers and non-party workers now ready to participate, initiating nuclei of the anti-fascist defense guard,

functioning as independent, organized, disciplined and active institutions.

The Labor Party

22. During the past year, the sentiment among the workers for a Labor Party has remained inert, held back by Roosevelt, the labor bureaucrats and the Stalinists. Any extended general campaign on our part around the labor party slogan would have been on the whole academic, and our agitation on this issue has been largely, and correctly, confined to specific and local situations where it was relevant. Nevertheless, the organized intervention of labor in politics has continued and in some respects increased during this same year. The collapse of the New Deal and its transformation into the War Deal, the wave of social reaction, the more openly reactionary character of the Roosevelt administration, the approach of the 1940 elections, are all raising or beginning to raise once more in the minds of the workers questions about political action. So untenable is worn-out New Dealism becoming that even Lewis and the Stalinists have in the recent weeks been compelled to make certain criticisms of Roosevelt. It is hardly conceivable that the disillusionment of the workers with Roosevelt can in the main take the form of a swing back to Republicanism; and in any case it would be disastrous if this were permitted to happen. The slogan for a labor party, properly developed in connection with the other aspects of our program, can play a significant role in directing the disillusionment with Roosevelt and the dead New Deal into the sole progressive direction - toward independent political activity by the working class. We must be ready to utilize every concrete situation as it arises for propaganda and action in this direction.

23. The slogan for the labor party, as we conceive it, is in no way incompatible with direct entry of the party, under its own

name, in elections. On the contrary, experience has amply proved the great value of the party name and party candidates appearing on the ballot, with the wide opportunities for revolutionary education which this opens up. In all localities where this is practically feasible, and where it will not conflict with the development of genuine independent working class political action on a broader scale, the party must in the next period try to enter elections directly.

The Prospects for the Party

24. The defeats of the working class on an international scale, the lack of organized resistance to the approach of the war, and the apparent passivity of the working class in this as in other countries, above all since the fall of Barcelona, have not been without adverse effect in some quarters of the radical labor movement. In some cases this takes the form of the entirely erroneous opinion that our perspective for the next period must be one merely of consolidating a tight and firm cadre and of excluding the possibility of important numerical growth.

25. While the factors that have led to this feeling cannot be denied, the inference drawn is by no means necessarily correct, and other equally important national and international conditions point to a contrary conclusion. The war is approaching, but the masses, in the United States as in most other nations, are not in favor of the war, and have not succumbed to a blatant war chauvinism. They are on the whole against the war, however incompletely they understand the implications of their opposition. As the only party which fights the war, there is every objective foundation for the growth, even the rapid growth, of the party as the organization concretely embodying the anti-war sentiments of the masses. Again, there is no revolutionary opposition to the party, hardly the pretense of any; and consequently every serious feeling or thought directed against the present order

of war and tyranny and starvation can find genuine outlet only in the ranks and actions of our party. Again, the masses want to fight fascism and its growth at home; and only our party has proposed or attempted to carry out a serious fight against fascism. Finally, the end of the New Deal once again poses sharply before the workers the problems of political action; and here also our party alone gives an answer.

26. It is entirely possible that the coming period will be one of rapid growth for the party. It is certain that if we do not have this as our perspective, if we decide in advance that growth is impossible, then stagnation is assured. But our problem and aim is not to retreat, but to advance and to gain. The party has never taken recruiting seriously; it has always allowed new members to drop like ripe fruit into the ranks of the party, after suitable and lengthy fertilizing by our ideas and theories. To assure the success of the party in the next months we must radically alter this attitude: we must become crusaders and recruiting agents, not at all satisfied with a formally correct program, but resolved that this program will become the program of masses of workers. Habit and routine dictate caution and reserve. The future of the party and the needs of the American revolution demand audacity and a bold offensive.

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AMENDMENT TO THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

Proposed by Horman Stern

For incorporation into the section--Workers State

1. The abrogation of workers democracy in the Soviet Union and in the Comintern; the system of terror, frame-up and murder instituted by Stalinism throughout the international labor movement, as a weapon in eliminating workers opposition, has evoked widespread bitterness and reaction, not merely with the practices of the corrupt Soviet bureaucracy, but against the very concept of the "dictatorship of the proletariat". This resentment and skepticism, prevalent among many advanced workers, with the record of Stalinism, extends to a rejection of the 4th International, on the mistaken grounds that advocacy of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, necessarily associates our movement with Stalinism and the ultimate violation of the freedom of other working class parties.

2. In the fascist and bourgeois democratic nations alike, the masses of workers are defrauded and enslaved by a dictatorship of finance capital. In Germany and Italy by Hitler and Mussolini and a handful of multi-millionaires. In America, France and England by the colossal monopolies of the 60 families, 200 families, etc. The dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e. the workers state, signifies the passage of the ownership and control of the means of production, the transference of all the instruments of suppression and force, the deliverance of the institutions of science and education, from the dictatorship of the tiny minority, the bourgeoisie, to the overwhelming majority of the people, the working class and poor farmers. A dictatorship which infringes only on the rights of the counter-revolutionary armed forces of the enemies of the masses, is in reality the most democratic state known to history. Neither the anarchist, nor the social-democratic pattern of peacefully emerging into socialism, with^{out} the forcible seizure of power by the workers and the creation of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, has stood the test of events. Wherever reformism has held power - in Germany, Austria, Belgium, Spain, England, etc., it demonstrated that without the destruction of the bourgeois state, the proletariat can never rule. There

is no substitute for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

3. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat is the indispensable transition stage between capitalism and socialism after the conquest of power by the workers and farmers. Representatives of the workers and poor farmers, from their political parties, trade unions, councils and other mass organizations will be democratically chosen to assume the duties of the organization and regulation of the productive system and government.

4. The experiences of almost two decades of Stalinism in the Soviet Union teaches us that the dictatorship of the proletariat is not immune from the degenerating influences that affect trade unions and the masses in general under capitalism. On the one hand the isolation of the Soviet Union and a utopian program of socialism in one country, and on the other, the usurpation of power by Stalin and his clique, unfolded the perversion of the workers dictatorship in Russia.

5. The vast powers vested in those revolutionary men and women whom the working masses designate and recognize as leaders necessitates that extraordinary measures be adopted as precautions against the possible abuse of power. These precautions will be both economic and political and will aim to insure the maximum democracy of the masses and their maximum involvement in the institutions of authority and administration.

6. The dictatorship of the proletariat is not a dictatorship of one party over the masses. It is the state power of the entire working class led by the revolutionary party which is comprised of the most advanced, experienced and militant fighters, the vanguard.

7. The Fourth International and the S.W.P. recognizes as sacred and inviolate the freedom of other working class parties, groups and opposition minorities to the workers press, assemblies and proportional participation in the governing bodies of the workers state. No matter how sharply the program of one group may differ with another - the workers state affords both the same opportunity and privileges of expression.

8. The promulgation of genuine democracy in the ranks of the working class commences not after the revolution but today. The SWP in its ranks, encourages and provides for the utmost freedom of discussion and controversies prior to each convention where decisions are made. At the same time it imbues each member with a feeling of tolerance and respect for the beliefs of workers in other organizations, whom we aim to win to our program by our actions in the class-struggle and by superior principles.

FOR OR AGAINST ISOLATION

By Sydney Moraff

A study of the party's position on the question of "Isolation versus Collective Security", should convince anyone who has given it even casual attention that we have taken a wrong stand on this very important question.

Our party, having taken a correct position on the Ludlow Amendment, instead of carrying it out to its logical conclusion, makes an about turn and says to the workers: "we are against Isolation". It is indisputable that economically, Isolation is utterly impossible for any capitalist nation. It does not follow, therefore, that we the Socialist Workers Party derive a political conclusion from this fact. If this were true, in equal justice, the Bolsheviks seizing power in 1917 could have been opposed on the grounds that Russia was an economically backward country and that Socialism could not triumph in one country. The Bolshevik slogan, "Bread, Peace and Land", also could have been opposed, as it was, on the basis that Russia could not, by herself, isolate herself from the rest of the world.

Such an attitude, it is agreed, is sectarian to the nth degree. And that is precisely what our party is doing today. In our agitation, we tell the American workers that we are against Isolation. We point out the interdependence of all nations. And further on, we say that Imperialism has broken down national barriers. The average worker is not at all convinced or concerned with the manner in which we present our program. The 'how's, and why's and wherefore's' of Economics concern him only in so far as we give him a positive and unequivocal answer to the key question: "Are you for or against America's entering the next war?".

The S. W. P. in attempting to show that the spokesmen for the "Isolationist" point of view represent nothing more nor less than different section of the capitalist class, is again in error. It is as though a Stalinist, in trying to convince us of his party's revolutionary position, picked out a quotation from the Daily Worker, wherein they say: "Of course, we believe in Socialism". We are not at all concerned with a superficial examination of what this, that or the other capitalist gentry say, quite demagogically, for home consumption. A critical study of their respective positions would show that overwhelmingly, we might even say, almost unanimously, the American capitalist class favors a Collective Security program.

The N.Y. Times, Herald Tribune, Sun, World Telegram favor a collective security program for American capitalism. Superficially, the Daily News would seem to favor an isolationist position, but a closer study of its editorials show the hypocrisy in its position. It is against the Ludlow Amendment and it is constantly calling for a heavy armament program. It sees Japan as America's potential enemy. At the crucial moment, we have not doubt, that it too will say: "The only way we can really beat the Japs is for America to ally its navy with that of England". The "isolationism" of the Hearst press is also a fraud. Hearst is anti-Russian and pro-German. The conduct of the Hearst press in the Spanish-American War is a good indication of his future policy.

From Landon to Roosevelt, Stimson to Hull, Dorothy Thompson to Heywood Brown, the whole gamut of American capitalist spokesmen favor Collective Security. It can be stated as a political axiom: ALL CAPITALIST NATIONS FAVOR A COLLECTIVE SECURITY PROGRAM. The differences among them lie only in which country the greatest advantage is to be gained. In the totalitarian nation, the death penalty awaits all those who agitate for Isolation. In the so-called democratic nations, suitable measures are already on the statute books now for those against Collective Security.

And to complete the list we will add those miasmatic Parties:
Communist Party, American Labor Party, and Social Democratic Federation.

The Socialist Party can be dismissed as not being worthy of discussion. The way it acted at the time of the Munich crisis is a good indication that its position is nothing but Old Guardism. As for the most rabid "isolationist" of all, Father Coughlin, the Socialist Appeal has shown the fraud and hypocrisy of his position.

The American capitalists, conscious of the fact that the American people are Isolationist in sentiment, are already oiling the propaganda machine, slowly but surely, in an attempt to make it collective security conscious. To give but two examples. In the April 17th issue of LIFE there is an article: "TWENTY-TWO YEARS AFTER --AMERICA PONDERES ITS WORLD WAR LESSONS." The next two pages contain a picture of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee listening to the viewpoint of ex-Secretary of State Stimson, with the headline: "SENATE BEGINS NEUTRALITY REVISION HEARINGS AS AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION DRIFTS AWAY FROM ISOLATIONISM." The whole article is a subtle and apparently impartial attempt to "prove" that the American people are becoming collective securityites.

Jay Franklin writes in the N.Y. Post (May 5):

"In his speech opening the World's Fair at New York City, President Roosevelt touched lightly on a theme which is expected to command more attention and emphasis from the New Dealers during the coming months. This is the idea of national unity for the American people.

"In a world which is rapidly resolving itself into chosen peoples, inspired by nationalistic cults and imperialistic ambitions, the American people cannot afford to indulge in serious domestic divisions of purpose or confusion of counsel. The danger of such a course is high-lighted by Herr Hitler's appeal to our isolationists in his radio answer to President Roosevelt's peace letter.

"This appeal seems to have been a bad blunder, for it has identified a natural political instinct among many Americans with the purposes and policies of the German Reichsfuehrer, the man whose methods are utterly condemned by our public opinion.

"The solidarity with which the spokesmen for the isolationist point of view have declined to follow the lead and have backed up the President suggests that in 1939 - as in 1917 - the Germans have failed to understand American politics. There is something mightily reassuring about this closing of our ranks when alien diplomacy sought to play upon our domestic disputes."

If any further proof were necessary that the so-called differences among the capitalists are but minor ones, the above quotation ought to dispel it.

Our party's refusal to take a positive stand on this question is based solely on the grounds that it might be accused of being in the same boat with the Pacifist and Liberals of different hues. We all know that the Pacifists of today are the war-mongers of tomorrow. For our Party to continue on its present course means that our Party will continue its sectarian approach. The approach of the second imperialist war automatically relegates every other question to a secondary position. More and more our Party will be compelled to give a positive and unequivocal answer to the question: FOR OR AGAINST ISOLATION?

There is no third choice.

LABOR PARTY RESOLUTION

by Emil Revyuk

Today the world is on the verge of a new world war in which each of the capitalist groupings of the world will attempt to destroy its rivals and guarantee its own enjoyment of the spoils of imperialist economy. The capitalists have no choice in the matter of war. Ten years of depression have proven that capitalism is a dying economy which can exist only by a process of cannibalism.

In preparation for the next war the capitalists in every country in the world are organizing the shock troops of fascism and carrying on a struggle to destroy the economic and political organizations which are the weapons of the working class. The destruction of those weapons which the working class uses in the defense of its class interests are important to the capitalists in two ways. The first object of this destruction is to immobilize the working class so that it can carry on no effective fight against war and against fascism. The second object is to rationalize the national economy and to save enough money through the lengthening of working hours and the reduction of wages and unemployment benefits so that the national economy can stand the tremendous drain of war preparations and actual conflict.

In the United States today the legal process of weakening the working class through legislation limiting the right to organize, to strike, to picket, to engage in political action, etc., is already reaching a stage as open as that which it has reached in France under the regime of Daladier.

In such a period in the development of the class struggle, labor parties are started by the trade union bureaucracy, not in opposition to the threat of war and fascism, not to find a revolutionary solution to the depression, but in order to preserve some of the privileges of the trade union officialdom and the jobs and salaries of the bureaucracy, and in order to find a more "radical" organizational form within the limitations of capitalism with which to maintain their hold upon that section of the labor movement which is no longer satisfied with the old-line parties.

In analyzing the role of the labor party, the point of departure cannot be the wishful dreams of reformists, but rather the actual character of the existing trade union movement, the probable structure, the relation of forces in the country, and even such factors as the electoral law; but above, all, the program.

The program of the labor party, which is determined in the last analysis by the ideology and goal of the trade union bureaucrats, is a reformist and social-patriotic one. The reason for this is the desire of the bureaucracy to defend what they have already won under capitalism and if possible to restore capitalism to the stage of development at which it was able to grant the privileged sections of the working class the greatest concessions. In pursuit of this chimerical dream of returning to a previous stage of capitalist development the labor party will support a war in order to destroy the rivals of its own capital-

1st class, or in order to protect their imperialist exploitation of the colonial masses. This has been the policy of the labor and social-democratic parties in the war of 1914, the policy of English Labor Party in relation to the British colonies and to the new conscription law. The program of the labor party cannot be other than reformist because its aim and goal is to improve the lot of the workingman under capitalism. It excludes the essential thought of the necessity for overthrowing the capitalist system, of the fact that not even the elementary economic demands of the masses can be won under the present system of society in decay. It denies the first principles of proletarian experience, that the state is the instrument of the ruling class, and instead bases itself upon collaboration and "loyal opposition" to the exploiters' state. Although in composition the labor party is based upon the trade unions, its program and policies stamp it as third bourgeois party.

The determining factor which prevents the labor party from becoming revolutionary and from representing the basic interests of the working class as a whole, no matter how seemingly radical its demands or how discontented the masses become, is its program. Furthermore, this is in a sense "guaranteed" by its organizational form. Labor parties are all built upon the affiliation of the existing trade unions. Any party not built upon this basis is not a labor party but an "innocent organization" of the political group which sponsors it. All activities of the labor party are carried on with the consent and through the channel of the trade-union bureaucracy. The labor party cannot, at its inception, be any more militant or progressive than the trade unions. In actual fact it is always less militant and less progressive than the trade unions because it must provide room for the most conservative section of the bureaucracy, and because in the unions themselves the rank and file, since it is in the front line of the economic struggle, is in a better position to ignore its leadership and adopt a militant line. Put in another way, union members can take part in an "outlaw" strike without breaking the organizational structure of the union, but as labor party members any independent action of the rank and file destroys the very basis of the labor party.

The actual characteristics of the labor party in the United States at the moment of its inception (and they must be enumerated before one can consider the possibilities of whether a labor party can be made acceptable to a Marxist) can best be considered by a study of the labor movement from which it will develop and the particular ideologies and groupings of the American working class. The CIO is the only national union organization which is turning toward some form of semi-independent political action, and though local manifestations of labor party sentiment may develop, it is a foregone conclusion that the CIO can absorb them when it seriously enters the field.

From an analysis of the CIO we can then assume that the labor party will be as bureaucratic in its control of policy and activities as the CIO has been in all of the organizing centers it has set up, as Lewis has been in the miners' union. We can assume that it will be as reformist and lacking in militancy as the CIO was in the "Little Steel" strike. Particularly in view of the peculiar electoral structure in the United States (national elections every second and fourth year and no "by-elections" when a cabinet is defeated), and the impossibility of electing either state or national candidates without the control of local patronage, we can expect the labor party to make deals with the old-line capitalist parties.

Every third party movement has made such deals in the national elections in order to get enough local patronage to elect state and local officers. Olson in Minnesota did it, Sinclair in California, and the LNPL has done it up to now. In this respect the labor party will be no better than any of the third parties which have existed in this country.

Another factor which would make the labor party no different from any third party would be the inclusion of membership clubs as constituent parts of the labor party. In Minnesota the Stalinists used the membership clubs to build an artificial majority by which they could dominate the labor party. When the labor party is a force the local Republican and Democratic ward-hoedlers will swarm in with their organizations in order to share the spoils. When the control of the union bureaucracy is threatened they will also organize membership clubs through the use of the union funds at their disposal and through their control of the union's seniority and unemployment lists. These devices have been used by union bureaucrats in the past - notably by the building trades unions in NYC to build a Tammany machine - and there is no reason to imagine that they will forget the success of these tactics when they become laborites.

A still greater danger from the membership clubs will be the entry of non-working class elements which will undermine even the class composition of the labor party to the point where it will be in every sense a Popular Front rather than a party based on the trade unions. In any struggle between the membership clubs and the trade unions the clubs will have the advantage of being more directly organized as political bodies (thereby more vocal and influential) and of having a better structure for the control of local patronage.

A basic Marxist tenet is that the working class draws its political conclusions primarily from the class struggle (that is from the struggle at the point of production primarily) and that it is in this struggle that the workers come to a realization of the necessity of revolutionary political action. What would be the effect of the labor party on the struggles along this front? In England the LP has consistently hampered economic struggles in the name of political expediency; in France today the reformist parties are doing the same thing; in Germany the Social-Democrats followed the same policy; in America Hoan and McLevy have done the same thing. Lewis broke the militancy of the little steel strike in an attempt to capitalize on his support of the Democratic party. Bridges on the West Coast sabotaged a marine strike in 1936 in order not to embarrass Roosevelt's campaign for re-election. The labor party, led by Lewis, Bridges, and others of their ilk, will do the same thing.

Having considered to some extent the nature of the program and activities of the labor party let us analyze the arguments for the support of such a party and for the affiliation of the Marxist party to it. Contrists, in order to explain the contradiction between their support of a labor party and their general admission that it is reformist and social-patriotic in its official ideology and activity, attempt to draw a sharp line between the bureaucracy and the rank and file. The inability of the Marxists to create a sharp cleavage between the bureaucrats and the rank and file in the trade unions is a poor omen for their success in this task in the labor party. No bureaucracy has ever existed or will ever exist without the honest ideological support of part of its rank and file, the

bribed support of another part, and the silent consent of an inactive part. These elements will exist in the labor party and, as a matter of fact, to a much greater extent. Any justification of the labor party on the basis of the argument that its control can be wrested from the bureaucracy is utopian. In the revolutionary period, and even to some extent before, the rank and file can be broken away from the labor party by a Marxist party; but this break will be hampered if the Marxist party has been a sponsor of the party from which the workers are breaking.

Another argument is that the labor party is a training ground in political thinking from which the workers can be readily brought to the Marxist program and party. What truth is there in this? In Germany prior to the third Reich membership shifts between the Social Democrats, the Communists, and the Nazis tend to prove the contrary. Workers who had been brought up in the reformist atmosphere of the SDP at moments of crisis either remained "loyal" to their leadership, became Nazis, or joined the CP. Neither their acceptance of the CP line or of the Nazi ideology gave proof of their willingness to accept the Marxist line. The more likely development after a taste of reformism has been shown by experience to be either disgust with the labor movement (hence working-class elements in the Nazis and the existence of the "radical" Nazis), or else an inability to distinguish a "left face" from a "left line" (hence membership in the CP). This will be all the more true if the revolutionary party by its advocacy of the labor party helps to miseducate the labor movement and can be pointed out by the fascists as part of the bloc of "labor fakery". In this country the fascists will probably be more successful in recruiting from the labor party than in Europe. In Germany the SDP made at least some pretensions to being a working-class party and over a long period of time had built up a sense of class solidarity in its members.

Aside from the question of the effect of the labor party upon the ideology and morale of the workers its effect upon the membership and recruiting of the Marxist party is also important. Marxist parties which have "bored from within" or liquidated into centrist or reformist parties have always lost some of their members. More important, the Marxist party as a whole has always been effected in its political thinking by the ideology of the centrists. In the case of entry into a rather small organization which compete principally on ideological grounds this organizational loss may be more than offset by the gains from the centrists. But the ideological loss cannot be offset. With the complicating factor of the financial and organizational resources of a labor party backed by the trade union bureaucracy the organizational losses and the inability to recruit of the Marxist party will be much more serious.

Another question enters in to complicate the matter of ideological differences. What position can the Marxist party take on the question of discipline of the labor party? If it stands for a disciplined labor party it will be unable to hold its own membership let alone win over the members of the labor party. If it stands against discipline in the labor party it is not for a party which will carry anything but a flexible tool in the hands of the bureaucracy. These two points are obvious. A disciplined labor party membership will carry on certain activity which in accord with the ideology of the labor party will be reformist in character. People carrying on such activity must inevitably justify it to themselves by adopting a reformist ideology. On the other hand an undisciplined labor party

means one in which the bureaucracy is undisciplined and can carry on any sort of manouvres behind closed dorrs. To be at all "practical" the Marxist must be for both a disciplined labor party and his right to break that discipline at any time.

In the formative stages the question of discipline will be a sore point principally when the labor party is still weak and makes the most flagrant deals with the capitalist parties. Later the ideological differences and the necessity of breaking discipline would take on more severe forms - votes on war appropriations, support of war, treatment of colonies, etc. If the Marxist breaks the discipline of the labor party on these points they will be open to the accusation of disloyalty to the working class levelled at them by the bureaucracy; if they obey discipline they are breaking with Marxism. In either case the problem of offering a Marxist line to the masses is an insurmountable one.

The final argument of the contrists is that where the trade unions go we must follow in order to share their experiences and to have contact with their membership. The flaw in this concept is that the contrists forget that the most important of the experiences and those which have the character of class struggles to the greatest degree are those which take place on the economic field - through the trade unions and unemployed organizations today; in the workers' councils tomorrow. Entry into a labor party and adherence to its discipline would in thousands of instances sacrifice our freedom of action and criticism in the economic organizations of the workers for a voice in the councils of the labor party. Hardly a worthwhile trade! Can the labor party be criticized from the outside and will the workers within the labor party listen to these criticisms? Certainly! It was not necessary for the Bolshoviks to endorse the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries or to enter those parties for their agitation and proposals for action to have an effect upon the members of those parties. Nor has it been suggested (except by the CP) that it is necessary to join the Democratic Party (or the Republican) in order to propagandize their members.

The Marxist policy toward either the labor party or toward any contrist grouping is based on the consideration that the Marxists must preserve their freedom of action and agitation at all costs. Aside from this our line will take effect on the workers (either in or out of the labor party) in direct proportion to its correctness and to the extent to which we are in the fighting organizations of the workers (the trade unions and unemployed organizations today). If we are solidly entrenched in these economic organizations as militants and activists the workers will respect our political opinions.

The question of our approach to the labor party has its narrower tactical side also. The fact that the Party cannot endorse or affiliate to a labor party does not mean that we cannot work within it. But it does mean that work there is directed to the interests of the Marxist party and not to that of the labor party. The interests of the workers and those of the labor party are diametrically opposed. The Marxist party may make united fronts with the labor party but the basis on which we approach it is that it is another reformist, pro-war party with a bureaucratic leadership.

A point which must be considered in the evaluation of the labor party is the degree to which the general characteristics which make support of the labor party unacceptable to Marxists are immutable and common (in their essence) to all labor parties organized during the period of capitalist decay. If the characteristics which make support inadmissible are immutable and general to all such parties then the formula which expresses those generalizations is a principle. That is what a principle is; the summation of generalizations about strategy - a summation which holds true in the face of national peculiarities or the particular moment when the phenomena arises.

The general characteristics which are always true of a labor party during the period of capitalist decay are - (1) a reformist program, (2) control by a bureaucracy, (3) social-patriotism in time of war. Furthermore, it is always impossible for the Marxists to capture the labor party and it is inadmissible for them to endorse or affiliate to it.

In summation:

(1) No party except the Marxist party can have the program which represents the needs of the working class.

(2) If that program is to take root in the masses and in the party itself the Marxist Party must preserve at all costs the greatest possible freedom of action and propaganda.

(3) In order to preserve its freedom of action and propaganda the Marxist Party cannot endorse or enter into a non-Marxist party but must rather prove to the working class that such a party is of necessity a party of betrayal.

(4) Marxists must work out the tactics of dealing with a reformist party; a tactic which will include such devices as united fronts and "boring from within".

(5) In the process of bringing the working class to the stage of revolution the influence and prestige of all parties except the Marxist one must be destroyed or made ineffectual.

(6) Non-support of labor parties is a principled question on which the Marxist party can make no compromise.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FREE SPEECH AND THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

By Roger B. Cross

The right of free speech, a phrase mouthed as it has been by generations of social reformers, political scholars, charlatans, cheap politicians, and Babbits, is today a broad, meaningless slogan, still capable of invoking a hearty response. Its exact limits are conveniently misty for those who wish to wield public opinion. The more staunch spokesmen of the Vested Interests righteously insist that an advocate of Bolshovism should not be allowed to voice his opinions upon current affairs, for he is advocating the overthrow of existing institutions, which is treason. Leo Tolstoy would probably maintain that no one should resist an invading army because that would be denying the officers who issued the command the right of free speech. Likewise, ardent, enthusiastic Marxists, in their zeal to be true to their religion will tend to confuse militant opposition to a certain group with the denial of free speech to that group. The danger of such an unclear conception of a right, which is a necessary condition to any free society, should be apparent to anyone who uses his head for something other than a resting place for the ready made opinions freely manufactured and distributed by our esteemed guardians of law and order, or those just as generously disseminated by the trusted guarantors of the purity of the Marxist-Leninist doctrines. Without a clear definition of free speech, it can be effectively suppressed while lip-service is being vociferously given it. The label of 'Bolshovik' in this country, and that of 'counter-revolutionary' in Russia are constant reminders of this insidious practice. Therefore, although a definition may be technical, it is necessary, both to maintain that right and also to insure effective action against, shall we say broadly, enemies of that right.

The right of free speech should not be conceived of in the abstract. It is based on and should be applied to actual circumstances. This must be understood before we try to demarcate its limits. Broadly, the right of free speech is the right to say what one wants to say. Immediately, the very nature of the social organism imposes a restraint upon this unlimited right. Other individuals rights are protected by actions of slander against the perpetrators of malicious untruths about them. It is unnecessary to elaborate upon the wisdom of this limitation. The important thing is to distinguish the right to express one's ideas from the active participation of an insurrectionary nature against the group in power. The individual and society must be protected against, and must resist the forceful acts of criminals, of harmful sabotage, of military attack - of this there can be no question. But suppressing these acts is an entirely different thing from denying these people the right to freely express their opinions. If a fascist leader urges his gang of thugs to destroy a picket-line, and we defend ourselves by beating him up, we are not denying his right to speak, but we are denying him the right to destroy our picket line. These are two different things. We must keep this distinction clear - that talking is different than acting; that although we may fight, and oppose, and even prevent certain actions, we should not, because of its extreme importance as one of the guarantors of a free society, ever deny any person or any group the right to utter and to publish their beliefs.

Just, as was pointed out above, it is necessary, for the well being of society as a whole, to qualify the right of free speech

it is similarly necessary to restrict actions harmful to society which may be indirectly resultant from the exercise of the right of free speech. It cannot be denied that there is a fairly close relation between words and action. It may reasonably be urged that in preventing an action, one is effectively preventing the right of free speech. This too, cannot be denied, but the important point is that it is an action which is being prevented, and only incidentally, as a by product of the prohibited action, free speech also. Perhaps this distinction is arbitrary, and metaphysically untenable. It may be true that the relationship between talking and acting is so close and so complex, that it is impossible to draw a clear line of demarcation. But, as was pointed out before, and as will be discussed more fully in a moment, the disastrous consequences of not drawing a distinction are far greater than the inconvenience and (possibly) the contradiction of acting on such a distinction.

FREE SPEECH AS A VEIL OF BOURGEOIS CLASS INTERESTS

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the right of free speech, along with the principles of self-help became popular and attained the status of inalienable rights as the result of the exigencies of a developing society of individual production for exchange. The development and freedom of the individual was at that time requisite for industrial and cultural advance. Today the industrial and social situation has changed, but not the principles, laws and customs of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The highly complex technocratic state of the 'industrial arts' is dependent for effective operation not upon one individual nor a group of individuals but upon the specialized and trained work of millions of workers in thousands of inter-related industries. Democracy in practice has been democracy for the moneyed classes. That the slogans of 'liberty, fraternity and equality' have been used by the bourgeoisie merely as euphonics for the more prosaic pursuit of maintaining their class position is familiar to all of us, and demonstrates, as Marx put it, that they are interested in Infantry, Cavalry, and Artillery, and know not care nothing for the common ideals of the French Revolution. And so, as their position becomes more insecure, the 'kept classes' increasingly limit the democratic rights of the keeping class, including the right of free speech. The consummation of this process is, of course, the complete denial of all democratic rights, via a totalitarian state. Stated quite simply, bourgeois free speech is a sham, a decoy, designed to lull people into a false sense of security, and it will be denied the moment it becomes a threat to the continued existence of the bourgeoisie.

FREE SPEECH AND THE SOCIALIST IDEAL

Socialism contemplates that type of society in which all members of humanity will be free to realize their capacities and to enjoy the fruits of civilization, that is, to live life as they see fit - or as Trotsky states it, socialism has as its end, "the liberation of mankind". An individual's freedom is to be limited only when necessary for the well-being of other individuals. In other words, we give up only those rights requisite for the smooth functioning of a complex society. It is always to be kept in mind that the maximum freedom for the individual is the goal of Socialism. This freedom would not exist without the right of the individual to express whatever thoughts he desires. Free speech is one of the ultimate objectives of a revolutionary who desires the realization of the Socialist Ideal.

Inasmuch as this ideal hasn't been realized, what is the relationship between free speech and the working class today? Like the bourgeois right of free speech, I suppose, the right of free speech is also a veil of the interests of the working class. Their basic interest is to obtain a decent living which can be secured only by revising the economic apparatus. Before even the first step can be taken toward the achievement of the socialist goal, the incubus of capitalism must be removed. The means selected must be checked by fact and depend on whether or not they aid in the attainment of the goal. The important question now arises as to whether, by granting freedom of speech to everybody, including its strongest enemies, a revolutionary party will be able to effectively advance, or whether, in order to conquer power, it may not be a better tactic to deny certain opposing groups the right of free speech. This is a question of tactics. Which method will better aid us in the fight to liberate humanity. If it could be established that the only way that socialism could successfully be brought about would be by denying opponents the right to speak, then a revolutionary party would have to follow that policy. However it would only be a last resort, for the consequences of such a policy would far more likely prove to be a boomerang.

SHOULD THE FASCISTS BE ALLOWED FREE SPEECH?

The current articles in the press of the Socialist Workers Party have unambiguously pledged that party to most violent action in smashing the fascists and in denying them the right to speak. A more thoughtful leadership would simply agitate to smash the fascists, and leave the question of their right to speak alone. The arguments used are: that the avowed object of the fascists is to smash all democratic rights. They would deny us the right to speak, put us in concentration camps, and shoot us. Consequently, why should they be allowed free speech? We should smash them.

What is the logical conclusion of this argument? Because the bourgeoisie are our class enemies, and should be fought bitterly, we should also deny the Democratic Party and the Republican Party the right of free speech. If we don't do this, we are falling into the same fatal blunder of the Communist Party, against which the Socialist Workers Party has continually polemicized, that of separating the good capitalists against the bad capitalists.

Is the denial of free speech to the fascists an asset as a means by which the Proletariat may conquer power? In the first place, as has already been pointed out, there seems to be a confusion of identifying militant action against fascist organizations with denying them the right of free speech. It is important that these two things not be confused. Protecting one's self against fascist violence is not denying them the right to speak, it is merely meeting their forceful action by actions equally forceful. Likewise through our press, our demonstrations, our militant leadership of the workers, and the espousal of their cause, our picketing, etc., we can effectively combat the fascists. That is to say that in the last analysis, the issue of Socialism versus capitalism (or fascism if you like) will be decided by whether or not the confidence of the people has been gained, and whether there has been a correct application of a correct program. In the second place, there is an obvious inconsistency in demanding democratic rights under capitalism while at the same time favoring the denial of those same democratic rights to other groups. It tends to destroy whatever hope workers have of

increasing and making more meaningful those rights. In addition it provides a very strong justification for the denial of what democratic rights society still allows the working class, especially when it is well known that the group in power prefers the fascists to the revolutionaries. Thirdly, it is not a very effective means of recruiting members to fight with a revolutionary party for a society of the free when that party already blatantly denies others that freedom. Further, the prospective members read the press, listen to the radio, attend cinemas, all controlled by the class to which a revolutionary party is opposed. Is it reasonable to expect that the bourgeoisie won't capitalize upon this inconsistency of such a party, pointing out the superiority of Democracy over the totalitarianism of Socialism and Communism? This policy only succeeds in making the revolutionary propaganda that much more difficult to put over.

What will be the effect of this rather dubious asset in the conquest of power, if power is conquered? Will it aid or hinder the possibilities of attaining the Socialist goal? First of all, the members of the revolutionary party and the workers who follow the leadership of this party will imbibe an ideology, a set attitude of a deliberate, unmerciful smashing of all opponents - which might aid in the seizure of power, but which will make easy the suppression of democracy (and free speech) within the Worker's State. More important, however, is the danger that the means may backfire and become an end in themselves (insofar as they are the direct antithesis of liberated society for which Socialism stands, and are no longer moving in that direction), as happened in Soviet Russia. For example, the concept of a single party dictatorship becoming in a relatively short time the dictatorship of one man, can scarcely be overlooked. Denying the fascists or bourgeoisie the right of free speech, the determination of who is a fascist and who is a bourgeois is left in the hands of the party or person in power. 'Fascist' (or 'bourgeois') can too easily be changed to 'fascist-minded' or 'fascist-ideology'. Hence it is very possible that any person who disagrees with the party line may find himself denied the right to speak because he has a 'fascist out-look' on things. It is so easy for democracy to be suppressed anyway that a revolutionary party cannot afford to leave such a golden opportunity for the Stalins of the future. We must preserve and cherish what few guarantees we have against the menace of a bureaucratic dictatorship. One guarantee is that of the right of every person, regardless of his persuasion to express freely his opinions.

WILL A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY BE LESS EFFECTIVE IF FASCISTS ARE ALLOWED THE RIGHT OF FREE SPEECH?

The way to fight fascism is through an intelligent, revolutionary program. The most a party can gain through the denial of free speech to the fascists is a certain militancy which can be just as easily gained by other means. The fascists can be exposed ideologically, their meetings can be picketed (the right to picket is not contradictory to the right of free speech. When one pickets a meeting these two rights are really corollaries. If one person has a right to say what he wishes, then another person has an equal right to object to what the first person says, or even to tell other people not to listen. There is no conflict as long as the second person does not physically prevent the first person from speaking). Workers' defense guards can be used for defense against the

fascists. Our slogans and language wouldn't lose any of their vigour. In short, a successful revolution depends upon the militant leadership of a revolutionary party knowing when a revolutionary crisis arises, and when to strike.

Again, the reader should be warned not to confuse military action or insurrection with the denial of free speech to the opponents. If there is a revolutionary situation, opposing forces are sharply drawn. The fight at this moment is to determine which of the two opposing groups shall control the machinery of the state. It is an armed struggle. The opposing groups are not fighting the right of the other party to speak, but they are opposing the direct actions of the other.

In conclusion, the dangers of denying the fascists the right to speak exceed by far any possible benefit attained in pursuing such a policy. We are fighting for the freedom of the workers. To preserve that freedom we must stop any possibility of that freedom being taken away from them. We must never forget the intricate interrelationship between free speech and "the liberation of mankind". One is so integral a part of the other that denying one is tantamount to a negation of the other. By denying the right of free speech to the fascists at this stage, where there isn't even the excuse of a revolutionary situation, the Socialist Workers Party is indicating to a mild degree what its possible tactics toward all of its opponents will be after the seizure of power. The chance is too great, especially when nothing is gained by following this policy.

It is all too easy for lazy and dogmatic minds to escape the problem by saying that the right of free speech is a bourgeois right, and letting it go at that. To call the criticizer of this policy a bourgeois liberal of the eighteenth century variety is also no answer. The problem is far more significant than that, and deserves the attention of every serious revolutionary.

COMRADE CROSS INVENTS A PROBLEM

By Felix Morrow

I have carefully read and re-read Comrade Cross' article, "The relationship between free speech and the proletarian revolution." I regret that it is not a fruitful contribution to analyzing the new problems concretely raised by the slogan of Workers Defense Guards. That slogan does raise important new problems. Comrade Cross has, however, simply invented a non-existent problem; he has done so, as I shall show, in order to propagate an historical interpretation of the Thermidorian reaction in Soviet Russia which is alien to the Trotskyist explanation of the degeneration of the Workers State in Russia. The free speech "problem" invented by him serves merely as a springboard for a false historical theory. Comrade Cross is within his rights in raising any and all questions during the pre-convention discussion. But the main body of his article is an argument against a straw man, for it is not true that the party "denies free speech to fascists"; while the real logical motivation of his article, --- the enunciation of an anti-Trotskyist explanation of the degeneration of the proletarian dictatorship in Russia --- is simply asserted without a word of argument or proof.

Comrade Cross writes: "The current articles in the press of the S.W.P. have unambiguously pledged that party to most violent action in smashing the fascists and in denying them the right to speak. A more thoughtful leadership would simply agitate to smash the fascists, and leave the question of their right to speak alone. The arguments used are: that the avowed object of the fascists is to smash all democratic rights. They would deny us the right to speak, put us in concentration camps and shoot us. Consequently, why should they be allowed free speech?"

Where did Comrade Cross find the Socialist Appeal saying that fascists should not be allowed to speak? He cites no issues and pages of the Appeal -- and with good reason, for he could find no such citations. Yet he blandly reports the Appeal's arguments for this non-existent position:

A very fruitful discussion can be had on the extremely delicate problems connected with calling upon the workers to fight against the fascists: when to speak purely in defensive terms, and when to go over to terms indicating an offensive against the fascists. For the moment, it is clear, political realities -- the speedy growth of the fascists, our own weakness -- dictate defensive terms. A warning must also be given to the party against a too-technical conception of the formation of Workers Defense Guards: unless the Guards are merely the first ranks, carrying with them non-party and non-guard elements in their actions, we shall find ourselves defeating the real purpose for mobilizing the guards: getting the masses to move with us. We must also convince the party membership -- and above all the youth -- that the guard is a practical, feasible and pressing task. These and other problems deserve discussion. But not this invention of Comrade Cross.

It has long been clearly thought out, in the Bolshevik movement, where we stand on the question of free speech. First of all "free speech" belongs to the category of "civil liberties". Let those who will, engage in this activity -- we certainly don't denounce the existence of the American Civil Liberties Union -- but the task of the revolutionist and of the working class and its allies is the fight for

the democratic rights of the working class.

From the concept of "civil liberties", the American Civil Liberties Union logically arrives at the point of offering its services to fascists who in isolated instances run afoul of a "progressive" mayor or police chief. What do we say about such actions of the ACLU? We say: for every fascist persecuted by the state, ten thousand workers are persecuted. We are ready to toll the ACLU of more cases of workers' rights being violated, than the ACLU can possibly handle. The ACLU knows this as well as we. But the ACLU is so anxious to prove its respectability, so fawningly worried about the good opinion of bosses and their stooges, that the ACLU takes good money and lawyers that might be used to help persecuted workers, and diverts it to the use of the fascists.

This concrete criticism of the ACLU does not involve a denial of free speech to the fascists. Moreover, is it our business to tell the capitalist state what to do about the fascists, to please give them free speech? Not at all. We give advice only to the workers, and we call upon them to fight fascism. The only point at which we will suppress the free speech of the fascists is only in the broad sense that, in carrying out the seizure of state power, we shall undoubtedly have to smash the fascist organizations and suppress the fascist cadres.

And here we come to the real intent of Cross' article. He is worried about the extent to which we shall suppress the counter-revolutionaries in the course of carrying out the actual seizure of state power. And he is worried about this, because he believes that the degeneration of the Russian Revolution flowed from such suppressions, and that our revolution will also degenerate if it engages in such suppressions. He writes that from our attitude in fighting the fascists,

"the members of the revolutionary party and the workers who follow the leadership of this party will imbibe an ideology, a set attitude of a deliberate unmerciful smashing of all opponents, which might aid in the seizure of power, but which will make easy the suppression of democracy (and free speech) within the Workers State. More important, however, is the danger that the means may backfire and become an end in themselves...as happened in Soviet Russia. For example, the concept of a single party dictatorship becoming in a relatively short time the dictatorship of one man, can scarcely be overlooked."

This false theory is stated just like that, without argument, as if it were an obvious truth. But the Fourth Internationalist movement has produced an enormous literature flowing from an entirely different thesis: that the degeneration of the Workers State in Russia flowed primarily from the isolation of the revolution, the failure to spread it to the rest of Europe, exacerbated by the primitive economic technology of Russia.

What is involved here are the very foundations of our movement: those who deduce the degeneration of the Russian Revolution from the Bolshevik methodology --and that is the tendency of Comrade Cross --invariably end by becoming opponents of the proletarian revolution. Comrade Cross is within his rights in saying anything he pleases during the course of the pre-convention discussion. But if he desires to attack the fundamental methodology of the movement, let him do so, and do with reasoned argument based on an indicated familiarity with the literature of our movement, and not as a by-the-by apropos of an article about a non-existent problem raised by the slogan of Workers Defense Guards.

THE CRISIS OF OUR SEMI-WEEKLY PAPER

by
Sherman Stanley

At the time of writing this report it is impossible to state what has been the reaction of our party and its branches to our warning signal that the Appeal is in serious danger.

However, the purpose of this article is to explain as simply and clearly as possible the reason and explanation for this crucial financial situation that has caused the absolute drainage of our reserve fund of approximately \$3200 in little less than 4 months time. We wish to make it entirely clear that the Appeal crisis cannot be basically solved by such measures as large donations or fund raising alone. The only real - that is, revolutionary solution - lies in expansion of its circulation, adding to its subscription lists and the development of a system of prompt bill payments. All of this is contingent upon a sharp rise in party morale and agitational activity.

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What Has Happened:

Around the middle of February, 1939, we had completed our \$3000 drive and had gotten off to a flying start. The branches and ranks were highly enthusiastic over our success. Careful instructions about the new paper and its upkeep had been sent out. Literature agents had replied stating that they would be able to meet our needs. Not a single branch out its bundle order, which meant that it was prepared to do double the work each week in order to dispose of the semi-weekly bundles.

It must be clearly understood that expenses had more than doubled over the weekly Appeal.

- (1) Printing costs were automatically doubled.
- (2) Engraving was more than doubled since the more popular Appeal demanded more cuts and pictures.
- (3) Mailing likewise more than doubled due to certain postal regulations which make a semi-weekly more than twice that of a weekly.
- (4) Equipment, postage and miscellaneous charges more than doubled because of our greater needs.
- (5) Certain promotional undertakings were launched (news-boy aprons, posters for headquarters and newsstands, greater free circulation, etc.). We had not done these things before.
- (6) But above all, the expense of wages (the business and editorial staff) came close to being tripled each week. The full 2-a-week staff was equivalent to 6 full-time workers, plus one assistant, ($\frac{1}{2}$ week).

During the first weeks of the 2-a-week paper, the weekly deficit ran far above \$100 due to the fact that there had as yet been no appreciable increase in the income. This had been expected and had been allowed for in our planning. The obvious reason why we had raised the \$3000 reserve fund was to help balance the budget in the first difficult weeks.

However, we had counted upon the following factors which we thought would tend to decrease the weekly deficit to a small amount (say \$50 per week) and bring income and outgo closer together.

First, a cut in expenditures which would come with stabilization and systematization of our paper. After the first month this did take place to a certain extent.

Secondly, - and far more important - we were counting upon a 50% or more increase in income. Bundle order and subscription income each month account for about 70 to 80% of the regular, total income. These two items form the life-blood of our paper. Let there be no mistake about that! We had counted upon - to put it most simply - getting a lot more subs on our lists and selling a lot more papers. This was absolutely essential for the success of our great undertaking. The failure of this to mature in reality is the basic cause of our present crisis.

During the period of our subscription drive (which was a reasonable success) there was a welcome and healthy increase in subs. In March, when we got 405 subs (an all time record!) our deficit went down considerably. However, since then, the subscription record has been disastrous. It has dropped to a weekly average of less than 40! This is below our average for the weekly Appeal. In an effort to bolster this up and pull out of the slump we have organized a one-month campaign for renewal subs. We must frankly state that the results so far have been negligible. Here lies our first serious difficulty.

Secondly, as regards bundle order payments, we must admit a complete failure along those lines. The average monthly totals are barely above those of the weekly paper. And yet we are circulating twice the number of papers each month! The rise in bundle order income has been so small that it has had no practical effect upon the deficit. Here is the essence of our problem: getting payments in full on orders taken by the branches. There is today an outstanding debt of more than \$800.

WHAT WE HAVE DONE:

Facing the fact that our reserve fund was rapidly being drained, the Appeal took drastic economy measures. The business and editorial staff was cut from the equivalent of 6½ full-time workers to 3 - a veritable WPA slash! We were able to reduce printing costs slightly and all promotional activity involving cash outlays were temporarily dropped. Expenses were reduced by over \$60.00 per week. But we cannot possibly reduce them any further without abandoning the 2-a-week paper! Every dollar - no, every cent - we now spend is an unavoidable necessity. We have cut to the very marrow of the bone!

But the sole effect of this has been only to lower the deficit and slow up the rate of approaching bankruptcy. The problem of raising the income still remains and demands rapid solution. It is a scissors problem, in which we must make both blades approach one another.

CONCLUSIONS:

Two conclusions are unavoidable:

- (1) Under the best circumstances we can expect a weekly

deficit of at least \$50.00. This assumes no change in present costs. It is therefore necessary to raise \$3000 per year for the publication of our 2-a-week paper.

(2) This minimum weekly deficit of \$50.00 will, however, be much larger unless we increase our present weekly revenue by 30 to 40% each week of the year. This can only be done by increasing the number of subs we get and by increasing bundle order revenue. All other Appeal income items (ads, donations, bound volume sales, etc.) are practically negligible.

Hence, in the fullest sense of the word, the fate of the 2-a-week Appeal rests entirely upon the efforts of the local units and the rank-and-file comrades. We in the office cannot get subs or sell Appeals in the streets. We have our hands full writing, publishing, mailing, and managing.

To summarize - the following tasks must be immediately placed before our Party and their practical solution organized:

- (1) Raising of a \$3000 Deficiency Fund each year.
- (2) Organizing of the party to raise subscription income.
- (3) A system that will permit prompt payment of branch debts on bundle orders.
- (4) An increase in sales through (a) mass street sales; (b) organization of more and better professional sales brigades; (3) increase in newsstand circulation.

Here, in brief, is the problem of the Appeal.

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P.S. We neglected to mention the sharp and alarming drop in bundle order circulation that began after one month of the semi-weekly paper. Detroit opened the way by cutting its bundle from 250 to 50 per issue. After that, in short order, came cuts from St. Paul, Cleveland, Toledo, Oakland, San Diego, Denver, Washington D.C., East Chicago, Flint, Rochester, Allentown, Reading etc., etc. There were several bundle order cancellations, besides. As a result our total bundle order circulation has dropped by over a thousand per issue below that of the weekly Appeal at its best! This is a direct reflection of our current crisis.