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The French League Faced with a Decisive Turn

For several years the most active fighting slogan of the League was "The United Front". Without a doubt this slogan was in spite of its "abstract" character for 2 or 3 years the key to the situation in Germany, then in France. The defeat of the German proletariat, the Austrian catastrophe, the growth of Fascism in France and other countries was necessary before the Comintern bureaucracy took a radical turn in the question of the united front. The examples of earlier turns have only proven to us all too well that without a critical overhauling of the old position and without a theoretical foundation for the new one a turn even formally progressive offers no guarantee for a correct policy. On the contrary it unavoidably bears within it a chain of new vacillations and mistakes. Eloquent signs of the new dangers are already there: the ultimativists become opportunists. For this reason our whole struggle transfers itself to a new higher plane.

Social democracy on its part has tread the path of the united front with the definite purpose of breaking off its revolutionary head. In the field of the united front the fight against the reformist bureaucracy must be carried on less noisily in form but more systematic and concentrated than ever.

Both bureaucracies are united by their common interest against the growing opposition which bring to expression or try to express the tasks of the hour. On the other hand both bureaucracies inimically oppose each other in a competition sharper than ever. For this reason one can differentiate in the policy of both bureaucracies: the conspiracy against all who aim to encroach on their rule, and the fear of each of them becoming a victim of the ally. The result--the readiness to break the united front at any time.

Only a short time ago the lessons of the events, Marxian analysis, the criticism of the Bolshevik-Leninists spoke for the policy of the united front. Now in France a mighty factor has added itself, the active pressure of the masses themselves. Now this factor is decisive. It expresses itself directly in the militant demonstrations on the street and indirectly in the political turn of both apparatuses. That is a tremendous step forward. But just because the step is tremendous it changes the political situation from top to bottom.

Only yesterday the slogan of the United Front was the sole monopoly of the Bolshevik-Leninists. Today this monopoly has been taken from us. The slogan has become common property. It expresses ~~itself~~ the deep, passionate, but politically very nebulous longing of the masses to oppose the forward march of reaction with the united forces of all the oppressed. The presence of this longing creates the most important condition if not for a directly revolutionary situation at least for a pre-revolutionary one. But unfortunately, the existing organizations see very ~~poorly~~ the real changes in the mood of the working masses. To have an ear for the average worker in the factory, on the street, in the street car, in the cafe, in the family in order to know how he sees the situation, what hopes he cherishes, what he believes in,--to listen attentively to such a worker,--that is the first duty of a revolutionary organization, above all in a critical period like the present when the consciousness of the masses literally changes every day. At the moment one can judge the depth and the acuteness of the turn in the consciousness of the masses above all by their sympathetic expression, especially by the events which are taking place within both parties (crystallization of a left wing within social democracy, the split of St. Denis, the turn of both bureaucracies to the united front, etc.). The character of such symptomatic expressions has certainly remained backward and is distorted, nevertheless they allowed the following conclusion: 1) the workers see not only the danger, but also the possibility of resistance; 2) they see their salvation in the united front; 3) with a half way correct policy which reinforces the confidence of the workers in themselves, the active defence can in a short time go over to a general attack.

The task of the Bolshevik-Leninists does not now consist in the repetition of abstract formulas on the united front (workers' alliances, etc.) but in the formulation of definite slogans, concrete activity and the perspective of the struggle on the basis of the policy of a mass united front. It is the task of the defense to set up soviets and to hasten their transformation into organs of the struggle for power. The task of the League according to the present situation does not diminish but on the contrary grows, but shifts to another plane and takes on another character. Not to understand that, to occupy oneself with the reflection of what has already been learned would mean to lose the game.

Of decisive significance for the fate of the League will be from now on its solution to the united front, not as an abstract slogan, but as the living reality of a man's struggle. The new situation expresses itself most clearly in the example of St. Denis. Only yesterday Doriot was the leader in the fight for the united front, which he, in his own way, made a reality in St. Denis. Tomorrow, in case of an agreement between the two bureaucracies the masses will see in Doriot an obstacle, a splitter, a saboteur of the united front. The Stalinist bureaucracy will either press St. Denis to return to the ranks of its old party (with or without Doriot)? or will smash St. Denis.

The policy of the League is naturally not exhausted with the abstract idea of the united front, for this reason--historically seen--the course of the Bolshevik-Leninists cannot be liquidated by the agreement of both bureaucracies. Should the League remain passive, however, unable to adjust itself courageously and rapidly to the new situation, the League can be for a long period cast back into the void.

One can object: the united front demands the participation of all proletarian groupings and organizations, consequently the ~~part~~ participation of St. Denis as well as that of the League. But this objection is only of formal significance. Decisive is the relation of forces. If the League had been able at the proper time to take deeper roots in the masses; if St. Denis had joined the League; if ...etc.. then there would have been a third force alongside of both bureaucracies whose participation in the united front would have been necessitated by the situation itself. In the field of the united front this third force would have become decisive. But that is not the situation. The League is organizationally weak; St. Denis and other groups are politically exceptionally weak. ~~It~~ For his reason they are all, including the League, threatened with the danger of actually having to remain outside of the united front, in spite of the fact that it is the tremendous merit of the League to have set it in motion.

If the League remains on the outside and concentrates its efforts upon criticism from without, it risks the danger of creating anger among the workers instead of attention. Let us once more recapitulate: in the unity of the ranks the masses now see their only means of salvation. Everyone who remains outside the common ranks, every one who criticizes from the side lines, the masses look upon as an obstacle. Not to take this mighty and at bottom healthy mood of the masses into consideration, to work against it, that would be the death. With the rise of a movement the task of the Marxists consists in, supported by the wave, bringing in the necessary clarity of the thought and method.

The League must take an organic place in the ranks of the united front. It is too weak to claim an independent place. That is as much to say that it must immediately take a place in one of the two parties which have negotiated the agreement. For us there is no ~~principle~~ principled difference between the two parties, or almost none. Practically, however, only the entry into the Socialdemocratic Party is possible.

What? At once we hear a hail of objections, the League should go into Leon Blum's party? It should capitulate before Reformism? But we are for a new party? We are for the 4th International? How can we join the 2nd? What will the Stalinists say? What will the workers? say? etc., etc. All of these arguments look

very mi ghty, but in reality they are superficial, for they make a leap over reality. They are based on that which would be desirable, not on that which is.

Of course, we are against Reformism--in the present situation more admantly than ever. But one must know how to come nearer the goal in the given, concrete ~~xxx~~ situation. To renounce the principles and the or to "provisionally" relinquish the struggle for them would be open ~~to~~ treason. But to bring the methods of struggle in congruence with the situation and our own forces is an elementary demand of realism. Bolshevism, represented by the Leninist leadership, did not betray and renounce itself; but in 1905-06 the Bolsheviks were forced by the pressure of the ~~xxxx~~ masses which longed for unity to coalesce themselves with the Mensheviks. This coalition led progressively to a new split. But in 1910 Lenin, un der the pressure of the sentiment in his own ranks was himself forced to undertake an attempt at unity which was in 2 years to lead to a final split. Irreconcilableness of principle has nothing in common with sectarian ossification which heedlessly passes over the changes in the situation and the mood of the masses. From the thesis that the proletarian party must be independent at all costs, our English comrades concluded that it would be impermissible to go into the IIP. Alas! they only forgot that they were far from being a party, but were only a propoganda circle, that a party does not fall from heaven, that the propoganda circle must pass thru a period of embryonic existence before it can become a party. Our English comrades (the majority) doubtlessly paid for their mistake in perspective dearly and we with them. Let us here recall the following to mind: at the time we did not reproach Walcher and Co. for entering the SAP, but, in doing so, for sheathing the banner of Marxism. We will not this.

Naturally the League cannot enter the Socialist party other than as a Bolshevik-Leninist fraction. It will maintain the Verite, which will transform itself into a fractional organ with the same rights as the "Action Socialiste", etc. Openly putting the question of admission, the League will say: "Our views have completely vindicated themselves. The united front is getting under way on the rails of the masses. We want to participate actively. The sole possibility for our organization to participate in the mass united front under the given circumstances is the entry into Socialist party. Now as before we consider it to be more necessary than ever to fight for the principles of Bolshevism, for the creation of a truly revolutionary party, of the proletarian vanguard and for the fourth International. We hope to convince the majority of the socialist as well as the communist workers of this. We will bind ourselves to pursue this task within the framework of the party, to subject ourselves to its discipline and to preserve the unity of action."

Naturally the Stalinists will fly up in a furious howl or attempt to fly up. But in the first place they themselves ~~have~~ have undertaken a sharp turn by their entry into a bloc with the "Socialfascists." Secondly, in their campaign against us they will encounter the indignation of the socialist workers. Thirdly, and that is at borrom to only important consideration --it is not a question of what the Stalinists will say, but, how can the League become a serious force in the labor movement. If it succeeds by its entry into the Socialist party in the course of a year or even in six months (all processes evolve very quickly today) in rallying to its banner several thousand workers, it will never occur to anyone remember the campaign of the Stalinists.

Several comrades, I among them, several accused the leadership of the League and the Verite of insufficiency in the struggle against the socialdemocratic leadership. At first glance it might seem as though there yawned an irreconcilable contradiction between this criticism, which I still maintain today

in its full extent, and the proposal to enter the socialdemocratic party. In reality, that is not the case. To exist as an independent organization and thereby not to demarcate oneself sharply from the socialdemocrats means to risk becoming an appendage of Socialdemocracy. To enter openly (under the given concrete conditions) the Socialdemocratic party in order to develop an inexorable struggle against the reformist leadership means to perform a revolutionary act. The critical examination of the policy of Blum and Co. must be the same in both cases.

One can make still another objection: Why begin with the socialist party? Would it not be more correct to address oneself first to the communist party? At any rate the question cannot become the object of serious differences of opinion; it is ~~necessary~~ clear that the appeal to the Stalinists can only have the character of a demonstration. Is it necessary? It is possible that it would be useful as regards a definite section of Communist workers. The declaration of the League could then have the following content: "We have fought against the theory of Socialfascism, for the united front, etc. The latest steps of the party are evidence of a certain turn in this direction. For this reason we are ready to make a loyal attempt to work within the party. Naturally, under the condition that it be possible for us to fight for our ideas on the basis of party democracy." As for the inevitable refusal the League would have to address itself to the Socialist party. If the leadership of the Socialist party refuses to admit the League (and that is very well possible) then a broad field would be opened for the fight against the leadership in the lower organs. The sympathies of the socialist workers would in this case undoubtedly be on the side of the League.

The League is faced with the most serious turn in its whole history. The success of this turn will ~~only~~ only be ensured by boldness, quickness, and unanimity. Loss of time, endless discussions and internal strife would mean destruction.

First the Central Committee, beginning with the Politburo must establish its position, naturally hand in hand with the International Secretariat. Then the members of the Politburo must on the spot prepare the opinion of the members. Because of the extraordinary significance of the question it would be necessary to summon a conference in order to pass a final resolution. In the face of this rapid course of events the conference should not convene later than the middle of July, for example on the 14th of July. Only by observing this tempo in deeds and by a manlike character of the turn itself can one firmly count on the League's not only not running along behind the events, but also on its making a great stride forward on the road to the creation of a really revolutionary party of the proletariat and the building of the fourth International.

-----Vidal.

The Tasks of ICL in the Struggle for the Fourth International and the Turn of Stalinists.

1). The pact of the four disintegrated as the result of the rightward development of its centrist participants, who without a broad perspective, without taking to heart the teachings of Marx and Lenin under the depression of the Fascist attack on the one hand and under the impression of the new centrist "mass" tendency on the otherhand removed themselves from the ~~ground~~ independent propaganda of the 4th International and created the genial theory of propaganda by silence and blocs without principle.

The pact of the four, as such, was an unavoidable stage on the road to the 4th International, a stage which doubtless will and must repeat itself on a higher level. Nevertheless one must not close ones eyes to the fact that after the decline of the pact of four the ICL is the sole organization which openly and consistently has posed the question of the new fourth, Communist International. This fact places our organization before new and important tasks and gives to it and its development increased significance.

2). Along with this fact ~~look~~ it is imperative, by virtue of the new tasks which are already posed in France and which are beginning to be posed in other countries (Switzerland, Czechoslovakia), to realize the turn in the Comintern in its whole significance and to take it into account. Our fundamental attitude to the Comintern on the one hand and to the new International on the other cannot be changed by it in the least. Our evaluation of ~~the~~ Stalinism as bureaucratic centrism enabled us to predict just such a turn, without being surprised by it. It is clear, however, that this turn, little as it can put the C.I. into a position to further the revolutionary cause in any country and under its opportunistic character can in the long have a disintegrating influence, it places the objective development of the class struggle in various countries on another basis, changes far reachingly the relation of the CI to the masses and to a certain degree betters them. The insufficient or incorrect reaction to this turn could lead to a considerable weakening of our organization.

The turn of the Stalinists to the united front, in as much as it is an adaptation to mass pressure, is not least of all a success and confirmation of the policy of our organization-- a policy which it especially pursued in the last 5 years, ~~was~~ which also enabled it not only to strengthen the old organization (the American, French, Belgian and German section) considerably and push them forward, but also to win over new important sections in the whole world (Holland, Poland, Chile etc.). To overlook these successes would be just as fatal as the illusion that we could, going on in the old way, live on the capital gained.

3). It appears that the opportunistic turn of the Stalinists in certain countries can go far beyond the united front, especially in France. At the last negotiations between the heads of the French CP and SP the question of the united party was openly and affirmatively looked forward to. The causes are clear: the turn of the CI is at least as much an expression of Russian foreign policy as the result of mass pressure. The ~~for~~ foreign policy of ~~the~~ Litvinoff has no longer a revolutionary perspective. Its sole goal in the prevention of wars by the creation of ~~illusions~~ alliances. For the sake of this goal it strives in France to keep governments a la Doumergue in power. The united front is to create a left bloc which is to counterbalance the right bloc. To demonstrate to the French bourgeoisie (and also to the English bourgeoisie which has lately been approaching this bloc) the complete sincerity of its turn, The Soviet bureaucracy permits through Thorez and Cachin not only the adaptation of the united front to the wishes of the SFIO, but it is even heading toward the liquidation of the ~~CP~~ CPF subordinating the revolutionary factor in a united party to the discipline of Leon Blum.

Regardless of whether it will go to the end, whether it will be possible to do this, whether the constant shifting among the powers will not create a new situation, the significance of our independent role, our role in the revolution increases tremendously. To be sure the broad masses will at first be gripped by the intoxication of unity. On the other hand the best Communist elements in France and still more in the other countries will be driven into our ranks, provided that we understand how to answer to the situation correctly. The moment appears to be nearing in which the theoretical liquidation of Marxism-Leninism ~~by~~ by the Stalinists seen thru and attacked by us since 1923 is clearly breaking thru in practice and thereby opening to us new great possibilities.

4). The further fate of our organization as well as the development of the 4th International depends first of all on the existence of international ~~is~~ cadres which are in a position to give answer to the questions of revolution and counterrevolution especially in its fascist and Bonapartist cloak, and the impending war, and can form the realization of the solution to these questions and practically demonstrate them. The answers

The answers to these questions can be given internationally only by a politically and organizationally independent factor. This factor in its greatest efforts to find allies can never relinquish its independence, can never cease careful selection and education of its own cadres and deep going ideological work.

5). The first goal which we set on the way to the revolution, against fascism, was the united front. Toward this goal an important step has been ~~made~~ made by the turn. Proceeding from this gain we must criticise its shortcomings and the incapability and indecision of the bureaucracy in undertaking further steps. One must apply the severest criticism to their opportunistic conceptions.

One must demand the transformation of the united front of meetings into the united front of action, the transformation of the united front of two parties into the united front of all workers organizations. One must prepare for the transformation of the united front of organizations into a Soviet movement.

6). Our taking a place in the united front is by no means isolation. Already at the base there are great possibilities for it. And even where one refuses today, by the fact that we will be the only ones who will be able to lend the united front a concrete content and a concrete goal, the sympathy for us and the demand for our inclusion will grow.

The question of practical proposals of practical slogans assume in this connection the very ~~the~~ greatest significance (militia, arming, concrete local and factory slogans). The elaboration of such measures will rub out the remains of our purely speculative and literary way of thinking and will on the other hand be the best way of gaining the confidence of the toiling masses and of breaking the influence of the bureaucracy in the united front.

7). The united front--in so far as it is at all realized and its sabotage not leading to important processes of differentiation in the reformist parties, which one must seize hold of--cannot remain in the misleading and soporific form of "meetings" for which the bureaucracy is striving. Either it will broaden out and lead to our ~~own~~ inclusion and the rupturing of the bureaucratic ~~structure~~ frame (in the struggle for these preparations left wings will originate in both parties which one must influence) or which is almost more probable one of the two bureaucracies will in many countries, as the result of the impulse of self-preservation, be driven to the disruption of the spreading united front. This unmistakably puts the question of split in the party in question on the order of the day. Systematic work on ~~the part~~ our part will put us in a position to become the magnetic pole for the left wing of both parties and to create the precondition for the foundation of a new Communist party.

The possible formation of united parties places us moreover before a completely new situation. The momentary submerging of the mass echo on one side will be accompanied on the other hand by the capturing of the best revolutionary elements. Further developments would obviously allow our organization to appear openly as the only Communist organization and allow us to play the role of the Communist party with incomparably more rapid tempo inasmuch as we would juxtapose the empty, opportunistic chatter of unity, the slogans and preparations of revolutionary action.

8). All successful work on our part has as precondition the thorough break with the methods of work of the past, the methods of work of the faction. The ideological work of the germ of the new party, of the new international must have its center of gravity in the positive guiding, constructive work, which does not shy off from concretizing. The activity of the faction limited itself consciously to propaganda, subjecting itself in

action to the discipline of the party. The work of the embryo of the new party, of the new international try on the contrary, at every opportunity to go beyond the frame of propaganda and by independent action or by activity in action, to prove the seriousness and the value of our revolutionary will, proceeding from the fact that by deed is the only way of convincing the broad masses of the correctness of our ideas. Here lies the center of gravity of our new orientation. No other organizational measure can circumvent or obviate this step.

9). Along with its independent propagnadastic and activist work all methods momentarily corresponding to the concrete situation must be made to link us with the masses, to push them forward and to form new revolutionary cadres from its ranks. This necessitates first of all:

a) systematic fractional work in the trade unions under the slogan of trade union unity. There, better than in any party, can the masses of workers be laid hold of and influenced.

Trade union unity is in many countries almost of greater practical importance than the united front of parties. The immediate economic effects of reactionary developments, the deep differentiation in the trade unions give the best variants for work.

b) systematic fractional work in all workers parties and organizations, not only by the building up of fractions/ of sympathizers there, but also by eventual sending in of really firm elements.

c) formation of cartels and blocs with organizations who are striving toward the goal of a new Communist party and International, on a clear principled basis with concrete practical aims.

d) very special care and promotion of work among the youth, by work in the existing youth organizations as well as by building and extending the existent youth organization.

e) amalgamations with such organizations on the basis of a clear Communist program.

f) In very special cases the entry of a whole section into ~~the~~ a centrist organization may prove to be useful to increase our influence and speed up the building of the 4th International (ILP-England)..The declaration of this method as a panacea is factually the declaration of bankruptcy of the policy pursued until now, the liquidation of the independent organization, the effect as well as the cause of a complete demoralization. This policy must be most sharply rejected.

The already proposed entry of the French Ligue into the SFIO to spread our influence would not only actually lead to the liquidation of our influence and to actual capitulation in France, but also to the discrediting and disintegrating of the whole ICL just at the moment when, growing steadily, it sees the very greatest perspectives and tasks before it. Thorough examination of this question, which is a matter of life and death for the whole ICL, the immediate, energetic rejection of this orientation is urgently necessary so that the ICL does not lose a second in utilizing the grandiose new possibilities, instead of falling into decline.

A proper understanding of the newly created situation and a serious execution of the above outlined measures will in conjunction with the restrengthening of the revolutionary forces in numerous countries make possible considerable advances on the road to the ~~fourth~~ fourth International ~~infactum~~ and effectual preparatory ~~measures~~ measures for the decisive conflicts between the bourgeoisie and proletariat.

--NC of the German Section.

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Summary Declaration of the CC // Circular of the CC // The true
balance sheet of the discussion (Navy) //

*** The True Balance Sheet OF THE Discussion***

In Bulletin No. 3 (no. 11), comrade Vidal suddenly draws a balance sheet of the discussion now going on. This balance sheet in reality cannot be drawn except by our National Conference. But the fact that comrade Vidal hurries to make one up beforehand, shows that, in his opinion, it is necessary to draw ~~down~~ conclusions in advance of the National Conference. The splitting act of Comrades Molinier and Frank in seizing Verite and the administration two weeks before the National Conference provide the conclusion.

Here we wish to answer the arguments which comrade Vidal opposes to our position.

- 1) We will leave aside the fact that comrade Vidal attacks comrades Naville and Bauer personally. In reality, he is making charges against the CC and the position taken by its majority. This is all the more important to emphasize, inasmuch as comrade Vidal has been for six months attacking with renewed vigor the action of the League, during which period the CC ~~was~~ has been unanimous in its actions.
- 2) According to Vidal, we have been brought to the present state of affairs because of the absence of fractional work in the SP. Because of "fear of the masses," of course. "The comrades in charge of this work have done nothing." To look at things from a formal viewpoint, the accusation falls directly on the head of Molinier, who had been designated as responsible for this work and who had in his hands all ~~the means~~ the means for success. But this is not the question. What is really involved is that two different conceptions of work in the reformist ranks are confronting each other. At that time comrade Vidal said nothing, nor did the IS, nor did anyone in the international organization. The conception defended by comrade Molinier was that it was necessary to send all the living forces of the League into the SP. Ours was that militants were not to be sent in from outside except in singular cases, but that we should ~~should~~ rely on the leftward current and on contacts gradually ~~and~~ built up inside.

Practically the question was never thoroughly aired ~~inside~~ and this is one of the reasons for the insufficiency of our work in this field. Nevertheless, our relations with the SP in general (adult and youth) have been transformed during this period and our influence can be seen from the brochure published against by Pivert. On this point, why does comrade Vidal go to such pains to separate the gains of the young Leninists and the activity of the Ligue?

Has there, however, been a year of "watchful waiting?" To say this is to ignore in a disingenuous fashion the international efforts toward the organization of the Fourth International and the international results of these efforts. Now this is the heart of the question. At the moment of proposing to practically dissolve the League inside of the SP, is there nothing to say on this subject? Come, the protagonists of entrance into the 2nd International should be frank: they consider that the negative experiment of the "bloc of four" imposes on us a radical change of tactic legitimized, so to speak, by the French situation. When one wants to kill one's dog, one says he is mad.

- 3) Have the present differences a principled nature? The CC had adopted a resolution (proposed by Molinier and unanimously adopted) according to which the differences did not have a principled nature. But for Vidal the differences "with comrade Naville" had a principled nature. Why only with comrade Naville? Comrade Naville did no more than defend the majority of the CC as Vidal well knows.

What gives to the present disagreements their principled nature, is not at all the pretended opposition of abstract propagandism to the Bolshevik spirit, but the fact that since the opening of the ~~discussion~~ discussion the partisans of entrance into the SP have not failed to declare that they would make this step despite and against everything. In order to legitimize this

position in the face of all the facts, the "returners" have accumulated a series of mutually contradictory arguments and have been intent on demoralization and defeatism. Thus their position has become false in principle. There are many nuances among them. Some of them (Frank) are politically demoralized, others discouraged, some overcome by naivete, etc. All the arguments given differ, but they all lead to a common affirmation: the League is bankrupt as an independent organization. All the subtleties do not matter: this is the basic argument of the "returners". Yes, there is a principled difference with this position! Because whoever identifies the paucity of results thus far with the organizational bankruptcy of the Fourth International, prepares for a certainty his own defeat within the Social Democracy.

4) Vidal next makes a summary of the "intransigence" of the CC which, for the purposes of his argument, he identifies with comrade Naville. Weakening of criticism of the SP, diplomatic maneuvers "around the bureaucracy of the SP" refusal to create a fraction within the SP - this is the summary.

We disagree with Vidal on these points. It is not a question of trying to avoid criticism. The entire organization has made it and will continue to make it. But we affirm that Vidal gives us nothing but a general phrase and no facts or precise criticism. He goes so far as to ~~state~~ state that we refused to create a fraction which is entirely untrue; and still more, refused ~~xxx~~ "in order not to spoil relations with the bureaucrats!"

There is in Vidal's series of charges, repeated in several communications, a wildness on this subject, without a shadow of evidence, which is not very reassuring.

To affirm that the line of the League during the past six months has been distinctly in opposition to that of the SP. After Feb. 6th in comrade Franks brochure (aside from the question of arming, which was corrected in Verite), before the SP congress and after, in the negotiations for a united front, in the policy of the united front committees, in the contacts with the SP militants and branches, we never heeded to fight to rescue from the reformist stupor those elements sympathetic to us. The proof is to be found in the increase of the sale of Verite, especially among socialist workers. Those who talk of nothing but the decline of the League should not have forgotten that the circulation of the paper has more than doubled in this period.

Vidal concludes that for six months there has been a "vacuum of intransigence, of a literary circle." This crude simplification in no way corresponds to the truth. And in any case, ~~xx~~ how can "returnists" talk of progress when they propose to enter the Second International in order to escape a "literary vacuum?" Here, then, is this "precious capital!" After you have explained to the SP workers that you have joined them because where you were it was a "literary vacuum" you will be well armed indeed to capture the party of Blum and Frossard and Pivert!

No, this characterization is just gotten up for the occasion. We entirely reject it.

5) Vidal next affirms - making his own deductions - that "comrade Naville desires at any costs to prevent revolutionary work within the SP." This is a gratuitous affirmation which hits not only comrade Naville but the entire ~~the~~ CC.

The work in the ranks of the SP must be organized, pushed, multiplied. This is the conviction of the CC. The work done up to now, even if it is modest, gives an important basis for ~~the~~ future work. Vidal ridicules this proposition in saying that comrade Naville (again!) and others (?) proposes to create a fraction within the SP only by having them keep their own "independence." "This means: to leave everything as it was before." But all this not mean very much. Neither Naville nor other comrades propose to maintain "their" independence. It is the CC which proposes to maintain the independent organizational existence of the League. Well - why does this mean leaving everything as it was before? Is it not perhaps also possible that entrance

into the social democracy will "leave everything as it was before?" The victory of our ideas within or outside the SP depends on our energy.

6) Comrade Vidal proposes already to the League a "declaration" of entrance into the SP. The role of this declaration is very modest, he says. Let us rather say that ~~the comrades who have decided to break with the League in order to enter the social democracy~~ play at modesty in order to get in; that's more correct. In effect, just as the entrance of the League can have no other real meaning than the bankruptcy of the League (which even the most confused of all "returners" sense), the greatest wisdom is to declare to Blum and Paul Faure, that "we are ready to learn through common experiences." Or even better, not to make any declaration at all!

Moreover this is just what the "returners" mean. Here in effect is what their resolution presented to the Paris branch stated: "To sum up, we must now enter the SP, each comrade individually joining that branch where he has a chance of winning a quick following; once inside we must popularize within and on a national scale our revolutionary program ~~and~~ with the perspective of becoming the leading current of the French proletariat."

Thus the entire problem of the new party is shuffled out of sight. It will be enough for these comrades to enter thus in order rapidly to undo the progress accomplished in one year.

7) Continuing his balance sheet, Vidal envisages already the question of international control on the fraction set up by the Bolshevik-Leninists within the social democracy.

It is truly remarkable that the question of international collaboration which has been practically refused to the League in recent months, now comes to the foreground. On its part, the CC is quite decided to place before the entire ICL the question under discussion here. It desires that before exercising its control, the IS particularly collaborate in the solution of the question itself. Vidal demands an example of lack of international collaboration? Here is one clear enough: for a month and a half during which we have been carrying on our discussion, the IS has not uttered the slightest expression of opinion!

Every member of the League knows by the publication of the internal bulletin the exact situation of our relations with the IS. On this point the IS has been unanimous until today.

Vidal proposes to publish the correspondence of our international organization "insofar as it concerns" the subject of our program of action. We do not fear any sort of denial and we invite the IS to publish the so-called correspondence (leaving aside, of course, the correspondence which we have published ourselves and which is all there is).

8) One more dragged in by the hair on the subject of the ILP. For the needs of his case, Vidal here attacks jointly comrades Bauer and Naville. As far comrade Naville is concerned, he was never against the participation of our English section in the I.L.P. Being ignorant of the concrete conditions in England, he reserved his opinion. Comrade Vidal knows this very well. When during a trip to England, comrade Naville had examined the situation concretely, he stated that the best road would be to work in the ILP. He did not, then, recognize the "falsity of his former position."

Vidal affirms next that it is "ridiculous" to differentiate between the principles of the ILP and the SPF. (French Socialist party). What is ridiculous is to pose the question in this way. Heraclitus said that everything is in everything. But even if we were to say that the 2nd and 3rd international, and even the 2 $\frac{1}{2}$, are full of centrist currents, this would not mean at all that we cannot choose among these diverse currents. The situation of the ILP is radically different from that of the SPF. The "returners" will not take long to find this out. What is useful in London is harmful in Paris.

But now we want to ask comrade Vidal a question: ~~what is the answer~~
What position does he lay down for our Belgian, American and Spanish comrades (to speak only of those) we must have an answer to these questions. Would there, for example, be any principled difference between the Belgian SP and the French SP? Between the American SP and the ILP?

9) There remains the question of split. This question practically rests not upon phrases and threats, but upon the attitude of the "returnists" group.

It remains for us to fight so that it does not bring too great sacrifices from the development of the proletarian vanguard toward the Fourth International of victory.

P. Naville.

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SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION

Our group has appointed me to formulate certain general conclusions which we have arrived at on the basis of the information in the internal bulletin of the League and other documents.

1) Are the divergences ones of principle or of a purely practical nature? In this general form the question is put incorrectly. The divergences have arisen over a very important question of tactics, but they have different roots in different comrades, springing from different ideological premises. Thus, for example, we maintain that the differences with Comrade Georges (to the extent that there are differences) are of a purely practical character and should be verified in the process of applying the common policy. The differences with com. P.N. are differences of principle.

2) Comrade Georges has undoubtedly presented the best paper on the question. Nine truths of his letter consist of facts throwing light on the real situation and not of general formulas which might be applied equally well to Paris & or Honolulu. Nevertheless, we feel that in comrade Georges' letter there is a grave error in evaluating the dynamics and rhythm of the development. On the basis of a very interesting analysis of the National Council of the S.F.I.O., G. shows that the majority of the Socialist Party is still reformist, that a significant leftward trend may be found only in Paris and in the Youth Socialists, and therefore it would be "premature" to enter the S.P. In answer to these claims we ~~wish to say~~ wish to say briefly:

a) Paris and the Young Socialists are today going through the stage that the provinces will pass through tomorrow. There is no need for us to guide ourselves by the situation in the provinces.

b) Paris and the Young Socialists are decisive fields for the League.

c) The party machine in the provinces (as in Paris) is the old one, i.e., reformist. Still, this machine found itself forced to break with Renaudel and accept the united front with Moscow. It is precisely the opportunist character of the S.F.I.O. apparatus which best indicates the power of the pressure from below, that is; the dynamics of the development. Comrade Georges is right when he says that entering the party six days too soon would mean mishandling the situation. We must merely add that entering six days too late would mean running it entirely.

3) How shall we determine the right moment for entry and the most reasonable form? By political reconnoitering and by actively establishing tie-ups with the Socialists, discussing political questions with them, etc.

A year has passed since we took the turn for a new party. One of the principal tasks assigned to the League was work on the inside of the S.F.I.O. What has been accomplished during the year in Paris? Nothing. The comrades in charge of this work have not set up any relationships, have made no preparations. On the contrary, they have opposed the creation of a fraction in the S.F.I.O. This fact is of major importance for an understanding of the present difficulties, including even difficulties of discussion. These same comrades who, during the

past year, have opposed working inside the S.F.I.O. are now opposed to our entering that body. In both cases they repeat the same general talk about "independence". For them the fundamental thing seems to be to remain independent of the working class, the masses, the changes in the state of affairs, of the whole reality. These comrades substitute a monologue for actual political work among the masses. Their politics follows the line of least resistance; it is politics of self-complacency disguised by formulas of imaginary intransigence.

We must demand that these comrades give an accounting of the work they were entrusted with doing in the S.F.I.O. and the results of this work. The League and these comrades themselves need such a report, and not general slogans! The report will show that these comrades are afraid of the masses, are afraid of the difficulties connected with working among the masses, that they want to preserve their "purity" by a kind of self-isolation. That is why they remain unchanged through all the changes in the political situation. The psychology of passive waiting which existed before the ~~proposal~~ proposal of entry into the S.F.I.O. was a powerful brake on the development of the League, especially during the past year. This psychology is now in glaring contradiction to the whole situation in this country and in the working class.

4) The only differences which are serious, important and fruitful are those which arise from the pressure of major events and changes in the state of mind of the masses. The same traits of abstract propagandism which were to a certain extent inevitable in the initial period of the League's development (before the German catastrophe), and which have more and more checked the work during these last years, have now definitely taken on a reactionary character and in the present turmoil of events threaten to lead the League to total ruin. It is particularly now that we must put up a pitiless fight against abstract, passive propagandism, against a policy of waiting. Along this line the differences are certainly differences of principle, although the exponents of the conservative tendency have not yet drawn the necessary ideological conclusions from their position.

5) Comrades P.N., Bauer, and certain others who think as they do, assume the cloak of "ideological intransigence". However in actuality, in the present policy, things are quite different. Let us consider the stand taken by "Verite" after February 6th. During the entire time "Verite" adopted itself politically to the SFIO. In his letter P.N. says: "Several documents sent to the C.C. indicate that for the past six months we have been following a semi-socialist line.. But here is the conclusion: since you have "adapted" yourselves so well to the SFIO, why not enter that group?"

Remarkable logic!

This declaration is the crux of P.N.'s letter. It throws a brilliant light on the real progress of the preparation of the divergences and at the same time reveals the non-dialectical, abstract, journalistic thinking of Comrade P.N. Yes; in a whole series of letters and conversations we did accuse Comrade P.N. and others of obscuring (toning down, blurring) the differences with the SFIO, of not openly stating the fundamental questions of the revolutionary struggle, of risking the transformation of the League into a left wing of the SFIO. We stand by this criticism without modification, even today. Members who insist upon formal independence are always inclined to capitulate before the reality when it treads upon their toes. The adoption of the League to the SFIO has found symbolic expression in very recent happenings: in reply to the proposal that we enter the SFIO, the political bureau decided to manage by obtaining the floor for a representative of the League at the National Council of the SFIO!!! Here again they displayed their penchant for purely diplomatic negotiations with the heads of the SFIO, without any serious attempt to penetrate the mass base of the organization. (We are not speaking of the Young Socialists, among them real work has been done). We must carefully consider what the intransigence of Comrade P.N. and the others has consisted of during the past six months:

- a) external weakening of criticism of the SFIO.
- b) diplomatic maneuvers with the SFIO bureaucrats.
- c) refusal to create a fraction inside the SFIO

(because they did not want to spoil their relations with the bureaucrats?)

There, you have the real picture of the relations

of the "intransigents" with the SFIO during the past six months, so crowded with events. No general slogan, no gesture can change the political meaning of this picture which demonstrates the emptiness of an intransigence that is factional, or, worse still, literary. Until comrade F.N. and the others arrive at an understanding of their own history during the last six months, they will not move one step forward in their development.

6) When we analyzed the rotten policy of the Anglo-Russian Committee, the Stalinists said: "You are opposed to working in the unions!" We replied: "We are opposed to adventurous maneuvering with the leaderships, but in favor of working with the memberships." There, it is true, we were concerned with unions. But we can give a similar illustration with regard to parties. We denounced Walcher for his political complicity in the Tranmael case. At the same time we say: "If any revolutionary group can ~~enter~~ enter the N.A.P. for revolutionary work among the masses, it is the duty of that group to do so, and they will have our support."

We have criticized passive adaptation to the official policy of the SFIO and at the same time we have upheld active participation in the internal life of that body, the building of an internal fraction. In principle that does not differ at all from entry into the SFIO. Comrade FN sees a contradiction here. Isn't that absurd? Under the influence of that false position he has taken, the perspectives and retrospect are distorted for him, just as they always are in such cases.

7) It would of course be incorrect to attribute the "soft" diplomatic line of "Verite" during the last six months of the year to an error on the part of a few comrades. The truth of the matter is that the League has suddenly come under the great pressure of events. The same causes which forced the SFIO bureaucracy and the Stalinists to accept the slogan of the united front have suggested to the leadership of the League, consciously or unconsciously, the fear that they would find themselves left quite outside of things, and since there was the chance of getting the floor and selling their publications through the SFIO, there arose the hope of managing the latter, of adopting themselves to that body. The League's place in the workingclass movement was more clearly and seriously decided by this policy of "Verite" than by all the talk of imaginary intransigence. The unfortunate thing is that the leadership yielded unconsciously to the events and only gropingly adapted itself to the new situation. This experience has clearly and forcefully shown up the fiction of organizational independence and verbal intransigence in the face of great historic developments, when the masses begin stirring.

8) When we criticized comrade P.N. and others for their adaptation to the SFIO, we did not at all consider that we were confronted with irreconcilable contradictions threatening a split. We do not think so now, either. But the situation becomes tremendously more dangerous inasmuch as comrade P.N., growing convinced of the total failure of passive adaptation from without, wishes at all costs to prevent revolutionary work from within. The progress of events now permits no delay to any of us, and particularly not to comrade PN. We must boldly and resolutely judge what our previous course was and start moving on the new road.

9) It is true that now comrade P.N. and others generously offer to create a fraction inside the SFIO, while preserving their own "independence". That means letting everything go on as before. It means continuing to swim on the sand instead of venturing into the water. There is only one way to save the "intransigents" for the revolutionary movement: force them to get into the water up to their necks.

10) Is there not a danger that the comrades adapting themselves from the outside to the SFIO policy will completely lose their political identity if they enter the SFIO? The question cannot be put in that general form. A certain differentiation will inevitably be produced; a certain position of the comrades may abandon our ideas. The experience of all countries shows that the ones who are most prone to lose their identity in the opportunist milieu are yesterday's ultimacists. But it would be absolutely incorrect to extend this fear to the League in its entirety or even to all our present opponents in the League.

To our mind, the very possibility of bringing up the question of entry into the SFIO springs from the fact that in

the body of the League we have serious cadres. If we delay too long in applying the yeast to the dough, it will go sour on us and be wasted. That is the danger threatening the League. Look at the Bordiguists with their famous "Report" which should really be named the "Zero-Report".

11) Certain comrades are inclined to shift the center of gravity to the question of the "declaration". Some of them have in mind a declaration that would make entry into the SFIO impossible. Others are inclined to see in the declaration a talisman that will protect them from all dangers. In reality, the role of the declaration is very modest. It must show:

- a) that we are not giving up our ideas,
- b) that we are ready to learn from joint activity.
- c) that we will fight for our ideas on the basis of democracy of the party.
- d) that we will maintain discipline.

The declaration must be drawn up so as to win the confidence of Socialist workers and make it very difficult for the reactionary SFIO bureaucracy to decide on non-admission of the League.

12) Aside from retaining our ideology, the only way we can ~~keep~~ keep the Bolshevik-Leninists from dissolution once they are inside the SFIO is by means of great cohesion, creation of a fractional body, adaptation to new working conditions and international control. We must direct all our efforts to that end.

13) International control must be understood in its broad sense, without limiting it to the International Secretariat. The exchange of ~~publications~~ publications and information, international discussion should not be weakened, but developed and reinforced. It is true that Comrade P.N. presents the matter as if the international organization had prevented (!) the League from working, particularly during the elaboration of the program of action. Comrade P.N. does not and cannot bring forth the slightest proof of his assertion. We propose to Comrade P.N. that he publish (only in the International Bulletin if need be) all the correspondence devoted to the elaboration of the program of action as well as the general policy of the League during the last six months. A piece of work of this kind done in good faith would show the enormous importance of our international organization as such, and would incidentally refute the definitely incorrect and prejudiced assertions of Comrade P.N.

14) The lack of a real ideological position on the part of Comrades Bauer and P.N. appears most plainly on the question of the I.L.P. Bauer was in favor of the entry of the British section into the ILP from its beginning. P.N. was against this, but after his trip to England, having become aware of the actual situation at first-hand, he recognized the incorrectness of his original position. To set up an ideological difference between the ILP and the SFIO, especially the latter's Parisian organization and the Young Socialists, is simply ridiculous. Neither PN nor Bauer has made any attempt to explain the difference in their ideological stand with regard to England and France.

However, the experience of the British section, on a small scale, is highly instructive. The "majority", maintaining its "organizational autonomy", actually finds itself in a state of constant internal ~~strife~~ strife and division. Certain leaders have left the organization altogether. On the other hand, the "minority", which entered the ILP, has maintained its internal solidarity, its connection with the international Bolshevik-Leninists, made large use of the publications of the League in America and has had a series of successes inside the ILP. We must learn from the example.

15) Certain comrades threaten a split in case the new line is adopted. That shows their lack of seriousness with regard to the things that unite us, the ideas and tactics we have in common, elaborated in the course of eleven years of a great collective work on an international scale. We must of course do everything possible to avoid a split, even the withdrawal of a single group. Every comrade is valuable to us, for he can and should become an officer in the proletarian army. But it would be ridiculous and unworthy of us to be afraid of threats of withdrawal. We have seen withdrawals of this kind before and we know how they have ended up. Dear as our comrades are to us, the development of the organization is unmeasurably dearer to us. There is no room for hesitation!

STATEMENT BY WEBER, C. L. A.

Dear Comrades,

I have followed with close attention the events transpiring in France particularly since the February days and the unfolding of the general economic crisis. The growing threat to the French proletariat of the bid for power of fascist reaction containing within it at this time consequences of such moment to the workers of the entire world, that one must of necessity rivet one's eyes on the course of events, and give the best of one's judgment in the matter of policies proposed by the vanguard for achieving the defeat of reaction and the march to power of the proletariat.

The unprecedented nature of the present situation demands that we give ourselves a clear account first as to its nature, secondly as to the time elements involved, thirdly the state of mind and the direction of motion of the masses, fourthly our own forces and their roots in the masses, and finally the conclusions that must flow of necessity from such an analysis as to a course of action.

Looking back over the defeats of the world proletariat since the death of Lenin, one may characterize the past decade as one of recession of the revolutionary wave and of the victory of reaction. Over the entire world, but more particularly in Europe, omitting the Soviet Union, there spreads the cancer of decay, fascism, from one country to the other. During the past few years, it is reactionary capitalism that has been shown "how it is done" in the establishing of one bloody dictatorship after the other. The French proletariat, threatened next, cannot look to the workers of the neighboring countries--Germany, Poland, Italy, etc.--to aid them at least by neutralizing the efforts of their bourgeois governments to help the French bourgeoisie against its working class. Nor need the French workers expect any aid from the Soviet Union--the German events tested that possibility once for all. And the French capitalists know this as well as the workers,--as the Germans did not. We speak here of course of the period during which the political crisis will be resolved and the problem of power settled.

We cannot look for precedents and immediate guidance, obviously, to the Russian Revolution. There the entire economic system, and with it the state superstructure, had suffered complete collapse. And this collapse had occurred after defeat in war when the masses were fully armed. It was this fact of the utterly attenuated power of the ruling class and the existence of a relatively weak capitalist class that permitted history to present, thru the Bolshevik Party, a "classic" instance of a small independent Marxian Party gaining the hegemony of the workers and toilers in the Soviets. But then too Lenin's Party had the experience and the prestige of a whole generation of struggle behind it and had deep roots among the masses in consequence. It is idle to specialize as to the effect on Leninist strategy and tactics had some Kerensky or other succeeded in establishing a powerful Bonapartist regime in Russia. And yet we know that Lenin, with his face always turned to reality and with no classic scheme of first establishing and building in linear or straight-line fashion the pure Marxian Party, strongly urged the British C.P. to join the Labor Party when he felt that the masses were in motion and leadership could be won away from the reformists by a properly conducted struggle from within the ranks.

The Doumergue government is a pre-fascist Bonapartist government. Having obtained power by a species of coup d'etat and an outright subjecting of the bourgeois parliamentary system to its own purposes, it conducts itself with more assurance, more brutality than the Bruening regime in Germany ever dared. We note, for example, how the Doumergue government disposed of half the budget for the armed forces "without authority" and without any attempt at disguise. This military-police government of Doumergue-Chiappe-Tardieu is more completely conscious not merely of its aims but of the methods to be adopted to achieve these aims than were the similar Italian and German regimes. In the light of "modern instances" it will require far less time to come to the point of opening up its complete and undisguised attack on the proletariat than elsewhere. Tardieu has already indicated

his readiness for "the day" by his attempt to precipitate a cabinet crisis which would throw the issue into the streets, as Herriot publicly stated when he explained why he dared not quit the cabinet. In short, we must realize with the utmost ~~clear~~ clarity that the time is short in France, that in the nature of the case with the previous examples as models, the stages of struggle will be foreshortened in France. This is just as true of the workingclass movement, the masses realizing instinctively that their forces also must be set more rapidly in motion if they are to defend themselves. The lessons of Germany and Austria made it possible to achieve the United Front of the SD and the CP in a comparatively brief period after the threat of fascism appeared. And in itself this unites more closely the forces of reaction and quickens the pace of the struggle. Even the blunders of the Stalinists are confined to briefer periods: note for example the repetition of the period of the "Red Referendum" in the February days. The time element thus takes on a character of decisive importance in all our calculations so that a strategy and tactics that might appear as correct in an epoch during which events move slowly and normally, become inapplicable and lose contact with reality in a period of rapid tempo of development. Time is of the very essence of things so that we are required to accomplish tasks for which we had formerly given ourselves ample perspective in the briefest possible time. And in no sense is the time element under our control, we are forced to adapt ourselves to events as rapidly as they shape themselves. In a pre-revolutionary (or counter-revolutionary!) period all experience teaches us the need for rapid transformation of outlook and policies, to keep pace with the speed of the dialectic movement of events.

It is the quickened development of the masses that has made it mandatory on all parties, from the extreme right to the extreme left, to define in new terms their aims and policies. One of the inevitable signs of a pre-revolutionary period is the splitting of parties over the sharpening issues involved in a political crisis. By this process the two major camps begin to separate themselves out for a decisive battle. Confronted by the growing crystallization in society of the dual power ordinarily dormant therein, the leaders are forced more and more to show their true colors, be it at one stage or the other of the struggle; they are forced to take decisive stands on one side of the barricades or the other. That is what is taking place now and what will continue to take place as the crisis moves towards a culminating. As the masses move they tend to throw off and sweep aside all hindrances. The direction of motion depends not only on events but on the leadership given by the workingclass parties that are rooted in the masses, to whom the workers have become accustomed to look for guidance. The shift to the left and the transfer of forces that goes on rapidly then becomes a matter of presenting correct policies from within the ranks of the workers' organizations.

Since our complete break with Stalinism we International Communists have had as our perspective the creation of new revolutionary parties in all countries, the parties of the Fourth International. We have never been under any illusions that we ourselves constituted these parties. On the contrary, it has been our effort everywhere to gather together the various groups and tendencies repelled by the 2nd and 3rd Internationals and moving in the revolutionary direction. We have attempted to guide these groups towards us. We have looked for recruits for the new party to the Centrists splittoff from the SD, to the left elements ~~in~~ inside the SD, to those in the Stalinist ranks becoming increasingly disgusted with the criminal policies of Stalinism. Our recruiting power, recognized, depended on our independent activities in the class struggle, on our contacts in the unions, on our mass work. Our influence has in one sense been quite incommensurate with the smallness of our forces. But this lack of forces has meant a slowness in making headway, particularly in rooting ourselves in workingclass organizations. The meagre cadres at our disposal now with their limited experience cannot possibly expect to achieve guidance of huge masses of workers and toilers in a brief space of time. If we have stressed the importance of the independent revolutionary party, its decisive role in a revolutionary crisis, that does not make of our small groups this party. True we have the proper policies, we are at present the only Marxian vanguard, --but we would be blind to consider that the masses will turn to us for leadership in our present form of organization. What is our recruiting power for the next year

or so, assuming that we have even that much time? We are still unrooted in the masses and play very little of an independent role. Even where workers, often enough, agree with our point of view, they feel that we have remained a sect, that they had better remain to fight for correct policies in the larger, more "successful" parties. No, we must set down impersonally and clear-sightedly that we are not prepared to play the role of a guiding force in the immediate future from within the confines of our present status. But then that means, in view of the decisive events that stand on the order of the day in France that we are in mortal danger of being completely isolated from the revolutionary masses, that we may degenerate into a sectarian group of "purists", divorced completely from action and reality. And the SD and CP bureaucracies will make, are making, every effort to isolate us from the arena of action. It must be our aim to prevent them from succeeding--and thereby preparing for the betrayal of the French workers.

The move, due to the pressure of masses of workers in fact, for organic unity of the two major parties, in that case becomes for us the crucial test as to whether we shall take the road of action or remain a sect. From the Verite we gather that at United Front meetings the idea of organic unity has met with a tremendous response. Shall we ignore that fact? We criticize the Stalinists quite correctly for their trend towards capitulation in this move, we might even show that the entire history of Stalinism leads inevitably to such capitulation. But it would be seeing the trees and losing sight of the woods indeed to characterize the pressure of the masses for organic unity in the present desperate situation as reactionary because the Stalinists are reactionary. What about the SD workers? Would this not be a step forward for them,--to welcome the "left" wing into their ranks? We characterize both these parties as Centrist parties at the present time. It is obvious that the two bureaucracies of these Centrist parties, wishing to keep their bureaucratic control and to derail the working class in its leftward trend towards the road to power, are placing themselves at the head of a movement in order to betray it. But what kind of a platform, what policies will be put forth as the basis for unity? Already there are clear signs that the attempt will be made to confine the party within the framework of bourgeois democracy. But a new, even bureaucratic, platform, will require the approval of the workers of both parties, will not only permit but demand discussion. Can there be any doubt that the real revolutionary workers of both present parties will present for discussion demands of their own? In short, we have here in truth the making of a new party, in which at the start, owing to the necessity of a ratifying convention, all points of view will have to be permitted expression. It may even be that the Stalinists as is their wont, will attempt under the circumstances to "put over" some of the ideas of the Bolshevik-Leninists, (We do not own or control these ideas, Comrades!) of course, in perverted form. And we must not permit them to be perverted! If we do not endorse and demand admission to such a party, then we permit the two bureaucracies to close the ranks in short order and to cut short the time of open and free discussion.

It is of course possible that we may not be admitted in any case assuming that the two parties actually carry thru their merger. Certainly it is not possible for us to come in as an independent negotiating force. To play any part in the discussion we must enter immediately into one or the other of the two major forces. Which one is of no consequence. The SD would offer less resistance and more possibility of success. Do we then lose our independent role? We can only enter provided we are permitted to join as an independent fraction, with our own press, given the right within the discipline of the SD to agitate for our own point of view.

It is the aim of the fascist forces to first ~~and~~ of all isolate and crush the real Marxians so that they cannot influence the masses. That is the meaning of the attack on Comrade Trotsky for one thing. For the Internationalists to remain isolated from the masses, without strong support in the workingclass organizations, means to facilitate this task of reaction. Under the present circumstances, even from this point of view, which is not presented as being at all decisive, it is necessary to protect the vanguard by enlisting the support of the organizations of the workingclass. The defense of the vanguard and of Comrade Trotsky is of vital importance to the French proletariat despite

the fact that this proletariat is not aware of the fact in the sense that we ~~are~~ Marxians are. That defense has been up to now relatively weak in France as elsewhere. But in the shortest space of time that could become a central issue of the class struggle. In France, particularly with the formation of a new party. It is no accident that this in itself would indicate the progressive character of the move for organic unity. The fascist forces will give us little time. It is necessary to act firmly and unanimously and to make our discussions as ~~be~~ brief as possible in view of the immediacy of the threat.

Assuming that Thorez and Blum can reach an agreement, what will be the aspect of things tomorrow? To ignore the moods of the masses would be absolutely fatal. Can there be any doubt that such a party would have enormous recruiting power, attracting all those revolutionary elements who take this unity to mean the preparation for real struggle, and as the guarantee of success in the struggle? Any force then which remains outside to act as critic will be viewed as unwilling to enter into the fight and will be pushed aside, correct policy or no correct policy. From our point of view it would seem that there is no other choice,-- that we must choose the progressive road of organic unity, the road of participation in the mass struggle which will help to resolve any contradictions.

There remains the question of the international effect of this movement in France. Certainly the situation is not the same in those countries that have not yet witnessed the triumph of fascism. Nor is there for this very reason the urge of the masses pushing towards such a conclusion. Our forces elsewhere remain for the moment "intact" but we do not ignore the implications for the future. It can be reckoned however that the results of the French experience will open up new variants. Given a correct orientation of the LO and a correct participation in the revolutionary struggle against fascism, there can be no doubt of the enhancement of the prestige of the LO everywhere, of the strengthening of its recruiting power. It does not follow that we must pursue the same tactics now or necessarily orient our sections everywhere for the same policy. Yet such a merger carried out in France creates a predisposition in favor of the same kind of merger. Given the development of the same situation--and we see this on the way in America too,--here, we are prepared to pursue the same policy that we urge on our French comrades. The events in France will undoubtedly, however, bring about an entire change of situation. At present the interests of the French proletariat, of the French Revolution make mandatory that we hail the move for organic unity and put ourselves at its service. Our interests can be none other than those of the French Revolution.

--New York, --Aug. 20, 1934

MOTIONS OF FRANCE BY ABERN, C.L.A.

- 1) To accept the statement of comrade Weber as the basis of our attitude on the situation in France, and to enter his statement into the minutes} on the basis thereof.
- 2) To endorse the proposal that the Communist League of France endeavor to enter as a bloc into the Socialist Party of France
- 3) The attempts to enter the S.P. of France be conditioned on:
 - a) The right to join as an independent faction.
 - b) The right of maintaining of our own press, just as is permitted other groups in the French Socialist Party.
 - c) The right, within the discipline of the French S.P., to propound the viewpoint of the Bolshevick-Leninists; for the maintenance of workers democracy.
- 4) To demand the admittance of the Communist League of France into the united front movement now espoused by the the Communist and Socialist Parties of France.
- 5) Should a merger or organic unity between the Stalinist and Socialist Parties of France emerge as a result of the development of the present united front, it is comrade Swabek's conception (cf. his statement) that it must be the deliberate object of the French Left Opposition to engineer a split in this merged party in order thereby to achieve a new Communist Party

of France. This conception of the role of the Communist League of France, in case it should gain admittance into the French Socialist Party as a bloc, is wholly false. He thereby conceives our object in endeavoring to join the French S.P. in the narrowest sense of a maneuver and fails to realize properly the gigantic objective factors which impel a move in this direction, and further fails to realize the revolutionary potentialities for the Left Opposition in the event of such an organic unity.

It is wrong to regard the united front between the Socialist and Communist Parties of France, even on its present basis, merely as a "bureaucratic combination between two centrist parties", as Swabek's statement says.

Our object, if an organic unity is achieved, must not be merely to drive for a split, assuming thereby beforehand as a defeatist or minority viewpoint but on the contrary shall aim more intensively to win the ranks of the merged party to the Bolshevik-Leninist program; that is, to strive, for the support of the majority of the members. In a situation of dynamic flux of the class struggle, mass transformations of parties, as well as splits, may be achieved, and that should be our aim.

The methods for the formation of new Communist Parties and a Fourth International cannot be determined a priori in its organizational phases. Objective or environmental factors (status of the labor movement generally and the position of capitalism economically and politically) and the subjective factors (particularly the relation of forces and influences of the Social Democracy, Stalinism, the other Centrist groupings and the International-Communists internationally and in the respective countries) will determine the means taken organizationally in their formation. It cannot be settled in advance, if, for ~~ix~~ instance in France, an organic unity of the political parties should take place because of mass pressure; whether the formation of the new Communist Party and hence a section of the Fourth International will take place through the medium of a split, deliberately aimed-for by us or otherwise, or through the medium of the transformation of such a party into the new Communist Party (that is, its ranks won over to the views of the Bolshevik-Leninists). The latter is preferable and to be sought, thereby compelling the subsequent split to be the act of the seceding Right Wing minority. However, this is not the actual question of the day; such a problem can be left open.

It must be recognized that, despite Stalinism and the SP, the ~~achievement~~ achievement of organic unity, after a period of united front actions, between the SP and CP, even if temporarily excluding the Bolshevik-Leninists, would be a progressive step at this state, representing the healthy will of the masses for revolutionary unity.

While comrade Swabek at this time only proposes a discussion for the entry en bloc of the Spartacus Youth League into the Young Peoples Socialist League of the United States, and therefore there is time afforded for examination of the merits of this proposal, it is our ~~x~~ opinion that such a proposal at this time or in the immediate future is only a mechanical transplantation of the situation in France to the United States and is not well founded.

RESOLUTION ON THE FRENCH QUESTION
BY HUGO OEHLER, C. L. A.

The thesis of comrade Trotsky and others, for the French League to enter the SFIO, the French section of the Second International, is false, is detrimental to the interest of the French ~~revolution~~ revolution, and to the International Communist League.

In essence this thesis means that we consider the road to the Fourth International, and the road to power to first lead through the Second International. The entrance of the French section into the Second International lays the basis for the entrance of the other sections and the dissolution of the International Communist League --not into Marxian parties of the Fourth International, but into either the Second International or parties with the program of 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ International.

The immediate danger of Fascism in France and the absence of a revolutionary party calls for the continuation and strengthening of our INDEPENDENT embryo party in France and internationally.

The short duration between now and the decisive battle with Fascism all the more calls for the Marxian vanguard to guard close its INDEPENDENT role because no revolutionary party exists.

To claim that the entrance into the Socialist Party of France is synonymous in overcoming isolation from the masses is false to the core. There is more than one road that leads to the masses, and the most dangerous road and the road that seldom leads to the masses is for the Marxists to enter the party of reformism. It is not true that all the avenues in the united front has been exhausted. Even with the present united front from the top between the leaders of the Second and Third International in France we have had gains. If this unity reaches the stage of organic unity this all the more calls for our independent role in the class struggle. The maneuver to overcome isolation by entrance of Marxists into reformist parties and through the united steps are steps. But there is a more fundamental road away from isolation through proper internal organizational steps to combined elementary propaganda with our theoretical base, to combined faction work in the reformist organization with our independent role and organization and to subsidize the French section.

No matter how capable we are in maneuvering our forces in the Socialist party, even keeping our faction intact and issuing our own material the fact remains that when the world movement hears that the former Left Opposition have joined the Second International in France, and the policy is being carried out in other places as well, this will strengthen social reformism. Our own forces and our close sympathizers "may stay with us" but the layers of workers will consider the SP a party of revolution. The split of the SP of France is inevitable. We will be in a more strategical position if we have our organization outside as an independent force ready to unite with the split group where we have a faction working inside.

Our NEC not only endorses the false step but has already through Swabeck and Shachtman advocated as a forerunner that the Young Spartacus send its whole New York section into the YPSL. This means dissolving the Y.S. Repercussions from the French turn have not yet reached their depth in France, in the United States, or in the world organization.

For the independence of the International Communist League as a world embryo party, until they dissolve into Marxian parties of the Fourth International.

--Sept 16, 1934

"Not a soulful optimism, but intolerance, vigilance, revolutionary distrust, and the struggle for every hand's breadth of independence--these are the basic qualities of Bolshevism." (Trotsky, Strategy of the World Revolution)

The orientation for entering the French S.P. proposed by some of our French comrades is based on the twofold proposition 1) that we are a small, numerically insignificant force in the French working class movement and 2) that the bureaucratic combination masquerading as a united front, between S.P. and C.P. leaderships which is heading toward organic unity will isolate us completely from the masses and thereby render impossible our influencing the course of events in France. Hence the solution is offered us--before this organic unity is achieved--of entering the French SP--(since it is a foregone conclusion that entry into the CP, because of its inner regime, is impossible). The argument presented is as follows: By liquidating our independence as an organization and entering the SP as a faction we will be enabled to participate in the united front and influence it--in one degree or another--because we will be part and parcel of a majority party within the already established united front. We are to enter openly as a faction demanding the rights of a faction within Social-Democracy--the right to our own point of view, press, etc. Should the leadership of the French SP reject us on that basis--then we shall resort to the tactic of applying to the locals--or what is tantamount to the same thing--organic unity from below. Now there are some comrades--particularly our NC majority who declare that entry into the SFIO is a question separate and apart from organic unity. In fact they condemn organic as reactionary and hail entry into the SFIO. That the one cannot be divorced from the other is at least seen by our European sections--those for the entry or against. It is also made clear in the statement of the IS where it says: "Comrade G. (Gourov unquestionably) along with others thinks that the time has come for the French organization to take its place in one of the two camps of the united front, working for a probable organic unity." Should organic unity between the two major centrist parties of France come to be--it would unquestionably clear the atmosphere for the revolutionary wing represented by the French Communist Ligue. At such a moment "every hand's breadth of independence" will be as oxygen to a person suffering from asphyxiation.

The comrades arguing for the orientation bring 'practical' reasons, circumstances of events, peculiar national conditions--everything but a theoretical premise for their orientation. "When they do resort to theoretics, it is to convince one by the method of extraneous analogy. It is argued: For a party the orientation would be incorrect. (Vidal) But then we are not a party. If we are not a party then why the analogies to parties who in the past (allegedly) did what we are asked to do? These analogies might merit some attention if, were we a party, such an orientation were offered us. Then, for lack of sound Marxism, we would substitute the method of legal precedence. All the theoretics boil down to the formula: Independent revolutionary parties always maintain their political and organizational independence from all other parties. But for revolutionary organizations--propaganda groups (weak parties)--revolutionary tendencies no such hard and fast rules apply. And so in a couple of sentences the entire "Strategy of the World Revolution" is wiped out, annulled, obliterated. But then perhaps there are some who think a new "Strategy" ought to be written. Perhaps ours belongs in the museum of old Bolshevik-Leninists. I do not think so.

But then it's a practical question really, comrades, and not a fundamentally theoretical one, at least that is the argument. So let us follow the argument as presented by those in favor of the orientation.

"This convergence of turns on the part of the apparatuses ('bureaucracies') will have a progressive effect on the already seething mass..." Only temporarily. Because the illusions of unity--abstract unity--is always rife among the masses. These illusions can be fought only--"against the current" and not with the current. "The Ligue has tooted our conceptions in every part of France and its colonies. There are not workers districts in which our antennae have not penetrated. But antennae are not enough." No--nor is anything enough. It is a question here of keeping our antennae or losing our bearing altogether.

"Only 12 members hold responsible posts in the Red Trade unions. None in reformist unions. There is no nationally centralized faction in the SFIO although we have militants active in it." Then get into the reformist unions. Get a nationally centralized faction in the SFIO. "What will it (the Ligue) have when its main lever of the united front will be wrested from its hands?" That question could be put with some justification to Brandler--Lovestone; but directed at us it smacks of a serious misunderstanding of our very reason for existence. "Let the yoke of 'socialism in one country' be loosened and who can tell what will become of it (Stalinism)?" What a sorry way to formulate a question with regard to Stalinism. Let that yoke be loosened--let Stalinism disavow Socialism in One Country--But Stalinism is Stalinism principally because it cannot and will not disavow that. The question has as much logic as would be the question: Let but bureaucratic centrism loosen the yoke of its bureaucracy and of its centrism--and then where are we? Perhaps somewhere on Mars but not on terra firma. "To become a decisive magnetic pole" it is essential to "grow". In other words program, strategy, platform that has little or nothing to do with becoming the "decisive magnetic pole". Only quantity is essential--not quality. "What a caricature of the Marxian dialectic! What Bucharinist mechanism! ("Mass quantity can be the result only of principled quality"-Trotsky, Int'l Bulletin new series #2)

The reference to the French Ligue being nothing but a group of Verite readers can well be said of all our Leagues--of the Bolsheviks prior to 1917 when it was Iskra and its readers, Proletarii and its readers --not forgetting the revolutionary importance of Nashe Slovo and its readers. The very posing of the question: To be or not to be--is approaching the coming very serious events in France like Hamlet. Somewhere in his works comrade Trotsky has already well polemicized against political Hamletism. Now Vidal faces the events in France and the future of our organization with Hamlet's mental torment, with Hamlet's broken spirited indecision. To be or not to be! Revolutionists never pose such questions for themselves. They know only to be! "It is necessary to find a place for oneself within the framework of the united front--that means within the framework of the SFIO." What has happened to all our arguments against the burlesking of the united front into a merger of political tendencies, into confusion of banners. For us, it is now argued, the united front means the liquidation of the organization into the Socialist party, so that being in the SP we will also be in the united front. Why was What "next written?--the Only Road--The Strategy of the World Revolution. Why? But comrades it must be borne in mind that not even Hamlet was born with pessimism in his mouth. And document #2, in the first French Bulletin, is written by one whose point of departure is only now--"to be or not to be". "Is that not a capitulation before the 2nd International?" asks Vidal and he answers: "Such a complaint can be lodged with much more justice against the Stalinists." Let us take for granted that that is so. It can be said with more justice of the Stalinists. Does not the very answer imply that it can be said with some justice of us? Of course it does. And how does that vindicate us? "We on our part have been ready to form a new International with the SAP and the OSP" Yes, "we were ready to form" with them ~~SAP and the OSP~~ a new International on a Marxian program--but not to enter into their centrist stream. "We urgently advised our British comrades to enter the ILP. Was that capitulation?" No--and who said anything about capitulation? There is more to Shakespeare than "to be or not to be". There is also* me thinks the lady doth protest too much.

One word on the ILP and our English grouplet. Not to see the distinction between the ILP as a classically centrist group outside of both International and moving to the left--and a reformist party in the 2nd Int'l. moving toward centrism is to see nothing. Adding to that fact that our grouplet in England had not even been born yet and so to lessen its birth pangs it was advised to get into the ILP which at that time was in a great state of ferment. And yet with all that our tiny grouplet split. One can well question whether it would not have been a healthier infant today had it gone through its normal agony of birth.

The early part of Vidal's document quotes Hamlet. It ends with a quotation from the Koran. In the opening paragraph Marx's Capital and the Communist Manifesto are treated rather lightly. And that is no accident. For the orientation of comrade Vidal does not emanate from these books--Rather it emanates from the indecision of Hamlet and the mysticism of the Koran.

Unquestionably large masses have already been set into motion by this united front, in France," says the NC statement. How a united front of inaction as we have properly characterized it elsewhere in