

# INTERNAL BULLETIN

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## PROPAGANDA GROUP OR INDEPENDENT PARTY?

By C. Thomas

The long-simmering differences in the party are at last coming into public view. Who really "opened" this discussion and what methods have been employed? The answer to these questions will provide a key to understanding the right and the wrong ways to initiate and carry on a serious discussion in our movement.

According to the spokesmen for the PC minority, Comrades Stevens and Ring are the culprits. They are charged with improperly injecting into the New York Local pre-convention discussion political issues which were under controversy in the National Committee. "They should have waited," says Bartell, "until the NC itself was prepared to open such a discussion on the basis of clearly formulated positions."

The truth is that the PC minority itself had already thrust these questions into the life of the New York Local through Comrade Bartell's report which projected an orientation at variance with the line adopted by the last National Convention. And he did this in accord with the objectives and the methods of the Cochranite faction of which he is one of the four leaders.

### The Cochranite Faction

The Cochranites -- Cochran, Clarke, Frankel and Bartell -- have been functioning as a PC faction for over a year. During this entire period they have conducted a special type of guerrilla warfare against the party leadership, program and policy. They have been repeatedly pressed to put their views in writing so that the NC, at least, could reach some conclusion on the nature and extent of the differences.

To my knowledge, under prodding of the PC majority, only one attempt was made to codify the differences. That was a document submitted to the committee in January of 1952 proposing a major turn toward the Progressive Party and "its associated organizations and movements." This memorandum on "Proposals on Policy Toward PP" was submitted in the name of Bartell and received one vote in the committee.

The other members of the group, who were not present when the vote was taken, did not record themselves one way or another. Apparently the "Proposals" were dropped for they were not presented to the May 1952 plenum of the National Committee nor were they submitted to the membership in the pre-convention discussion. I say "apparently" because the same "Proposals" cropped up later in another form in Bartell's "Report and Tasks."

The Cochranites have set down a prescription for the conduct of the discussion. "So far as all responsible comrades on both sides are concerned, the party discussion must open with the statement of positions by the contending viewpoints." (My emphasis.) This is a good formula, but like most such prescriptions emanating from this source, intended for others.

As for the Cochranites themselves. . . "all responsible comrades" know they have been carrying on an intensive political agitation -- not before the forum of the party, but in homes, corridors and coffee

klatches. A discussion based on gossip, tendentious interpretations of PC decisions, actions and discussions, under cover of which they pushed their political line. That is how the Cochranites "opened" the discussion. At the same time they resisted every attempt to get them to submit their views, criticisms and grievances to open party discussion where they could be subjected to critical evaluation.

The national discussion bulletin was opened in December to give anyone who wanted the opportunity of presenting their views to the party. Did they avail themselves of this opportunity? They did not! Instead they tried to smuggle in their line piece-meal, surreptitiously, behind the back of the party.

An open discussion before they had consolidated their faction was the last thing they wanted. A discussion of political ideas and views is a good thing -- but a power caucus consolidated in advance of the discussion, that's something really substantial! In conformity with this line the Cochranites have done everything possible to delay and obstruct the political discussion.

Meanwhile comrades have been button-holed, harangued and "lined up." On what basis? Were they admonished to "wait" until the document which the Cochranites have at last promised to write appeared? Not to my knowledge. Apparently only those are admonished to wait who want the discussion carried on before the entire membership. The party is supposed to remain in a state of suspended animation until their promised document is forthcoming.

### Their Faction Platform

Viewed against this background it becomes clear that Bartell's "Report and Tasks" constituted a faction platform of the Cochranite combination. Consistent with their method, it was not frankly presented as such but was introduced under the pretense that it was in agreement with established policy and contained nothing new. It is our contention that this Cochranite platform submitted in the name of Bartell, projects an orientation at odds with that adopted by the last National Convention; an orientation that brings into question the nature and role of the Socialist Workers Party.

As against work directed toward the "leftward moving militants among the organized workers -- especially in the CIO" -- the "Report," taken together with Bartell's speech to the New York membership, projects an orientation toward the Stalinist movement.

As against the independent party acting "as the revolutionary leadership of the masses," it counterposes the concept of the propaganda group.

Now there is nothing "heretical" about such views. If formulated clearly and presented openly they could provide the basis for a fruitful discussion. Unfortunately, they were not so formulated or presented. Under the circumstances, I trust Comrade Frankel will forgive me if I endeavor to "synthesize" a more or less unified concept from the views Bartell has expressed in his writings and draw some of the ideas advanced to their logical conclusion.

It isn't always too clear, from a reading of the "Report and Tasks," in what sense Bartell uses the word "propaganda." He clarified his views on this matter in his speech to the membership where he went to great lengths to provide a precise definition.

### "Propaganda" Given Precise Definition

First he tells us what he does not mean. "At all stages," he says, "the party engages to one degree or another in all three general types of work: propaganda, agitation and action. Thus in this past year, we have conducted propaganda through our forums and the circulation of our press; we conducted mass agitation in Harlem around some action slogans in the Harry Moore case, and we led tenants of East Harlem in struggle against the City Housing Authority. But this observation leaves us nowhere. It establishes no guiding line for our work today, precisely because it holds true for all periods, including on the eve of the revolution. It is necessary," Bartell concludes, "to establish what must be the main, the principal tasks, to which others are subordinated." ("The Struggle in the N.Y. Local," hereafter designated as "The Struggle.")

Then he tells us what he does mean. "We can attract people today," he asserts, "primarily on the ground that we have the only correct ideas, ideas which explain the great world events and which conform to the needs and interests of the proletariat and of human progress generally. It follows that our main tasks today, especially when we take into account our extremely meager forces, is the dissemination of ideas through our press, through lectures, personal discussion, etc. . . ."

"There is an inescapable corollary," Bartell continues, "that follows from this: it necessarily narrows down the audience to which we address ourselves. Plekhanov distinguished agitation from propaganda roughly as follows: agitation means the dissemination of one or a few simple ideas to many people. Propaganda means the dissemination of many complicated ideas to a few people.

"Moreover," Bartell concludes, "this does not mean any few people. It means those few (relatively) 'who are equipped to understand and willing to listen.'" (The Struggle, P.6) We shall keep this definition firmly in mind as we follow the logic of these ideas to their ultimate organizational conclusion that the role of the SWP today should be that of a propaganda group.

### Example of Propaganda Group

First of all, a propaganda group must have a target, or as Bartell puts it, a "milieu." When the Shachtmanites recognized they were nothing but a propaganda group, they drew all the necessary conclusions. They abandoned the name: "Workers Party" and adopted the designation, Independent Socialist League. They transformed Labor Action into a "propaganda" organ which "disseminates many complicated ideas to a few people." And as "this does not mean any few people," the Shachtmanites direct their propaganda primarily at the Social Democratic movement and its periphery. They gave up independent electoral activity and executed an "entry" into Dubinsky's Liberal Party.

This does not mean that the Shachtmanites have no members in the unions. They do. But the activity of their few unionists is subordinated to "the main, the principal tasks," the propaganda tasks. And as complicated ideas are complicated to present, hardly an article in Labor Action runs under a full page of type. But, as it makes no pretense of addressing itself to the workers, everything is in order.

### Toward the Stalinist Milieu

What is Bartell's target? Toward whom is the propaganda, i.e., "the many complicated ideas," to be directed? In his "Report and Tasks," under the section on "Trade Union Work," Bartell poses "the question (that) naturally arises: what about the proletarian, or trade union, orientation?" And the answer to the question is given in the first part of the sentence: "Since the mass movement is quiescent (relatively), dominated by an unchallenged imperialist-minded bureaucracy, and our opportunities for work in the union movement have become extremely limited, . . . our activities are to be directed primarily toward more politically conscious circles." (My emphasis.)

From the same report, under the section headed Propaganda: "Our literature activities should be consistent with our overall tasks, and general orientation. We should direct a concentrated fire at the more politically conscious currents in the population, certain unions and schools and other selected points rather than indiscriminate broadsides at the population in general." Bartell is here referring to the circulation of our press, and not its content. We'll come to that later.

Bartell is fond of resorting to the common debater's trick of reducing to an absurdity the argument of a real or imaginary adversary and then proceeding to demolish the absurdity. Why do "broad-sides" have to be "indiscriminate?" Why can't they be "discriminate" broadsides? And why directed at "the population in general"? Why can't they be directed at the workers or a section of them? Who has proposed or is proposing such "indiscriminate broadsides"? But all this is neither here nor there. What Bartell is concerned with is establishing the validity of the direction, or as he puts it, the "general orientation" toward "the more politically conscious currents in the population."

In the same report Bartell sums up the section on "Opponents Work," a key section for an understanding of his orientation, by listing the organizations and groups which comprise, as he calls it, "the rest of the left-wing political world." All of those listed, with one or two exceptions, come under the heading of Stalinist peripheral or Stalinoid organizations. It is in this milieu that Bartell finds the main arena "to propagate our ideas to people who are equipped to understand them and are willing to listen."

In order to make this "milieu" even more attractive, Bartell paints a fantastic picture of the New York Stalinist movement. He doesn't use a brush, he really lays it on with a trowel. "The atmosphere in and around the Stalinist movement," he asserts, "is less hostile than ever before. Indeed, their movement could be said to be rife with Trotskyist conciliationism." (My emphasis.)

"Rife!" One could hardly have picked a stronger word. If that were true it would be a phenomenon unique, not only for this country, but for the entire world. It's a fantasy, but what purpose is it intended to serve? It is intended to create the impression that these people are not only "equipped to understand" our ideas "and are willing to listen" but are also eager to accept. It is this "left-wing political world," peopled by the Stalinists and their petty-bourgeois periphery that provides the target for Bartell's propaganda orientation.

### What About Role of Press?

What about the role of our press, more particularly, the weekly paper? If Bartell has thought about the question at all, he hasn't given us the benefit of his views. But if our main task, our principal task, our guiding line, is to be the dissemination of propaganda, how is this to be reflected in the paper? The paper is the primary medium for the presentation of our views. It now disseminates a few simple ideas (agitation) from our Transitional Program and is addressed primarily to the workers. It thus runs counter to Bartell's propaganda orientation. What change does Bartell propose to make in the character of the paper to make it conform to his propaganda line?

Some of his more consistent supporters frankly advocate that the paper become more "theoretical," which would make it more attractive to the "advanced political circles" to whom it should be primarily addressed. And by the same token, much less attractive to the workers. This conclusion flows inexorably from Bartell's propaganda orientation.

### Nature and Role of SWP

This dispute on the question of orientation hinges on the concept of the role of our party in this country. The resolution adopted by the last National Convention took a clear and unambiguous position on this question. Under the section on "Perspectives of a New Radicalization" the resolution affirmed: "The work of our party has been and continues to be fundamentally directed toward influencing, winning and recruiting leftward moving militants among the organized workers -- especially in the CIO -- who owe no allegiance to any radical party. This is our main field of work. The Communist Party is our opponent in this field. Wherever we encounter the Stalinists in the mass movement our tactic is to challenge and combat their ideas and influence with our own program as part of our struggle for the leadership of the American workers' vanguard."

This orientation is in line with the tactical orientation elaborated in Pablo's report to the Tenth Plenum. But when Stevens and Ring, criticising Bartell's orientation, quoted Pablo to the effect that the SWP should "act from now on as the revolutionary leadership of the masses," Bartell recoiled as though touched with a red-hot poker.

Stevens and Ring, he charged, "seized upon a general algebraic formula which Pablo applied to the entire 'third category,' which includes countries like Ceylon, Bolivia, etc. in the same general classification as the U.S. Now it is perfectly obvious that this

formula cannot mean the same thing for Bolivia, which is in the midst of a revolution, and the U.S. which is in the grip of reaction."

### Meaning of Orientation

Pablo's elaboration of the tactic of "essentially independent work" for a whole category of countries, including the U.S. is airily dismissed as a "general algebraic formula." This sounds very profound. It is intended to impress those who know little about algebra and less about revolutionary politics. The formula, he says, is algebraic, that is, of an indeterminate character, abstract. He then proceeds to make it concrete by supplying his own "unknown" factor. This is the contrast in the objective situation which today in Bolivia is revolutionary and in the U.S. is reactionary.

Instead of a serious polemic we are confronted again with a debater's trick. Do we, he demands to know, on the basis of his "concrete" example, "act in deeds, right this minute, as the revolutionary leaders of the New York proletariat"? Bartell reduces all questions to the small coin of "concrete" issues. He has apparently learned nothing nor forgotten anything since the 1940 fight with the petty-bourgeois opposition.

No, it doesn't mean, Comrade Bartell, that we rush into the streets of New York and call upon the proletariat to storm City Hall. It does mean that in this country our basic orientation is toward "essentially independent work." That this orientation is based on the recognition that there does not exist in this country a mass political organization of the workers led by either the reformists or Stalinists. That we do not concede, in advance of the struggle, that the Stalinists will emerge as the leadership of the leftward moving masses. On the contrary, we propose to wage now a head-on struggle against their ideas and influence and are, furthermore, completely optimistic about the chances of our victory over them.

You want to know what it means? It is spelled out in great detail in the political resolution adopted at the last National Convention. Read it! You may not agree with it, that is your right. You may feel that your propaganda orientation is the more realistic answer to the problem of this stage of the American struggle for socialism, that is your right. But it is not your right to try and smuggle in a contrary orientation under the pretext that the resolution was a "compromise" between two lines and that the tactical orientation elaborated by the Tenth Plenum was nothing but a "general algebraic formula" that could be filled in practice with your propaganda group content.

### "General Algebraic Formula"?

Let's examine a little more closely the contention that the orientation elaborated by Pablo in his report provided only a "general algebraic formula." Bartell would have us believe that Pablo was unaware, or failed to take into account, the obviously different objective conditions in the category of countries for which the orientation to independent activity was adopted. In line with his method, Bartell singles out Ceylon and Bolivia to counterpose to the U.S. The other countries only rate an etcetera in his "analysis."

Along with the U.S., Ceylon and Bolivia, there are also listed Latin America, the African colonies, India, and the Middle East. A mere glance at this list should be enough to indicate that a wide variation exists in the objective conditions in these various countries. In some the reaction is deeper and more extensive than in the U.S. In some the parties are leading revolutionary actions. In some they are illegal and function only under the greatest difficulties. The determinate factor in the so-called "algebraic formula" could not be, then, the degree of reaction or of radicalization, that is, the given stage of the class struggle in the various countries.

(As for Bartell's "example" which was intended to point out the absurdity of including the reactionary U.S. and revolutionary Bolivia in the same category. The Tenth Plenum was held before the outbreak of the Bolivian revolution at a time when the Trotskyists in Bolivia were forced by the existing dictatorship to function as a semi-legal group with some of their leaders in exile. But Bartell's "facts" are always tailored to fit his factional needs.)

There must be some common denominator which makes it possible to include such diverse countries in one and the same category so far as determining our orientation is concerned. The fact is, that Pablo does give the determinate factors, both organizational and political.

#### The Determining Factors Given

In the report by Pablo on "The Tactical Application of the Third World Congress Line," under the section headed "The Essentially Independent Work," he says:

"The texts of the Third World Congress have clearly indicated that for a whole category of very important countries where the obstacle of a strong reformist or Stalinist movement does not exist, the immediate central task of the Trotskyists is to act from now on as the revolutionary leadership of the masses. This category of countries includes above all Latin America and Ceylon. The United States, India, the countries of the Middle East, the African colonies, can be considered a part of this category with the following reservations: in all these countries the Trotskyists must from now on act as the revolutionary leadership of the masses even though it may be necessary in some of these countries to go through an experience with certain reformist, centrist or simply national currents and formations.

"For example, the activity of the American Trotskyists is at the present stage essentially independent even though it calls for the necessity of a Labor Party in the USA, an eventuality which if realized would involve their entry into the Labor Party."

Then again: "Our activity must be considered essentially independent in all those countries where the existence of another leadership, reformist or Stalinist, has not been solidly established among the masses and consequently does not impose a long-term entrism such as we now envisage in all other cases."

"This essentially independent activity means as we have said to act from now on as the revolutionary leadership of the masses."

Pablo then presents the political prognosis from which the orientation flows: "This character of the activity flows from our evaluation of the situation and the perspectives of its evolution. The situation is pre-revolutionary all over in various degrees and evolving toward the revolution in a relatively brief period. And this process from now on is in general irreversible."

The determinate factors are given: the absence of a "strong reformist or Stalinist movement," and the prognosis of the evolving revolutionary process which "from now on is in general irreversible." These are the concrete factors which not only determine that the U.S., along with the other countries listed, belong together in the same category, i.e., essentially independent work, but also explain why they do not belong under either of the other two categories.

### Can't Both Be Right

Bartell insists that Pablo's formula is "algebraic." Pablo insists it's concrete. They can't both be right. "With the Third World Congress," the report reads, "our movement succeeded in unifying two elements in its tactical conception: A concrete milieu for work, a concrete manner of working within it." Our concrete milieu for work is in the mass movement among the politically unorganized workers in the unions. Our concrete manner of working is as an independent party, conducting that whole complex of political activity that this involves.

Does Bartell seek to teach us that the objective situation imposes upon us the necessity of carrying on essentially propaganda tasks directed at our concrete milieu? (Propaganda, that is, as used in the larger sense of combining propaganda, agitation and action according to circumstances.) That the party must at all times harmonize its activity with the tempo of the class struggle? That we cannot artificially call the working class to action? That we cannot substitute the action of the party for the action of the class? That even mass parties, the Stalinists in France for example, who try it end up badly? If these were the lessons that he sought to teach, he would find us receptive pupils. But he specifically disclaims this approach.

Such observations, he insists, "leaves us nowhere. It establishes no guiding line for our work today, precisely because it holds true for all periods, including on the eve of the revolution." Bartell's insistence upon the limited definition of our "propaganda tasks" leads inevitably to the conclusion: (1) That our "concrete manner of working" should be that of a propaganda group "disseminating many complicated ideas to a few people," and (2) that our "concrete milieu for work" is the Stalinist movement and its petty-bourgeois periphery.

### Basis for Bartell's Orientation

Bartell bases his orientation on the prognosis of a deepening reaction. He has read the "social barometers" and has found "the unfavorable climate will continue for a time and will probably get worse." This is a recurrent theme throughout his Report and speech and provides the basis for his projected orientation toward a propa-

ganda group aimed at the Stalinist "milieu." For Bartell the reaction is the determining factor in his orientation.

Here is the basic fallacy in his whole position. The degree of the reaction determines, not our basic orientation, but the tactical application of our strategic line within the mass movement. Our tactics within the mass movement are adjusted to the ebb and flow of the class struggle. They are based on the mood of the masses, their level of political consciousness and the objective factors that condition them. Tactics within the mass movement, therefore, must be extremely flexible and adapted to the peculiarities, not only of this or that country, but of each specific situation within the given country.

Bartell mixes everything up, confuses strategy and tactics, consults his barometer, finds that the "reaction is bad and getting worse," and therefore. . . we must change our basic course and steer for the "politically advanced circles" in the "left-wing political world."

What is Bartell's interpretation of the view that we must act now as the revolutionary leadership of the masses? "In our estimation," he says, "we can act as the revolutionary leaders of the masses only in the ideological sense. That is, we take upon ourselves the obligation to set forth the correct path, the program, the strategy and tactics which will lead the masses to power in this country."

Bartell here counterposes his own "algebraic formula." We can act as the revolutionary leadership, he insists, "only in the ideological," that is, in the propaganda sense. Why "only" in the ideological sense? Why not also in the political sense? The answer to these questions depends on your basic orientation. If you think in terms of a propaganda group Bartell's formula fits like a rubber glove. If you don't, his formula is one-sided and therefore false.

It seems as though Pablo's report was written as a direct polemic against Bartell. In regard to the last point, for example, Pablo writes: "The small nuclei of revolutionary Marxists can and must play the role assigned them by history, that of the revolutionary leadership. These nuclei can discharge this task and by so doing develop in a relatively short time into powerful currents, provided they are from now on prepared ideologically and politically, that is to say, if they have from now on a clear and profound understanding of the explosive revolutionary character of the period and if they elaborate a concrete policy and concrete tactic adapted to the particular conditions of their country. In a word, if they act from now on not as a general propaganda group but as the nucleus of the revolutionary leadership conscious of the needs and aspirations of the masses of their country and have concrete political answers to their problems."

To act right now as the revolutionary leadership means in essence to carry on that whole complex of activities which is the hallmark of an independent revolutionary party. Not the least of these in this period is our independent electoral activity. How do matters stand in this field?

## Attitude Toward Electoral Activity

The resolution of the National Convention placed the presidential election campaign as the party's number one task in 1952. "The central task of our party in 1952," says the resolution, "is its presidential campaign. Participation in the elections under the party's banner must take precedence over all other activities and the party's entire work from now until November must be geared into this campaign." How did Bartell apply this directive?

On Page 6 of his "Report and Tasks" he tells us: "We decided. . . not to be diverted by the election campaign from our propagandistic tasks." The resolution of the National Convention declares: "We should try to present our full program to the widest audience. Broad participation in the 1952 presidential campaign not only corresponds to our overall conception of the role and prospects of our party in the American class struggle. As part of our campaign for elementary democratic rights, it can serve to protect the party and its members against reaction and assaults upon the free functioning of our movement."

The resolution established the political premise for the most extensive campaign commensurate with our resources. But, says Bartell, "we decided. . . not to be diverted." "We conceived of a broad division of labor between the candidates and the party membership," he relates. "The candidates were to exploit every possible opportunity to reach the public at large by radio and television, while the membership followed through by systematic visiting of those who had responded to the broadcasts, as well as other contacts, and by coverage of all candidates' forums with literature and leaflets announcing our forum."

This is confusion worse confounded! It is a prime example of the fallacy of trying to fit reality into a preconceived mold. When our party decided to enter the national election campaign with our own candidates, it was above all, an action. Our candidates, appearing on television and radio, addressed a mass audience. They presented, by and large, a few simple ideas, primarily centered around our anti-war slogans, to the many. Following the definition that Bartell insists upon, they were engaged in agitation. And the few who attended our forum were presented with "the many complicated ideas" which, presumably, they were equipped to understand and accept.

How does Bartell make all this fit his schema? He dismisses the action, belittles the agitation, and distills out of our election campaign what is to him the sum and substance of our activity: propaganda. But without the action -- our independent election campaign -- there could not have been any "agitation." Without the agitation -- the dissemination of a few simple ideas to the many -- there can be no independent election campaign. Of course the forum remains. And if everything is to be subordinated to our "main task" of indoctrinating the few with many complicated ideas, then our independent electoral activity becomes, as Bartell describes it, a diversion.

## Entrism -- Their Real Line

That is why the Cochranites tend to look with jaundiced eye upon our independent electoral activity as a form of sectarian SLPism! In his memorandum submitted in January 1952, after the party had already decided to participate with our own candidates, Bartell proposed what amounted to a semi-entry into the Progressive Party on a national scale.

"The extent of our intervention," in the Progressive Party, he wrote, "is limited by the size and importance of this movement, and the forces at our disposal. Under the present circumstances it is highly doubtful that the benefits that might accrue from an all-out tactic of entry and support to their presidential candidate in the 1952 elections is worth the sacrifice of our presidential campaign."

Instead of "total entry," he proposed a series of measures that amounted to semi-entry and if adopted would have tended to reduce our campaign to a token campaign. He proposed, for example, to "assign groups of comrades" to enter the PP and participate actively in their election campaign. He proposed to "give critical support to candidates of the PP where we are not running any of our own. Such support should not be limited to a formal gesture, such as a statement in our paper, but should consist of active participation in the campaign, side by side with the activists of the PP." This proposal which was rejected and not formally raised afterward obviously colored Bartell's attitude toward our independent campaign. He went in dragging his feet and this attitude unquestionably communicated itself to the local membership.

## An Inadvertent Admission

Bartell makes an inadvertent admission in this connection that is very revealing. In speaking of the circulation of our press (Report and Tasks, P.5) Bartell reports: "The inevitable decline in our sub list must be compensated for by stepping up the sales of single copies at political meetings, forums, unions and schools. This work has lagged in the last few months. (My emphasis.)"

The date on the "Report" is Dec. 3, 1952. "The last few months" obviously refers to the period at the very height of the election campaign. The paper was our main campaign medium for the dissemination of our views. Yet it was precisely in this period, that Bartell reports, "sales of single copies at political meetings, forums, unions and schools" had "lagged"! And this in the city of New York about which Bartell writes: "New York has a far higher level of political consciousness than any other city. It has large Social-Democratic and Stalinist movements, each with its own powerful electoral party. In this respect it resembles more a European city than any other in America."

## Perspective for Municipal Election

Now what is the perspective for independent electoral activity in the coming municipal elections of this, most European, of all American cities, in the year 1953? Bartell devotes a total of three short paragraphs in his "Report" to this question which we quote in

toto: "The 1953 municipal elections promise to be interesting." That's a good start, let's continue. "It is impossible to foretell the lineups now, but Rudolph Halley will probably run for Mayor on the Liberal Party line. He has a fair chance of getting elected, especially with new and more sensational scandals breaking over Tammany's head. Under these circumstances, it is possible that other sections of the labor movement will shift to Halley. That does not, however, exclude the possibility that the anti-Tammany Democrats and Fusion Republicans will enter into a coalition with the Liberal Party. Interesting indeed, let's go on.

"On the other side, the ALP, already beset by a lesser evil crisis, and shaken up by its decline will probably face an even more serious internal conflict over Halley. The CP, which yearned for a 'broad anti-Tammany coalition' in 1951, is likely to press more vigorously for it in 1953. Meanwhile others are pushing in the opposite direction, i.e., for the conversion of the PP into a 'socialist' party." And the conclusion that follows from all this?

"All of this will provide opportunities for our intervention, but it is too early to decide on our precise tactics now. We should plan a discussion of our election policy for 1953 later on when the picture becomes clearer." All very interesting, but what is the specific perspective? What political premise is offered for waiting until the ward heelers get through cooking up their deals? What kind of "opportunities for our intervention" will their maneuvering provide? If the interesting facts he offers mean anything, Bartell is hopefully waiting for the boodlers to come forward with a candidate to whom he can offer "critical support."

#### What Should Be Done

The New York press has been carrying considerable news about the maneuvering going on among the politicians over the coming municipal elections. Individual politicians have announced their candidacy or their "availability" and have been interviewed on television and radio. It would appear that the best tactic for us to follow would be to announce our intention to participate with our own candidate coupled with the offer to withdraw in favor of a labor candidate if the unions would run such a candidate on an independent labor ticket. This would give us, right now, the opportunity to advance our Labor Party slogan, to get some publicity in the press, and where candidates are interviewed or appear on television or radio on public service programs, to demand time for our own candidate.

It is in this direction that the membership of Local New York should be oriented and prepared in advance for our participation with our own candidate and program in the municipal election. Instead, Bartell's propaganda orientation points in the opposite direction -- toward that "left-wing radical world" upon whose maneuvers he waits with bated breath.

#### Attitude Toward Union Work

Bartell's attitude toward the possibility of doing fruitful work in the unions is contained in the phrase he used to summarize his views to a New York membership meeting. "The trade unions," he

asserted, "are more dead than not dead." The section in his "Report" dealing with "trade union work" is permeated with that spirit. If our main tasks, our principal tasks, our guiding line, is to be propaganda, the dissemination of many complicated ideas to a few people -- and as Bartell insists, "this does not mean any few," but those "who are equipped to understand and willing to listen," -- it inescapably follows that our trade union activity becomes a supplementary activity subordinate to the main line. Members of a propaganda group may also be members of a union but the focus of their attention is in another direction.

Bartell's "Report" and his subsequent published speech constitute a grab bag. He can reach in and pluck out a quotation to suit any occasion. There is no single consistent line, clearly put forth and easily identifiable. It is the work of a person more concerned with concealing than revealing his basic views and aims. The consistent thread of his thought, which I have tried to unravel in this article, is twisted and tangled in a mass of verbiage. What emerges is a concept of the role and nature of the party at variance both with the line of our National Convention and the orientation elaborated by the Tenth Plenum.

### The Art of Concealment

It is true that the Cochranites have not yet set down in concise form their concept of the nature and role of the party in this country. They don't operate that way. They have conducted guerrilla operations over an extended period designed to undermine, weaken and overthrow the party policy and leadership. And in guerrilla warfare the art of concealment enters as a major component in any given operation.

The Cochranites are fond of referring to the National Convention resolution as a "compromise" resolution. By this they intend to convey the notion that the resolution has no consistent line and that, in reality, it represents a compromise between divergent tendencies. This is completely false. There was no compromise whatever on the basic line. The main sections dealing with orientation and perspective don't yield an inch to the views expressed by Bartell. Nor do the sections which he claims "he" wrote on our supplementary tactics toward the Stalinist movement and its periphery, give him any license to carry through his "propaganda" orientation.

### Where the Majority Stands

The position of the majority can be easily stated in a few propositions:

1. The SWP must continue to act from now on as the revolutionary leadership of the American working class; that is, to carry on essentially independent political activity in all fields of the class struggle, not the least of which in this period is independent participation in the electoral field.

2. Our basic orientation is toward the organized workers in the unions and the Negro masses. The work of our party has been and continues to be fundamentally directed toward influencing, winning and

recruiting leftward moving militants -- especially in the CIO -- who owe no allegiance to any radical party. This is our main field of work. The Communist Party is our opponent in this field. Wherever we encounter the Stalinists in the mass movement our tactic is to challenge and combat their ideas and influence with our own program as part of our struggle for the leadership of the American workers' vanguard. We reject the concept that we are all fellow-travelers in some kind of amorphous "left-wing radical world."

3. Our work in the opponents field is a necessary supplement to our main sphere of work but is subordinated to it.

4. Any change in the paper should be toward making it more representative of the life and needs of the workers. If the workers cannot understand our language there is something wrong with our language, not with the workers. It is from this criterion that the paper should be critically examined.

The American working class, while organized in powerful unions, remains politically unorganized. No class political party has yet established its hegemony over the working class in this country. The next few years may well be critical in the emergence of working class political organization. The radicalization of the American workers will take place via the unions, especially in the mass production industries. This prospect determines our basic orientation toward this concrete milieu. Any digression from this course; any "detour" away from our proletarian orientation under the illusion of finding greener pastures elsewhere can only serve to disorient the party and render us incapable of playing our rôle as leavening agent in that process of radicalization.

New York, N.Y.  
March 23, 1953

THE CHALLENGE TO OUR ORIENTATION

(Presentation in Debate with Harry Frankel March 21)

By Joseph Hansen

The struggle that has opened up in our party is one of the most serious we have yet faced.

First of all, it occurs under the darkening shadow of the preparations of American imperialism for another global war and under the pressure of a witch hunt such as the country has never before witnessed. Precisely when our party requires the utmost clarity of program, unity of ranks and solidarity in action, we find grave questions raised about our program, our ranks dividing into factional formations, and rancor poisoning our relations.

To make matters worse, the issues at bottom still appear obscure to a section of the ranks and even part of the leadership. This may be due to lack of political alertness, a reflection in our party of the general political backwardness of the American working class; or it may be due to the inertia of sentiment, an unwillingness to recognize that old comrades with whom we have gone through many tough battles could really have changed, a wish to somehow smooth over what may be only a family squabble, so to speak, and somehow patch things up by playing down the differences and even closing our eyes to them.

I daresay I have felt this as keenly as anyone -- the wish that we weren't faced with such ugly differences among our cadres -- but I see no way of healing them except by bringing them out clearly into the open and discussing them. How else can full consciousness be brought to bear on them and the possibility opened up of resolving them through reason? Friendship is a precious thing in these harsh and brutal times but the Leninist method is more precious. It requires us to approach the danger now facing our party with the utmost objectivity.

We are dealing in the final analysis with the most fateful revolution in the world -- the third American revolution. The answers we give to the questions that have been raised in our current dispute may well prove decisive in determining the fate of that revolution. All of us are duty-bound as Trotskyists, as future officers of the mighty upsurge that will bring the workers to power in America, to take our positions with this broad, objective outlook in mind and not let sentiment or petty considerations of any kind stand in the way of getting the issues out into the open where we can discuss them in the Marxist tradition.

These were some of the things I had in mind when I submitted my article "What the New York Discussion Has Revealed" to the Internal Bulletin. I hope the same attitude will govern our discussion today so that it will prove fruitful and take us another step along the road toward clarification and resolution of the differences.

It is not my intention to simply repeat the points I covered in my article -- I trust that all of you read it before coming here. What I want to do now is to amplify it and also bring in for your

consideration additional material most of which I had before me when I wrote it. This comes under four general headings: (1) Comrade Bartell's orientation; (2) Comrade Bartell's challenge to the party's tradition and program; (3) The position of our party and our co-thinkers on the correct orientation for America; (4) A correction of some false propaganda on the danger of sectarianism that is being disseminated in the party.

I.

It is a gross error to seriously believe that all that is involved in the dispute is Comrade Bartell's "stewardship" of the New York Local or the small change of this or that concrete proposal concerning local activities. True enough, this was the contention of Comrade Bartell for a time and some comrades may have been taken in by it. But what was really involved, as Comrade Ring and Comrade Stevens pointed out, was Comrade Bartell's orientation for the New York Local. Despite all Comrade Bartell's denials that orientation was involved, he was finally forced to admit that he belonged to a national faction in the party, a faction which we must conclude does have an orientation, one involving the entire party and therefore the New York Local. Everyone should now look back at the development of the discussion and ask himself -- was Comrade Bartell applying the orientation of his faction in the New York Local? Or was he carrying out a line in opposition to the platform of his faction and in accordance with party program?

To judge this correctly may not seem easy in view of the fact that his faction has not yet seen fit to inform the party as to just what its platform is. Nevertheless, we are entitled to our opinion. Moreover, careful study of Comrade Bartell's statements as well as actions provides us with some revealing material.

"Wait for the Documents. . ."

Internal struggles such as the one we are now in, follow a pretty well-beaten track in general; yet they always have their own peculiarities. This one produced a real novelty, a profound and searching argument that seems to have stopped some comrades cold; namely, "Why don't you wait for the documents?"

When Comrades Stevens and Ring raised the question of the New York organizer's orientation last December, Comrade Bartell responded by scoring them for daring to speak out "before the documents clarifying the respective views are forthcoming" on national differences. "They should have waited," he argued, "until the N.C. itself was prepared to open such a discussion on the basis of clearly formulated positions." What they should have concerned themselves about, he contended, was a discussion of possible "improvements" in "this or that phase of work" of the Local.

The purpose of this argument should be clear now to everyone. It was an attempt by Comrade Bartell to line up unsuspecting comrades with his faction on issues which he made out to be purely local. Some comrades fell for it, stating that on national questions they would wait for the documents while supporting Comrade Bartell on the

"local" issues. Through this maneuver they were tricked into committing themselves to something bigger than they bargained for. Today, three months later, they find themselves in the camp of a national faction which has still not brought its platform out into the light of day.

As for himself, Comrade Bartell did not choose to follow his own advice and "wait for the documents" before injecting his orientation into the New York Local and bringing in differences which he claimed could not be settled on a local basis. He and his collaborators worked with full energy to entrench and strengthen their faction without so much as putting a page out of the official documents they promised.

This course of action, which is not in the Trotskyist tradition, served to alert a number of comrades. Through personal experience in previous faction struggles or through study of party history they were able to recognize the symptoms of the disease known as Abernism. Martin Abern played a valued role in the founding of the American Trotskyist movement but he had the unfortunate weakness of setting more store by a power grouping within the party than by the platform of that grouping.

Having observed this tendency on the part of Comrade Bartell and his co-factionalists in the leadership for a year or more, I became somewhat alarmed. I tried to ascertain the arguments that were being used in the corridors to line people up, since arguments that are used in building a faction in the absence of documents no longer represent merely personal views -- they represent the real platform of the grouping. The party has a right to know that platform and so I did my part in publicizing it.

I considered it all the more my duty to do this because the longer the faction waits to bring out its documents the greater the likelihood they will prove worthless and even obstructive to clarification of the issues. If a strong faction can be cemented together on the basis of grievances, gossip, demoralization, pessimism, experimentalism and opposition to the party leadership for the sake of opposition, then the documents that are finally produced may well turn out to be nothing but a cover-up designed to smear over the principled differences within the faction. I do not say that this is bound to be the case with the present faction; all I say is that in this respect the longer I wait for the documents the greater my skepticism becomes.

By way of contrast to the current course being followed by Comrade Bartell, let me now quote what he said about a different discussion -- the model discussion our party conducted over the question of Eastern Europe. Here is what he wrote in his "Report and Perspectives" for the New York Local in February 1950: "Naturally, since the opening of the controversy on the 'buffer countries,' this discussion has dominated the internal life in the party. This discussion should be developed in a leisurely manner, with the aim of deriving the greatest educational value rather than to 'line up' comrades on one side or the other. This should be the occasion for a study (or re-study) by the entire party of the theoretical works of Lenin and Trotsky on fundamental questions related to the discussion."

Today, as the comrades in the Youth Branch especially can testify, Comrade Bartell has quite a different attitude. He is very insistent about "lining up" and as for studying the theoretical works of Lenin and Trotsky on fundamental questions related to the discussion he registers nothing but complaints. "We have been bombarded with quotations which have already extended back to 1900," he says. (Internal Bulletin, Vol. 15, No. 2, p. 24.) He even finds references to the articles of Pablo distasteful -- unless he needs a quotation for his own purposes. "This whole method of attempting to use authority in a political discussion by quotations that are removed from context and not related to specific reality," he declares, "is repugnant and alien to our movement. It is the method of quoting scriptures against 'heretics' without any concern for logic, rhyme or reason." (p. 9)

What is the reason for this shift in attitude? The main reason, I think, is that the discussion on Eastern Europe began with the publication of documents stating the differences. Under the democracy which is coupled with centralism in our party, this ensured a fruitful discussion. And under the leadership that built our party it was not necessary to organize any faction. Why did Comrade Bartell and those who support him forget this important chapter in party history so quickly? This is a question every comrade concerned about the welfare of the party must ask himself and seek to answer. I think the causes can be traced in the final analysis to the terrible social pressures bearing down upon us which have found a certain reflection within the party.

While I am on the point, let me note that Comrade Frankel seems to think that the "wait for the documents" argument can still be squeezed for a little more juice. As he puts it, instead of waiting "until national documents appear," Hansen hastened "to jump the gun" and "rushed to put a document before the party." Well, I apologize to Comrade Frankel for any inconvenience my jumping the gun caused him, but in extenuation for my precipitate action let me explain that I got tired waiting at the starting post for Comrade Frankel and the rest to give me the signal by firing their documents. I also noted that they didn't wait themselves but were already way down the race track, raising a considerable cloud of dust.

### Operation Smuggler

My effort to synthesize the undisclosed platform on which a national faction was being synthesized was denounced by Comrade Frankel as a "frame-up" and "the crassest falsification." (I.B., Vol. 15, No. 4, p. 31) This method of answering by denunciation does not belong in our movement. It was Comrade Frankel's duty to disclose his platform and to state publicly what planks of the ones I listed he agrees or disagrees with. His charge that I cooked up a platform out of thin air is an inversion of Comrade Bartell's answer to Comrades Stevens and Ring.

When they called in question his orientation Comrade Bartell responded by saying that they had "fabricated a synthetic platform" -- not for him, but for themselves -- and that naturally this "makeshift local platform collapsed under them" (I.B., Vol. 15, No. 3, p. 18) when Comrade Bartell began hammering at it. According to this propa-

ganda, it was all a plot in which Stevens and Ring acted as "agents" of members of the National Committee. As one comrade put it, they were "assigned" the job of finding differences with New York Local organizer; they couldn't find much but they did the best they could under the circumstances in synthesizing a platform.

This theory does not belong in our movement any more than Comrade Frankel's "frame-up" charge. It belongs to the Ellery Queen school of politics. But let's accept it as a working hypothesis and see how it fits in with the rest of the clues. How does it explain the crime of Comrade Bartell's orientation? Did the plotters themselves commit it? For example, in drawing up his report did Comrade Bartell write that "our activities are to be directed primarily toward the unions and organizations of the Negro people" and did agents of the National Committee sneak into the City Office in the dead of night and substitute for it the following words: "our activities are to be directed primarily toward more politically conscious circles"?

Did Comrade Bartell write a paragraph describing the opportunities in the unions and other mass organizations in New York which agents of the National Committee then altered so that it read that the Stalinist movement "could be said to be rife with 'Trotskyist conciliationism'" and that "Our victory over the Stalinists in the civil liberties struggle is virtually complete"? Was it secret agents of the National Committee, working in collusion with Stevens and Ring who took Comrade Bartell's report and loaded it with this fantastic painting-up of the opportunities in the petty-bourgeois Stalinist circles and equally fantastic painting-down of the opportunities in the trade unions and slipped in the decisive item about our activities being directed primarily toward the "more politically conscious circles"?

No, that's not what happened. Comrade Bartell not only admits he wrote these jewelled phrases, he boasts about it and reaffirms it and even cites personal conversations with certain Stalinists as evidence of the big changes in these circles, since in this case he does not care to wait for their documents that would prove to the world just how "rife" they are with "Trotskyist conciliationism."

Thus the plot theory goes up in smoke -- or at least a smoke screen -- and we are left with the problem, not of explaining the reasons for the challenge issued by Stevens and Ring, for that is purely a political challenge, but with the problem of accounting for the orientation introduced by Comrade Bartell into the New York Local. We can make only one concession to the Ellery Queen school -- a crime is indeed involved, but the crime is one committed by Comrade Bartell. In the criminal code it is classified under the heading of "Operation Smuggler."

### Who Decided It When?

When was it decided that the New York Local should orient primarily toward the petty-bourgeois Stalinist circles?

Who decided it?

Where was it even discussed?

These questions are acutely embarrassing to Comrade Bartell inasmuch as he did not get away with his smuggling operation. His alibis are outstanding examples of what he calls "the weirdest branch or local discussion ever seen or heard." (I.B., Vol. 15, No. 2, p.23-24) For instance, he attempts to make out that his present orientation "is not a new one, especially for the New York Local" and he avers that "The attempt on the part of Stevens and Ring to represent the approach contained in my report for the 1953 City Convention as a shift or turn which they are resisting is a pure fabrication." As evidence, he says "we need only to compare the relevant paragraphs" of his 1950 and 1953 reports "to explode this myth." Then he cites the "relevant paragraphs" and sure enough, in his 1950 report there is a sentence that reads: "While remaining alert for opportunities to intervene in the mass movement we shifted our emphasis heavily toward political work in the radical milieu, from agitation among the mass of unpoliticalized workers, to political propaganda among the most advanced, radical sectors, especially the youth in the Stalinist-Wallaceite camp. . ." (I.B., Feb.1, 1950)

What could be more convincing? Bartell not only places the main orientation on work in the Stalinist movement today but he's done it since 1950!

Let me confirm the accuracy of Comrade Bartell's quotation. I went back to that Internal Bulletin and checked it and it's right, word for word. But if some unkind comrade were now to ask me whether this is not one of those "quotations that are removed from context and not related to specific reality" which are so "repugnant and alien to our movement," as Comrade Bartell phrases it, I should have to reply, "That is unfortunately the case."

The very next sentence of Comrade Bartell's 1950 report reads: "We decided that the chief target of our propaganda offensive must be the Communist Party, which in New York confronts us as our main rival in the fight for supremacy in the left-wing of the labor movement, among Negro militants and the new generation of radical youth." (My emphasis.)

And lest you think that this quotation is torn out of context, listen to the paragraph that follows: "We estimated the conditions for an offensive against the Stalinists to be more favorable than they have been in many years. We noted the difficulties and demoralization besetting the CP, resulting from their rout in the labor movement, and the Wallace debacle. The prosecution of the Stalinist leaders presented us with an unprecedented opportunity of supplementing our direct frontal assault with a flank attack through the united front tactic." (My emphasis.)

It is obvious from these sentences alone that the orientation in 1950 so far as the Stalinists were concerned was in line with the propaganda offensive launched by our National Plenum at the end of December 1949 against both the Stalinists and the Social Democrats. Comrade Bartell's orientation toward the Stalinists today involves something quite different. To hear him, our propaganda offensive scored such a decisive victory that the ranks of the Stalinists became

"rife" with "Trotskyist conciliationism." The conclusion to this would seem to be that we on our side should take a conciliatory attitude toward the Stalinists and adopt a new orientation in line with this.

The difference between Comrade Bartell's 1950 and 1953 reports becomes all the more striking if you compare them as a whole. For example, the 1950 report spends five pages on the 1949 municipal election campaign together with two paragraphs on the prospective 1950 municipal election campaign. It is a glowing report, emphasizing how fruitful electoral activity is even under adverse circumstances. And there is a two-page supplementary report by George Rock on "Open-Air Election Rallies" which makes some excellent suggestions about future activity of this kind. Comrade Bartell's 1953 report by way of contrast spends only two paragraphs on New York's participation in the presidential election campaign as if there were very little indeed to report about such a routine action although he does manage to include a boast about deciding "not to be diverted by the election campaign from our propaganda tasks" and a sentence that appears to be aimed squarely at Comrade Rock: "We decided not to dissipate our energies in wide, thinly spread agitation on street corners. . ."

Comrade Bartell then comments on the "virtue" of the plan he held to in the second presidential campaign of the Socialist Workers Party: ". . .instead of going through a whirl of feverish activity followed by a general collapse of activity and morale we are able to continue without seriously breaking our stride." What 's that if it isn't a slam at electoral activities and the unusual opportunities they offer, and a plug for routine propaganda? Comrade Bartell adds two thin paragraphs speculating about possible maneuvers of the political hacks in the coming mayoralty contest with a recommendation to discuss our "election policy for 1953 later on when the picture becomes clearer." Not a single word appears in the report about plans for the New York Local cashing in on the early start of the mayoralty contest this year and the widespread interest already apparent in it.

What does the startling contrast between Comrade Bartell's two reports reveal about his orientation? Hasn't it been changed? Doesn't he have a different attitude toward the Stalinists today from the one he had in 1950? And hasn't his attitude toward electoral activity undergone an extraordinary reversal?

To me it seems indisputable that sometime between 1950 and the end of 1952, Comrade Bartell arrived at a new conception of the tasks and perspectives of the New York Local, if not the whole party, and that he began injecting his new orientation into the Local without discussion and without consultation with the elected bodies of the party. Are we not justified in concluding that this orientation is the orientation of the faction which he has announced exists in our party?

### Ring-around-a-Rosy

A smuggling operation may seem fairly easy, particularly if you're the organizer and in position to direct activities and to inch

in the new line piece meal so that it's difficult for comrades to spot any single move as especially off beam. But sooner or later it becomes obvious that all is not quite as it should be and then you are confronted with difficulties, particularly as to whether or not it is advisable to admit that you have embarked on a new course. This difficulty makes Comrade Bartell's contribution to the discussion, "The Struggle in the New York Local," one of the "weirdest," most "mystical and confusing" we have seen in a long time. Having told us that he has had his current orientation at least since 1950, he suddenly takes it back and appears about to answer the charge that he has relegated the unions and factories as our major field of work to a subordinate place on the agenda. He even affirms that ". . . we know that it is the working class that will lead the American revolution, and that our party is oriented fundamentally at all times toward the proletariat, and more specifically toward the basic organizations of the workers, the trade unions." (p.10) And more emphatically a little later, "Yes, our main and fundamental orientation remains toward the trade unions all the time."

But just as we begin to think that perhaps Comrade Bartell is changing his mind and backing out of his untenable position, he submits a series of declarations that sound almost like the "whereases" of a resolution. First of all, he breaks up orientation into percentage figures as if he were dealing with a sack of marbles and then declares that it would be an "incredibly formal, simplistic, mechanical conception" to "apportion" the percentages of our "fundamental strategic orientation. . .at every moment, in every locality" according to a "rigid order."

Then he lays the basis for a reversal of the percentages, at least for the New York Local:

WHEREAS, . . . "there are times and places when we can succeed in building our fractions more successfully through activities outside the factories than inside. . ."

AND, WHEREAS, . . . "We are a very small party. What we need above all are numbers, cadres, and we can't be choosy as to where we get them or what their present occupations are. . ."

AND, WHEREAS, ". . . A national orientation is not a blueprint for the activity of each branch. . ."

AND, WHEREAS, New York is "unique." "You might even say it is a 'petty-bourgeois' town. . ."

AND, WHEREAS, ". . . the composition of our membership has always reflected this. That is, in spite of all of our efforts, only a minority of our members have ever been factory workers. . ."

AND, WHEREAS, "New York has a far higher level of political consciousness than any other city. It has large Social Democratic and Stalinist movements, each with its own powerful electoral party. In this respect it resembles more a European city than any other in America. . ."

AND, WHEREAS, ". . . this is an advantage in this period. . ." (Bartell's emphasis.)

AND, WHEREAS, ". . . it has been precisely those branches in the purely industrial factory towns that have been the hardest hit in these years. . ."

AND, WHEREAS, ". . . These branches envy the lively political existence we are able to maintain here; they only wish they had some Compass Clubs or Monthly Review forums or universities in their cities. . ."

AND, WHEREAS, ". . . We propose to take full advantage of this situation, while our super-proletarian critics propose that we unnecessarily and artificially impose on ourselves the conditions of Pittsburgh, Akron or Flint. . ."

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED. . .

Well, what? That our worker comrades get out of the hard hit, purely industrial factory towns and come to New York to take full advantage of a major orientation into the petty-bourgeois Stalinist circles which are "rife with 'Trotskyist conciliationism'?"

That would seem to be the conclusion that is called for after all those "whereases," but Comrade Bartell can't bring himself to say that. Perhaps he suddenly reminded himself of Leon Trotsky's warning about the "Bad composition especially of the most important New York branch. . ." (In Defense of Marxism, p. 63) Trotsky's advice "to turn one's back to the petty-bourgeois intellectuals, and to face toward the workers," (p.105) Trotsky's insistent proposals that the petty-bourgeois elements in our party be sent "into working-class districts for day-to-day dirty work among the proletariat" (p.147) and Trotsky's recommendations over a period of years on what to do about rectifying the problem of "the composition" of the New York Local. (See pages 108 to 112 for typical examples.)

And so, whether Comrade Bartell recalled what Trotsky said on this score, or for some other reason best known to his faction, he ends up with the following unexpected conclusion to his "whereases":

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, ". . . Stevens-Ring distort our conception of propaganda work as our principal task, as against mass agitation and action, to mean a 'shift' of our main arena of work from the trade union movement to the Stalinist organizations. This is nothing but a fabrication designed to catch the unwary." (p.12)

Once again we are in the clear. Our only problem now is to try to figure out why Comrade Bartell went to such extraordinary lengths to give his laborious explanation about chopping an orientation up into percentages and finding loopholes for special branches with unique petty-bourgeois problems and opportunities. Was he only trying to make himself look ridiculous?

Not at all, he was only trying to explain what he means "when we say that we must direct our efforts primarily toward 'politically conscious circles.'" "We mean," he tells us, "what Comrade Cochran referred to in his unanimously adopted trade union report to the convention as 'the most advanced workers and youth intellectuals.'" (p.13)

Very good. For the moment let's accept Comrade Bartell's claim that to accuse him of a "shift" of our main arena work "is nothing but a fabrication designed to catch the unwary." But only for the moment. Before finally making up our minds, let's follow Comrade Bartell into the Youth Branch of the New York Local. The date is March 11 and he has taken the floor without waiting for the documents he demands everyone else should wait for. I can't report everything he said, because being "ubiquitous," to use Comrade Frankel's apt description of my qualities, it's hard for me to be in one place in one chunk. Nevertheless certain phrases come to my ears. He's talking about Stalinism: "In the event of a war it will advocate revolutionary policies." "They will even support revolutions in various countries." "They will support colonial revolutions." "Its major role and conflict is with imperialism and not with revolutions." "Not only didn't the Kremlin capitulate but also the Communist parties within the capitalist countries will not capitulate." "They will fight where the Social Democrats didn't. They will permit revolutionary struggle in Western Europe because they will need them."

Now I will ask only one question. What kind of orientation does a high-pressure sales talk containing such glowing phrases fit in with -- an orientation toward "day-to-day dirty work among the proletariat" or an orientation toward the attractive Stalinist petty-bourgeois circles in New York?

It is true that Comrade Bartell also mentioned in his speech the counter-revolutionary side of Stalinism. And he even rattled it loudly against the revolutionary side as if he had two bones on a ring. But the way he put it, you don't have to buy both bones; you can buy them separately, either one you choose.

Tempting as it is to give further consideration to this speech by Comrade Bartell, I will forego it at this time. I cite it simply as further evidence of Comrade Bartell's real orientation in the New York Local. I want to turn now to the second topic I mentioned at the beginning of my speech; that is, Comrade Bartell's challenge to the party's tradition and program. This should be somewhat briefer.

## II.

One of the main characteristics of an unprincipled faction is its reluctance to bring its ideas out into the open and let them stand on their own feet. There is a reason for this. Such a faction is often composed of contradictory elements from a programmatic point of view and it thus tends to decompose and disintegrate when its platform becomes visible and subject to examination and public debate. Consequently the usual course of an unprincipled faction is to cover up its ideas and to advance them through personal contact, a method that also has the advantage of making it easy to butter up people and sympathize with whatever individual points of view, quirks or idiosyncracies they may have. The faction thus becomes inverted. Instead of a grouping supporting and advancing common principled views, it tends to unite in a common effort to hide the conflicting views. An unprincipled faction thus demonstrates its lack of confidence in its own ideas and above all its lack of confidence in the

party regime. In the fire of debate it begins to feel persecuted and hounded and instead of political challenges it sees "plots" and "frameups" engineered by the leadership. These symptoms are apparent in the faction announced by Comrade Bartell.

If the ideas held by the various comrades in the grouping were strong ones, why didn't they begin by writing them down in documents?

If they had confidence in the regime of the party, why did they proceed to organize a faction?

And if they had lost their confidence in the party leadership, why didn't they give the party an opportunity to reach similar conclusions by submitting the leadership to another test such as it underwent in the case of the discussion over Eastern Europe?

The truth of it is, that this faction had no confidence in the party leadership, no confidence in their own ideas and no confidence in the ability of the party ranks to reach an independent decision on the basis of documents submitted in a free discussion. And this in turn indicates that the leaders of the faction have no real confidence in either their own capacities or the capacities of the party. Perhaps this explains why they are so careless about the traditions of the party and appear to dump them with such heedlessness. Let me cite some examples besides the one concerning the orientation of the New York Local, which we have already examined.

#### When a Majority Is Not a Majority

When Comrade Bartell found himself in a minority on the City Committee of the New York Local he did not accept this status in accordance with the tradition of democratic centralism. The simple fact that a majority of the committee supported the criticisms made by Ring and Stevens of the New York organizer's orientation was denounced by Comrade Bartell as "a quarter-truth which would better have been left unsaid. . ." (IB, Vol. 15, No.3, p.22). Whether or not the committee majority represented the prevailing opinion in the New York Local could be determined only on the basis of a convention. Until that time it constitutes the authority duly elected by the membership. This did not prevent Comrade Bartell from attempting to undermine that authority, from casting aspersions on it, and in fact carrying his challenge to lengths completely out of keeping with the tradition of our movement.

At one point he even attempted to establish a referendum of the membership to which the decisions of the City Committee would be subjected.

Nor was this all. He disparaged the authority of the Political Committee and its right to decide in local organizational disputes.

It was not difficult to expose and answer these maneuvers of the New York Local Organizer. A number of comrades promptly proved that the concepts behind them are far from new. And with appropriate citations from Lenin and Trotsky they put the proper label on them: Menshevism.

Comrade Bartell did not get away with his attempt to substitute his minority for the majority of the committee. But the attempt offers us a certain instructive insight into the character of the faction of which he is a leading member.

The fact that Comrade Bartell could suck in some of the newer comrades into supporting his Menshevik maneuvers raises a question about the educational program of the New York Local. How long has it been since we had a course on the history of our party, our organizational concepts, their origin and the repeated struggles to safeguard them? Has an educational program including such subjects been dumped overboard along with much else in our tradition? Is that why so many comrades take corridor gossip and other small change as sufficient motivation in political struggles?

I think it's high time we took a good look at the educational program of the New York Local and began arming our newer comrades so that they are not taken in so easily by Menshevik garbage offered to them as latter-day revelations.

And while we're about it let's consider a course on the Third American Revolution to inoculate our party once again against some of the poisonous pessimism about the American working class that is being circulated by members of Comrade Bartell's faction.

### The Light Cavalry Concept

Comrade Bartell's revisionism did not stop with his Menshevik challenge to the authority of duly elected party bodies. On page 13 of his article, "The Struggle in the New York Local," he tosses in a concept of the party which, if taken seriously, would give us something novel to say the least.

It's "nonsense," he says, that he proposes "to make the Stalinoid organizations, such as the Compass Clubs and the ALP, our main field of work." But it's nonsense only because "this arena" is not "big enough and fruitful enough to absorb our main forces and attention." If the arena were big enough and fruitful enough then he "would not hesitate to propose this." To justify this answer to his nonsensical "if," he explains that we must "have no fetishes or taboos" about our "main arena."

I suppose all of us will agree with Comrade Bartell about not having "fetishes or taboos" about our proletarian orientation, but that is not what is involved -- it is the proletarian orientation itself. Now listen to Comrade Bartell develop his concept of how the party should orient itself provided certain "ifs" apply:

"If there should develop a sudden rise of militant struggle among the Negro masses, we would not hesitate to place this first on the agenda and make this our main field of work, even though it occupies, according to Stevens-Ring, only second place in our strategic orientation."

Do you get the picture? The party wheeling like light cavalry from preoccupation with the "politically conscious circles" and charging up to Harlem and other Negro communities, bugles blowing and

leaflets announcing: "We are here, fresh from the politically conscious circles to lead you in the further rise of your militant struggle!"

Now read Comrade Bartell's next paragraph: "If it should so happen that a significant radicalization develops on the campus while the labor movement remains temporarily passive and dormant, we should head straight into this current, even give it our main attention for a while, without worrying as to whether it is third, fourth or seventeenth in our order of priority."

Do you get that picture? Our light cavalry reins in, wheels around and thunders onto the campus green showering leaflets on the students: "We are here, fresh from the militant struggle among the Negro masses to lead you in any further development of your significant radicalization!"

Comrade Bartell does not develop his concept any further than that but let us suppose that a sudden big rank and file strike movement develops on the waterfront bringing to a climax the long series of sporadic flareups we have witnessed in New York. Again orders go out to the light cavalry. We gallop down to the waterfront, banners flying, and pass out leaflets by the thousands, announcing: "We are here, fresh from the significant radicalization of the campus, to lead you in ousting King Ryan and setting up a hiring hall!"

Can you imagine the response of the longshoremen? I won't give it to you, but I can assure you it wouldn't be longer than two short pithy words.

Reading those two paragraphs of Comrade Bartell's, it is difficult to describe what amazement I felt. Could it really be possible that Comrade Bartell went through the 1939-40 struggle with the petty-bourgeois opposition without once grasping the real meaning of Trotsky concept of a proletarian orientation? Does he really conceive of "orientation" as a hurtling of forces here and there the way the anarchists conceived it? (A strike breaks out, for instance; you grab the first train there and announce you've come to lead it.)

It's difficult to believe that Comrade Bartell doesn't know any better, but listen to the following description of what he thinks Ring and Stevens should have proposed as a "program of activities" if they "took their own 'orientation' seriously": "the organization of left-wing groups inside the unions, mass distribution of leaflets and literature at plants, open air meetings at factory gates, public meetings designed to attract industrial workers, consistent and extensive literature sales and distributions door-to-door in workers' districts and on the streets of Harlem, the organization of Negro masses in struggle for equal rights, etc." (p.12)

Despite my amazement, I prefer to believe that Comrade Bartell does know better. He got caught in a smuggling operation and this is his way of trying to unload the goods. The truth is that he is getting in deeper and deeper.

### Should We Re-orient Our Press?

Comrade Bartell does not clearly specify whether he thinks our

press should be oriented in the main toward the Stalinists, and if so, whether it should adopt a conciliatory tone. But he does quote Pablo on certain general directives that fit in with such a tactic applicable in countries like France. The implication is that Comrade Bartell considers that these general directives also apply to us. In close connection with Pablo's remarks about how the Trotskyist press should write to "the militants and masses influenced by Stalinism," Comrade Bartell lays down the following prescription:

"The question of our attitude or approach in these organizations is an extremely important one. It would be the height of stupidity for us to speak to the members of these organizations as though we were addressing enemies and to hurl epithets at them or their leaders. We would only succeed in strengthening their prejudices against us and making an objective consideration of our opinions impossible. We should start with our common interest and aims in the struggle against imperialist war and reaction, offer to collaborate in the struggle over specific issues and, in the course of discussions and common activity, unfold our revolutionary program as distinct from the opportunistic policies of the Stalinists and their allies."  
(pp. 20-21.)

If Comrade Bartell is referring here solely to the manner in which comrades assigned to opponents work should in general conduct themselves, then we can easily come to agreement on this question. But if he is referring to the tone our press should adopt toward Stalinism, it is an entirely different matter. Leaving aside the item of hurling "epithets" instead of political characterizations and explanations -- I suppose Comrade Bartell really means epithets -- I would like to ask him a frank question. Does he conceive of our press as an outside supplement to fraction work inside the Stalinist organizations? Or does he agree that our press, above all our paper, should meet the Stalinists in head-on conflict and orient toward workers who by and large are opposed to Stalinism?

Perhaps Comrade Frankel can give us some clarification on this question.

### What About the Transition Program?

What revisions in our party's program Comrade Bartell's orientation may lead to can be gathered from the argumentation he uses to justify selecting the "politically conscious circles" as the main field of work for the New York Local. On page 6 of the article just cited, he declares: "The American population in general is neither able to understand nor is interested in studying the conceptions of the 3rd World Congress. But since we are only able to recruit or expand our circle of sympathizers today on the basis of our world program, we are of necessity very isolated."

On the next page he continues his theme: "The fact is that on the one hand there is no leftward moving stream for us to swim in, and on the other hand, ideologically, there is a vast gulf separating us from the American population."

Get the picture fixed firmly in mind: On one hand no leftward moving stream to swim in and on the other hand a vast gulf.

Then he asks the devastating question: "Shall we then direct our main efforts toward the average worker (or student or anyone else today)?"

And he brings up this brilliant answer in the form of a rhetorical question: "Is it not apparent that we must seek out the more enlightened and advanced workers and intellectuals, those whom we can interest in our whole program?" (His emphasis.)

To clinch his point he drags in some evidence by the hair, namely James P. Cannon, whom he then traduces by stating that Comrade Cannon's conception of our current isolation is the same as the one contained in Comrade Cochran's trade union report, about having to work "for a whole period to come" in "a limited milieu. . ." Comrade Cannon's recent lectures in Los Angeles, which have been published in the weekly paper, should establish the fact that there is an essential difference if not a polar opposition between his views and those of Comrade Cochran on this point.

But leaving that aside, let us consider the "theory" that constitutes the grounds for the orientation Comrade Bartell tried to smuggle into the New York Local. The "vast gulf" which he notes between socialist program and the understanding of the mass of the population is not exactly new. It was noted before Marx's time and the first attempt at a realistic solution is at least 9 years older than the Communist Manifesto -- 1839 if I remember my dates correctly. Marx and Engels concerned themselves about it. The Second International had its tentative solution. Lenin and Trotsky had concrete proposals. This century and more of thought on the problem was summed up by Trotsky in the Transition Program which occupies a key position in our theoretical heritage. Its purpose is to bridge this "vast gulf separating us from the American population" which seems to have reduced Comrade Bartell to theoretical prostration if not impotence.

What happened to the Transition Program in Comrade Bartell's little schema that puts the American population on one side of a vast gulf and our ideas on the other side? Is there no way of bringing the masses and our ideas together except through the Stalinist petty-bourgeois circles? Are the Stalinist intellectuals like Huberman the connecting link that replaces the Transition Program?

Don't tell us you could have easily added a paragraph of lip service to the Transition Program if you had thought about it. The concept developed in the Transition Program happens to be an integral part of the solution to the problem you are discussing and can't be forgotten without at the same time forgetting one of the greatest conquests of a century of Marxist thought and one that also happens to be the main key to reaching the masses, above all in America.

Take another look at this pearl of wisdom, this genuine, first-water Bartellism: "Is it not apparent that we must seek out the more enlightened and advanced workers and intellectuals, those whom we can interest in our whole program?" Isn't that sectarian -- sectarian through and through? Isn't your idea that our audience "narrows down" because of our world program and that therefore we must concentrate our propaganda on those whom we can interest in the whole program, a piece of sectarian muddleheadedness completely alien to our

movement, more akin to the sterile outlook of the Socialist Labor Party? And by way of apology to the SLP, let me say that they are at least consciously opposed to the Transition Program and openly say so.

I think it is obvious why you "forgot" about the Transition Program, or dumped it. Your orientation toward the "politically conscious circles" doesn't require it -- in fact it stands in your way just as Transition slogans stand in the way of the SLP in its propaganda efforts.

Let me conclude this point by observing that it may well be that our paper is not easily understood by the ordinary worker. If that is the case, the fault is not primarily his but ours. In turning the helm further in the direction of the ordinary worker, it might be well to consciously work out further refinements in applying our Transition Program. This would prove far more fruitful than studying the rags and patches and fossilized bones Comrade Bartell serves up as examples of the most up-to-date and "realistic" thought.

### III.

I want to turn now to my third point, the position of our party and our co-thinkers on the correct orientation for America. First, our party position.

In the third paragraph of his article, "The Struggle in the New York Local," Comrade Bartell has some contemptuous remarks about the citations of Stevens and Ring on the position of our party and our co-thinkers on orientation. These he characterizes as "selected quotations strung together in an attempt to prove that we are in violation of the national and international law of the movement."

Comrade Bartell rejects this out of hand as a "sterile approach." In his weighty opinion, "It is the method of scholastics who, substituting appeals to authority for thought, convert Marxism into a barren dogma instead of a guide to action."

From this you might gather that Comrade Bartell does not intend to appeal to the "law of the movement" or otherwise fall into the "method of scholastics." But don't expect such consistency from Comrade Bartell; he is simply clearing the ground for a new law and a new prophet. Thus in Bulletin No.5 of the New York Pre-Convention Discussion, we are given a three-and-a-half page excerpt from the Political Resolution of the 15th National Convention dealing with the Progressive Party and the Stalinists in America. True, it is already somewhat out-dated by the recognition of the Stalinists that the whole Progressive Party maneuver was a bad mistake and that what is now called for is entry into the Democratic Party, but nevertheless, it's party "law" ain't it? And therefore you're bound hand and foot by it. Besides, who is the proud father of this section of the party "law"? If I have not been misinformed about Comrade Bartell's boasts, he himself is the potent author. He got it included in the Political Resolution and you had better obey it.

Besides this "law," Comrade Bartell lays down another one, the "unanimously adopted trade union report to the convention" by Comrade Cochran.

To listen to these factionalists, that was the main business of our last convention -- to discuss and adopt the new legislative measures proposed by Comrade Bartell and Comrade Cochran.

My own impression of the convention was somewhat different. I understood at the time that its main purpose was to prepare the party for a great action, our second presidential campaign, and that as our radio and TV time became due all other business must be set aside. Our candidates and other leading comrades spent a good deal of time working out and delivering speeches to the general public. When Comrade Cochran, in the midst of this strenuous activity made the remark in his report that "We cannot just shout promiscuously at the general mass, for that would be like hurling seeds into a storm, hoping that by good fortune a few would find their way into productive soil," I considered it a slap in the face of the convention, for that's precisely what we were doing right then and there, hurling seeds into a storm. I had additional differences with Comrade Cochran, as did other comrades, but shortly after his report we had to go on the air again. An interesting supplemental report by Comrade Dunne was cut short, and the opportunity for thorough discussion of Comrade Cochran's report was lost in the shuffle. This was unfortunate, but the election activities around which the convention revolved, cut across even such an important subject as our trade union work.

I am not arguing that the element of accident which made impossible adequate discussion of Comrade Cochran's report thereby invalidates it as party "law." I am simply saying that insofar as Comrade Cochran's report goes against the main report and political resolution it is not party "law." The main report was delivered by Comrade Cannon. It was discussed and even debated and the vote on that report represents the measured opinion of the delegates. You won't find anything there fitting in with the orientation Comrade Bartell tried to smuggle into the New York Local. I recommend that you go back and read it again. It is in the weekly paper of August 25, 1952.

The political resolution of the last convention is likewise quite clear on what our main orientation is. Comrade Ring and Comrade Stevens called the attention of the New York organizer to this when they criticized his orientation. "The work of our party has been and continues to be," states the resolution, "fundamentally directed toward influencing, winning and recruiting leftward moving militants among the organized workers -- and especially in the CIO -- who owe no allegiance to any radical party. This is our main field of work."

Having filed that party law in the archives on his own initiative, Comrade Bartell of course now considers any references to it as a "sterile approach," the "method of scholastics."

### The Real Views of Our Co-Thinkers

If you were to single out any single item that might be classified as the main stock in trade of the faction announced by Comrade Bartell it is the claim that they represent the real position taken by the Third World Congress. They are particularly insistent that they are promulgating the genuine views of Comrade Pablo. However, they face a slight difficulty here in convincing people who have not

already been deeply committed to the faction. The leadership of the world Trotskyist movement, including Comrade Pablo, do not conduct themselves in the manner of an unprincipled faction reluctant about putting down its views in black and white. The program adopted by the Third World Congress exists in the form of written documents and needs no disciples possessed of the "inside dope" to tell you what was really voted for. Comrade Pablo likewise has put down his views in black and white for anybody to read. He likewise needs no personal messenger to tip you off about his real opinions.

In my article, "What the New York Discussion Has Revealed," I tried to demonstrate that neither the Third World Congress nor Comrade Pablo had altered the basic Trotskyist conception of the character of Stalinism. Today I would like to consider briefly the views of our co-thinkers on the tactical problems facing the world Trotskyist movement.

The main fact about the world situation recognized by the Third World Congress was the speed with which American imperialism is preparing for another world war, a war in which the imperialist powers constitute a coalition against the Soviet bloc and the colonial revolution. This fact had already been recognized by the Socialist Workers Party, as you can judge for yourself by reading the political resolution of our 1948 convention.

In 1948, when we recognized this, we did not draw any tactical conclusions from it for Trotskyists in other countries. The Third World Congress, meeting in 1951, did.

In view of the extraordinary speed of the war preparations and the unfavorable relation of forces facing world imperialism, the Third World Congress saw great dangers facing many sections of the Trotskyist movement -- as well as great opportunities if correct tactics were followed. The main danger is sectarian isolation from the masses. The great opportunity is the possibility of coming to the head of revolutionary upsurges in a relatively short period of time. Under the impact of war, the masses are bound to start moving; but because of the short time span, they will begin moving within the organizations to which they now adhere. In other words, the time for testing their current leadership and finding a new leadership is very short. This means that if you are separated from the masses and remain in isolation you can be by-passed. Moreover, the opportunist leadership of the masses can be expected to go considerable distances in response to pressure from the ranks -- and in the case of the Stalinist bureaucracy even give an impulse to the class struggle. This makes it difficult to expose them but it also opens up big possibilities for us if we are present when a revolutionary impulse occurs.

Under "Orientation and Tasks of the Fourth International," the Congress went down the list country by country suggesting the tactical orientation that should be followed in the period we are now in. The general line, as explained by Comrade Pablo is that "we must be capable of finding our place in the mass movement as it is, wherever it expresses itself, and to aid it to rise through its own experience to higher levels." (FI, 1952, p. 172.)

Three main variants of this line correspond to the differences in leadership of the masses in the various countries. First of all, those countries where the masses are under social-democratic leadership, Britain, Germany, Canada, etc. There, entries are called for by our forces. This tactic had already been applied in Britain long before the Congress, as everyone is aware, and it has already proved its correctness beyond dispute.

Analogous to this variant is the one in those countries where the masses are under Stalinist leadership, France, Italy, China, etc. But here the entry is of a special kind because of the character of the Stalinist bureaucracy. In France, for example, while orienting into the Stalinist-led movement, some of the comrades remain outside to help the work from this vantage point, while the press remains independent but supplements the work of the comrades inside the Stalinist organizations by writing its articles with their special needs in mind. This necessary way of working is called an entry sui generis, the French comrades being able to understand Latin better than us; we would only call it an entry of a special kind.

The third main variant is advised where the masses are not under social-democratic or Stalinist leadership and it is possible for the party to function independently. This is the variant we have followed since 1937.

Now if you agree with this tactical line then you are in agreement with the Third World Congress and Comrade Pablo on this question.

All of you, I am sure, have heard plenty of quotations about Comrade Pablo's position. I will not repeat them today. But permit me to give you one concerning the third variant that seems to be missing from the repertory of Comrade Bartell and his co-factionalists: "In those countries where Stalinism is practically non-existent or exercises weak influence over the masses, our movement will strive to become the principal leadership of the proletariat in the years ahead: in the United States, England, Germany, Canada, in all of Latin America, in Australia, Indonesia, perhaps in India. The main immediate future of our movement (Pablo's emphasis) resides far more in these places than in countries where the Stalinist influence still reigns. Certain of these countries play a key role in the international situation and because of the conditions of their economic development remain favored countries for socialist construction: the United States, England and Germany. The future of Stalinism is barred in these countries. (My emphasis.) The development of our movement in the United States in particular would influence the entire course of the international workers' movement and would accelerate the crisis and decomposition of Stalinism." (International Information Bulletin, March, 1951, pp. 17-18.)

This was written by Comrade Pablo as part of the preparatory discussion for the Third World Congress. Everything he has written since indicates that he holds firmly to this position at the present moment.

#### IV.

I will now turn to my fourth and last point; a correction of some false propaganda on the danger of sectarianism that is being

disseminated in the party.

According to Comrade Bartell and his co-factionalists, those who are trying to defend the proletarian orientation of our party represent a clear and present danger -- the danger of inertia, of sectarianism, of Stalinophobia, of fear of being tarred with the brush of Stalinism, a fear that is "extremely unbecoming to revolutionists in the country that is the bastion and power-house of world counter-revolution and in which the Stalinists are a hounded, persecuted, despised movement." (I.B., Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 22-23.) In Comrade Bartell's opinion, "To seek for dangers of Stalinist conciliationism, of 'softness' toward Stalinism under these conditions is absurd." (p.23)

I do not regard these charges as a "frameup" but as a political challenge which I will try to answer on a political level.

### Who Are the Sectarians?

It is true enough that opposition to the tactical line adopted by the Third World Congress takes the form mainly of sectarianism.

In Britain, opposition to the line would obviously take the form of resistance to entry in the Labor Party where the workers in the great mass happen to be at present. As a matter of fact, the British Trotskyists had to go through a sharp struggle before they succeeded in applying this tactic.

In France, opposition to the line would obviously take the form of resistance to entry in the Stalinist-led organizations where the workers in the great mass happen to be at present. And in fact, our French co-thinkers underwent a split when a considerable part of their movement resisted undertaking this difficult and onerous tactic.

What form would opposition to the line take in America? It is obvious, it seems to me, that it would take the form of resistance to the day-to-day difficult work among the proletariat that constitutes our main orientation. How easy it is, and even pleasant, to sit in New York working out good advice for our Chinese comrades about risking their heads in order to carry on the necessary but exceedingly difficult day-to-day work required there! It is not even too unpleasant advising the French Trotskyists about the need to roll up their sleeves and not mind the slop-pail chore of working among Stalinist-dominated organizations. But the American workers -- in their political backwardness, their relative conservatism, their resistance to the world concepts of Trotskyism -- that's a different matter! We are suddenly faced with the terrible problem of "finding a political milieu in which to operate" (Bartell, Report and Tasks, p. 8) and of course the Compass Clubs "are the most satisfactory places for work since they meet regularly, and their sole activity is political discussion." (p.8)

When you spot such an attitude in our party, you have spotted sectarianism -- the genuine unadulterated article made in the USA.

True enough, it takes an opportunist form. It looks toward the green pastures of the Stalinist petty-bourgeois circles and even

babbles about the revolutionary side of Stalinism and the possibility of American Stalinism taking a revolutionary course -- but haven't we always been taught that opportunism and sectarianism are only two sides of the same coin? We need only note that Comrade Bartell and his co-factionalists have provided us with a fresh living example of this phenomenon for the benefit of the newest generation of students of Marxism.

### The Bleibtreu Tendency in America

In his hasty and ill-considered first attempt at a reply to my article, Comrade Frankel asked whether "Hansen is an opponent of the conceptions of the World Congress in the French style. . ." He did not answer the question directly, stating that he would reserve it for "a full examination at a later time." Nevertheless, he implied that I am an opponent of conceptions of the Congress in the French style, that my document leaves me "in a very equivocal position" and other comrades "may have drawn their conclusion."

Pursuing this line of attack, he cited some arguments of the Bleibtreu faction and even quoted from the correspondence between Daniel Renard, a leading member of this disloyal grouping, and Comrade Cannon.

I will not charge Comrade Frankel with attempting to make an amalgam here but instead thank him for bringing up this instructive example from which all of us can learn something.

The Bleibtreu faction in France agreed with the general line of the Third World Congress in words just as the Cochran-Bartell-Clarke-Frankel faction does in America. But when it came to applying the French form of the proletarian orientation, they balked, just as Bartell and the rest balk at applying its American form.

Comrade Pablo and his collaborators called Bleibtreu to order, raising the question of Bleibtreu's orientation. The response of this faction in France should prove an eye-opener, especially to some of the comrades here in New York. You can get a taste of it for yourself by reading Daniel Renard's letter to Comrade Cannon, published in the International Information Bulletin of November 1952.

Listen to Renard's response when his orientation is challenged: "The truth is that whatever the spheres of activity of our party, nothing has given rise to the slightest criticism by any of the leading bodies of the International regarding remissness in applying the line laid down by the last World Congress." Like Comrade Bartell, when he was challenged on orientation, Renard demanded concrete criticisms of "spheres of activity."

Then like Comrade Bartell, he cites some of the spheres of activity: In youth work, application of the line "has called forth no important criticism." In trade union work the same situation, and Renard tries to show that Comrade Stevens -- pardon me, Comrade Pierre Frank -- a member of the National Contact Commission, was in "complete agreement" and therefore shared responsibility. Finally, in the central organ of the party, where application of a wrong line would

surely show if anywhere, no concrete criticisms were offered by Pablo.

". . . if the leadership had really desired to carry out a different line," says Renard, "this would have revealed itself not accidentally in episodic and piecemeal cases, but in the entire activity of the party, in all spheres, daily, and at every step. Examples of such an undisciplined attitude would be so numerous that there would be no difficulty in presenting a great many of them." That's Renard speaking, not Comrade Bartell.

Now note another striking parallel. In France the devil who is pressing the proletarian orientation is Comrade Pablo. Consequently this orientation is known there as "Pabloism." And the Bleibtreu faction, wanting to carry out the American tactic in France seeks a patron saint whom they can use to fight "Pabloism." Naturally they scan the American movement where such a figure might be found and their eyes light on Comrade Cannon to whom they write, hoping for support.

In America the devil who is pressing the proletarian orientation is Comrade Cannon. Consequently this orientation has more or less become known over the years as "Cannonism." Observe closely now. Comrade Bartell and his co-factionalists, apparently wanting to apply a French tactic in America, or a reasonable facsimile of it, seek a patron saint whom they can use to fight "Cannonism." Naturally they scan the European movement where such a figure might be found and their eyes light on Comrade Pablo whom they begin presenting as if they had his support.

In the case of both Bleibtreu and Bartell, we are dealing with a sectarian grouping. They are sectarian because they resist applying the tactic fitted to the peculiar conditions of the country they live in. The resistance is to day-to-day work in the proletariat as it is and not as we wish it or as it was in upsurges of the past, or as it will become in the future. In both cases an attempt is made to carry out an orientation that takes the party away from the masses. It is done under guise of supporting the conceptions of the World Congress while in reality applying a tactic in conflict with those conceptions.

The parallel between the Bleibtreu faction in France and the faction which has risen in the SWP is a deadly one. Let me again express my gratitude to Comrade Frankel for calling it to my attention. It gave me among other things the opportunity to show by example what I mean by giving a political answer to a political challenge.

### In Conclusion

Let me now recapitulate. I have tried to establish that what we have on our hands is an unprincipled faction that is sectarian in orientation, opportunist in outlook. In my opinion it is a reflection in our party of the social pressures bearing down upon us.

Its mood of pessimism about the American workers and optimism about Stalinism shows that it is essentially escapist. In place of

seeking hard tough work in the mass movement, in unions as unsavory as Ryan's longshore empire, for example, it seeks a short cut by converting a secondary tactic toward the Stalinist petty-bourgeois circles into a major orientation. It rationalizes this with the delusory belief that Stalinism will manifest revolutionary tendencies in America and that we must take our place in their ranks in time. In line with this outlook, Comrade Bartell attempted to smuggle into the New York local an orientation that reverses the one laid down by our party and supported by our co-thinkers abroad.

Trying to defend this course when he was caught with the goods, Comrade Bartell has advanced concepts that are not in accord with either our program or our tradition.

It is time, in my opinion, for the party to call a halt to this dangerous development, to reaffirm our proletarian orientation and to turn the party more consistently toward work in the unions and other organizations such as the NAACP. Along with this we must try to make our paper more for the ordinary worker, and by applying and developing our Transition Program more consistently try to bridge the gap that now stands between our revolutionary socialist concepts and the present level of thinking of the American workers.

March 21, 1953

NEW YORK LOCAL OPPONENTS WORK REPORT

By Lou S.

(Note: I am submitting my New York Local Opponents Work Report to the national Internal Bulletin for the following reasons:

The work of the N.Y. Local in this field of activity and especially the direction of this work by Comrade Bartell and me, was attacked by Stevens and Ring. Since Comrade Stevens chose to publish his attack in the national bulletin, I am submitting this report to make clear the precise nature of this work and of our approach to it.

The fraudulent charge that we counterposed or substituted opponents work for trade union work as the fundamental orientation of the party has been adequately answered by Comrade Bartell in "The Struggle in the New York Local." This report deals specifically with our activities in the field of opponents work for the year 1952, and outlines our objectives and policies.)

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OPPONENTS WORK REPORT  
by Lou S.

Our most important rival in the radical movement of New York is the Stalinist movement. This movement must be viewed broadly, including in its scope not only the Communist Party, but also those organizations, groups and individuals sympathetic to, allied with, or influenced to one degree or another by Stalinism.

This movement, taken as a whole, is by no means monolithic or even homogeneous. Centrifugal tendencies generated by the pressures of reaction and the cold war have produced fissures, conflicts and a general loosening up in this camp, as revealed by the conflict over civil rights for Trotskyists, the conflict within the ALP between the Marcantonio forces and the CP, the emergence of the Monthly Review tendency which displays a growing independence from the CP, a more critical attitude within the peripheral organizations, etc.

However, all of the groups and tendencies have up to now in general remained allied on the basis of the Stalinist policies and within the organizational framework of the ALP. Questions of our general appraisal of the relative strength and importance of this movement, its physiognomy, direction and internal developments, as well as our general attitude and tactical approach to it have all been dealt with extensively in the Political Resolution unanimously adopted at our last National Convention. This should serve as the basis for a consideration of our local work and tactics. Since this resolution may not be readily available to all comrades, this section of the Political Resolution is appended to this report.

After our last City Convention, the City Committee designated a special committee to develop our work in this field. We had to start from scratch, without any contact to speak of with the Stalinoid world in this city, or any precise information by which to be guided.

This serious defect dictated our first task: to probe the field, to find out what is.

Over a period of several months, right up to the petition drive for the national elections, this was with minor exceptions, our sole purpose in this field. Then, beginning with the petition drive, and the general summer slack, this activity was forced to a complete halt in order to concentrate on election work.

However, up to this time we had succeeded in involving sixteen comrades, and in covering a whole series of clubs and organizations within the Stalinist milieu, and in acquiring a fair picture (by no means complete) of the Stalinoid world in New York. Our comrades made acquaintance with eight different ALP clubs; eight Compass clubs; the Monthly Review Forum; the Jefferson School of Social Science; two LYL youth branches; one Youth Peace Club; the organizing committee of the Civil Rights Congress Youth Division; two discussion social clubs. None of these comrades were diverted from other party tasks. (Quite the contrary, with the beginning of the Tenants League work in Harlem, four comrades were withdrawn from opponents work, including one member of the Committee.) Many of these comrades were

comparatively new in our movement, with little or no experience in mass work, and without a field for political work outside the party. The comrades generally responded with enthusiasm to this opportunity to do political work in a radical milieu.

During the latter part of the election campaign, a "great debate" gripped the entire ALP camp over the question of the "lesser evil" Stevenson or the "Peace candidate" Hallinan, with I.F. Stone and Sweezy going the "lesser evil" way, and Huberman, Marcantonio and the CP upholding the P.P. candidate. We tried to revive our activity in order to intervene actively in this debate and we were fairly successful. Aside from the numerous radio and TV broadcasts, we made known our position at four Compass clubs, one Youth Peace club, the Monthly Review Forum, and had an article in the Monthly Review magazine by Clarke and an article in the Daily Compass by Bartell.

At present we have eight comrades keeping in touch with five Compass Clubs, two comrades active in ALP clubs and several more assigned to this organization; several comrades who attend the Monthly Review Forums; two comrades assigned to a Youth Peace Club. In addition we maintain very good relations with five leading elements from left-wing Zionist youth organizations. Our comrade who belonged to the LYL left New York, leaving a gap. Another big gap in our work has been our failure to attract comrades for assignment to the Jefferson School.

ALP - A striking feature about the ALP is the difference one encounters from one club to the next. There is some relationship between the neighborhood and the composition of the club. In the Puerto Rican area there is a big, live workers club; one Bronx club is good-sized, with predominantly white-collar elements; a second Bronx club is smaller, composed of white-collar elements and workers, all on a high political level. The age groups are more uniform however, being mainly composed of people in the thirties, with some in the forties and some in the twenties.

The political complexion also varies from club to club. We recall the experience of comrade Johnny K. who went to sell literature at a club in Manhattan in the Marcantonio district. Ten people arrived for the meeting, eight of them bought The Militant, the chairman referred to an article in The Militant during the meeting, and comrade Johnny was invited to join the club! We had a similar experience in Brooklyn, where several comrades spoke during the elections for Dobbs and Weiss against Hallinan and Bass before a Compass Club. The comrades were approached afterwards by a member of the neighborhood ALP club to join up, and this ALPer felt that rejecting Hallinan and Bass during the election period was no reason to stay out of the ALP.

An example on the other extreme is the East Bronx club mentioned in the preceding paragraph. In this club our comrade is asked to participate in practical work, but finds it very difficult to become integrated, must be very wary of what he says, and is surrounded by the Stalinists in an atmosphere of suspicion.

ALP POLICY - Our objective in working in the ALP,

as in any rival political party, is to destroy its influence to our advantage among workers and radical petty-bourgeois, by winning as much of its following as possible to our ideas and our party.

Our comrades working in the ALP should as a rule not operate as members of the SWP, but as revolutionary socialists who distinguish themselves from the Stalinists and Marcantonio leadership by consistent advocacy of a socialist program and of the most militant class struggle policies and actions. The purpose of this tactic is to bring about a differentiation in the ranks, with the aim of crystallising socialist left-wing groups which would serve as a bridge to our party.

The crisis of perspective which has now overtaken the ALP, the question of to be or not to be, presents the best possible opportunity for employing such a tactic. The ALP is confronted with the following dilemma: on the one hand, its avowed program is strictly reformist, on the premise that it is a "labor party" and thus should have a partial program which can embrace the entire class or a large section of it on the level of its present consciousness; on the other hand, it is in reality a minority radical party, influencing a maximum of 100,000 in the city, whose base is constantly narrowing rather than widening.

The ranks have been confronted with two alternatives. The Stalinist solution is to liquidate the ALP (which they now look upon as a blind alley) and join with the mass of the workers who are affiliated with the Democratic Party through their unions, in order to form a left-wing embracing the unions, the Negro movement, etc., which allegedly would eventually emerge as an independent labor party.

Marcantonio opposes the Stalinist policy of liquidation, but offers no solution other than the status quo. But the ALP serves neither to mobilize the class in struggle for partial demands because of its isolation from the masses, nor to educate and train a principled socialist vanguard because of its reformist program.

Our comrades should advocate a policy which will influence and attract the most class conscious elements and set them in leftward motion in opposition to the opportunist policies of both the Stalinists and Marcantonio. They should propose that the ALP adopt a straightforward socialist program, concretized by a platform of revolutionary transitional demands including the nationalization of war industries under workers' control, withdrawal of U.S. troops from Korea and all foreign countries, a referendum on war, for a genuine labor party based on the unions, etc.

Such a policy should win some support among the best elements and help to break them loose from the influence of their present leaders. At a maximum, such a tactic will bring about a socialist, left-wing tendency in the ALP, moving in our direction. At a minimum, it will help to influence and recruit individuals to our party. It is unfortunate that we do not have more comrades active in the ALP to exploit this opportunity to our advantage.

As in any organization, in order to be effective, our comrades will have to participate in activities in order to get a

hearing.

Naturally, here as elsewhere, our comrades would exploit every opportunity both at meetings and in informal discussion to present our ideas on all political questions that arise and seek out individuals for contacting. The fact that the principal function of the ALP is electoral work limits the possibilities for raising, or intervening in discussions of political questions. However, because the ALP is not simply an electoral machine, but a radical party, we find that spontaneous discussions, and even formal discussions on general political questions are common. For the same reason, the ALP engages in non-electoral activities which make it possible to introduce questions of program, policy and methods quite naturally. An example of this is the campaign now being launched by the ALP against Eisenhower's aggressive policy toward China.

COMPASS CLUBS - The Compass Clubs were founded with the purpose of supporting the Compass newspaper (which had a 30,000 to 50,000 daily circulation in New York). However, these clubs never really pursued that purpose seriously, and they became neighborhood forums for radicals of all stripes and shadings, drawing their crowd from the readers of the Compass. The common denominator is opposition to the war drive and the witch-hunt. The political atmosphere in these clubs is very favorable, and our people can unfold our full program. We have encountered no discrimination against SWPers. On the contrary, where such an attempt was made by a Stalinist, it was blocked by the chair and the audience applauded the decision. The Stalinists are active in these clubs, but they do not control them.

I.F. Stone followers, together with a miscellany of other elements are the majority on the National Board, and the Stalinists are a sizeable minority. The National Board makes recommendations which the clubs are not duty-bound to accept. More or less, each club can go its own way, and does.

Approximately 6 of these clubs continue to function even though the Compass had folded. The attendance varies greatly and depends largely on the nature of the meeting. Regular meetings vary from 20 to 60 as a rule, but publicized lectures or debates draw good crowds, often between one and two hundred.

What keeps these clubs going, now that the Compass has been gone for some months? Although the Compass Clubs are in decline the existing clubs are still very much alive, and this is due primarily to the fact that there is today a strong desire on the part of radical elements to get together and discuss, to hear fresh opinions, to try to clarify ideas and to stick together.

The composition of these clubs, which also varies from area to area, is less favorable from our viewpoint than the ALP. Nonetheless, they still attract a good crowd and therefore merit our attention. It is doubtful that these clubs will have a prolonged existence and if a further decline sets in, various clubs will probably amalgamate and may wind up with one or two large forums.

COMPASS CLUBS POLICY - The Compass Clubs do not constitute an opponent, or rival political party or tendency,

Especially since the folding of the Compass, these clubs have no independent program, nor policies, nor do they engage in any political action. They do not endorse any party or candidates. They are in reality nothing more than neighborhood political forums. Their members and audiences include many shadings of radical and liberal opinion. Their sole function is to provide an arena for presentation, debate and discussion of current political questions, especially controversial ones.

Our policy with relation to them is therefore the same as toward any forum -- that is, we aim to utilize the forum for the presentation of our ideas against all others toward the end of winning members and sympathizers for our party.

Our comrades assigned to these clubs should seek to win posts which will enable us to influence decisions with regard to the topics and speakers and aim naturally at having a maximum of SWP speakers.

MONTHLY REVIEW FORUM - This monthly forum, which draws its audience mainly from the readers of the Monthly Review magazine, edited by Sweezy and Huberman, with a national circulation of almost 5000, deserves our close attention in this period. The forum generally attracts several hundred people. Of all the groups, this one evinces the greatest interest in Marxist ideas. It is composed in the main of dissident Stalinists who left the organizational orbit of the party and students who have been attracted by the magazine. The forum attracts several hundred people on the average, and we generally get an opportunity to speak from the floor.

JEFFERSON SCHOOL - From all reports we conclude that this institution attracts some of the best young CP cadres, the most intellectually alert; also, any CPer who begins to ask too many questions is assigned to the Jefferson School. The curriculum includes classes in Marxian economics and philosophy, imperialism, colonial questions, current politics and a weekly forum. All in all, the school is attractive to the serious young students of Marxism who can be sucked into their orbit. We must make an effort to enter these classes and forum, where our comrades should be able to find many good contacts. Leaflet distributions announcing our forum on the Soviet anti-Semitic trials attracted at least two students of the school.

LABOR YOUTH LEAGUE - The LYL remains the live and active, although small, CP youth organization, since the YPA died a gradual death. Our comrade who belonged to two LYL groups reports that the clubs differ somewhat in size, composition and political level. Generally, the LYLeers are working class youth, anti-imperialist and pro-Soviet Union, but not yet case-hardened Stalinists. Such issues as the Stalinist anti-Semitism and the anti-Zionist line will continue to trouble these youth, most of whom in New York are Jewish. The Hashomer Hatzair youth have been closely connected with the LYL. Then there is the case of a friend from Habonim (social democratic Zionist youth) who after becoming disillusioned with Habonim, first gravitated to the LYL, and only after some adverse experiences there, and through personal contact with one of our own youth, did he finally find his way to us. We are obliged to do what we can from the

outside. But the element of personal contact is absolutely vital. Our Youth Branch should attempt to colonize one or two comrades in this organization.

ZIONIST YOUTH - Our movement internationally has always recruited excellent elements from the Hashomer Hatzair (left-wing Zionist youth) which until recently was predominantly pro-Stalinist. Today this organization is at a low ebb in the U.S., but all the same we have been in touch with serious young people who are interested in becoming Marxists. Now that Stalinism has been seriously compromised in this organization, we ought to make some headway.

CIVIL RIGHTS CONGRESS YOUTH - This organization which the CP launched last spring had a promising beginning but never developed substantially. Our comrade who functioned there reports that very good youth elements participated in this organization.

YOUTH FOR PEACE CLUB - This club was sponsored by LYL elements, and has had its ups and downs. The Stalinists could never quite dominate the group and we had, at one time, three of our youth there. Only one comrade remains, and when a motion was made by the CP whip to expel him, the club voted against this motion -- even some Stalinist members voted against. During the elections comrade Anne M. spoke there for the SWP and received a good response. Our comrade distributes The Militant and other literature. At the moment, the club is in decline, in part because the leading Stalinists have pulled out.

DISCUSSION-SOCIAL CLUBS - During the past year there were numerous discussion groups formed by radicals and liberals who felt the need to get together and talk things over. Ads were appearing frequently in the Compass advertising this or that independent discussion and social club. Of the two such clubs with which we got acquainted, one was a youth club, composed of a sprinkling of LYLers and generally radical youth. The other discussion group also had a sprinkling of Stalinists, some Social Democrats, and others before whom one could discuss socialist ideas. This second group was mainly petty-bourgeois in composition. We were not on the lookout for such groups, but having come across them we felt it was worthwhile to investigate. Any youth discussion groups we meet up with should not be neglected.

DOUGLASS SCHOOL - The Douglass School was established as the Harlem branch of the Jefferson School, and was an outstanding flop this year, inasmuch as it failed to attract Negroes. The Jefferson School, on the other hand, does attract Negroes.

SUMMARY - During this year we can record the following progress vis-a-vis the Stalinoid world and their allies:

At the Youth Peace Conference, held last Feb. 22, three comrades participated in panel discussions, where all proposals made by our comrades (such as withdrawal of the troops from Korea and the referendum on war) were adopted by the panels, and comrade Ethel B. was able to present our program before the conference.

At the Citizens Emergency Defense Conference, held

last March 16, a resolution was adopted extending the defense of civil rights of ALL persons penalized by the Smith Act and the restoration of civil rights to past victims of the Act. This was a far cry from the action of the Bill of Rights Conference of July, 1948, which went on record against defending the Trotskyist victims of the Smith Act.

During the city elections of 1951 and the recent national elections we were able to make a considerable impact on the Stalinist ranks and sympathizers via the radio, TV and forums.

The pressure from within their own camp resulting from their vulnerable position in appealing to the labor and liberal movement, and in part from our active intervention, finally compelled them to reverse their formal stand on civil rights for Trotskyists.

We are in a far superior position now, owing to the above mentioned developments and our own opponents work, to reach these groupings and to profit therefrom, than we were one year back.

Our experience thus far demonstrates that there are opportunities open to us in this field for counteracting and undermining the influence of Stalinism, winning important new contacts and sympathizers, as well as providing our comrades with an opportunity to gain experience in political struggle with our opponents. It is far easier for us to get a hearing for our ideas in these groups than we could in the past. In mapping out our over-all plans for local activities, we should consider this an important field of work and assign forces to it accordingly.

Feb. 12, 1953

(Excerpt from the Political Resolution of the 15th National Convention)

Our chief opponent in the struggle for the allegiance of the radical-minded workers in the electoral field today is the Progressive Party, which includes the Stalinists as its dominant force. It is the only other party which places its main propaganda emphasis on opposition to the war plans of American imperialism and to the witch-hunt. As such, despite its bourgeois-liberal program, it continues to provide a point of attraction for present and awakening groups of radical workers and students who, despite limited numbers, constitute a large part of the existing organized anti-war movement.

The relationship of forces between the SWP and the PP is more favorable today than in 1948 when the PP was a broad mass movement headed by popular political figures, supported by all the Stalinist controlled unions then still largely intact, and was sufficiently representative of mass discontent with the two old parties to force Truman to swing sharply to the left in the midst of the campaign in order to win the election.

A combination of many factors have reduced the size and effectiveness of the PP. Outstanding among these was the desertion of Wallace, Taylor and other prominent bourgeois politicians and ex-New Dealers, the intimidating effects of the witch-hunt on the labor and Negro movement. Shorn of its bourgeois allies, who put the stamp of a popular front coalition on the party in its heyday, the PP survives today as an alliance between independent radicals, petty-bourgeois politicians and intellectuals on the one side and the Stalinists on the other who play the dominant role providing most of the cadres and active manpower.

This change in the character of the party has removed it from the arena of direct competition with the big capitalist parties and placed it in the camp of radical left-wing politics. In the absence of possibilities of electoral victories as the result of combinations with the major parties, the tendency both toward a more independent role and toward a more radical program becomes more pronounced in the ranks of the party. The program of "progressive capitalism," which presupposes bourgeois allies, is more and more divorced from the realities of the present situation and creates dissatisfaction in the ranks and conflict with the petty-bourgeois and Stalinist leadership.

Our attitude toward the Progressive Party must be determined by the following considerations: That it is the sole electoral organization of importance in the anti-imperialist camp besides ourselves; that it still groups around itself a considerable number of radical workers and students; that the coalition policy of the leadership is in contradiction with the desires and aspirations of a part of its membership and following.

In fighting the PP for the support of the radical workers our propaganda tactics must be devised toward exposing the fundamental fallacy of its basic program while demonstrating by example how a realistic anti-war struggle is conducted. On the other hand, a carefully formulated program of fraction work where warranted by the situation and not in conflict with the needs of our election campaign, united front proposals on specific issues relating to democratic rights, the struggle against war and the Negro question,

can help raise the socialist political level of the rank and file and widen the differentiation between them and the Stalinist-liberal leadership. We must not allow Stalinist domination over these radical-minded workers and students to go unchallenged.

As to the Stalinist party itself: three significant differences characterize the CP today as compared with the past:

1. Under relentless hammering from the bourgeoisie and the labor bureaucracy, and as a result of their own crimes and betrayals, the forces and activities of the Communist Party have constantly declined. The virtually illegalized CP has been driven underground to a very large extent. Its forces largely function behind the cover and through the channels of their various peace fronts and mobilizations, the Civil Rights Congress, the Progressive Party, etc.

However, it should be noted that these blows come all from the right, from official reaction. The Stalinists have not been supplanted in the unions and mass organizations by more radical opponents in the midst of rising class activity but by conservative, reactionary elements in a period of ebb-tide of the class struggle. This tends to mitigate the moral effect of the blows received, to veil the war-time betrayals of Stalinism and may possibly gain them some broader sympathy as the witch-hunt extends to broader layers of the labor and liberal movement.

2. For almost five years the Stalinists have been thrust into a position of opposition to U.S. imperialism and to the official labor bureaucracy. Except for the brief interlude of their alliance with Wallace they have been completely cut off from all allies in that camp. This has not come about because of any policy or design on their part but as a result of the evolution of the American and world situation. Important changes have occurred as a result in the outlook and composition of the CP membership and its immediate periphery. Petty bourgeois, careerists and opportunist types who swarmed around the CP during the palmy days of Roosevelt and the war have abandoned it in droves. What remains of the whittled-down party are a large cadre of corrupted functionaries, old case-hardened Stalinists, and others who are prepared to suffer the full consequences of the repression, who completely identify themselves with the camp of the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China and who tend to become more and more revolutionary in their outlook and conceptions than at any time since the ultra-leftist "Third period".

3. The changed position of the CP in relation to official bourgeois society and the altered conceptions of the rank and file as to the tasks of the party clashes directly with the unchanging orientation of the Stalinist leadership. Under the tutelage of the Kremlin and because of their own conservative opportunistic background, the bureaucrats continue to pursue the same type of Peoples' Front, class collaborationist policy they did in the Thirties and the Forties, adapted now to the various "peace" campaigns launched from Moscow. In fact they are more prepared to abandon independent class politics, to support bourgeois politicians on the flimsiest grounds than are some of their petty-bourgeois allies in and around the Progressive Party. The anachronism of this policy

is not only that it produces no results and that the isolation of the CP worsens but that with each failure the Stalinist leaders shout louder for a "progressive coalition" and condemn those who want to "go it alone." The utter lack of realism, not to speak of lack of success of the policy of their leadership creates serious moods of discontent, questioning and restiveness among the rank and file. The "Browderism" of the present leadership becomes more frustrating than the policy of Browder himself who actually had powerful bourgeois and union allies. The moods of discontent are further aggravated by the fact that the sources of authority in the party, because of the jailings and its illegal condition, are no longer clearly discernible or established in the eyes of the membership.

These conditions properly utilized place us in a favorable position to undermine the influence of the CP leadership among their rank and file, to divert some of their new recruits in our direction and even to win adherents from them directly.

In the forthcoming presidential election campaign, as in all our public activity, we have the opportunity to demonstrate on the broad arena of working class politics how revolutionary socialists conduct the struggle against the threatened war against the USSR, Eastern Europe, China and the revolutionary workers' movements. This propaganda, put directly, positively in all its revolutionary implications will have a strong impact on the Stalinist ranks who cannot fail to notice the real Leninism as contrasted with the spurious variety peddled by their own leadership. The conditions will thus be created for a polemic with Stalinism before a Stalinist audience which can only yield favorable results.

An important question in regard to our attitude to the Stalinists, and not only the Stalinists, is that of the proposal for a Five-power Peace Conference. To the Kremlin bureaucracy this slogan is aimed at reestablishing international class collaboration for which it is prepared to sacrifice working class and colonial revolutionary movements. For the Stalinist bureaucrats here it becomes a device to reinstate some form of peoples Front. But for those outside their ranks it is a form of expressing discontent with the policies of the State Department and for the Stalinist rank and file it signifies a means of opposition and exposure of the aggressive drive of U.S. imperialism to war. Our press must explain both aspects of this question.

While we mercilessly expose and denounce the treacherous aims of Kremlin diplomacy, we cannot oppose the proposal for a Five-power conference any more than we can advocate it. What we must insist upon is that there can be no effective struggle for peace without the independent mobilization of the masses against imperialism. Wherever the proposal for a Five-Power conference is made in any workers' organization we should amend it with our demand for a referendum on war, for the withdrawal of the troops, the recognition of China, etc. Such a tactic will deprive the Stalinists of their spurious charge that we reject practical measures short of socialism in the struggle against war. At the same time, it will give the anti-war movement more radical class forms which is precisely what the Stalinists wish to avoid. In their aim of establishing a "broad coalition" for peace.

Our tactics toward the Stalinist ranks will gain in

effectiveness by combining the propagandist methods already described with a consistent policy of loyally supporting them against repression and pressing them for united actions in defense of democratic rights. Such a position places the Stalinist leaders in an impossible situation. They cannot admit that Trotskyists can have a principled class position on the witch-hunt and they cannot permit the proximity of our membership with theirs. Yet it has been clearly demonstrated that they cannot oppose our participation in such actions without exposing themselves as unscrupulous factionalists, endangering their remaining non-party support and creating dissatisfaction in their own ranks.

Regardless of immediate gains, the long-range aim of this tactic is to break down the hostility the Stalinist leaders have erected against Trotskyism. Once this barrier of slander and suspicion is removed and Stalinist workers can judge with some objectivity between the policies of the two parties, our political program will more than compensate for our inferior numbers in the struggle for the allegiance of the advanced workers. This tactic is a necessary supplement to our main course of struggling for influence and leadership over the principal body of trade union militants and politically unorganized workers.