

# **T H E B U L L E T I N**

**AN OPEN LETTER TO MEMBERS OF SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY**

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**THE THIRD BRITISH "LABOR" GOVERNMENT**

**—J. C. HUNTER**

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**FRANKENSTEEN — WHOSE CANDIDATE?**

**—A. JAMES**

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**SEVENTEEN YEARS OF SELLOUTS: THE WORK OF CANNON AND  
SCHACHTMAN IN THE TRADE UNIONS— PART TWO**

**THE MINNEAPOLIS TEAMSTERS'  
STRIKES OF 1934**

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**LENINIST LEAGUE LINE SPLITS R. W. L.**

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**THE TROTSKY SCHOOL OF FALSIFICATION**

**Checking Up on Cannon's "History,"**

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THE BULLETIN and its PURPOSE

THE BULLETIN is devoted to crystallizing the programmatic foundation for a new proletarian party in America and a Marxist International. On the basis of the lessons of the October Revolution, of a struggle against the betrayals resulting from the Stalinist degeneration of the Comintern, against the workings of Social-democracy, as well as against the policies of imperialism in the present epoch, THE BULLETIN presents a system of ideas for the fight against capitalism.

The immediate aim of THE BULLETIN is to arm the revolutionary workers with an understanding of the pseudo-Marxist organizations now controlling the proletarian vanguard and to organize these workers into a new Marxist Party.

The role of Stalinism as the chief betrayer within the ranks of the proletariat and of the Trotsky tendency as a loyal "opposition" and main prop of Stalinism among the revolutionary anti-Stalinist workers has been established in THE BULLETIN with documentary evidence. THE BULLETIN contains the only Marxist exposure of the so-called "ultra-Left" tendencies which spread the confusion that the Stalinist bureaucratic apparatus operating the state issuing out of a proletarian revolution, is a new class.

To rally the proletarian vanguard around the program of Marxism for the struggle to liberate the toiling masses from every form of oppression - this is the purpose for which THE BULLETIN has fought from its foundation and which differentiates it from all other publications,

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AN OPEN LETTER TO THE  
MEMBERS AND SYMPATHIZERS OF THE S.W.P.

Comrades: -

You may have been taken aback by the call of your Party upon you and other workers to give your "second choice" vote to Councilman Benjamin Davis, an undisguised Stalinist bureaucrat and representative of the Kremlin assassins of the revolutionary workers of the Soviet Union, Spain and other countries. To be sure, as ever, Cannon's pro-Stalinist line is neatly wrapped in the cellophane of "criticism." The recitation of Davis' anti-workingclass line such as "His policy of collaborating with the agents of Wall Street," and the reference to the fact that "The Stalinist Party of which Davis is a national officer, functions as a servile tool of the reactionary foreign policy of the Stalinist bureaucrats in the Soviet Union," are an abstract verbal cover for the concrete policy of pushing you and other workers to give political backing to the worst Judases in the workers' camp.

The usual excuse of a loyal opposition, as everybody knows, is "we have criticised them and their policy." Indeed, international Social Democracy always "criticises" imperialism, and through that very method attaches the workers to the capitalist class. As to the Stalinist Comintern, it has published bales of "criticism" against Fascism, against imperialism, and under that deceptive cloak has been betraying the workers to the Fascist butchers.

Your leaders have often used very fiery phrases of condemnation of the Stalin bureaucracy, especially at moments of GPU assassinations. Cannon once designated Stalinism as the syphilis of the labor movement. This made you imagine you were being led into battle against the horrible Stalinist disease. In reality you have been taken off guard. While you have been enveloped with a cloud of strong words, the Cannon leadership has been tying you time and time again to the Stalinist monster. The most common method has been the insistence that you give support to the GPU candidates in the popular elections.

The reasons given by The Militant (October 13, 1945) for calling upon you to vote for the Stalinist Councilman Davis are no less hypocritical than the accompanying "criticism." The SWP urges you and other workers to back Davis "solely because he is a Negro candidate on the ticket of a working class party." Let us take a closer look at these reasons in the light of Marxist struggle for the emancipation of the toiling masses of all races. Note that there are two reasons given: one, that Davis is a Negro; two, that he is a candidate of a "working class party."

Marxism advocates support of a candidate not for the color of his skin but for the color of his politics. No racial or national group is homogeneous, but is divided into classes, toilers and exploiters. Those Negro chieftains who during the period of chattel slavery hunted for the human beings of their race in the wilds of Africa and delivered them for a price to the white slavers to be transported into the colonies, represented not the interests of the Negro masses but the interests of the slave-owners. A Negro who serves Wall Street imperialism or Stalin, and in the case of Davis, both Stalin and Wall Street, is one of the worst enemies of the Negro masses, a promoter of wage slavery and sharecropper exploitation of the toiling Negroes and

a supporter of enslavement and oppression of the toiling people of all races.

A Marxist draws a line of separation between agents of slavery and fighters for the emancipation of the exploited and oppressed. The Jews, for instance, are perhaps the most oppressed and tortured national minority in all history. But only an ignoramus or a faker will have failed to observe the brutal fact that the Jewish masses murdered by Hitler were victims not only of the Nazi terror but also of the Jewish bankers who were among those that helped financially to build the Hitler machine. It would be an unpardonable crime on the part of a Marxist leadership to urge the workers to give support to a Jewish politician because he is a Jew, although he is either one of those who directly aided Hitler or their masked agent.

Davis is not a "Negro candidate," he is a Stalinist candidate and as such must be unhesitatingly opposed and condemned by you as an enemy of the Negro and white workers.

The second reason given you by The Militant for supporting Davis is the story about the Stalinist organization being "a working class party." This is an outrageous lie, and no one knows this better than the Trotskyist leadership. On what grounds do the Cannon leaders call the Stalinist party a "working class party"? Because many workers are members and many other workers give it their support? Cannon knows perfectly well that the membership-composition and the mass support of an organization never determine its political nature and role in the arena of classes. The class character of an organization is determined by its politics. The Democratic Party, which has more working class supporters than all the so-called Marxist parties put together, is a party of Wall Street Imperialism. The traditional "working class" parties of the Second International long ago were analyzed by Lenin as petty-bourgeois parties, though they operate in the midst of the working class.

The Cannon leaders know that the name "Communist Party" is but a deceptive label to fool the uninformed victims of Stalinism. They know that far from being a working class party, the Stalinist organization is a counter-revolutionary trap whose policy is consciously designed by its leadership to capture the workers by any device and sell them to capitalism. The Browder-Foster leadership of that "working class party" consciously assisted Stalin to deliver the advanced workers of Germany to Hitler and aided the GPU to destroy the revolutionary workers in Spain. That leadership of which Davis is an inseparable part is preparing the ground today for new bloody catastrophies for the toiling masses. The American "Communist Party" is a wing of Stalinism and as such serves the interests of the Kremlin gang, of American imperialism and of international capitalism as a whole. Any worker who supports Davis, the undisguised agent of Stalin and a member of Foster's National Committee, supports not a candidate of a "working class party" but a candidate of an organization representing the Stalinist counter-revolution.

The Cannon leaders have resorted to the trick of labelling this counter-revolutionary trap "working class party" in order to make it palatable for you to cast your "second choice" vote for the Stalinist bureaucrat, Davis.

The Cannon leadership carries on the traditional policy of the Trotsky loyal opposition to safeguard Stalinism, especially in periods of strong anti-Stalinist ferment among the victims of the Comintern.

Today the Stalinist workers are in a state of agitation. It is one of those moments which a real Marxist Party would utilize to cut the chain that holds the advanced workers to the Comintern bureaucracy. But the Cannon leadership reinforces that chain by urging the workers to give support to a Foster stooge, by white-washing the counter-revolutionary trap of Stalinism with the honorable name of a "working class party."

When the Stalinists pursue a line of "critical support" to a reactionary politician, the Trotskyite leaders put on an air of righteous indignation and utter words of condemnation. Thus, when the Stalinists who only yesterday denounced O'Dwyer in harsh language, came out for O'Dwyer as a politician "close to labor," the Trotskyites wrote scathing words: "The Stalinists work with one hand in a bucket of mud, the other in a bucket of whitewash." (The Militant, July 7, 1945) This is true, but the fact is that the Trotskyites practice not the abstract Marxist policy that they preach, but the concrete opportunist line they denounce. With their right hand they describe Davis as a tool of the Kremlin cut-throats, and with their left hand they whitewash the counter-revolutionary Stalinist party as "a working class party."

The Stalin bureaucrats poured a pail of particularly filthy slop into the face of the Trotskyist leadership for its endorsement of Davis. In this the Stalin bureaucrats merely copy the capitalist politicians. For example, O'Dwyer naturally benefits by the Stalinist support, but he makes a public repudiation of that support to save face before the voters who believe the Stalinists represent Communism. Similarly, when the Trotsky leaders lend aid in returning Davis to office, the Foster crew knowing well that every bit helps, publicly repudiates the Trotskyites who are known officially as "anti-Stalinists." The Stalinist bureaucrats, always supported by Cannon, invariably profit by that support, but they don't like to be kissed by Cannon in public.

Members and sympathizers of the SWP! How long will you tolerate this pro-Stalinist treachery of the Cannon leadership! Refuse to give support to the Stalinist hangmen of the working class! Reject the rotten Stalinist policy of Cannon and his aides, repudiate the line which transforms you and other revolutionary workers into a tail to the sinister Comintern machine. Cast off the deception disseminated by the Cannon leaders that the Trotsky movement has ceased to be a "faction of the Comintern." Their "independent" policy is the same as ever — support to their parent body, the Stalinist system.

At this moment your leaders are talking unity with another opportunist outfit which also has a line of tying the workers to the Kremlin butchers of the revolution. That outfit is Shachtman's Workers Party. Shachtman stands in principle on the line of supporting Stalinists, Social Democrats or any other agent of reaction who can possibly be painted up as a "working class" candidate. As Shachtman put it at the time the Cannon leaders called for support to the known Stalinist stooge, Eugene Connolly: "Now, no revolutionary or working class principle is violated in endorsing a Social-Democratic or Reformist or Stalinist candidate for office in an election. Given certain conditions it is right and necessary." (Labor Action, March 17, 1941)

Refuse to unite with "leaders" who spare no effort to tack the working class to its most vicious enemies! Unite with the Leninist League in furthering the task of building a truly independent, truly Marxist Fourth International!

LENINIST LEAGUE, U.S.A.  
October 1945

Address: P.O.B. 67, Station D, New York City

THE THIRD BRITISH  
"LABOR" GOVERNMENT

The formation of the British Labor Party cabinet, with a majority in Parliament, to head the British Empire, has let loose a flood of interpretations of the significance of this event for the working class.

In a brief note in the last issue of THE BULLETIN written on the day of the formation of the "Labor" Government, we evaluated it in the following words:

"The so-called Labor Party Government of Attlee-Bevin is an imperialist Government, not a government of the workingclass in any sense whatever. The Labor Party Government has no policy in the interests of the masses, but continues the policies of British imperialism in different words from Churchill and to different music. This Government, like that of Churchill, can lead the workers only to the strengthening of the capitalist class and eventually to disaster." (July-August 1945, p. 16)

This evaluation was made before the Attlee Government had a chance to put any of its policies into practice and thus to reveal concretely its class character. Hence our evaluation was in a sense a prognosis. It was a prognosis, however, based not on any guess work but on all the teachings of history with regard to the British Labor Party. The whole past of the British Labor Party leadership shows it to be an agency of British imperialism. This Laborite gang formed two Governments in the past. In both cases the Laborite Government acted as a spearhead of reaction, increasing the capitalist class pressure on the masses in Great Britain and launching bloody attacks on the colonial slaves of British imperialism. The class line of the Labor Party not only has not changed one iota since those two Governments, but has become intensified and if anything more clearly expressed as a line exclusively in the interests of the capitalists.

Sharply contrasted with our evaluation was that given by the Trotskyites. The Trotskyite leaders elevated the election of the Labor Party Government to "An Inspiring Victory" (J.P. Cannon's Militant of August 4, 1945), and similarly, according to the line of the British Trotskyites: "The General Election has resulted in a smashing victory for the working class." (Socialist Appeal, August 1945) The Shachtmanite Trotskyites echoed their former colleague, Cannon, that the electoral victory of the British Labor Party "is a victory that should command the support and admiration of the workers of the world." (Labor Action, August 6, 1945)

Even more significant than these general cries of "Victory" is the more specific evaluation by the Trotskyites in class terms. In an article under the headline, "British Workers Vote Labor Party to Power," Cannon's Militant declared: "The middle classes of town and country have joined with the workers to deliver the first telling blow against capitalism." (August 4, 1945, p. 4. My emphasis - J.C.H.) The voting of the Labor Party "to power," according to an editorial in The Militant, literally opens the path to a beautiful future for the workers: "British labor now has the possibility of completely reshaping the life of Great Britain in accordance with the needs of the working class and all the poor people." (Ibid.)

It is a matter for living reality to decide which evaluation is

the correct one, the Trotskyites' to the effect that the General Election resulted in "the first telling blow against capitalism," or our analysis, that the General Election resulted in the installation of another imperialist Government pursuing the basic policies of Churchill.

\* \* \*

The keynote of the specific policies of the Laborite Government was struck by Ernest Bevin in his speech on foreign policy. The comments of the bourgeois press on this speech are priceless.

"Ernest Bevin, making his first speech as Britain's new Foreign Secretary, solidly and completely lined the Labor Government up with the former Churchill Coalition Government on questions of foreign policy. There is no better way of summing up his speech than to say that if Winston Churchill had made it there would have been no surprises.

"It was not a debate on foreign policy today; it was a love feast, and Anthony Eden, speaking for the Opposition, did not oppose a single thing Mr. Bevin said but heartily congratulated him on every detail." (The New York Times, August 21, 1945)

The Greek and Indian masses, victims of Churchill's bloody repressions, will find little to comfort them in the policies of Churchill's echo, Ernest Bevin. The Jewish workers, victims of the Fascist butchers who acted with the connivance of the British imperialists, will find that their "democratic" oppressors in Downing Street have changed only in name. At this very moment the "Labor" Government troops are carrying out a bloody suppression of the colonial slaves in the East Indies and French Indo-China.

Not for nothing do the British capitalists view the election of the Labor Party Government with the utmost peace of mind. Indeed, their expressed attitude is one of distinct friendliness. The Daily Mail, a paper of outright fascist leanings and formerly the mouthpiece of Oswald Mosley, is full of good-naturedness in its treatment of the new Government. Its issue of August 8th declared:

"With cordial unanimity all the newspapers, whatever the shade of their political opinions, have showered expressions of good will upon the Labor Ministry and have adjured the country to give them a fair chance."

The first major concrete action of the Attlee Government in regard to the British workers constitutes one of the most vicious blows against the working class. The Laborite Government has already rushed through Parliament a slave labor law more drastic and brazen than any put over even by Churchill; this law is to hold for the next five years:

"The controls give the Government broad powers over the nation's economic life, even to the virtual drafting of labor. Any person seeking work must register with the Labor Exchange and TAKE WHATEVER JOB IS OFFERED." (The New York Times, October 16, 1945. My capitals - J.C.H.)

This law compelling a worker to accept any job the bosses and their "Labor Government will foist on his is obviously designed to launch a furious assault on the living conditions of the toilers. A particular point to note is that this slave law is promulgated for what is called "times of peace." No former Government in Britain ever dared to pass such a bill.

It remained for the "Labor" Government to put over on the masses what was beyond the reach of the openly capitalist Governments.

At this point it is appropriate to note who among others worked like beavers to put the Labor Party scoundrels in office. While from the very outset we categorically condemned any support to the Labor Party agents of imperialism, the British Trotskyites, upon the announcement of the General Election, promptly offered to do electioneering for the Attlee-Bevin imperialist bandits.

"Our comrades will work hard in the localities together with the Labour workers to return a majority Labour Government." (Socialist Appeal, June 1945, p. 4)

Naturally, the Labor Party fakers would have been elected without any aid from the Trotskyites. The latter's function was to act as a transmission belt for spreading the influence of the Labor Party among the relatively advanced workers of Great Britain. The Trotskyites' mythical "first telling blow against capitalism" has already resulted in a very real and ferocious blow against the working class in the form of Attlee-Bevin's slave labor law.

As for the much-vaunted nationalization hocus-pocus of the Labor Party, it is not sufficient to stigmatize it merely as a watery reformist policy designed to bolster capitalism by rubbing a little polish on some of the filthier spots. The Labor Party scheme is one of bourgeois nationalization which in every instance is an outright financial swindle for which the workers are compelled to pay heavily. The essence of the nationalization preached by the Labor Party is to guarantee the profits of the owners of various enterprises.

For the Bank of England the Attlee crowd has already introduced a nationalization bill in Commons which can be characterized only as one of the most brazen financial frauds on record. To begin with, the bill gives a Government guarantee of the present annual profits of the Bank capitalists:

"The Government moved today to nationalize the Bank of England. Under a bill introduced in the House of Commons, the nationalization will mean no financial loss to the 17,500 stockholders, for government obligations to be given in exchange for stock-holders' bank holdings will average the same gross annual return as the bank's stock did over the past twenty years." (The New York Times, October 11, 1945)

In the lean years as well as in the fat, the capitalist stockholders are assured of reaping their steady profits from good, solid Government bonds. To put it differently, this nationalization scheme will see to it that the capitalists of the Bank of England have no lean years; their profits will be guaranteed by "law" backed up by the "honor" of His Majesty's Government.

The second point, and the particularly choice part of this swindle, is the fact that the present stockholders are to receive four times as much in Government bonds as the present value of the Bank shares:

"According to the measure, which was introduced by Hugh Dalton, Chancellor of the exchequer, the stock of the bank now outstanding and valued at \$58,212,000 will be taken over



by the Government, which will issue in exchange 3 per cent bonds to the value of \$232,848,000. The Government bonds may be redeemed at par on or after April 5, 1966, and, subject to such redemption, will be perpetual." (Ibid.)

In other words, not only is the present annual profit of the holders of these Government bonds guaranteed while the holder chooses to retain possession of the bonds, but if he should hold them for the next twenty years, their value will have matured to four times the present value of the Bank shares. Should the stock-holder choose to sell his Government bonds soon after getting them in return for his present Bank shares, he can still make a handsome profit even taking into account discount rates.

The scheme to nationalize the coal mines is still in the promissory state. If put into practice it will take the same form as the "nationalization" of the Bank of England. The shrewd bourgeoisie of England know perfectly well that they can make a pretty penny out of the way the "Labor" Government will nationalize the mines. Indeed, in responsible bourgeois circles, there is felt a definite need to unload the decrepit coal industry on the "public":

"Many Conservatives, for instance, agree with the Laborites that the government must take over the British coal mines. They see no other hope of curing a desperately sick and vitally important industry which has been unable to remedy its own inefficient methods, high costs and low wages." (New York World-Telegram, September 5, 1945)

In addition to enriching the coal barons, the Laborite nationalization scheme, which is based not on the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie but on the continuation and reinforcement of the capitalist dictatorship, will be a powerful strike-breaking device. Should the viciously exploited miners move to strike for improvements, the whole weight of the bourgeois state will be brought into action against them immediately and directly on the pretext that as Government employees they cannot strike against the Government.

Bourgeois nationalization is reactionary. Only nationalization carried out by a proletarian revolution through democratically chosen Workers Councils serves the interests of the exploited masses. The absolutely necessary prerequisite for progressive nationalization of industry, finance and exchange is the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeois state by the proletariat. Against such a program the Attlees and Bevins have always fought with every means at their command.

A Marxist policy would not have presented the issue to the British workers as "either Attlee or Churchill," that Attlee is a victory for the workers while Churchill is a defeat. Marxism would show that the issue is capitalist slavery or proletarian liberation, and that both Attlee and Churchill represent the former. However much the workers at one particular moment or another may not agree with this posing of the issue, only such a political line can ever win them away from both Attlee and Churchill to a revolutionary program. The line of "either Attlee or Churchill" tied the workers to both Attlee and Churchill.

The only hope for the British workers lies in cleansing the proletarian vanguard of its present pseudo-Bolshevik leadership. Through various devices, more or less complex, the Stalinist-Trotskyite leadership

of the vanguard ties the workers to the bourgeoisie. The Trotskyites are particularly adept at this. What the Stalinists do very bluntly, the Trotskyites do with finesse. The Trotskyites are also masters in getting the most advanced workers to support the Stalinist candidates. The line of reasoning they use in the latter enterprise is about the same as when they are electioneering for the Labor Party.

The path for the liberation of the British toilers lies through cleansing the proletarian vanguard of its opportunist domination. The only political group which had a Marxist line for the British election is that represented by this publication. From its very foundation, THE BULLETIN has presented a clear policy of combatting the opportunists' deceptions about Labor Partyism. It has forewarned the workers against the menace of the future growth of the Labor Party movement in this country and so has contributed toward safeguarding the American workers against going through the disastrous experience of the British workers with "their" Labor Party. The policy of the Stalinists and Trotskyites is one which heaps upon the American workers the burden of repeating the mistakes of their British brethren in building and supporting a bourgeois Labor Party. All the talk of the Trotskyite leaders to the effect that they do not have in mind an American edition of the British Labor Party is given the lie by their actions which consisted of supporting the present British Labor Party. Concrete facts prove ultimately that the Trotskyite leaders themselves are only a second edition of the Stalinist bureaucrats whose line they tail-end with the aid of camouflage in the form of a heap of "Marxist" phrases.

As the criminal policies of the British "Labor" Government unfold and bring increased misery and hardship upon the toilers, every class-conscious worker should ask himself: Who was it that put me up to supporting the "Labor" bandits in July 1945 and tricked me into giving them a free hand to bring ruin upon the working class? The answer will lead to only one conclusion for every class-conscious, revolutionary-minded worker: Repudiate the Stalinist and Trotskyite misleaders who preached support to the imperialist British Labor Party.

J. C. Hunter  
October 20, 1945

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Send For A Free Copy -      A Marxist Evaluation of an Important Problem

#### LENIN'S POSITION ON THE BRITISH LABOR PARTY

"During more than two decades of Stalinist deceptions, a certain notorious phrase has been tenaciously attached to Lenin's position: 'Lenin supported the British Labor Party in 1920.' And usually, this expression is uttered as a defense of supporting some variety of political swindle. Indeed, the situation is such, due to the poisons spread by the opportunists, that one would never guess that Lenin was against the very idea of a Labor Party, fought it bitterly, and within Russia itself, where his influence was direct and paramount amongst the workers, succeeded in conquering and exterminating it. Let us therefore see what Lenin's position actually was and whether it has stood the test of history." (From the article, LENIN'S POSITION ON THE BRITISH LABOR PARTY)

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#### LENIN'S POSITION ON THE BRITISH LABOR PARTY

Address: P.O. Box 67, Station D., New York City

FRANKENSTEEN -- WHOSE CANDIDATE?

Running as a Mayoralty candidate in Detroit is Richard Frankenstein, a vice-president of the United Auto Workers - CIO. Frankenstein is not a new figure in the labor-capital situation in Detroit. During the "war emergency," he played a leading part in paralyzing the workers by making them accept the economic status quo. Whenever spontaneous strikes were called by those who chafed at the capitalist restrictions, he energetically acted as a whip for the bosses to bring the workers back into line. As a vice president of the UAW, in short, he has been an actively functioning agent of the bourgeoisie within the union and it is precisely due to the Frankensteins that the workers have been engulfed in a wave of reaction.

Very few people are as well aware of the reactionary role of Frankenstein as are the leaders of the Socialist Workers Party. The columns of The Militant, organ of the Socialist Workers Party, have often carried reports of Frankenstein's reactionary, strike-breaking activities. That paper reported, for example, how he deliberately ignored and bureaucratically sabotaged a UAW convention directive that a referendum be held on the No Strike Pledge. It reported the openly reactionary strike-breaking activity of Frankenstein and the rest of the UAW International leadership in trying to throttle the recent Kelsey-Hayes strike, which he called "mobocracy." As The Militant summarizes it:

"Further, Frankenstein has little personal popularity among the auto workers, because of his rotten role as a UAW vice-president. He has repeatedly intervened against striking workers and consistently opposed militant policies against the profiteering, union-busting auto corporations." (The Militant, October 13, 1945)

In plain words, Frankenstein is a loyal supporter of the auto barons, one of their agents within the UAW. This, however, does not prevent the leaders of the SWP from backing this labor faker in the mayoralty campaign in Detroit:

"The Detroit Branch of the Socialist Workers Party today announced its support to the candidacy of Richard Frankenstein, nominee of the CIO Political Action Committee, for mayor." (The Militant, August 4, 1945)

The Trotskyite leadership, in urging the workers to support a traitor to the working class, face a complex problem. Frankenstein's actions in the union are so putrid that the SWP must take cognizance of them. Yet if there were nothing but attacks against him, the workers who were convinced of the correctness of those attacks would never vote for him. Therefore, in order to get the workers to support him, the leaders of the SWP must whitewash him in a certain way. While "criticizing" him, they present the story that despite his rotten personal record, Frankenstein is an independent candidate of labor and his election, the Trotsky story goes, will be an important forward step for the working class because it will mean a break with the reactionary bourgeois parties and will mean the end of boss politics in Detroit. In writing of the primaries in that city, the SWP told the workers that Frankenstein's stand is in opposition to the Democratic and Republican Parties:

"Nevertheless, with sound class instincts, the Detroit

workers cast their votes for Frankenstein, not as an individual, but as a representative of the labor movement, as an independent labor candidate in opposition to all the capitalist candidates." (The Militant, August 18, 1945)

With this explanation, the SWP branch in Detroit went all out in a campaign to elect this labor faker, displaying a large picture of him in the window of its headquarters, arranging radio broadcasts to tell the workers to support "Detroit's Labor Candidate" and distributing thousands of copies of a campaign card urging the election of Frankenstein. This campaign card stresses the "independence" of Frankenstein with slogans such as "Vote Labor! An End to Boss Politics!" and "Only LABOR candidates, elected independently of the two 'boss' parties, can help win the following:" after which appear a number of programmatic points taken out of the Socialist Workers Party platform.

In telling the workers that Frankenstein "is a genuine union representative in a non-partisan race" (The Militant, October 13, 1945) the SWP utilizes a little sleight of hand. The fact is that due to the election laws in Detroit every municipal election in that city must be a "non-partisan race." The statutes prohibit any candidate from running on a party ticket. Hence, not only Frankenstein but also Jeffries is "independent" of any political party. <sup>Everyone in Detroit knows</sup> well that Jeffries serves the Republican Party machine and that Frankenstein is politically affiliated with the Democratic Party machine. However, the leaders of the SWP, while not hesitating to admit the facts in the case of Jeffries, calling him "a Republican mayor" (The Militant, October 13, 1945), keep mum in the case of Frankenstein. By taking advantage of the Detroit statute the SWP leaders resort to the trick of supporting the capitalist concoction about the race in Detroit being "non-partisan."

The Trotsky leaders assured the workers that Frankenstein was a "non-partisan," imagining it was perfectly safe to let that little fraud stand because in Detroit elections the bourgeois parties had always stayed in the background. But in this situation the Trotsky leaders were caught short. The Democratic machine unexpectedly broke tradition and came out with open support to its man. In announcing support to the "Independent Labor Candidate" Frankenstein, Joseph Wisniewski, Democratic Party County Chairman, stated that "We owe it to Dick because of his activity as a Democrat." (The New York Times, October 21, 1945)

This wholly unexpected move of the Democratic Party toppled the entire concoction of the Trotsky leaders that Frankenstein was "an Independent Labor Candidate in opposition to all capitalist politicians." They did their best to extricate themselves from the tight situation by trying to reverse the picture, attempting to show that the tail was wagging the dog. Whereas Frankenstein is an active machine man of the Democratic Party, endearingly called "Dick" by the local Democratic boss, the Trotsky leaders say that "the Democratic machine is trying to hang on to labor's coat-tails and to prevent a clean break" and that "this is an attempt to blur the fact that a labor candidate can win without and against the capitalist parties." (The Militant, October 13, 1945) While in reality the workers are being maneuvered by the CIO bureaucracy into supporting a capitalist party on a capitalist program, the Trotsky leaders are trying to make it seem that the capitalists are jumping on "labor's" band-wagon.

Many bourgeois candidates try to attract the support of the workers

by hiding behind a deceptive mask. The task of a revolutionary organization in these instances is to expose the faker for what he really is — an agent of the bourgeoisie. In the case of the SWP's support to the Democrat Frankenstein that organization finds itself in a peculiar predicament. Be it noted that Frankenstein does not run as a leader of the UAW. But the Trotsky leaders are doing everything in their power to give Frankenstein a cover up as an independent labor candidate to rationalize in some way their support to him. Frankenstein on his part, but lately receives the official backing of his Party. But he adds insult to injury by repudiating unconditionally the "labor" label the Trotsky leadership, among others, is straining so hard to stick on him. This leaves the SWP in the peculiar position of telling the workers whom this alienates not to believe him — that Frankenstein may be a Democrat and he may deny that he is a labor candidate, but whether he wants to be or not, he is a labor candidate because the SWP says so.

"Frankenstein has gone around declaring he is not a labor candidate but a candidate of 'all the people.' This does not help his chances with the overwhelming majority of the Detroit populace. The union members and their families will support Frankenstein precisely because he is a union man and a genuine labor candidate and because they want a class political party and program." (The Militant, October 13, 1945)

Despite the glaring fact that Frankenstein emphatically rejects being designated as a labor candidate, and despite the open backing of his party, a party of Wall Street imperialism the Trotsky leaders insist upon painting him as an "independent, labor candidate" and on the basis of that lie, urge the workers to give support to that agent of the exploiters.

Significantly, in the Detroit situation there has appeared a healthy sentiment within a section of the workers. They refuse to back either Jeffries or Frankenstein. As The New York Times puts it:

"This may take the form of a stay-away vote; that is, some UAW members who are hostile to Mr. Frankenstein, yet cannot bring themselves to vote for the Mayor (i.e., Jeffries - A.J.), may not vote at all." (October 21, 1945)

The Trotsky leaders, showing determination to corral the workers for Frankenstein, in effect for the Democratic Party machine, are trying furiously to kill that healthy sentiment among the Detroit workers. Apparently, the Trotsky force has a considerable weight in the campaign. According to them "An important, if not decisive element in a possible Frankenstein victory, is the support of the Trotskyists." (The Militant, October 13, 1945)

Parading as revolutionists, the Trotsky leaders will probably succeed in smashing the healthy sentiment of the militant, anti-capitalist workers of Detroit. When Frankenstein unfolds his vicious policies from the Mayor's office, if he is elected, it is to be hoped the workers whom the Trotskyites persuaded to vote for him will remember to whom they owe that rotten outcome.

Were there a Marxist party in the field, putting up a real working class candidate whose record was an open page of devotion and service to the

masses, the anti-Jeffries, anti-Frankensteen sentiment could be organized into a powerful nucleus for a genuine fight against all the capitalist politicians.

\* \* \*

What is the chief bait that the Trotskyite leaders throw their followers in the drive to line them up behind such putrid labor skates as Frankensteen and similar agents of Wall Street or of the Kremlin? The rationalization of the Cannon leadership is that the move to support the Frankensteens in elections is a move in the direction of building a Labor Party which will provide the workers with a vehicle for Independent Labor Action.

Let us examine this bait. The experience of the proletarian struggle against its capitalist exploiters shows that there can be only one kind of labor party which is truly independent of the capitalist class. Such a party is the Marxist party. Every other "labor" party is nothing but an agency of imperialism. This fact is well known to the Trotsky leadership. Back in the days when the Trotskyites had not yet taken over the Stalinist line of building a labor party they wrote quite clearly:

"For, it is not the business of the revolutionary Marxists, above all in the present stage of the relationship between capitalist disintegration and social reformism, to initiate or to help organize and found in addition to their own party another party for the 'second class citizens,' for the 'backward workers,' i.e., a third capitalist party, even if composed predominantly of workers." (The New International, March 1935; p. 36)

Equally clear to the Trotsky leaders is the role of a Labor Party: "Its main function would be to canalize the discontent of the working class into more or less futile reformist endeavors and to swerve the movement from the revolutionary path." (Ibid., August 1935)

The Trotsky leaders could afford to write these true words which showed that a labor party is really a third capitalist party because at that time their opportunism took the form of joining the Second International. After they left, by compulsion, the "stinking corpse" of Social Democracy they adopted the line of building a labor party. The best evidence of the purpose of their line to build a labor party is contained both in their correct explanation of the function of a "labor party" as a means to divert the workers from the revolutionary path and in their concrete method of maneuvering the workers into support of the most despicable enemies of the masses.

A much more subtle line in connection with Frankensteen's candidacy is the one adopted by the Workers Party led by Shachtman. The Shachtman leadership declared:

"If the same Frankensteen, however, were a candidate of a Labor Party and thereby subject to its program and control we would support him." (Labor Action, September, 3, 1945)

Shachtman here pretends that in such an event Frankensteen would stand separate from and against the capitalist parties. It will be instructive to point out that the article we cited from the New International

in which it was stated that a labor party would merely be a third capitalist party was written by Max Shachtman when he and Cannon were the official leaders of the American Trotsky group.

In the struggle against the Cannon and Shachtman line of building a third capitalist party with a "labor" name to conceal its imperialist role the duty of the Marxists is plain. Two points must be made clear to the workers. First, that a "labor party" is an obstacle to the emancipation of the workers; second, that any party which devotes itself to the task of building a "labor party" is not a Marxist organization. It is an agency of reaction.

A. James  
October 23, 1945

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PART II — THE MINNEAPOLIS TEAMSTERS STRIKES OF 1934

The Minneapolis Teamsters strikes of 1934 constitute a special chapter in the history of the American Trotsky group. As Cannon, the leader of the Socialist Workers Party states in his History of American Trotskyism, "with this opportunity presented in Minneapolis to participate in the mass movement, American Trotskyism was put squarely to the test." (p. 141) Cannon and Shachtman have carried out an extensive advertising campaign playing up the leading participation of their group in this Minneapolis situation as the shining example of their "revolutionary work" in the trade unions. How in reality did American Trotskyism stand up to this test?

\* \* \* \* \*  
THE "NEW DEAL" STRATEGY

The Minneapolis Teamsters' strikes occurred in the early part of the Roosevelt "New Deal." The election of Roosevelt in 1932 and the launching of the "New Deal" form of capitalist demagogy reflected certain significant changes in class relationships between the American bosses and the workers. The American masses had suffered terribly through three and a half years of capitalist crisis. With the first signs of an economic "revival" the pent-up dissatisfaction of the workers began to express itself in a series of strikes which soon swept the country, first in the spring and summer of 1933 and then on a much larger scale in a similar period during the year 1934. The perspicacious agents of capitalism functioning in the Roosevelt machine quite accurately gauged the angry temper of the workers and foresaw their inevitable movement to strike back at their oppressors. To meet this development, the Roosevelt "New Deal" was introduced to the accompaniment of a well-organized and enormously powerful hullabaloo designed to arrest the strike movement of the workers and help the bosses stabilize their tottering system.

The "New Deal" strategy, as embodied in the N. R. A. (Section 7A) revolved around three central features. The line was first to "recognize" trade unions officially and to encourage their organization wherever these unions were in the hands of the old line A.F. of L. labor fakers. The strategy of the bosses was to use the trade unions to get control over the restless and seething workers. "Union recognition" as an official policy of the Roosevelt Government was conceived and practiced with the idea of making the reactionary-led labor unions more than ever the agency of the capitalists in paralyzing and betraying the workers. The "New Deal" strategy of fostering union recognition was a remarkable illustration of how every workers' organization can be used against the toilers through the control exercised over them by the reactionary "labor" leaders.

The second feature of the "New Deal" strategy was the scheme of interlocking Labor Boards. The third was the "arbitration" swindle to be worked through these self-same Labor Boards. Around this strike-breaking mechanism the bosses and their agents worked out a whole ideological campaign dinning into the ears of the workers that the "New Deal" was in the interests of the workers and that the government Labor Boards were functioning as "impartial" agencies to mediate and adjust the right -



ful demands of the workers.

Due to the political domination of opportunism in the workers' movement the boss strategy met with a great measure of success. The leaders of the A. F. of L. successfully promoted the N.R.A. swindle and stifled the workers in long-drawn out "arbitration" proceedings in the government Labor Boards. The government mediators, their Labor Boards, and the A.F. of L. labor lieutenants of capital strangled two nation-wide auto strikes, a general steel strike, a general coal strike and nipped in the bud innumerable other possible struggles. The strike-breaking tactic of the reactionary labor leaders became a simple but effective one: to call off a strike and throw the "settlement" into the treacherous hands of the Labor Board "arbitrators."

\* \* \* \* \*

#### GENERAL DRIVERS LOCAL 574 AND ITS LEADERSHIP

In the city of Minneapolis the leadership of the trade unions rested in the hands of a corps of well-heeled A. F. of L. bureaucrats organized around the Central Labor Union. Due to the special conditions in Minneapolis, this particular A. F. of L. gang talked "Left" and adhered to the "Farmer-Labor" brand of capitalist politics dominating the state of Minnesota at the time. The Farmer-Labor cover enabled the Central Labor Union leaders to serve as more effective adjutants for the more open fakers in the A.F. of L. machine.

One of the A.F. of L. leaders in the Minneapolis Central Labor Union was Bill Brown, a member of the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party and perennial president of General Drivers Local No. 574. Cannon himself gives a fairly good indication of the stale organization over which Brown presided and its record of inactivity in so far as fighting to improve the conditions of the workers was concerned. It had all the earmarks of a typical ossified A. F. of L. craft union, even down to the feature of Brown having been president (by 1934) for thirteen consecutive years:

"Bill was President of General Drivers Union, Local No. 574 (now 544) continuously from 1921. It was a small union and he continued to work as a driver until 1932. During all those years, up until 1934, as with most unions of the same sort, nothing much ever happened. There were a few piddling contracts with small bosses. There was the routine business of keeping an office open and collecting dues and letting well-enough alone that is so characteristic of the old craft union school." (J. P. Cannon, Socialist Appeal, July 2, 1938, p. 2)

In the organization drive to instill some life into his moribund union, Brown appointed some prominent Trotskyites into leading committee positions. Cannon recalls:

"We certainly made the most of this accident, the circumstance that the President of Teamsters Local 574 was that wonderful character, Bill Brown, who held open the door of the union to the 'new men' who knew how to organize the workers and lead them in battle. But our comrades were new members in this union. They weren't in there long enough to be officers; they were just members when the fight began to pop. So not a single one of our

people — that is, members of the Trotskyist group — was an official of the union during the three strikes. But they organized and led the strikes just the same. They were constituted as an 'Organizing Committee,' a sort of extra-legal body set up for the purpose of directing the organization campaign and leading the strikes.

"The organizing campaign and the strikes were carried on virtually over the head of the official leadership of the union. The only one of the regular officials who really participated in a direct way in the actual leadership of the strikes was Bill Brown, along with the Organizing Committee." ("The History of American Trotskyism," J. P. Cannon, pp. 144-145)

This gave the Trotsky leaders an opportunity to show how their policy operated in practice in the capacity of union leadership. The demonstration was not long in coming, the line of the Trotsky leaders being tested in three strikes of General Drivers Local 574 in 1934; a two-and-a-half day strike in February, a ten-day strike in May, and the final five-week strike in July-August. We will analyze each of these strikes in some detail, first from the angle of the specific issues involved in each strike and how they were resolved; and second from the general political line pursued throughout the course of the strikes.

#### THE FEBRUARY STRIKE OF THE COAL DRIVERS

In February 1934 there flared up a strike of the coal drivers in Minneapolis. After two-and-a-half days the strike was called off in agreement with the orders of the Regional Labor Board. In accordance with the "New Deal" line this order called for open shop "recognition" of the union and insisted that the wage and other concrete demands be submitted to arbitration by the Board. This strike was led by Local 574 and the committee negotiating the "settlement" ending the strike consisted of the top leaders of this union plus two prominent Trotskyite leaders in Minneapolis:

"The strike was conducted by General Drivers Union No. 574. The committee representing the strikers before the Regional Labor Board, which negotiate the settlement, consisted of William Brown, Cliff Hall, Miles Dunne, and Carl Scoglund." (The Militant, February 24, 1934)

Naturally, by this Labor Board "arbitration" scheme the Labor Board sharks intended to shut off the strike, dampen the militant ardor of the workers and arbitrate their demands out of existence. After the strike the Local 574 leadership requested the "services" of one of the A. F. of L. leaders to represent it at the Labor Board hearings. This representative was Cunningham, Vice President of the A. F. of L. Minnesota State Federation of Labor. As was to be expected the hearings bogged down in the Labor Board swamp with the demands of the drivers being "adjudicated" out of existence. In his reports of the negotiations in the Labor Board Cunningham admitted that "conditions had not improved a great deal." (The Minneapolis Labor Review, February 16, 1934) And later, the A. F. of L. bureaucrats, estimating the final results of the strike, admitted that it was the bankers and the bosses who came out of the coal drivers' strike as the real victors:

"The settlement of the Coal Drivers' strike by the Board ended in the assassination of the Union at the order of the Branch Bankers and the Citizens' Alliance." (Ibid. May 18, 1934, p. 4)

In this case, the exploited drivers gained no concrete improvements in their conditions as a result of the "settlement" calling off their strike and instead had their attention shifted to the Labor Board as the medium for gaining an improvement in their conditions. That is, the workers were imbued with faith, not in the policy and spirit of class struggle, but in the capitalist-controlled, class-collaborationist Labor Board mechanism.

Now for the issue of "recognition" itself. We have already indicated how this fitted in with the "New Deal" strategy. However, this type of "recognition" was open shop recognition because the closed shop was explicitly ruled out. This always gave the bosses and their Labor Boards a solid footing for maneuvers to stifle the strike sentiments of the workers. Union "recognition" was always granted with tongue in cheek by the class enemy and his Labor Board agents, for such recognition committed the bosses to nothing more serious than "negotiations," in which they were always quite willing to engage; stalling usually favored the bosses. A striking confirmation of this point can be seen from the call for the subsequent May strike where the Trotskyite Publicity Committee of Local 574 justified its demands for a closed shop in light of the miserable settlement of the coal drivers' strike. The Publicity Committee pointed out that far from being a "victory" the settlement of the coal drivers' strike worked to the advantage of the bosses:

"The issue here is clear-cut. It is as the employers state "the open shop versus the closed shop." Recent experiences with employers in Minneapolis during the coal drivers strike has demonstrated that an open shop agreement with union recognition means only an invitation to the employers for discrimination and general discharge of union employees." (Printed in The Minneapolis Labor Review, May 11, 1934, p. 1)

Thus, in the case of the coal drivers' strike it is quite clear that it was the workers and not the bosses who suffered a defeat. Yet in Trotskyite history, the coal drivers' strike and its finale have been played up as a great victory for the toilers.

Now, no particular crime may be involved in the loss of a strike. It is quite possible that a trade union even in the hands of Marxist leaders might lost a strike due to unfavorable circumstances. However, Marxist leaders will frankly admit loss of a strike if this occurs and point out the necessary lessons for the toilers. It is opportunism and not Marxism which hides the truth from the workers and plays up a defeated strike as a victory. Particularly is this the case with the Stalinist leaders who made a whole art out of explaining away defeated strikes as "victories." Do the Trotsky leaders differ any from the Stalinists in utilizing this careerist tactic? Years after the events, Cannon explicitly labels the whole outcome of the strike as a "smashing victory" which presumably was due to the Trotskyite policy pursued in this union:

"The coal strike, mentioned in our discussion last week, was a preliminary skirmish before the great battles to come. The smashing victory of that strike, its militancy,

its good organization and its quick success, stimulated the general organization of the truck drivers and helpers, who up to that time and throughout the years of the depression, had been cruelly exploited and without benefit of organization." ("The History of American Trotskyism," J. P. Cannon, p. 142. My emphasis - A.B.)

Of course, Cannon didn't bother to detail the actual "settlement" terms nor how these terms worked out in the interests of the bosses. To have done so would have automatically created a dent in the deceptive story of victory and necessitated a lot of "explaining." The settlement of the coal drivers' strike under Trotskyite leadership which dumped the question of the workers' conditions into the lap of the treacherous Labor Board was after the typical pattern of the notorious A. F. of L. "settlements." Cannon diplomatically left out these tell-tale facts and boasted about a "smashing victory." This is history written by the Trotsky leaders!

### THE MAY STRIKE

Reflecting the general tendency of the workers to flock into the A. F. of L. unions throughout the country, the membership of Local 574 mushroomed from a few hundred to over 3,000 in early May 1934. The "militant" talk of the leaders of Local 574 also contributed to this tendency.

Contrary to Cannon's glib assertion of a "smashing victory" in the outcome of the February strike, the conditions of the workers remained what they were before the strike. The coal drivers who had just gone through a strike as well as the new members who came in after the strike were therefore impelled to fight all over again to change the old, still-existing conditions.

The demands drawn up by the leadership of Local 574 for the May strike centered about the question of the closed shop, increase of wages, and bettering of conditions. The strike call issued by the Trotskyite-led Publicity Committee stated:

"It is true that the General Drivers' Union is asking for higher wages and better working conditions and they are also asking for the only possible guarantee of the permanency of wage increases and better conditions and that is the closed shop." (Printed by The Minneapolis Labor Review, May 11, 1934, p. 1)

In other words, in the May strike the workers fought for the improved conditions out of which they had been bamboozled by the Labor Board arbitration scheme foisted on them by the February "settlement."

In particular, the question of an increase in wages was pushed to the fore. The starvation wages of the Drivers and Helpers was quite correctly pointed out and the Local 574 leadership gave every impression that this time it would fight hammer and tong against any yielding on the question of bettering conditions.

The strike struggle commenced on May 15 and lasted ten days. During the course of the strike the workers showed a remarkably high degree of courage and militancy, in one instance ("The Battle of Deputies Run") utterly routing the police and the entire force of special deputies. The objective circumstances here, determined by the highly militant actions

of the workers, supported by the rest of the Minneapolis workers and unemployed organizations clearly pointed to a sure victory for the workers.

It was not long before that "Friend of Labor," Farmer-Laborite Governor Olson, stepped into the situation. After the police and deputies had been put to rout, he demanded and secured a "truce" and proposed a settlement which formed the basis of the agreement to end the strike.

The "settlement" ending the strike consisted of the union's being in possession of the same open shop recognition it had before the strike, with all questions concerning the working conditions of the drivers left up in the air and thrown into the clutches of the Labor Board "arbitrators." The leaders of Local 574 accepted this "settlement." Without any basic demands of the workers being agreed upon, the Local 574 Trotskyite leaders called off the strike. The key clause in the agreement ending the strike is the following:

"In the event that any employer affected hereby and its employees or their representatives cannot agree upon a wage scale or conditions of employment, such employer shall submit such subject or subjects to said Minneapolis St. Paul Regional Labor Board for arbitration." (The Minneapolis Labor Review, June 1, 1934, p. 1)

In other words, the "settlement" of the May strike was the same as the February one.

The fraudulent nature of the May "settlement" soon manifested itself. From the Trotskyite press itself it can be shown that the workers got nothing whatever out of the strike. The question of wages, as we have said, remained unsettled in the clutches of the Minneapolis Regional Labor Board. The latter, agency of Wall Street, quite naturally saw to it that the demand for higher wages met with failure. In the pages of The Militant is recorded the raw deal the workers met with on this point. In its call for the subsequent strike of July (dated July 11), the drivers' union clearly indicated the black outcome of the May events:

"All the efforts of our Union, over a period of six weeks since the ending of the strike, to establish living wages and hours have been frustrated by the arrogant attitude of the employers. The Regional Labor Board by its action, or rather, by its failure to act, has aided in every case in upholding the hand of the employers." (Reprinted in The Militant, July 14, 1934, p. 1)

In fact, this disastrous result of the May strike was what led to the July strike.

In so far as "recognition" was concerned, the situation was the same as with wages and hours. The "recognition" from the Labor Board for the sake of which the Trotsky leaders of Local 574 called off the strike was open shop recognition, in a word, no recognition at all. Here is how The Militant describes what happened to this "recognition" from May 31 on:

"We have been trying ever since May 31, when the regional labor board issued its order based on the terms of the signed peace agreement ending the strike, to negotiate with the employers the matters that the peace agreement

left to negotiation, but have not been able to get anywhere because the employers refuse to recognize us as representatives of the employees and have just been giving us the runaround,' William Brown, president of the union said in the statement which had the assent of other union leaders, Miles, Grant and Ray Dunne, Farrel Dobbs and Carl Scoglund." (The Militant, July 7, 1934, p. 4. My emphasis - A..B.)

And in fact, according to the official strike call of the leadership for the July strike, it was pointed out that no recognition at all was gained from the May settlement:

"The right of the Union to represent all its members — which was explicitly agreed to in the strike settlement, has been denied. Seniority rules provided for in the agreement have been violated by the majority of the firms." (Reprinted in The Militant, July 14, 1934)

To complete the picture there are also the facts cited in the pro-Trotskyite history of the Minneapolis strikes recorded in the book "American City" by Charles Rumford Walker. The author shows how union "recognition" operated after the May "settlement":

"Scarcely two months were to elapse after the settlement of the May warfare, before another strike, even wider in scope than the first and more fiercely contested on both sides, was to break out. The defensive powers of the Citizen's Alliance were enormous and the forces of the rebels not yet strong enough to conserve their gains without new battles. Irreconcilables among the truck owners chafed under the labor board stipulation and chiseled on agreements at all points. In the files of the union are 700 cases of discrimination by the employers following the first (May - A.B.) strike." (P. 155. My emphasis-A.B.)

Like the other features of the strike "settlement," the "recognition" was an out-and-out deception. The workers had been misled into accepting a fake settlement tying them to the machinations of the Roosevelt Labor Board.

Immediately from the end of the strike, i. e., from May 31 on, the treacherous nature of open shop recognition agreements was shown in life. Nevertheless, in The Militant of June 16, i.e., after two weeks of this runaround, Cannon defended the agreement signed by his lieutenants in Minneapolis. It is highly significant to note that the key point in Cannon's apology was the feature of "recognition," with Cannon pretending that the Labor Board's "recognition" was an honest and factual one:

"In these sections of the agreement the main demands of the union were complied with in written form. And what is more important, they were carried out in practise in the days immediately following the end of the strike. Every case of discrimination in the rehiring of the workers — there were about 50 out of 5,000, according to the report made to the union meeting three days later — brought a committee of union officials to the office of the firm complained against. In not a single case did the employers

refuse to meet the union officials, and to adjust the complaints." (J. P. Cannon, The Militant, June 16, 1934)

The conclusion of Cannon's pretense was the following:

"That is 'recognition' enforced to the letter by a union that stands intact and ready to fight again if necessary. Where is there a new union anywhere in the United States which secured a clearer and more definite recognition since the inauguration of the NRA and began to enforce it the very next day?" (Ibid.)

As can be seen from the declaration of his own lieutenants in Minneapolis that from the very end of the strike the bosses refused to recognize them as representatives of the workers, Cannon was simply lying to the workers when he stated that the main demands of the union "were carried out in practise in the days immediately following the end of the strike," and that "recognition" was genuine and enforced to the letter.

It must be emphasized that Cannon-Shachtman knew precisely the treacherous nature of any settlement which hinged the entire question of the workers' demands on action by the Labor Board. Only a few days before the strike which they knew was in preparation, The Militant tried to parade before the workers as a real fighter against the ideology of Labor Boardism and its strike-breaking mechanisms:

"The Labor Boards, when they act at all, shuffle back and forth between the bosses' and the workers' spokesmen. They stand between, they talk of 'peaceful' settlements. They talk with tongue in cheek. No reliance can be placed in 'labor boards,' nor the decisions that come from them." (The Militant, May 12, 1934, p. 1)

For the coal drivers who were given this runaround in February, the outcome of the May strike was a double betrayal. As for the new workers who joined Local 574 after the February strike, they were thrown into the same rut as the coal drivers. The enormous militancy of the heroic workers on the picket lines shown in the battles with the police and deputies was washed out by the tactics of the union leadership. It is clear that the Trotskyite leaders and organizers knew exactly what constitutes a militant strike policy. Shortly before the 1934 strikes, The Militant inveighed editorially against bringing a strike to a conclusion with the specific demands of the workers left up in the air at the mercy of the N.R.A. arbitration swindlers:

"The strike policy that will yield the best results is clear enough:

"Systematic exposure of the strike-breaking machinations of the NRA administration. No illusions about it. No confidence in it. The workers can rely only on their own strength. This strength is manifested in their solidarity in their strike. Therefore, no 'disarming', no 'truce', no return to the shops without a definite and satisfactory settlement. This is point one in a realistic and militant strike policy." (Editorial, The Militant, October 7, 1933, p. 4. My emphasis - A. B.)

This profession of a correct trade union policy remained confined to paper like the other Marxist principles mouthed by Cannon and Shachtman.

In life their policy was the very opposite of their verbal proclamations.

The Trotskyite leaders in Minneapolis talked very militant but their line in practice was one of signing rotten compromises. It is significant that there were militant workers who immediately smelled the malodorous nature of the agreement and who demanded repudiation of the "settlement" and a return to the picket lines until the bosses met their demands specifically and concretely. Charles Rumford Walker in "American City" draws a picture of the meeting of the General Drivers Union called to discuss the May "settlement." From his description it is easy to see the class struggle sentiments of the militant workers on the one hand and the capitulatory line of the Trotskyite-Brown leadership on the other.

"That meeting of striking truck drivers was a boisterous and heated one. The rank and file of the union hotly debated the settlement. The leaders frankly presented the Labor Board stipulation as a compromise, 'but on no fundamentals,' and urged acceptance with all the force they could muster. Some of the crowd were for no compromise and back to the picket lines," (p. 126)

The union leaders' story that the compromise was on no fundamentals was an outright lie; the compromise was on all fundamentals. In other words, it was no compromise; it was a capitulation.

The Trotskyite-Brown leadership successfully put over the agreement and talked down the militant workers by playing up the fake "recognition" issue. Let every Trotskyite worker who visualizes great struggles and Marxist mass work when he hears the magic word "Minneapolis" hold in mind this picture.

The drivers showed militancy unprecedented in the history of Minneapolis; they were backed by the entire working class population of the city and were directly assisted financially and physically in fights with the police by many workers who were not drivers and who were not in Local 574; they even had the support of most of the farmers in the countryside. The strikers and sympathizing workers licked the stuffings out of the bosses' police and their special deputies and thus dominated the situation. "There's no question that we could have taken over the city after the Battle of Deputies Run. We controlled it," said Bill Brown to Charles Rumford Walker ("American City," p. 126). If ever the path to victory was open for strikers, this was it. But the heroic strikers had victory snatched out of their hands by the opportunist agreement signed by their leaders.

### THE JULY STRIKE

The failure on the part of the workers to secure their basic demands as a result of the May "settlement" laid the grounds for a new upheaval which took place in July. The questions of wage increases and bettering of living conditions quite obviously had to be taken away from the death-grip of the strike-breaking Labor Board and settled on the field of battle.

How did the Trotskyite leadership prepare the workers to enter this class battle? It will be recalled that in Local 574's call for the May strike the demand for a closed shop agreement was made an outstanding



point. As we have shown in dealing with the May strike, the leaders of Local 574 declared plainly that "they are also asking for the only possible guarantee of the permanency of wage increases and better conditions and that is the closed shop." The Trotskyite leaders at that time showed they understood "that the employers reject the so-called closed shop because when they enter into a so-called recognition agreement they are not entering into that agreement in good faith and, in general, they consider this only a temporary thing that they can break down at their own pleasure." (Release by Trotskyite Publicity Committee, Printed in The Minneapolis Labor Review, May 18, 1934, p. 2)

It is therefore highly significant to note that in the Trotskyites' official call for the July strike, the demand for a closed shop was omitted! (See The Militant, July 14, 1934, p. 1) In other words, even before the July strike began, the Trotskyite leadership of Local 574 placed the workers on a capitulatory basis.

In view of the sharp rise in living costs which The Militant was proving statistically in issue after issue, one would expect a reasonably substantial demand for a wage increase. The low minimum wage scale then prevailing was 50 cents an hour for the drivers and 40 cents an hour for the helpers. Yet the union leadership raised the rather meek demand of 5 cents an hour increase for both drivers and helpers.

"The union demanded 45 cents an hour for inside workers and 55 cents for truck drivers." (The New York Times, July 18, 1934, p. 5)

Every worker knows that it is the most elementary trade union strategy to make a substantial wage demand on the expectation that in the course of the struggle it will very likely be whittled down somewhat. The Trotskyite "Marxist" tacticians, on the other hand, raised the lowest demand they possibly could without making themselves look ridiculous before the workers. The Trotskyite tactic was very simple: no demand for a closed shop, and a paltry nickel demand in wage increases. Thus by demanding virtually nothing to begin with, if the strike ended with the workers getting nothing, nobody could say they had lost anything!

The conditions of the workers were so bad that they were willing to get out on strike on almost any demand. The strike began on July 16. Again the workers displayed a high degree of militancy; again they won the support not only of the Minneapolis workers but even of the farmers in the countryside.

This time the bosses were determined not merely to negotiate the strike out of existence but to crush the workers by physical force, thus breaking their spirit. On one occasion, "Bloody Friday," the police trapped a detachment of unarmed pickets, shooting about fifty in the back and causing two fatalities. This time the official Roosevelt machine in Washington stepped in, sending down two "mediators," one a priest, Father Haas, and the other, E. H. Dunnigan from the United States Department of Labor.

Haas-Dunnigan immediately slashed two-and-one-half cents off the nickel which the Trotskyite leaders had proposed:

"With respect to wages, the mediators recommended that the arbitration award should in no event provide for a scale of less than 42½ cents an hour for inside workers,

platform men and drivers' helpers, and 52½ cents an hour for the drivers." (The New York Times, July 26, 1934, p. 8)

On this swindle the strike was to be called off and the whole matter of improvement of the workers' conditions was to be thrown again to the bosses' Labor Board. This flimflam became known as the Haas-Dunnigan Plan.

What was the policy of the Trotskyite leaders?

"We accepted the Haas-Dunnigan plan." (J. P. Cannon, "The History of American Trotskyism," p. 165)

However, though Cannon and Co. were quite willing to accept any kind of a face-saving swindle, the bosses who had learned the calibre of their Trotskyite "opponents," wouldn't even consent to giving this crumb. The bosses declared that the original minimum wage scale of 50 cents for drivers and 40 cents for helpers would stand:

"The employers' proposal, addressed to Father Haas, contained two important provisions. One established a minimum wage of 50 cents an hour for drivers and 40 cents an hour for helpers and inside workers except 'small package' handlers." (The New York Times, August 3, 1934, p.6)

Haas and Dunnigan withdrew from the scene and a third Federal mediator, Donaghue, came in with another proposal. The Donaghue proposal was that of the bosses; no increase of the 50cent-40 cent minimum wage scale as the basis for calling off the strike and again the "settlement" to be left in the hands of the Labor Board. **THIS CROOKED PROPOSAL WAS ACCEPTED BY THE TROTSKYITE LEADERS OF LOCAL 574 AS THE BASIS FOR CALLING OFF THE STRIKE!** We wish to quote in full the essential paragraphs of the agreement on which the Trotskyites called off the strike. It was printed in The Militant of August 25, 1934. First, on the question of wages:

"Each firm agrees to pay for a period of at least one year, not less than fifty (50c) cents per hour to Truck Drivers, and not less than forty (40c) cents per hour to Helpers, Platform Workers and 'Inside Workers' as above defined. These hourly rates shall remain in effect unless changed by agreement or arbitration. If a dispute arises in any individual firm regarding hourly rates which can not be settled by negotiation, the dispute shall be submitted to arbitration."

Secondly, on the settlement being placed in the hands of the bosses' Labor Board:

"The reward of the Arbitration Board shall be final and binding and shall remain in full force and effect until August 22, 1935."

This agreement left the workers in exactly the same disastrous position they had been before the July strike began, before the May strike, and for the coal drivers, where they had been before the February strike.

For the third time in succession, Cannon and Shachtman played up the abject surrender by the Local 574 leaders as a "victory." Thus The

Militant of August 25, 1934 ran this screaming headline:

"MINNEAPOLIS DRIVERS VICTORIOUS."

Years later in his "The History of American Trotskyism," Cannon continued the fakery that the Donaghue "settlement" was a victory for the workers:

"Mr. Donaghue, I think that was his name, got right down to business and in a few days worked out a settlement which was a substantial victory for the union."  
(P. 165)

Cannon, of course, is simply taking advantage of his reader's lack of knowledge of the actual facts of the July strike "settlement."

The heroic spirit and militancy of the workers, the stirring battles on the picket lines, the colorful episodes about the participation of the women, and about the food commissary, described at great length in the pages of The Militant, were used as a curtain to hide the hollow settlement foisted on the workers by the Trotsky leaders.

Life as usual ran counter to the deceitful phrases of the Trotsky leaders. Their words pictured a tremendous stir on the part of the workers who supposedly were inspired by the July "victory":

"The stirring news of the victory of the Minneapolis strike will give heart and hope to every class conscious and union conscious worker in the United States. It comes as a beacon light on the dark sea of defeats that have engulfed the labor unions in the second strike movement under the NRA. The thrilling outcome of the battle will give confidence to the doubting worker that labor need not lose and capitalism can be defeated." (The Militant, August 25, 1934)

But the workers of Local 574 showed concretely how they felt about the Trotskyite leadership and its empty boasts. Whereas after the February and also following the May strikes, the unorganized drivers were taken in by the eloquent speeches of the leaders and swelled the membership of Local 574 to the high figure of 7,000 (See The Militant, June 9, 1934) after the crowning "victory" in July over 6,000 of them left the union, voting with their feet their lack of confidence in and disgust with the Trotskyist fakery. The pro-Trotskyite writer, Charles Rumford Walker, who in his book "American City," follows the Cannon-Shachtman line of describing the debacle of the July strike as a victory, reports the "paradox" of the virtual collapse of the drivers' union:

"Paradoxically the union membership which had reached several thousands at the peak of the strike, two months after victory had fallen to 900." (P. 245)

The tactic of the Minneapolis bosses followed the general line of the bourgeoisie. They were not averse, in the face of the steady rise of the cost of living, to hand out a pittance to their slaves, but they wanted all wage increases to be granted not as a direct result of strike struggles, but under the banner of the Labor Board. The workers would thereby be wrapped up in a class-collaborationist machine. While this might result in some increased labor costs to the bosses, it would be of

enormous political significance for the ruling class because the entire matter would be kept under the sway of the Wall Street "arbitration" set-up. Therefore, during the strike, and in the negotiations ending it, the bosses were adamant in their refusal to give in to any of the union's demands, and in the Trotskyite leadership they had valuable assistants who habitually called off strikes with none of the demands of the workers being met and the Labor Board completely in the saddle. In October 1934, a couple of months after the Trotskyites' abject capitulation marking the end of the July strike, the Labor Board announced a "magnanimous" award to the drivers. The workers were granted from September 15, 1934 to May 1935 the Haas-Dunnigan increase of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  cents and from June 1935 to May 1936, taking effect about a year after the July strike, another  $2\frac{1}{2}$  cent raise in the scale of wages.

In other words the original Local 574 proposal for the modest nickel an hour increase which should at least have been directly gained to begin with in the July strike as the starting point for upward revision of wages was now held off until June 1935, to remain in effect to May 1936, and became not the starting point of revision but the end point. The workers were now handcuffed for two years by the Labor Board trickery. The fact that such a long-term program limped way behind the sharp rise in living costs was naturally of no account to the rapacious bosses. This "arbitration" award accepted as binding by the Local 574 leaders finished off the entire strike situation and gave the coup de grace to any direct improvements in the living conditions of the workers. Such was the dismal outcome of Cannon's "substantial victory" for the workers!

#### THE POLITICAL LINE OF THE TROTSKYITES IN MINNEAPOLIS

In order to make clear the real basis of the opportunist role of the Trotsky leadership in the Minneapolis strikes, it is necessary to deal with their political line in the case.

We have referred to the fact that by the time of the last of the strikes the bosses had determined not merely to negotiate the workers' demands out of existence, but to crush the workers by physical violence. The key figure carrying out this policy of the bosses was Farmer-Laborite Governor Olson. During the course of the July strike, this Farmer-Laborite "Friend of the Workingman" declared martial law, called out the National Guard, gave military permits to operators of scab trucks and, in order to terrorize the rank-and-file workers, detained a few of the union leaders under military guard for several days. The Trotskyite paper reported on Olson's acts to break the strike:

"One dead and fifty wounded is the toll taken so far by the murderous authorities of Minneapolis. Governor Olson backed up the onslaught by the local police with an announcement that he is prepared to declare martial law."  
(The Militant, July 21, 1934)

"Martial law was proclaimed here today by Farmer-Labor Governor, Floyd B. Olson, in an effort to break the general strike of drivers and helpers which is now rounding out its second week, undaunted by police murders and bosses provocations." (The Militant, July 28, 1934, p. 1)

The strength of Olson and the bosses lay not in their physical forces

of repression but in the malicious role played by the various labor fakers who instilled trust in the workers toward Olson and his crew.

Bill Brown, President of Local 574, was a staunch Farmer-Laborite and a personal supporter of Olson. During the course of the strikes the Trotskyites' paper, The Militant, did not give any information of the role Brown played in the Olson affair or any indication of what sort of line Brown was pursuing toward Olson, although later they assured the workers that Brown had opposed Olson's strike-breaking. Since Brown was the president of the union, his line toward Olson was of the utmost importance to the workers following his leadership and a knowledge of Brown's line was a central factor in understanding the course of the strike. The real role that Brown played during the strike came out after the strike and very inadvertently at that.

Olson's strike-breaking was beginning to turn the workers' sentiments against him and against Farmer-Laborism in general. The line of the trade union bureaucrats was therefore to prop up Olson and the Farmer-Laborites in the face of their tottering prestige. After the strike, the A. F. of L. Central Labor Union gang rushed in to the rescue with a resolution supporting Olson's policy during the teamsters' strike. It is a most significant fact that this crooked resolution had as one of its prime supporters none other than the President of Local 574, Bill Brown. Here is how the matter came out. The Minneapolis Labor Review had reported that the pro-Olson resolution had been seconded by Grant Dunne, a Trotskyite leader. A worker wrote in to The Militant asking some uncomfortable questions about this report. The Militant gave the following reply:

"It was not Grant Dunne who seconded a resolution praising Olson's strike policy, but William Brown, president of the union." (October 13, 1934, p. 3)

If after the strike Brown was pushing a resolution praising Olson's line in the strike, if after the martial law, scabbing and murder of the workers perpetrated by Olson's cutthroats, Brown was still praising Olson, one can get a pretty fair idea of the rotten, opportunist policy Brown had during the strike. This support to the Farmer-Laborite enemy of the workers was a very integral and inseparable part of Brown's line. Upon Olson's death a couple of years after the strikes, Brown delivered a glowing tribute to that assassin of the drivers:

"The working class in Minnesota lost the outstanding champion of the underdog when Governor Olson died.

"We join with the labor movement in grieving the loss of this great fighter and also the loss of a personal friend whose friendship I valued most highly." (Statement by Bill Brown in The Minneapolis Labor Review, August 28, 1936, p. 4)

When Brown's intimate connection with Olson is understood, it becomes clear why Local 574 signed three consecutive capitulatory agreements wiping out the militant strike actions of the workers. Brown was Olson's direct agent in Local 574 and was nothing but a rotten strike-breaker in disguise, one of those typical "progressive" A. F. of L. trade union bureaucrats who emerge from their years and years of presidency of the union only to sell out their trusting followers.

The tie-up of the Trotskyites with Brown is not only clear but as

we have shown in the beginning of this article, Brown, smelling an upsurge of the union movement in 1934, hunted about for some experienced union organizers, preferably with a somewhat "militant" front. The Trotskyite Dunnes and their clique in Minneapolis were old-time ex-Stalinist leaders in that part of the country. They were fairly well-known to the workers from the old days of the Stalinist Party. No longer connected with the official C.P., they were handy characters on the scene for Brown to ally himself with. Brown picked them up from the outside and appointed these new members, as Cannon himself admits they were, organizers of the union.

From their bloc with Brown followed the policy of the Trotskyites. Brown had thrown them an important bone in the union movement. Opportunist to the core, thoroughly trained in the Stalinist school of fakery, the Trotskyites clung to Brown's coat-tails for the sake of their footing in the union. Every time there was a sell-out, the Trotskyites shouted "Victory."

Just as Brown eulogized Olson on his death in 1936, so the Trotskyites eulogized Olson's stooge, Brown, when the latter died in 1938:

"If there were a Valhalla where the great fallen champions of the working class gather, there Bill Brown would occupy one of the highest seats among those who have fought and died for the cause." (Socialist Appeal, June 4, 1938, p. 1)

And in his book, "The History of American Trotskyism," Cannon, with a tender recollection of the good old days of his bloc with Brown, refers to him as "that wonderful character, Bill Brown."

In those years the Trotskyites were verbally "opposing" the Farmer-Labor Party. As a matter of fact, in the same article of The Militant where the information was given about Brown's support to the Central Labor Union's whitewashing resolution of Olson's strike-breaking, it was pointed out as a "lesson" that the workers must vote politically as they strike and therefore repudiate Olson's party. The Trotsky leaders accordingly promised the workers that politically they would never acquiesce in Brown's type of opportunist politics:

"Of course, the League has no responsibility for Brown, who is not and never has been a member of the League.

"The manner in which trade union struggles are translated into political struggles is clearly illustrated by this incident. The particular strike struggle having ended, many workers turn their thoughts to other problems and cease to guard themselves against the misleading efforts of such resolutions as this one of the Minneapolis C.L.U. Only a new revolutionary party, with its own ticket in the field to keep these issues before the working class and to teach them to vote as they strike, for the class and its vanguard, can counteract the reformists of all varieties." (The Militant, October 13, 1934, p. 3)

Since the Trotsky leaders were heavily involved in sharing the leadership of the Minneapolis teamsters union together with Brown, they had to explain away Brown's adherence to the Farmer-Laborite enemies of the toilers. The Cannon-Shachtman tactic was simply to pretend disassociation from Brown's policy of supporting Olson's party. But how did Cannon-

Shachtman and Co. apply their revolutionary-sounding words in actual life? In the Spring of 1935, during the first Minneapolis election after the strike, the Trotskyites discarded their revolutionary disguise and came out openly together with Brown in support of the Farmer-Labor strike-breakers! Here is the statement of the National Committee of the Workers Party, as the Trotsky group called itself at that time:

"In view of the special circumstances in Minneapolis in the coming municipal election the W.P. will not put up its candidates but support the candidates of the F.L.P."  
(Workers Party Organization Bulletin, April 1935, #2, p. 12)

This is how the Trotsky leaders translated their union line into politics. It is quite clear, then, that the Trotskyites' repudiation of Brown's Farmer-Labor politics was a pure face-saving gesture designed only to fool their followers into believing their lies about pursuing a Marxist policy in Minneapolis. Support to the known assassins of the Minneapolis drivers — such was the policy of the Trotskyite leaders.

In the Minneapolis strikes, said Cannon, American Trotskyism was put squarely to the test. It met this test by hooking the workers to the Farmer-Laborite betrayers and stifling the militant sentiments of the teamsters by a class-collaborationist policy. The final result of the Trotskyite's much-vaunted "revolutionary policy" in Minneapolis tied up the workers in a series of typical Labor Board swindles and propped up the treacherous Farmer-Laborite enemies of the toilers.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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THE PERIOD OF DUAL UNIONISM

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The Leninist League Line  
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The R. W. L.

Introductory Note

The Revolutionary Workers League was formed in 1935 when a large part of the membership of the American Trotsky group broke with Cannon-Shachtman on the issue of entry into the parties of the Second International. Under the guidance of Hugo Oehler and Thomas Stamm, the R.W.L. adopted a program based on the fundamental Trotskyist fraud that the Left Opposition, which in reality shielded Stalin from exposure and participated in every Stalinist betrayal, was a Marxist current. Stemming from that Trotskyist fraud, the R.W.L. line led its followers who represented the best section of the subjectively anti-Stalin, anti-Trotsky revolutionary elements into a morass of opportunism on every vital issue confronting the proletariat. The R.W.L. adopted the subtle formula, "march separately from and strike together with" Stalinism or sections of the "democratic" bourgeoisie. Through this ideological device the R.W.L. workers were injected with the deadly illusion that at certain moments and in special situations the Stalinist counter-revolution or some part of the bourgeoisie act as a progressive force striking against the capitalist reaction.

Although Oehler and Stamm declared that the Trotskyist entry into the Second International was a breach of Leninist principles, from the outset they formulated for their own group the position that it was permissible to affiliate with another Social Democratic body, the London-Amsterdam "International." This unprincipled stand caused a number of R.W.L. workers to reconsider their split from Cannon-Shachtman. They decided that since Oehler-Stamm made it merely a choice between tweedledum and tweedledee, they would return to the parent Trotskyist body.

The R.W.L.'s continued opportunism gradually drove many original members out of the organization back to Cannon-Shachtman or into the blind alley of demoralization or, in a few cases, to an independent study of the entire question of the degeneration of the Comintern.

At length Stamm and Oehler split the group in two. After a while Stamm liquidated "his" R.W.L. and Oehler quietly withdrew from "his" group; at any event he has not been seen at meetings, plenums or conventions of the R.W.L. for a few years. The R.W.L. which has become greatly reduced from its original size is being run by two functionaries who constantly assure the membership that they are shaping their politics in accordance with secret directives from Oehler.

The Leninist League, U.S.A. has carried on a campaign of exposure of all the pseudo-Bolshevik organizations and has laid bare the pro-Stalinist politics of the Left-Trotskyist R.W.L. This exposure reached some honest members of that group who had been harboring strong doubts of their own regarding the R.W.L. line toward Stalinism. A series of international events convinced them of the correctness of the criticism presented by the Leninist League; they came to the conclusion that the R.W.L. has been travelling along an opportunist path. As a consequence a sharp struggle developed between them and the leaders who defended the line of the R.W.L. As could have been foretold, in the process of the struggle the Stalinist nature of the R.W.L. came into fuller view. The present leadership revealed itself as a typical Stalinist bureaucratic clique engaging in personal slander, deliberate distortion and suppression of views. Ac-



ording to very recent information, the two present leaders are now embroiled in petty intrigues directed against each other.

One of the signers of the following minority thesis, Thomas F. Harden, was organizational secretary of the R.W.L. and the other, Ann Wilcox, was an alternate to the Central Committee. These comrades were the initiators of the controversy within the R.W.L. As it developed subsequently, it became more profound and involved a good percentage of the R.W.L. The struggle of the revolutionary minority of the National Committee of the R.W.L. against the Stalinist line and actions of the majority has been recorded in a number of documents produced by both sides in the controversy. THE BULLETIN will publish the most important of them, beginning with the minority thesis presented to the National Committee of the R.W.L. as the starting point of the struggle.

MINORITY THESIS  
ON THE  
WORLD ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SITUATION  
SINCE NOVEMBER 1917

1. November 7, 1917 is to date the most decisive landmark in human history. Although this is generally accepted in the League, the authors of these theses intend to prove that the real significance of the October Revolution has not been understood by us either with relation to the SU or the world at large. In order to establish our point, it becomes necessary to give a clear and sober evaluation of all the important facts since that time. The conclusions at which we arrive differ markedly from the conclusions previously laid down by the League. This, in itself, is no argument. Lenin for a period of 15 years was totally wrong in upholding the theory of the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry as against the Trotsky thesis of the permanent revolution. When the March events took place, Lenin had no hesitation, in his famous April theses, in junking the whole 15-year concept. He also derided those "old Bolsheviks" who held to the old theory, saying that they should be relegated to the museum.

2. The October Revolution took place in the midst of an imperialist war. No Marxist can doubt that the war of 1914-18 was an actual imperialist conflict between rival gangs of finance capitalists for the redivision of the earth. The October Revolution caused the first significant breach in the imperialist war front.

3. Nor can there be any doubt among Marxists that the October Revolution was a real proletarian social revolution. Power was assumed by the proletariat and this power mainly expressed itself in the socializing of the productive machinery, particularly in the urban centers. At this point it is necessary to distinguish between the sub-structure and the super-structure. In an important lecture on the State, contained in Vol. II of the Selected Works of Lenin, Lenin pointed out with a wealth of detail that what determines the nature of the state is the property relationship. This concept is fundamental and is in full accord with the League concept of the SU as a degenerated workers' state. On this point there is no point of difference between the present majority and minority of the CC.

4. But the majority of the CC has a mechanical and unrealistic approach to the question of the ruling bureaucracy in the SU. In all

previous class rule, the slave owners, the feudal lords, the bourgeoisie ruled to a greater or lesser extent by means of a bureaucracy. In all these instances there was no fundamental conflict between the interests of the class and the interests of the bureaucracy. But, in the case of the proletarian dictatorship, for the first time in history, we do see the possibility of a fundamental conflict, which has taken on actual life in the present-day SU. As Lenin pointed out in the "State and Revolution," and before him, Marx and Engels, what the victorious proletariat needs is a "withering away" state. This means a state that will be harsh and inflexible toward the former ruling classes, but which will rely upon the independent and conscious activity of the proletariat, leading all the suppressed and exploited. What the bureaucracy needs is the exact opposite, a permanent state to enable it to continue filching power and privilege from the workers. The latter is exactly what happened in the SU but in order to properly appreciate the situation resulting from it, it is necessary to descend from generalities and see how the thing actually worked out in practice.

5. From an early period the workers' state possessed a defective superstructure, a bureaucratic distortion. Lenin realized this in the following words written in 1921:

"Our present state is such that the entirely organized proletariat must protect itself, and we must utilize these workers' organizations for the purpose of protecting the workers from their own state." (Lenin's Selected Works, Vol. IX, page 9. Our emphasis)

\*The literature of the period, and particularly the minutes of the party congresses, give example after example to show that on account of the backwardness of Russia, the bureaucracy was swamped with hundreds of thousands of ex-Czarist and ex-bourgeois bureaucrats. Lenin's program for combatting this is best shown by a speech of his in 1922 before the CI, in which he stated that the education of the working class forces over a long period of years was the solution (Selected Works, Vol. X, pages 330-331)

But that Lenin himself made big mistakes is best shown by certain impermissible concessions made by him in his booklet, "The Soviets at Work." There Lenin confused the inescapable necessity of paying enormous salaries to bourgeois experts, a necessity apparently forced by the objective conditions, with the subordination of the workers to these same bourgeois experts. The latter was not only a departure from the principles of the Paris Commune, as Lenin himself admitted, but it was also a departure from the prerequisites of a healthy workers' state as laid down by Lenin himself in "The State and Revolution." It is interesting in this connection to note the difference of treatment of the military and industrial experts by the Soviets. The military experts were not only given money and position to make them work, but they were also put on their good behavior, first by the system of hostages and, most important, by complete workers' control over them under the system of political commissars. Exactly the opposite course was followed in the industrial field, where the managers were given full administrative powers unhampered by control from the workers. And the results show that the failure to differentiate between technical skill and administrative control was a very fatal factor in the original bureaucratization.

6. But a still more fatal process was working out. Within the

party itself bureaucracy was being introduced as a system. On the basis of the first kind of bureaucracy set forth in the fifth thesis, there arose a group of party bureaucrats, wielding immense power, and aiming at the consolidation and ossification of such power for their own ends. Primary in this group were Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev. Allied with them in one or another form were such people as Trotsky, Bucharin, Rykov, Tomsky, etc.

That there was an actual conspiracy by the Troika, Stalin, Zinoviev, and Kamenev for the above purpose is amply proved. But no one should be led into the position that all these people did what they did because they were nasty men. Their actions were determined, as the actions of all social groups, by the material conditions permitting and propelling towards bureaucratic usurpation of power.

Lenin, though belatedly, saw the danger, and also saw that it was necessary to implement the long-term perspective of education of the workers with an immediate fight against the bureaucracy, most viciously personified by Stalin. For this purpose, he called in Trotsky and proposed that Trotsky should conduct a fight against the bureaucracy at the forthcoming 12th party congress. Trotsky agreed in words (in this connection it should be remembered that Lenin was physically incapable of taking a personal part in the struggle). And then what did Trotsky do? He went down to the 7th congress of the Ukrainian Communist Party as a representative of the political line of Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev. He came to the succeeding 12th Party Congress and not only not carried on the fight against the bureaucratic line, but voted with the rest of the members of the presidium to conceal Lenin's letter to the Congress on the nationalistic excesses of Stalin and Co. in Georgia from the members of Congress.

What do we adduce these details? Because they show that from the very beginning Trotsky was not conducting any sort of principled Marxist fight against the bureaucracy but had lined up with them to share the power, deceiving the sick Lenin all the while. Now the importance of this is that when Stalin subsequently double-crossed the Trotskyists and launched an attack upon them, their previous participation in the conspiracy prevented a real Marxist fight. And still more important is the fact that the launching by Trotsky of an unprincipled, non-Marxist fight, but one allegedly Marxist, misled thousands of workers who took the appearance for the reality. With this was laid the foundation for the non-appearance of a Marxist group in the party conflict.

On both sides of this inter-clique fight for power and privilege, it was inevitable that the conflict should emerge into the Communist International. Trotsky tried to avoid the international fight until he was literally kicked into it. See in this connection his disavowal of Max Eastman as one outstanding example of many. It remains a tragic but nevertheless true statement that the so-called international left opposition never was Marxist in its fight against Stalinism. With relation to China, the British General Strike, the Soviet Union economic development, on every important point, Trotskyism never conducted a Marxist struggle. The same is true of the German revolution in 1923. Even worse was the acceptance by the opposition of capitalist democracy in the form of a so-called "worker's government" at the 4th CI Congress. And crowning infamy of all was Trotsky's trading off the theory of the permanent revolution to Zinoviev and Kamenev in return for joining him in a clique fight against Stalinism. Two important

lessons must be drawn from this. The first is that the Trotskyists were bound by an unseverable umbilical cord to Stalinism. The second is that the unfortunate prestige of Trotsky in the 1917-21 period led to such illusions on the part of those workers who wanted to be Marxists that they allowed him blindly, and thereby prevented the formation for years of real Marxist cadres on a Russian and international scale.

7. What was the result so far as the RWL was concerned? The leadership of the RWL participated and was part of the non-Marxist ILO. In 1934, when Trotsky wanted to get back into the CI via the back door of the French turn, his anti-Marxism became so palpable that we split. But in splitting we carried over the false traditions of an alleged Marxism in the ILO prior to the French Turn. The result has been that, on the question of the nature of the Stalinist bureaucracy, of Trotskyism and questions flowing from, we find ourselves in a non-Marxist position. The authors of these theses make no attempt to exculpate themselves. We are just as responsible as the comrades of the majority of the CC. But we think they should be just as honest and objective in re-evaluating the whole period of history since 1917.

8. In the meantime, the degeneration of the workers' state has reached such a pass that nothing was left of the achievements of October except the economic base and this was being daily more and more warped. The retrogression towards capitalism, capitalist counter-revolutionary overturn, became more and more marked. The whole superstructure, in the domains of the Soviet, the Unions, the army, the national question, the position of women, turned into its counter-revolutionary opposite. There still remained, however, as the basic factor in world politics, a contradiction between the economic base of the Soviet Union and the ever-decaying imperialist world. There resulted from this the phenomenon of the subordination of the intra-imperialist antagonisms to the antagonisms between the imperialist world as a whole and the Soviet Union. Hitler was groomed by world imperialism as the super-wrangel in the attack against the SU. The line of the democratic imperialists was not a line of "appeasement" as is naively supposed, but a line of definitely furnishing the Nazis with the political and military means of smashing the SU. World imperialism had clearly seen that another imperialist war of the 1914-18 type could easily lead to the overthrow of the whole capitalist system. The Spanish revolution was fresh in the memory of all the Imperialist leaders. But, not only was there a species of ideological unity among the imperialists, there was also a material base for such unity in the form of the interlocking world trusts and cartels. We do not mean to say or imply that they had and did become subordinated to the common aim of all the imperialists.

9. In connection with the real war, that of the imperialists against the SU, what should be our line? To call for any marching separately and striking together with the Stalinists is to fail to understand the nature of the bureaucracy in the SU and the nature of Stalinism internationally. Stalinism is a new phenomenon. It cannot be compressed into the old form of the labor movement as analyzed by Lenin in 1914-17. It is an expression of the interests of the bureaucracy in the SU and an extension of the expression of those interests into the capitalist countries outside. It should be remembered in this connection that for millions and millions of workers Stalinism represents the traditions of October. The Stalinists have not only amassed billions of rubles for primitive accumulation, have not only stolen motor cars and the villas, the best food and the watering places, the power from October, but what is still more important, they have

stolen the traditions. As a popular example, we may cite the use of the term "Red Army" as applied to the present Stalinist led and dominated army serving the interests of the bureaucracy.

10. In view of all the above circumstances, a necessary prerequisite to the transformation of the present Stalinist bureaucratic fight against the military forces of imperialism is the overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy. This does not mean that we fall into the trap of the so-called "revolutionary defeatism" of Mr. Shacatman. We must be for the transformation of the present war into a real extension of October, by the overthrow of the bureaucracy, the revivification of the Soviets, a return to the 1918 policies of Lenin. We are not for surrendering positions to Nazi or any other imperialisms. But we clearly realize that the way to the transformation of this war into a real civil war on an international scale is only through the method we have above indicated. The basic task today for all Marxists is a clear understanding and re-evaluation of all the events since 1917, the laying down of correct and objective theoretical basis for the establishment of a real 4th International. To that end we must purge ourselves first and then later the whole working class of every vestige of Stalinism and its Siamese twin, Trotskyism. When we succeed in doing this and not until then can we build a revolutionary party. Then we realize to the full the profound meaning of an apparently simple sentence of Lenin's: "Have the will to build a revolutionary party, and the masses will come to you."

#### Some Additional Theses on the Question of the Russian State

1. We are for the defense of the October property relationship in the Soviet Union, the only thing that remains of the proletarian revolution. We defend it, not because of its present practical benefit to the Russian workers, which is nil, but because it historically represents a progressive form of production.

2. The Stalinist bureaucracy, which has superimposed its authority upon property relationship, cannot defend it.

3. Articles written by the members of the CC majority have accredited a certain amount of the progressiveness to Stalinism by construing the economic, political and military gyrations as sort of a corrupt defense. In the light of contemporary history, this has been proven false. The occupation of Poland and other border states by the Russian army, which the League negatively defended, has been of a dubious military value, but has proven to be actually the opening of a counter-revolutionary front for bourgeois economic penetration of the Soviet Union.

4. The Stalinist bureaucracy is the most pernicious form of bureaucracy known. As a gigantic job trust in control of a state, with unlimited resources, it is qualitatively different from Social Democracy. Its life depends upon the maintenance of the world status quo, and it will therefore always act as a counter-revolutionary force. In essence the present government of the SU is counter-revolutionary.

5. The defense of the October property relationship depends upon the rapid development of the world, and particularly, the European revolution, to which both capitalism and the Stalinist bureaucracy are enemies.

6. "March separately and strike together" with the Stalinist army is an impossibility. Historically there has never been a practical in-

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THE TROTSKY SCHOOL OF FALSIFICATION

CHECKING UP  
ON  
CANNON'S "HISTORY"

J. P. Cannon's book, "The History of American Trotskyism" is now being run serially in The Militant and is being given wide publicity by the Trotskyites. A major aspect of Trotskyite activities dealt with by Cannon in his "History" is in the trade union sphere.

From 1929 to 1934 the Stalinern was conducting its counter-revolutionary ultra-Left, Third Period zigzag. It was during this period that the Stalinists in the United States were participating in all sorts of adventuristic antics. One of the wildest and most disruptive things they did was the setting up of dual unions in trades and industries where A. F. of L. unions already existed. This maneuver was conducted by the Stalinist Trade Union Unity League. In actuality, these so-called "Red" trade unions existed chiefly on paper or were nothing more than artificial organizations to trap and betray the militant workers.

In Cannon's book, "The History of American Trotskyism," he states on page 143, that the policy of the American Trotskyites during that period was not to set up their own trade unions (dual unions) because it would run counter to the desires of the masses to go into the established unions:

"It was our deliberate course to go along the organizational line the masses were travelling, not to set up any artificially constructed unions of our own in contradiction to the impulse of the masses to go into the established trade union movement."

The Trotskyites, according to Cannon, also had a strong positive program which consisted of fighting against the destructive dual union policy of the Stalinists. Summarizing the Trotskyite line from 1928 to 1934, Cannon writes:

"For five years we had waged a determined battle against the ultra-left dogma of 'Red Unions,' such unions set up artificially by the Communist Party were boycotted by the workers, thus isolating the vanguard elements."

How true is Cannon's statement that for five years, during the so-called "Third Period," the American Trotskyites fought against this destructive Stalinist policy? Some checking against the actual history of the Trotsky movement will supply the answer. One of the dual unions set up by the Stalinists was the Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union; the A. F. of L. union in this field was the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union. The Stalinist NTFWIU was a typical example of an artificial union that Cannon says he fought against. But at the very time that the Stalinists set up that purely "Third Period" outfit, Cannon assured the workers who tended to boycott it, that the "union" was not an artificial concoction of the Foster-Browder bandits:

"The Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union is not an artificial creation." (J. P. Cannon, The Militant, June 21, 1930, p. 3)