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ON CONCENTRATION AND POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE

By Phil Bart, Ohio

The Draft Resolution correctly placed great stress on the "need of the Party's work (to give) top priority to the working class." This approach must be the central task for the Party. While some progress has been made, we still fall short of making this the major objective. In order to be a party of the working class we must establish firm organizational ties in major industries. Such direction in our work will help open new paths of action and win adherents to our Marxist party. This may be one more repetition of an oft repeated truism but it remains the main challenge before us.

It is an established fact that advances made by the working class also affect the living standards and general welfare of other classes. Its leadership for social security, in which the Communist Party played a significant part, benefited millions of people throughout the nation. The struggle for the shorter work day and work week extended leisure time for all working people. This, too, is a result of working-class leadership.

The struggle of the West Virginia coal miners against "black lung" disease had an immediate effect on the lives and health of the miners. But in the long run their initiative will help protect the health and welfare of all those who are endangered by poisoned air. This includes steel workers, molders, paint sprayers and others.

Every advance in our society is assured when it has the support and leadership of the working class. This is why Marxists recognize that not only with regard to immediate gains, but also in the ultimate struggle to eliminate exploitation, this class stands in the forefront. It is most decisive in its leadership. Consequently the policy of industrial concentration is fundamental to our program and its application in daily life.

With this in mind I want to direct myself to the treatment of the 1968 elections in the draft resolution and its relation to the working class. I have no quarrel with the need for various approaches, such as developing independent political forms, attention to the "old parties," first of all the Democratic Party, and the significant initiative in entering Communist Party candidates on the ballot. The question is: Where do we place the greatest emphasis in order to reach the working class and large sections in the black community?

Starting with the working class, it is essential to ask: Where did this class give its main support? The results showed greatest support to Democratic candidates, starting with the presidential ticket. We are not here discussing whether this was the best approach for the labor movement. We want, first, to establish the facts from which to draw our conclusions.

The draft states: "The elections witnessed a mass explosion of grass-roots political independence on all levels." (My emphasis.) Further down the document concludes that "The historic grass-roots electoral explosion did not result in a comparable breakthrough in the election results ..." Then where was the "explosion?" In the final analysis the vote is an important barometer of mass "explosions" and independent political movements.

Undoubtedly the draft refers to the pre-convention movement inside the Democratic Party, also to the unprecedented "dump-Johnson" movement, which had extraordinary results. They were of great importance and had mass support. But most of this support was limited to middle-class, student and professional groups. This in no way takes away from the achievement. Nevertheless the limitation of these movements as a base for the future cannot be ignored. This has not been dealt with.

The resolution lays the guilt for this situation on the "subservient policies of the AFL-CIO leadership." With this we agree. But we must go beyond that. Independent movements, as they develop, will clash with the top bureaucracy. They will involve leaders on all levels as well as the rank and file. Let me recall some of the developments in the 1930's. The top leadership of the United Mine Workers, the Carpenters and some other unions opposed the re-election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt as president. In this they clashed with the broad coalition of labor and the black people. But they could not get their membership to go along with them. A rank-and-file trade union movement today will find itself not only involved in economic issues and in democracy in the unions, but in the creation of independent political activities.

The working class and the black communities feared a Nixon victory. They were concerned with their domestic problems. These problems, however, are closely tied to U.S. imperialist foreign policy. It has placed added burdens on them through crushing taxes, speedup and rises in the cost of living. Both features of U.S. policy are more and more interrelated, and the struggle on the domestic front finds a reaction in foreign policy. This is observed in the growing call for diversion of war appropriations to domestic needs.

They sensed a Nixon victory as a threat to their conditions and a resistance to further gains. Was there a difference between Johnson's candidate Humphrey and Nixon? Johnson prosecuted the war and increased tax burdens on the people. It took Humphrey some time to make a slight break with Johnson. And the new Nixon Administration is following in the footsteps of its predecessor.

Yet over the years labor and the Afro-American population wrung concessions from Democratic administrations. They associate anti-labor legislation with Republican leadership. The fact is that the mayors of both Cleveland and Gary come from the Democratic Party. That party takes advantage of and utilizes this backlog of support from masses of the people.

One can therefore ask: Is such an approach as stated above, not helping to create illusions among workers and other sections of the population? How can those who vote Democrat break with that party? How can we help them make that break? This requires close attention to the problems facing the working class. It requires day-to-day help to our comrades who come up against these problems. It requires very specific answers to each new issue as it arises.

Our comrades faced the problem during the 1968 elections of how to answer the challenge of Wallace supporters in the plant. They found in many plants a number of men wearing Wallace buttons. Others, especially black workers, countered by wearing Humphrey buttons. What do you do under these circumstances? Some of our comrades explained to those wearing Humphrey buttons that it is insufficient to use this as a counter-move to Wallace. If they were supporting Humphrey then they must make demands upon their unions and the candidates. They must place their own demands before them. These were not isolated instances.

The point will be made that the workers have illusions. This is quite obvious. But illusions are ideological weapons of capitalism. They will make concessions and seek to keep the millions tied to their political parties. We must face this fact. The question is how to expose it. This will come through such struggles as those against high taxes, restrictive acts against the ghetto, etc. Fighting illusions means not to ignore them. They will be shed only through struggle and experience.

My only interest in the Democratic Party (and the Republican Party where applicable) is to help win masses from them, to destroy their effectiveness and influence on the millions, to help create a popular party whose strength is based on the working class and the black population.

A correct policy takes into consideration the level of political development of the working class. It then seeks through struggle and leadership to raise it to the next higher stage. This idea is well placed in a leaflet issued last year over the signatures of Henry Winston and Gus Hall. In their appeal

"Build the People's United Front" (The Worker, February 11, 1968) they wrote that there are "those whose political rebellion is still within the limits of the two-party system (and) ... those who have already broken out of these limits, New Politics against the dump-Johnson movements."

The dump Johnson movement reached millions who forced the former president to retreat and remove himself as a candidate for re-election. But a large section of these people then voted for Humphrey. This in no way took away from the achievement of the dump-Johnson movement. This initial step was a victory. But what happened to the New Politics movement? Organizationally it went out of existence and was not a factor in the elections. Several independent political parties placed candidates in the field. They were confined to particular groupings and regions. They were important in giving independent expressions in opposition to U.S. imperialist aggression and as a voice of the black liberation movement. But all these movements were limited and the task of creating a base for a mass political breakaway remains.

An important feature which developed and which will continue on the political scene is the American Independent party (the Wallace party). Its ambition to garner a larger vote was clipped thanks to the last-minute efforts of the labor movement. But whereas in the past such formations were regional, usually confined to a few southern states, this time they have sufficient votes to remain a party in all states. They will seek to establish themselves as a permanent political institution. In Cleveland, for instance, they have sidestepped their openly discredited spokesmen and replaced them with "respectable" individuals. They seek to interject their group into various crucial issues such as opposition to new taxes. They speak of candidates in state and local elections. They will undoubtedly seek alliances with other reactionary elements to strengthen their political hold in the state. This looms as a threat as well as a challenge to labor, the ghetto and other progressive forces.

Above are some questions which I have singled out, to which the draft resolution should address itself. The political instrument of U.S. monopoly -- the two-party system -- has never been a homogeneous entity. It always showed cracks and strains in time of crisis. Its problems today are even more complex. It tries to hold together conflicting class forces which are straining in their opposition. It uses ideological weapons where this will help. It utilizes also a body of restrictive electoral laws to stop the formation of new political parties.

After the Supreme Court threw out a law which absolutely denied the preemption of a new party in Ohio, the legislature not in session, is scheming to pass a new law hardly less restrictive. This is the way they hope to halt emerging political developments. It should be evident that only a powerful working-class movement can sweep aside such legislation. A political party based on labor and the black people will not be halted by such laws.

As I have indicated at the outset, stress on a concentration policy in all fields of work gives confidence of strengthening our ties with the masses. Through such developments we help create the kind of coalition essential for victory.

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WOMAN QUESTION NEGLECTED

by E. C., Garment Worker

The draft resolution is quite inadequate on the woman question. It doesn't even suggest some sort of an apparatus to look after and plan work dealing specifically with women's problems and work among women.

It speaks of women fighting for peace, but has nothing on the heroic role women played in organizing the unorganized in the South, in the struggles in Little Rock, in the battles of the hospital workers in New York, etc.

It speaks of promoting women into leadership, but only in general terms. It should urge a real struggle in the unions for giving leadership to women. Our program should call for a fight on the part of organized labor for women to receive full pensions at the age of 62 (since working women are subjected to greater pressures and difficulties). At our last convention this was raised and agreed upon, but no action was taken.

There should be more of an effort made to concretize and improve the section in the program on women. As it is now, it is very general.

THE PROGRAM AND WOMEN

by E. K.

The two drafts of the C. P. Program that I have so far read contain little or no mention of Women or of The Arts. Many clubs, including my own, have submitted articles on both of these questions, some of which have been printed in Party Affairs (April, 1968).

It is impossible that these areas remain unmentioned in the final draft through being considered "unimportant" and ridiculous that they be overlooked through negligence. These are two areas in which our party is known to be strong by all people who have any contact at all with the party. Not to mention them in the final draft of the program would be a step toward throwing away potential support for the party.

A CRITIQUE OF THE U. S. PARTY'S POSITION
ON THE CRISIS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

Fred Morris

The national leadership of the Communist Party of the United States wrongly approved the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the troops of socialist powers allied under the Warsaw Treaty. That invasion violated a clear provision of that Treaty, as well as the stand which the Soviet Union took in its own Declaration, issued October, 1956. The principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of socialist nations is also accepted by our Party. Our national leadership acted contrary to this principle in its statements on the Czechoslovakian crisis, and its statements, further, contain no evidence that military intervention was necessary. No officer or leading committee has power to modify the principles which govern us all, particularly not without membership discussion and convention action.

One important contribution which this convention can make is to curb the abuse of centralism under which a majority of our National Committee first usurped power to act contrary to principle and then stopped discussion.

I

The invasion of Czechoslovakia by troops from five Warsaw Treaty powers violated an obligation which each allied power had pledged to observe. Signed in May 14, 1955, the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance sprang from the formation in Western Europe of the NATO military alliance centered around remilitarized Western Germany. It provided for the mutual defense of member nations against imperialist attack and formalized relations among the signing nations. Article VIII is the pledge each nation made not to interfere in each other's internal affairs.

The contracting parties declare that they shall act in the spirit of friendship and cooperation with the object of furthering the development and strengthening the economic and cultural relations between them, adhering to the principles of mutual respect for their independence and sovereignty, and of non-interference in their internal affairs. ¹

1. Press Department, Embassy of Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, No. 292, released May 16, 1955

In the months which followed the signing of this treaty, popular discontent began to show itself in East Germany, Poland, and Hungary, particularly, against Stalinist abuses by party leadership in those lands. In Hungary, discontent flared into an uprising, which, seized upon by counter-revolutionary agents, flared into savage fighting. In August, 1956, the Hungarian Government called in Soviet Troops, who put the fighting down. They were called in once again, in November, by Kadar's provisional government. It is important to recollect that Soviet armed intervention, called for twice by Hungarian authorities in 1956, was an act of mutual assistance, an act to support working-class solidarity against the ancient regime in Hungary and its imperialist foreign allies. It is also important to recollect that the Soviet Union, in October of that year, forcefully restated the only conditions under which the armed forces of any Warsaw power may be sent into the territories of another socialist nation. Its Declaration on the Relations between the Soviet Union and Other Socialist Countries (an abbreviated title) states, in part,

The Soviet Union proceeds from the general principle that the troops of any Warsaw Power may be stationed in the territory of another Warsaw Power by agreement of all the Treaty members, and solely with the consent of the country in whose territory the troops have been stationed at its request or are proposed to be stationed.²

The government of Czechoslovakia did not ask Warsaw Pact troops to enter its territories. Neither did it, nor the Party, nor the masses of Czechoslovakia's organized trade unionists agree to having those troops within their borders.

II

However future historians may view the invasion of Czechoslovakia by her socialist neighbors, one need not wait for their judgment to know that two of the supporting statements by leaders of the U.S. Party are weak arguments. One was presented by Gus Hall as a report to the September, 1968, session of our National Committee. Approved by the Committee, it was issued in pamphlet under the title, Czechoslovakia at the Crossroads. The other, by Herbert Aptheker, Czechoslovakia and the Present Epoch, appeared in two parts, the first in the November, and the second in the December issue of Political Affairs, 1968. Each author believes that the invasion was essential. Neither presents evidence to justify his belief.

Crossroads, as I shall abbreviate the title of Comrade Hall's report to the National Committee, contains the remarkable statement that the invasion was contrary to our Party's program, but that it was nevertheless correct. An extraordinary instance of mugwumpism! It is exactly

2. New Times, November, 1956, #45.

in the sense of the 19th Century scoffer who defined a mugwump as a politician who firmly held his mug on one side and his wump on the other. How can an action which is contrary to our Party's program be called a correct action? Let us see how Comrade Hall accomplished this feat.

First, his own statement.

It is an exception to our Party's program on this matter, but it does not destroy the rule.³

But what is the rule? The rule is that in no case shall the relationship among Communist and Workers' parties be other than the fraternity of equals.

We are for consultation among the parties on the basis of mutual respect... We are opposed to any concept of monolithic unity that would press all working class parties into one mold... We are for the complete independence and autonomy of each party; we declare ourselves bound by no decision except our own.

That is one way of stating the rule. It is taken from an undisputed portion of The New Program of the Communist Party (CPUSA).⁴ Mutual respect for the aims and struggles of other workers' parties is a corollary of international working-class solidarity. The members of our Party accept this principle. None of our leaders challenges it. We know, then, just where we stand on this issue.

Very well, but, if the invasion is to be defended, the rule requiring consent to military occupations must be modified to include certain defining conditions. Just how shall a non-interference rule be modified to permit interference? Comrade Hall appears to have been caught in a dilemma of his own making. Either he clings to the principle of autonomous socialist development, or he tries to tell what the exact conditions are under which socialist nations with more troops may force socialist nations with fewer troops to change socialist policies without imposing a "monolithic unity" tending to "press all working class parties into one mold."

Crossroads boldly chooses the second horn of this dilemma. It contends that self-determination is not an unconditional right, under all circumstances.⁵ One is not at all sure how this observation bears upon the particular treaty obligation cited above or upon the Soviet Union's own Declaration, also cited. What is astonishing, however,

3. Czechoslovakia at the Crossroads, New Outlook Publishers, N.Y. 1968, p. 36

4. Op. cit., New Outlook Publishers, 1966, p. 121.

is the misquotation and misuse of a quotation which Comrade Hall draws from Lenin. According to Comrade Hall,⁵ Lenin said,

Where there appears a momentary contradiction between the two, there is a unity of interest in the basic solution. The unity is within the historic world revolutionary process.

The several demands of democracy, including self-determination, are not an absolute, but only a small part (Lenin's emphasis) of the general democratic (now: general-socialist) world movement. In individual concrete cases the part may contradict the whole; if so, it must be rejected.

This quotation, Comrade Hall says, is to be found in Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 22, page 341. It is part of Lenin's Articles and Speeches, August to December, 1916, Discussion on Self-Determination, VII "Marxism or Proudhonism," also to be found in Lenin, Collected Works, International Publishers, 1942, Vol. 19, pp. 287-8.

The first thing to note about this quotation is that it appears in two paragraphs. The first paragraph does not appear either in Vol. 22 or in Vol. 19 of the works cited. Comrade Hall's researchers simply added to the second paragraph which they did find, an introductory two sentences which they either invented or found somewhere else. It is too bad that Comrade Hall did not check his sources for himself. If he had, he would have noticed that the second paragraph of the quotation cited cannot be made to apply in any real sense to relations between Warsaw Treaty Powers in 1968.

In section VII, Lenin was chiding certain Polish comrades for their rejection of comments which Marx had made on the attitude one should take toward self-determination as it was being raised during the bourgeois democratic movements in Europe between 1848-1871. Marx and Engels had played down self-determination movements in certain Eastern European countries at that time, Lenin was saying, because those peoples, under tzarism, were pawns of tzarist-aided world reaction against democratic movements in European states. He was contrasting those early years with the first years of the imperialist era, 1898 to 1916, when, as he said, the new world movement pitted "general socialist" forces against imperialism.

The concrete change in the application of the same socialist principles: at that time (1848-71) first of all "against tsarism" ... at the present time (1916) against the united, straightened-out front of the imperialist powers... and for utilizing all national movements against imperialism for the purposes of the socialist revolution.⁶

5. Crossroads, p. 24

6. Lenin, V.I., Collected Works, International Publishers, N.Y. 1942 Vol. 19, p. 288.

10

Comrade Hall is misusing the remarks he quoted. They were torn out of a discussion of conditions in 1848-1871. They did not fit conditions in 1916, Lenin was saying. One wonders how Lenin would have thought they fit into a judgment of Czechoslovakia's socialist perspectives in 1968.

III

To quote Lenin effectively in contemporary theoretical argument is not to treat each phrase he uttered in historic contexts 50 years old in abstraction from the concrete problems to which he addressed himself, but to attend to his genius in analysis. Let us attend to the quality of analysis in the articles under examination. Let us see, if we can, whether their analyses of concrete relationships show that the entrance of troops into Czechoslovakia without its consent was a correct, although contrary, exception to the ever so correct rule.

No one contends, of course, that Czechoslovakia was in a state of counter-revolution, as Hungary was in 1956. The crux of the question about evidence is how to analyze what are said to have been trends in Czechoslovakia. Viewing society dynamically, Marxist-Leninists are above all concerned with how people interact. What factors cause what people in a given society to move in what direction are critical questions to those whose purpose is to accentuate movements which will determine future states of that society. To say persuasively that there was a counter-revolutionary trend powerful enough in a country to overturn its government, destroy the leadership of its Communist Party, and suppress the power and activities of its socialist minded trade union masses is to talk of large numbers of people in conflicting movement. To talk of trends which are determinant in a given society is not to speak as an agricultural worker once spoke to Stalin of generalized trends toward progress on the farmlands from which he had come. Stalin wanted to know just how many bushels of seed had been sown. Without such concrete knowledge, how could Stalin estimate the crop?

The first of Comrade Aptheker's articles in Political Affairs is a well-done summary of reactionary movements in the European theatre, with a reminder of what Americans should never forget, the immense slaughter, the gargantuan destruction, the torrential suffering, the incomprehensible physical, social, and psychological cost which went into the Soviet repulsion of Hitler's armies. Of course, a CIA triumph in Greece would not be lost upon heads of government in Eastern Europe or the Soviet Union. But the trouble with this part of Aptheker's argument is that for two decades of Cold War, imperialists have organized events in Europe which have menaced peace. That some such events were organized

about the time of the Warsaw occupation of Czechoslovakia, therefore, could hardly be called the sufficient cause of the occupation. Particularly not, when Comrade Hall's own pamphlet states, "It is true at this moment that neither U.S. nor West German imperialism is ready to strike militarily."⁷ Since the invasion of Czechoslovakia seems not to have been necessary to stop the outbreak of World War III, the material in Comrade Aptheker's first article cannot be said to support the Warsaw Pack action at this time.

His December article is a well-researched job, citing many opinions of publicists within Czechoslovakia and of influential and important spokesmen or agents of imperialist intervention. But his sources, though important, are secondary. They indicate intentions. The question he should move to is the effect which people having such intentions were producing. We know there was criticism, much criticism, some of it counter-revolutionary. What we are trying to find out is whether the government, the Party, the trade-union masses could have coped with it.

Comrade Hall's treatment of evidence centers on statements of events.

The new leadership...opened up the flood gates for a tide which created anarchy...a tide that swept in with it the forces of counter-revolution.⁸

That statement may be true, but it has no quantitative content.

Some students and youth organization leaders had organized a boycott. The right-wing Social Democratic Party organized its ranks...openly anti-Soviet. The Club 231 movement became gathering places for counter-revolutionaries. Club 231 held meetings, had TV interviews with U.S. and West German networks. Seventy intellectuals issued a 2000 word statement which was carried in seven newspapers and released to radio and TV.⁹

These are factual statements, beyond contention, too, but how may they be interpreted? Behind each of them, is there only one impulse, that toward counter-revolution? Who is being mobilized? Is there an ascending pitch to their involvement? Are there masses acting or only critical circles whose claims can be politically met by Party and trade union polemics?

Clearly there is a distinction between enumerating events and statements, and judging their impact upon parts of the population. A Marxist who cannot quantitatively define the relations within a society cannot tell us what qualitative turn that society may take, and cannot, consequently, tell us what kind of measures will be useful.

7. Crossroads, p. 21.

8. Ibid., p. 7.

9. Ibid. pp. 7, 11, 12, 14

What, for example, is the political foundation for Comrade Hall's judgment, that Czechoslovakia's Communist leaders did not correctly handle the authors of a 2000-word counter-revolutionary statement? The authors were politically defeated. They came, he said,¹⁰ to the Party's leadership to acknowledge that they had been wrong. They expressed a natural gratitude that their errors had not cost them their lives or liberty.

But what constitutes political victory? Is it not the political defeat of enemies of socialism? One might object that this triumph by the Czechoslovakian Party was too little or too late. How so? Within what relationship is it being weighed?

It is a fact, as Comrade Hall pointed out, that stores of arms were found in Czechoslovakia. Who stored them? for what purpose? Crossroads intimates that these arms were stored for the use of counter-revolutionary insurgents. According to a dispatch by Sam Russell from Prague, People's World, Oct. 5, 1968, the Prague staff headquarters of Czechoslovakia's peoples' Militia claimed that the arms seized by the invading troops belonged to the Peoples' Militia, itself. Staff headquarters claimed to have the numbers of those weapons and demanded their return to the depots from which they were taken. Unless he has special information, sources of which he does not disclose, Comrade Hall cannot pretend to know whose arms those were. Perhaps some of them belonged to the Militia. Perhaps others were stored for a reactionary coup d'etat. Unless a relationship can be shown between these arms and groupings in the struggle, no political inference from their existence is possible.

In what political relationship, again, were "all old Communists eliminated from the security forces?"¹¹ May one say "all," excluding the possible retention of even one? Were those dismissals for violations by security police of socialist legality under Novotny's leadership? Even the factual statement that there was a headquarters for counter-revolutionary radio programs in the "West German Army building in Munich"¹² loses the force it could have had in support Comrade Hall's argument. Under what political relationship did the West German Army have an operating center in Munich? Who used the radio equipment? Under what circumstances?

A mish-mash of instances, without sources through which one might check their accuracy, isolated as "facts," with undisplayed connection to political struggle, cannot be added one by one to an intellectual sum call a Marxist analysis.

10. Ibid., p. 18

11. Ibid., p. 18

12. Ibid., p. 18.

It may be objected that the leadership of the CPUSA is in no position to make the necessary quantitative analysis of the events in Czechoslovakia during the first half of 1968. That is possibly true, but our leadership need not have spoken in such a hurry, either. It could have opposed forceful intervention as a violation of party principle and treaty obligation. It could have taken no position. It could have undertaken a thorough quantitative analysis in an effort to discover whether this was so special a case as to justify armed intervention despite the party principle which prohibits it. Throwing each of these choices before our membership for study and discussion would have enlivened our Party's understanding and would have made its internal processes a welcome contrast to contemporary bourgeois political practice.

PROPOSAL FOR PRE-CONVENTION DISCUSSION:
NATIONAL COMMITTEE SIZE
submitted by M. Eisenscher

In the two and one half years I have served on the National Committee (NC) I have often been prompted to ponder the function and role of the NC as the leading political body of the party between conventions. I have come to conclude that in many respects problems, ideological and otherwise, which have arisen in the party can be traced back to the failure of the NC to fulfill its proper role as the highest policy-making body of the party and the functional center of leadership in the implementation of line and policy. No mechanical solutions will be found to overcome what are basically political problems within the NC, but I believe, as do many members of the district in Wisconsin, that certain structural changes should be made in the NC to better enable it to deal with the political changes that must be made. The proposals given here are not offered as polished and complete, but rather are contributed to stimulate thinking and discussion. The very fact that in the recent NC meeting there was no mention, less discussion, of the functioning of the NC, no attempt at self-critical analysis, is in itself reflective of the problem.

First of all, the NC is dominated by functionaries of long standing, older comrades who to a great extent are not in touch or involved in the day to day developments of the mass movements. The dominance of these members on the NC leads to the incapacity of that body to truly relate theory and practice, and the result is over-generalization, abstraction, and vagueness in development of line and policy. The total number of rank and file trade unionists, cadre in the Black Liberation, peace, and youth movements who sit on the NC composes a minority. Their voices and influence are muted by the preponderance of a majority who do not function in the mass movements and who do not relate adequately to the daily problems of a rank and file party member.

Second, it seems that the size of the NC is a problem. Debates are tedious and repetitious, with often fewer than half of the NC members taking part in many discussions. Discussions wander over many topics leading to a lack of precision and clarity on points of difference. The result is that issues of conflict are most often left unresolved, crippling the ability of the NC members to give leadership, and giving cause for confusion and disorientation in the

party ranks. I would suggest that the 19th Convention reduce the NC to about half its present size, or about 40 instead of 86, and that its composition be dominated by rank and file activists and those functionaries who relate directly to mass activity in addition to party organization. This raises some questions as to the role of top functionaries, relations between the Board and Secretariat and the NC, etc.

It is unnecessary for every leading person to sit on the NC. At this time too many members of commissions, committees, and departments hold NC membership. The overlap itself is a source of many problems, both political and in relation to the amount of time available to these comrades in carrying out duties and providing services to the districts. Delegation of authority and responsibility is crippled and few district members are brought into the national leadership for cadre training. Aside from personal ego, or unwillingness to relate to the district problems, there is no reason why most every functionary and district leader must sit on the NC. There are many valuable ways to serve our party other than NC membership, and older comrades in particular must be brought to see this fact.

With a reduced NC more attention could be given by comrades to the proper functioning of commissions, day to day guidance of the work of the party in mass activity, and production of materials to assist the clubs and districts. With the money saved by reduction in size, NC meetings could be held more often, in places other than New York, and funds would be available to the center to hire additional staff to give commissions the ability to take their work into the field, visiting districts more often and giving day to day leadership. Commissions would also be in a position to give more direct assistance to the NC in preparing reports on specific questions under debate in the NC. We would be gearing the leadership more to work than, as at present, to obfuscate debate. Commissions would be in a position to draw in more people from the district, transforming their work into lively and vital organs of party activity. The overall quality of leadership would be improved and we would be in a better position to resolve some of the differences and to qualitatively alter the mass ties of the party.

Lastly, I want to propose that the NC must find a better method of conducting its discussions. Many of the problems which have arisen in the past period are complicated by our type of debate which leaves questions unresolved, which avoids pointing out specific tasks for work, which results in vague and conflicting interpretations of what policy is. In part this stems from the insistence of the top leadership upon delivering "general" reports, and the NC adopting the "general line" of reports. It also stems from the fact that by the time reports are brought to the NC the Secretariat and Board have fully discussed and digested all points of view. The NC discussion is not pointed to developing policy, but rather approving policy developed by another body, or discussing aspects of application. The process negates the policy-making role of the NC. I am not against general political reports, but do feel that specific resolutions must be offered by the Secretariat and Board to the NC on ideological and mass political lines of the party. We must remove the room for confusion; we must achieve precision and clarity in our documents to the degree that conditions permit. It is time for us to spell out our policies as we adopt them, in resolution form. We must put an end to omnibus general reports which are adopted as the line, leaving us with no concise statement to fight for.

I hope that these few undeveloped remarks and suggestions will be taken in the context in which they are offered, to improve the work of the leadership and to transform our party into a mass party.

ON BLACK LIBERATION

by E. M.

The American Negroes are an oppressed colonial people and an integral part of the American nation.

What place did the Africans fill in the colonial economy when they were brought to America? They did not immigrate to these shores as the European settlers did. The Africans were enslaved and brought here as commodities to be sold for profit. "The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signalized the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief moments of primitive accumulation" (of capital). (a)

The Africans were bought for their labor-power -- just as a planter would buy a horse or any other commodity needed for production. Their labor was needed on the early colonial plantations. "The slave-owner buys his laborer as he buys his horse. If he loses his slave, he loses capital that can only be restored by new outlay in the slave-mart. But 'the rice-grounds of Georgia, or the swamps of the Mississippi may be fatally injurious to the human constitution; but the waste of human life which the cultivation of these districts necessitates, is not so great that it cannot be repaired from the teeming preserves of Virginia and Kentucky. Considerations of economy, . . . when once trading in slaves is practiced, become reasons for racking to the uttermost the toil of the slave; for, when his place can at once be supplied from foreign preserves, the duration of his life becomes a matter of less moment than its productiveness while it lasts. It is accordingly a maxim of slave management, in slave importing countries, that the most effect economy is that which takes out of the human chattel in the shortest space of time the utmost amount of exertion it is capable of putting forth.'" (b)

In this country, the early colonial plantations grew tobacco, rice, indigo and later cotton with the forced labor of Africans and their children. The raw products were shipped back to the mother country and sold for profit. "English modern industry . . . relied on two pivots . . . the second pivot . . . was the slave-grown cotton of the U.S. . . . As long as the English cotton manufacturers depended on slave-grown cotton, it could be truthfully asserted that they rested on a twofold slavery, the indirect slavery of the white man in England and the direct slavery of the black man on the other side of the Atlantic." (c)

Thus the enslaved Africans were a necessary part of the American-colonial world economy which supplied raw materials to England and Europe. In fact Marx considered the U. S. still a colony as late as 1866. "The eco-

nomical development of the U.S. is itself a product of European, more especially of English modern industry. In their present form (1866) the States must still be considered a European colony." (d)

This basic economic role in the COLONIAL economy determines the oppressed colonial status of the Afro-American, and at the same time proves they are an integral part of the American nation from the very beginning.

Just as the revolution of 1776 was not a revolution to free the wage-workers, neither was it a revolution of the oppressed colonial enslaved blacks. Nor did the Civil War give complete equality to end the colonial oppression of the Afro-Americans.

Because of their special function in the colonial economy, material conditions and problems, the history of the "freed" Afro-Americans over the years has always differed from all European immigrants. This origin and development is the reason why the non-integrated black communities of today have some features similar to other oppressed colonial people.

The recognition of the Black Liberation Movement as a movement from colonial oppression to full equality will strengthen our Program. It will give a solid economic basis to the Negro-labor alliance that can be a major component of the anti-monopoly coalition on the path to socialism.

NOTES:

(a) CAPITAL, Vol. I, Chapter XXXI, page 775. International Publishers, 1939.

(b) CAPITAL, Vol. I, Chapter X, Section 5, International Publishers, 1939.

(c) CIVIL WAR IN THE U.S., by K. Marx, page 19. International Publishers, 1940. From N. Y. Daily Tribune, October 14, 1861.

(d) CAPITAL, Vol. I, Chapter XV, Section 7, page 454, note 1. International Publishers, 1939.

OUR OBJECTIVES IN WORK AMONG THE JEWISH PEOPLE

B. H., Southern California

(The following is a report presented in pre-convention discussion at a Party club meeting)

Our aim is to analyze the Jewish minority in the U.S.A. Why are we doing it? As Party members, we have to work among them, we have to influence them. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary to know the subject matter, the material and the forces which can be used for this purpose.

I

We have now 6.2 million Jews in the U.S., 82% of them native born.

Where do they live? There are 2,650,000 in New York and its suburbs; 550,000 in Los Angeles; 400,000 in Philadelphia; 300,000 in Chicago; 130,000 in Miami; 150,000 in Boston; 90,000 each in Detroit, Cleveland and Washington, D.C.; 70,000 in San Francisco. As we see, 4,575,000 are in the largest cities of the nation and the remainder -- 1-1/2 million -- is also an urban population.

These figures indicate that the social weight of the Jewish population in the country is incomparably greater than if there were 10 or 15 million Jews in the U.S., or even more, dispersed throughout the land, proportionately with the rest of the population.

II

What are their trades or professions?

1. They are still, in New York and other centers, in the needle trades.
2. Many are employees in the various businesses in the big cities.
3. A very substantial number of them are office employees.
4. To a very large extent they are professionals, a higher proportion than in the general population.
5. They are also represented to a smaller extent -- believe it or not -- in heavy industries, such as rubber, aluminum and automobiles. Up to now the Jews are discriminated against in gas, electric, telephone and banks. (Jewish Yearly Almanac)

Jews are highly organized. There are over 200 national organizations, many of which have memberships in hundreds of thousands.

For example, Bnai B'rith has 300,000, Hadassah 300,000, Zionist Organization of America 100,000, Jewish Centers 700,000, American Jewish Congress 100,000. Synagogues pretend to have over 1.5 million (active among them is a fraction of a percent; to be exact 1.6% attend services).

The Jewish population is integrated politically, economically and culturally.

III

Since Jews are an urban population, they are more active in political parties than other minorities. As a rule they are more inclined to the Democratic Party.

What are the patterns of Jewish voting? Midstream of February 1969 presents reports from Baltimore, Chicago, St. Louis and Long Island, the results of which are indicative for the whole country. Marvin Braiterman of Baltimore writes: "There had been considerable speculation prior to the election that both Nixon and George Wallace would make considerable headway in Jewish areas. Jewish voters were particularly hard hit by the Easter Week disturbances in Baltimore." However, Humphrey's majority among Baltimore Jews must be characterized as one of landslide proportions. It is true that Humphrey was the "lesser of the evils." Seymour Cohen of Chicago, Richard Dawson of St. Louis and Myron Fenster of Long Island, all agree that on the whole the election results show that the Jewish population largely supported the Democratic candidates.

Let us not forget that the Jewish minority, to a large degree, was the builder of the unions in the United States in the last quarter of the 19th Century. They were relatively active in the struggle for civil rights, in the struggle for Negro liberation, against segregation. Prominently noticeable in these struggles were Bnai B'rith, the Anti-Defamation League, the American Jewish Congress and others.

Very active in the struggle for peace were Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Synagogues; more than 4,500 professors of various universities; intellectuals, students and so on. P. Novick writes in Jews in the United States:

It is noteworthy to mention here that, at its convention in New York in April 1962, the American Jewish Congress unanimously adopted a resolution calling for the repeal of the Smith Act of 1940, the Internal Security-McCarran Act of 1950, the Communist Control Act of 1954 and the drastic revision of the Immigration and Nationality Walter-McCarran Act of 1952. The stand taken at previous gatherings of the AJC for the abolition of the House Un-American Activities Committee, was reaffirmed.

IV

As we see, we have here a liberal minority, as far as struggles for legal democracy are concerned. But we should not forget that the hegemony over this minority is still in the hands of the Jewish bourgeoisie and therefore we have an entirely different picture when we analyze the internal or external affairs of the establishment. The cold war is a clear example. The leadership of the Jewish minority is with the State Department, regardless of

how harmful this line is to America and the Jewish people. This leadership has the same relationship to the class struggle in the country. Here the Jewish politicians have their say. The Goldbergs, Javitses and their ilk are dominating the Prinzes and Lelyvelds -- the leaders of the American Jewish Congress.

Indicative of the above are the following facts:

1. When the chimneys of Oswieczim were smoking, these leaders were reluctant to identify themselves with the victims of Hitlerism. (An exception was Rabbi Stephen Wise).

2. The American Jewish leadership know full well what the Nazi-gangs are doing now, and again they are not raising their voices.

3. Synagogues are frequently bombed, the hoodlums are not apprehended and again we do not hear meaningful protests from the American Jewish leadership.

4. The affair "Heusinger" was an eyesore. Senator Wayne Morse, a non-Jew, made an historic speech against Heusinger on the floor of the Senate on April 19, 1961. But Senator Jacob Javits, a Jew, not only remained silent, but in a letter to voters repeated the State Department line that Hitler's chief strategist, Heusinger, is OK. So it is in regard to the Berlin question; and so it is in regard to the cold war generally; and so it is in regard to the instrument of the cold war -- anti-Sovietism.

5. Large demonstrations were held in France, England and Argentina, but the leadership of our American Jewish minority are afraid to start up with the State Department.

What are the reasons for this?

1. The Jewish leadership is an integral part of the establishment.

2. It is afraid of losing its status among the politicians, as well as the leadership and the hegemony over the Jewish broad masses.

3. It is afraid of obstacles from the State Department in collecting huge sums through the United Jewish Appeal, to be used in the country as well as for helping Israel abroad.

(We have here another influential sector, the Forward and Morning Journal -- extreme right-wingers, whose influence extends only among the Jewish-speaking elements, and therefore is fortunately very limited.)

Such are the characteristics of the American Jewish minority. In order to understand our mutual interests we should read Commentary, Judaism, Congress Bi-Weekly and other such publications.

V

How can the Party influence this important minority? Certainly only through the Jewish progressive groups. They are estimated at 15-20,000 in this country. I think that they can be classified under such categories as party members, close followers and more distant sympathizers. There are about 5,000 close followers, and more than twice that number of sympathizers. (These, of course, are very conservative figures. Many will estimate our sympathizers in the tens of thousands.)

Since Jews are not in the main in the basic industries, we cannot approach them chiefly through trade union work. Therefore, it goes without saying that unity is the crying need of the moment. It is essential to establish united fronts on the issues against war, against the terror of the ultra-Rightist groups, against the statute of limitations for Nazi criminals. However, in order to establish such united fronts the progressives, and in the first place, the Party members, have to be clear on the subject and have a definite way to accomplish it.

VI

In the Jewish field the leader of the Marxist-Leninist theory was, of course, the Morning Freiheit.

I am reminded of a lecture in Ontario, California, in the late fifties, after the Stalin-Beria era. The lecturer was comrade Novick. Speaking about the world situation and the role of the Jews in it, he asked: "How can we recognize among the Jews our friends and enemies?" And he answered: "According to the attitude to the Soviet Union. An honest progressive person must be for the Soviet Union. A person who is anti-Soviet is not honest and is our enemy." An entirely correct attitude. And even in 1961, in his brochure, Jews in the U.S.A., Paul Novick writes:

When speaking of unity, it must be remembered that one can and ought to come together with other elements on one issue, although separating ourselves on a different issue or other issues. One may and ought to join with the Jewish War Veterans in the struggle against Nazi Rockwell, while at the same time disagreeing with their position in regard to the Soviet Union. One may and ought to join, for instance, with the American Jewish Congress against the Birchers, or with the American Jewish Committee in the fight for peace, without being in agreement with them on such subjects as Zionism, Ben Gurion and again the Soviet Union. Also an entirely correct position.

That was Novick of the late 50's and 1961.

VII

There was a time when each event was taken up by the Jewish leadership in the light of class-struggles only. That was the time when all our followers were workers in the shops, when we were involved in broad economic struggles. That was the time when we built a creative cultural life for our people. That was the time when we exposed chauvinism, the "ato-behartono" attitude of the Forward and Tog. That was the time when we ridiculed the attitude of the Tog, that took every event in the light: "Is it good or bad for Jews?" Of course, we progressives accepted a broader humanitarian point of view: "What is good for the working class is progressive, and what is progressive is good for all humanity, including Jews." The leaders of the Jewish movement at that time were Shachne Epstein and Moishe Olgin.

VIII

However, plenty of water has flowed under the bridge since. I must say that during the last 20 years we not only made a mistake here and there, but gradually and by degrees, we began to deviate from our ideology, and because of difficult objective conditions, took the course of least resistance.

Where are the causes of such deviation? I would say in the wrong analysis of the newly formed conditions. What were the new conditions?

1. The cut-off of the immigration to the United States and the curtailment of a stream of Jewish-speaking elements -- a potential Jewish proletariat. No new compact masses arrived, and in our work, we had to orient ourselves on the old-timers. The work grew narrow. The Left movement came face to face with the bourgeois forces in a contest for influence. The class lines grew blurred. We started making all kinds of compromises, especially in the cultural field and in the children's schools.

2. The Second World War and the monstrous catastrophe, unequalled in history, which brought the rise of nationalism not only to the broad masses, but also to the progressive elements.

3. The far-reaching economic changes among the Jewish masses, the abandonment of their traditional trades, their entry as owners of small factories, store-keepers, insurance agents and the like. The former youth, now middle-aged and educated, was already in the professions.

4. The establishment of the Jewish homeland, which stimulated the well-known religious slogan "kol Isroel chaveirim" (all Jews are brothers) and finally:

5. The work of our progressives among an elderly retired generation in better economic conditions than before, when they had worked in shops.

These are the conditions that caused the deviation from the Marxist theory of our Jewish comrades in the last couple of decades. The leader of the progressives among the Jewish people -- Morning Freiheit -- started to be more and more nationalistic inclined.

IX

As a result of such middle-class orientation, no wonder the Morning Freiheit took such an attitude as it did to the 6-day Israeli-Arab war. Scared to death by the catastrophe of the 6-million Jews burned in the crematories, overfilled with panic, the Jewish leadership could not see the reality of this historic event. They did not see that imperialism is trying its utmost to establish neo-colonialism in the Middle East in order to secure the 2/3 of the world's oil. They did not see the big intrusion of the CIA and the millions that they are spending there for the same cause. They did not see that there, in the Mideast, the same identical struggle goes on as in Vietnam, the Congo, Indonesia, Rhodesia, Chile, Brazil, the Dominican Republic and so forth. And, primarily, they did not see that between Israel and the Arab states are absent such economic antagonisms as usually lead to war. That if not for Israel's support of, and cooperation with our State Department, there could not develop such hatred toward the Israelis.

Our leadership, accepting a policy of "my country, right or wrong," instead of class struggle, adopted a nationalistic line. Instead of gaining broad masses to our side, the Morning Freiheit forgot that in the sphere of ideology there cannot be co-existence.

X

In his report of June 10, 1967 at a meeting of the National Committee, Gus Hall said :

We said that when there is no struggle against the influence and the ideas of the capitalist class, they will penetrate the ranks of the working class and the working-class parties.

We said that petty-bourgeois elements are the most consistent carriers of bourgeois ideas, that in fact this is their main ideological role, and again we were so right.

We said the way to fight bourgeois influence is not only through mere negative rejection, but through a positive struggle -- a struggle for working-class ideas, for a working-class world outlook, that puts one's class interests above all other interests.

We spoke against double standards -- against using one set of standards in viewing the problems of one's own nation, and another set of standards in viewing the problems of others.

XI

The same identical error was made by the Morning Freiheit on the question of Czechoslovakia. The preventive move of the Warsaw Pact countries, Comrade Novick calls a "fatal mistake." Plenty of facts have accumulated since, showing that the Soviet Union was correct both as to the infiltration of the CIA and as to the rearmament of West Germany. I would state here: THE FAILURE IN VIETNAM COMPELS OUR MILITARY INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX TO START ANOTHER WAR ELSEWHERE, NAMELY IN CENTRAL EUROPE.

The same identical error, but with more hate and emotional involvement, is made by the Morning Freiheit in connection with the latest events in Poland. The intent of the Pilsudsky White Guard to overthrow the government of the Democratic Republic of Poland, the Morning Freiheit presents as mere anti-Semitism and as a movement only against the Jewish people. And with the official protests and demonstrations against democratic Poland, the Morning Freiheit is playing right into the hands of our enemies.

In short, some Jewish progressives, formerly workers in the shops, but for years far away from class struggle, are leading, in the name of humanism, with "quotations" from Marx and Lenin on the national question, a purely nationalistic campaign against socialist countries, and in the first place against the Soviet Union. You can see it in YKUF, in our cultural clubs, in the reading circles.

We are facing a peculiar situation: Hard working people, activists in the progressive movement, members of progressive organizations, people who till now are financially supporting our aims, being turned against the Soviet Union and the Peoples Republic of Poland!

Furthermore, the readers of the Morning Freiheit are being turned against our Party. Rumors are spread in this city that the National Committee of the Party is anti-Semitic and has as its sole aim the expulsion of P. Novick from the National Committee.

With full earnestness, I dare say that the Morning Freiheit is now not an asset for our progressive movement, but, to a great extent, a liability.

This is only an outline giving facts about the Jewish minority in the U.S. I purposely omitted any plans for further work. Such motions should be given after a long and intensive discussion.

NATIONALISM AND SELF-DETERMINATION

By Quentin Bassett

We welcome Comrade Lightfoot's article, "The Right of Black America to Create a Nation" (Political Affairs, November 1968) as a real breakthrough in discussing the theory of nationhood as it relates to black America. This article expands on the subject of "The New National Consciousness" treated by Comrade Lightfoot, recommends increasing dialog with advanced forces in the liberation movement on specific theoretical points, and calls for a more thorough-going analysis of that struggle and its program and support for its just demands by Marxists, within and beyond the framework of the present Draft Program and pre-Convention discussion.

Any discussion of national consciousness in the present era must explicitly restate the nature of this era. In terms of the Draft Program, this means mentioning the central theme of Chapter II again in Chapter III. When we mention on page III-31, lines 3-7, the positive type of nationalism "which identifies with the working class and other oppressed peoples," we should indicate the high level of this identification, particularly with the other oppressed peoples (the "Third World") which characterizes black Americans of our decade.

In Chapter II of the current Draft, we characterize our epoch as "a revolutionary age. . .in which the forces opposing imperialism, . . . have already acquired the strength that enables them, increasingly, to exert the major influence on the course of human events. This is the paramount fact which places its indelible stamp on our time." And further on, we recognize that: "The peoples fighting for independence are natural allies of all within the United States fighting the same enemy." It is within this framework that we can best understand a significant unique feature of the upsurge of national consciousness which Lightfoot describes. Understanding the new world situation, Communists can recognize as positive and natural new level of anti-imperialist consciousness which takes the form of identification with national liberation struggles.

Does this mean that previous nationalist movements among black Americans were entirely isolated from world events, lacking in an international perspective? No; Comrade Aptheker has pointed out that long before the First World War, some black leaders raised the slogan of national independence by reference to the other nations of the earth (Political Affairs, June 1949). Later, Comrade Du Bois and others attempted to unite Afro-Americans and Africans in a pan-African movement. The point is rather that previous stirrings of nationalism among the black masses (notably the Garvey movement) were led into conceiving the new black nation either as a semi-feudal agrarian community or as a capitalist country because this conformed to the "modern type nations" then in existence or coming into existence. Some of this is also present in our

day; but there is a real struggle in the Black leadership now between "black capitalism" and "black socialism" partisans. The latter trend is at a uniquely high level in our era, which is natural because it identifies with the nations (particularly non-white ones, but including as a hero the white Che Guevara) now coming into existence! And the revolutionary process which creates these nations is, as we have said, anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist in character.

Again quoting from Chapter II of the Draft Program, "there is a close relation between the socialist and anti-colonial revolutions." Black revolutionaries who are "nationalists" are often also anti-imperialist and internationalist in outlook - and, as a national consequence of this "third world" orientation, large numbers of them are deeply interested in socialism as a model for the new society.

Indeed, the Resolution on the Negro Question adopted by our 17th National Convention, (the one which withdrew the slogan of self-determination) foresaw this development of heightened consciousness:

The Negro movement will be further strengthened as it forges bonds of conscious alliance with the rising colonial, semi-colonial, and newly independent nations of the world: the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America who have taken a glorious and irreversible path which leads to freedom from imperialist domination. (Page 4)

The wisdom of this foresight should have led to some mention of the possibility that the slogan simply be modified. Or perhaps it should be said that withdrawal of the slogan of self-determination was a temporary concession to the level of national consciousness; for it is true that at the time our Party first put forth the slogan, the Black masses were not responsive to the anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist type of nationalism now coming forth. In other words the slogan did not become a part of everyday struggles.

On the other hand, as Comrade Lightfoot points out, the Resolution also made an important contribution to our theoretical insight on this question in the direction of qualifying our analysis of black America. I refer here to the observation that we cannot view the nation as dogmatically as we once did in terms of the Black Belt. The Resolution says:

While properly emphasizing the importance of the struggle of the Negro farmers for the land in the total struggle of the Negro people...we should not exaggerate. (P. 8)

The Resolution points out that "decades ago, over two-thirds of the Negro people were rural folk"; furthermore, previously "the economic base of Negro oppression was the plantation economy." The Resolution then points out that the black man or woman of today is more likely to be a worker than

a peasant and rightly stresses the need for leadership by black workers in the national liberation struggle. ¹

Unfortunately, today's heightened anti-imperialist and nationalist feeling arose spontaneously, when the influence and awareness of our Party in the black community was at a low ebb. The working class and the labor movement had scarcely any visible vanguard; white America appeared to be monolithic in its exploitative attitude toward black people. Therefore, there has been a tendency to go whole hog in identifying with the revolutionary struggle in colonial regions, where race, nation, and economic region overlap or coincide. Formulations of black America as a colony are prevalent in the Movement explicitly in some works and often implicit in discussing "the black community". The theoretical position that black America is a colony has led to a serious study of how colonies have thrown off the imperialist yoke, and an attempt to use similar tactics and slogans among black Americans.

Thus nationalism, even in its separatist form, is attributable not only to petty-bourgeois leadership (we aren't the only ones who polemicize against that). It is attributable also to the national character of the Negro people (as Comrade Lightfoot points out), and to a strong sense of identification with anti-imperialist forces around the globe, which we certainly welcome. The question remains, however, whether the situation of black people in this country is essentially a colonial one.

The Draft Program is correct in warning today's revolutionaries:

One may learn from many revolutions, but one cannot take any single revolution as a model to copy. Whatever influence may be exerted by the example and experience of others, each revolution arises from the... social conflicts and class relationships in its own country.

However, we must go beyond this in attempting to understand and discuss the ideas raised by Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, Huey Newton, Bobby Seale and others. In such a dialog, we will certainly find points of solidarity as well as controversy. And we will generate greater clarity in our thinking as well as in the ideological level of the Movement.

1. This point, which Comrade Bloice stresses (Political Affairs, January 1969) is in fact similar to positions taken by colonial Communist Parties, even when the Proletariat is not the majority of the oppressed nation. It is doubly important in the U.S. today, where, as the Resolution mentioned above points out, the economic base of racism is now to be found not only in the semi-colonial South, but in "the dominant and financial branches of...capital." (Page 9. Emphasis in the original.)

Each revolution arises from the... social conflicts and class relationships in its own country: fine, let's spell out the particular meaning of this, recognizing the aspects of colonial domination which do exist (national oppression, if you will, but a systematic economic exploitation is meant here and not "cultural" oppression alone), and the relevance of a struggle for self-determination in addition to the class struggle.

Demands raised by black revolutionaries today reflect a historical materialist approach. For example, the Panthers' demand for all-black juries for black defendants is an immediate democratic demand which makes sense if we understand the national character of the black people. The Panther Program interprets the phrase "peer" (from the Fourteenth Amendment) as "a person from a similar economic, social, religious, geographical, environmental, historical and racial background." This background, this community, this "colony," seems to have most of the characteristics of a nation or national group according to our Marxist definition!

What is a nation? According to Josef Stalin in Marxism and the National Question, it is a historically constituted, stable community of people formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life and psychological makeup manifested in a common culture. Stalin's requirement of "common territory" is not included in the Panthers' definition, but is probably more distinctive of the term "colony" than of the term "nation" or "national group." That is, a "colony" may be thought of as an exploited economic region, while a national group need not live all in one territory.

Bonds of unity with "black nationalist" revolutionaries will be based on mutual respect, which in turn must be based on serious dialog and action toward common goals. Members of the Party who do not come in close contact with the black liberation struggle can assist in this dialog by giving serious consideration to the theoretical and political questions of nationalism and self-determination. More, we can make self-determination for black America part of all our work, not as an abstract slogan but by supporting appropriate immediate demands, for example, that of all black juries for black defendants, or spreading real understanding among whites of the community control issue. The best way to convince black people to be part of one united revolutionary struggle, and ultimately to opt for a socialist America, is to support their inalienable right to self-determination.

DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM

By Sylvia (Los Angeles)

The invigorating discussion which has recently unfolded in the ranks of the world Communist movement, in relation to Czechoslovakia, has inadvertently brought to the fore the need to examine also the following: 1) Does the traditional concept of democratic centralism (DC) operate alike in all Communist Parties; and 2) where deformities of the system had set in, was the vanguard role affected adversely?

Democratic centralism, as first expounded and applied, has undergone profound change, and at the present does not operate any longer in the same original manner, for example, in the USSR, Italy, or the USA. DC was considered a principle of fundamental importance to the very existence of a Marxist party. This was and remains so because a Marxist party, being a vanguard organization (in its very character), is able to retain a position of leadership only by making maximum use of the potential inherent in the system of DC. Wherever DC is used as a tactic, or a device, for the purpose of promoting the inner affairs of a Marxist party, there the vanguard role suffers immeasurably, resulting in isolation from the main body of people whom it aims to influence.

The system of DC has during the past 50-60 years become a basic part of the total body of knowledge referred to as Marxism-Leninism; and wherever this part is compromised, or abused, the body of Marxism-Leninism rejects it. The science of Marxism-Leninism in its totality, as well as its components, including DC, are in a continuous process of change and development. In the course of this change there is acquired a new dynamic, new dialectic qualities. Otherwise it would be impossible to envision mankind's highest dream - a communist, classless society, in which the total science of Marxism-Leninism will have realized itself, and will no longer be necessary.

DC, in its limited and simplest terms, requires that the decision of the majority prevail in the adoption and execution of the policies of the organization. An extension of this concept (in situations where further discussions are required) would mean observing DC where action has to be taken. In 1906 Lenin said: "The principle of democratic centralism and autonomy for local Party organizations implies universal and full freedom to criticize, so long as this does not disturb the unity of a definite action, it rules out all criticism which disrupts or makes difficult the unity of an action decided on by the Party."

Further, there must exist a two-way road between the membership and leadership. While the membership elects its leadership, and trusts it to represent it at all levels, the leadership is held accountable for such representation, and is required to be in constant touch with the membership, consult it, check its decisions periodically, and become refreshed through such relationships. The trust between the leadership and membership continues to flow, and the policies of the Marxist party are put to test against the realities of life, with both leadership and membership participating in full strength. This brief definition of DC probably contains the basic features.

However, we must add: the principle of DC is effective only in its totality, only when all its specific features are combined in relation to maintaining the Marxist organization as a vanguard body. Otherwise, DC reverts to a mechanical device for carrying on the inner affairs of the party, and the party loses its distinction as a vanguard organization.

Let's examine the first feature: Majority rule is decisive; the minority, in order not to weaken the full potential of the organization, must subordinate itself to the will of the majority. This democratic feature is absolutely necessary for any organization to remain alive, whether it be a working-class club, a trade union, or a bourgeois society.

But there is a discernable difference in the application of this democratic feature which distinguishes the non-Marxist from the Marxists. The dissenting minority in a non-Marxist organization has no obligation to carry out the majority decision, except in rare situations where one's personal security or livelihood may be at stake, as had happened under fascism.

In the Marxist organization, however, the minority is required to help carry out the decision on action, reached by the majority. This is fundamental. Continued activity by the minority for its own views and policies is condemned as divisive and factional. Therein lies one of the basic reasons for the strength of a Marxist organization. The full weight of a decision will, in fact, be felt because it, the decision, was based on this Marxist feature of DC, namely, that it would be carried out by all.

An important decision may have been reached by a small majority vote, yet the correctness or the error of that decision will nevertheless be given an opportunity to be tested in life in its full strength. Often Communists are doing just that: carrying out decisions they do not agree with.

Let's look at another feature of DC: The entire organization is to participate in the shaping of the policies. Provisions guaranteeing that are worked out in great detail. But generally speaking, this is also true of non-Marxist organizations. They, too, make efforts, though often minimal and only formal, to involve their members, through membership meetings, conventions, publications, referendums, etc. The membership, when pressed by conditions, will sometimes compel the leadership to change a policy with which it disagrees -- as was the case in the 30's, when the AFL leadership reversed itself regarding unemployment insurance.

In the Marxist organization, however, this seemingly elementary feature operates differently because of the vanguard character of the Marxist movement. It is, therefore, not enough to have this feature fully developed within its own ranks, for its own membership. The Marxists must test their policies with the masses, and all policies (with the exception of technical, inner operative decisions, or in times of illegality, problems of security) must eventually reach the masses for confirmation or rejection. That can be done only by sharing with the masses the content of the debates, the variety of viewpoints, the alternatives considered, and last, the decisions arrived at. If a Marxist organization fails to do that, it loses its character of a vanguard organization, and it reverts to the level of the others. Although a most democratic organization, it is no longer a vanguard organization. This is futher true because it is necessary for the Communists to confirm their

policies with the masses for purposes of lifting the masses to higher levels of class consciousness and class organization.

To remain in a vanguard position, even during periods of isolation, as is the case now in the USA, it becomes even more incumbent upon the Marxists to test with the masses its policies, its observations and estimates - and never to permit itself to be shut off from the masses.

* * *

In August of 1968, the USSR called for the defense of another socialist country, which it, the USSR, considered was in danger of overthrow or internal subversion. Under the USSR's concepts of its own role within the family of socialist countries, it had to invade the Czechoslovak borders in order to defend socialism as it recognized it in that country - in its own image. Finding one socialist country (the USSR) on a collision course with another socialist country (Czechoslovakia) came as a shocking surprise to the world Communist movement because the deformities that had developed in the USSR and the basis for the revelations of the 20th Congress in 1956 had never been explained. The hostilities within the ranks of the American Marxists are infinitesimal compared to the hostilities carried out at the point of a bayonet by one socialist country against another.

In the United States the Marxists do not control the media of communication, or influence them sufficiently to determine the extent and nature of a national discussion on any question. During and after the August events in Czechoslovakia, the American bourgeoisie, being in full control of these media, maintained a national (onesided) discussion all during the election weeks. The American CP, however, decided that it would not be a participant in that, after having stated its position, namely, that "it was regrettable but necessary for the Warsaw Pact powers to enter Czechoslovakia." The millions of Americans stayed with that debate, but the small American CP was forbidden to be part of it: witness the CP presidential candidate being obligated to reduce her total participation in that tremendous national debate to the monotonous phrase: "It was regrettable but necessary," and stop there. It would have been considerably better if Charlene Mitchell could have said: "It is the opinion of the majority of my Party that the entrance of the Warsaw Pact powers was necessary in order to protect the socialist countries from counter-revolution," and then add: "There are some who feel that it was an error to cross the Czech borders because they believe that there was no immediate threat of counter-revolution to the Czechoslovakian state power. They also feel that not everything possible (short of military intervention) was done by the socialist states, and by the friends of these states, to curb that counter-revolution."

She should have informed the country that the entire Party was studying and investigating the matter, and will probably come up with its findings as it progresses with the review of this important international event. That would have been a significant contribution because not only are the European CPs and other CPs now studying this matter, and are engaged in a serious theoretical dialogue, but the entire world knows that the Communist movement is not united on that question, and that the American Communists are not united, that together a deep-going search is in the process of the actual situation. Inasmuch as there is no specific action required of the American Communists, continued investigation is welcome.

The unity of action decided upon by the Warsaw Pact powers was not decided upon by the international communist movement; it was decided upon by five socialist states, in which the Communists have the leadership. The American CP and other CPs were not asked to participate either in the debate before the entrance into Czechoslovakia, or after. Therefore, the American and other CPs were not involved in the action, and were at liberty to continue with the entire review of the 1968 Czechoslovakia events, during which time the real issues of counter-revolution, of American participation in this counter-revolution, could have come out in full, and the American CPs position as a vanguard party in this national dialogue would have been well established. However, once the CP leadership of the USA ordered the withdrawal from that dialogue, its vanguard role was relinquished.

The position taken by the national leadership of the American CP was as if the American CP was a part of the five powers, and was making a decision, together with these five powers, on an extremely important action - the entrance into Czechoslovakia.

There are now fourteen socialist, or pro-socialist, countries. There are millions struggling against capitalism, on a very high level. The USSR has reached such a high level of economic and military parity with the bourgeoisie that it is practically impossible for the bourgeoisie openly to attack the USSR or any country that it considers vital to its defense, without destroying itself in that process.

The issue, however, was not the reality of the counter-revolutionary aims, or plans, which are always directed by the imperialists against the socialist countries. The issue was, taking into account the changed world situation, difference in development of socialism within the socialist world, how should such counter-revolutionary plans be fought against. Was the five-power policy the only policy? How to protect the Czechoslovakia socialist society, became a world-wide subject for discussion by all socialist countries and all CPs, and by tremendously large masses of people after the invasion. The new question that arose was: Is it permissible for the CPs, especially small parties like the American, to engage in such a study, from another vantage point than the one used by the USSR?

The study of that situation is far from being completed. In fact, it is not necessary to complete it; it must be allowed to continue as time passes so as to check the evaluations with the masses, and with life itself, and see whether counter-revolutionary trends and counter-revolutionary dangers were

reversed or encouraged in the months following the August events - not only in Czechoslovakia, but throughout the world. A unanimous stand by the entire Marxist movement in obtaining such an evaluation is not only not necessary, but even harmful - unless it happens to come to a unanimous conclusion through the natural operation of the principle of democratic centralism. Using DC to stifle the search for a correct evaluation - of any event - does Marxism a great injustice.

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