

# Positions of Conflicting Groups In the Socialist Party

It will be observed that the world Congress of the Labor and Socialist International, which came into being, not as a result of the desires of the Bureau, but through pressure of the defeat in Germany, did not serve to check the agitation within the ranks of the L.S.I. The Congress acted as a spur to the internal discussions taking place everywhere. Having briefly discussed the Congress and demonstrated the growth of left wing groupings in the International, we must of necessity occupy ourselves primarily with the American Socialist Party. No one can question the fact that the American groups reflect world events and the decisions of the August Congress. But in the United States, some peculiar and interesting changes took place. The situation here does not mirror exactly the situation in Europe from the point of view of party politics. There is a greater confusion in America as we shall soon detect.

At the Congress, the reactionary wing of the International was in complete control. The Congress reaffirmed the policy of reformism of the L.S.I. In conflict with this position of the Congress and the majority of the delegations, stood the Polish Bund which rallied to its side 18 votes out of 300 or more. The resolution was shown, declared, for an end to the policy of reform and in favor of the "revolutionary" (?) struggle for power, for the destruction of capitalism and the institution of the "dictatorship of the revolutionary party during the period of Socialist construction".

It demanded an end to the policy of "coalition governments", support of disarmament conferences, etc. On each of these questions, the Bund demonstrated, confusion and showed that it had not learned anything since it endeavored to aid in the construction of the 23 International. It does not distinguish between the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the "Dictatorship of the Party". Nowhere is there mention made of the Soviets and their role in the struggle for power and after its seizure. It speaks of the "development of the dictatorship by the revolutionary classes (!) into a dictatorship of the workers and peasants". The resolution calls for "new conditions of struggle", and says too, that the Socialist Parties must prepare "without fail for the necessities of direct action".

**The Fundamental Questions**  
All this, however, does not explain how, or what, is meant. We said last week that now is not the time to write new doctrines. The program of Bolshevism answers every question raised by the left wings in the Socialist International and it answers these questions with clarity and completeness. What the Bund has done has been to reiterate a stand it has held for more than a decade and bring it up to date. The early Congresses of the Communist International answered the questions of the Struggle for Power, the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, the Struggle against War, the United Front, etc. They were answered then in detail and with thoroughness. The half answers and half-truths contained in the Bund position, can only lead to confusion. In this respect the program of the Revolutionary Policy Committee in America is far clearer than that of the Polish Bund, and even that is not yet a complete Marxist position.

But in spite of the confusing and vague character of the Bund position it served as the starter in the International discussion raging in the Parties of the Social Democracy. For that it deserves merit. But some of the groupings starting where the Bund began are now far ahead of it. The Bund instead of moving ahead is standing still.

In the first article we spoke of the following groups existing in the American Socialist Party: The Revolutionary Policy Committee, the Militants, the Forward Association, the Old Guard (O'neal, Lee, etc.), the Wisconsin Organization, the followers of the Polish Bund, the "Chicago Left Wing" of Senior and Krueger. Politically, there are not so many groups or grouplets. Such a division serves the purpose of differentiation. A political classification would find the R.P.C. and the followers of the Bund on the Left, the Old Guard, the Forward Association and the Wisconsin Organization on the Right, with the leaders of the American delegation, Krueger and Senior, which supported the Bund in Europe (!) and the Militants to whom they really belong ready to fall in line with any majority.

### The R. P. C.

**1. The Revolutionary Policy Committee.** The articles of comrade Cannon have already discussed in detail the political position of this group. It is necessary however to examine their physiognomy a bit more. Without a doubt, the social composition of the group is its greatest weakness. The group is

### 3. The R.P.C. and Its Program

made up primarily of the petty-bourgeois and intellectual section of the Party, a great many of these being graduates of the League for Industrial Democracy. Thus, while the group enjoys a great interest and even support for its views, its lack of roots in the Party proper, narrows its influence over the proletarian section of the organization. The sympathies that it enjoys so far have little realization in organizational gains. The Program is signed by over 80 active party members, few however, having any decisive influence on the Party. Most of these are new in the movement. While its program is ahead of that of the Bund, its closest approximation in this country, the R.P.C. has no connection with the Bund. Similarly with respect to the matter of international connections. Though its existence is to be explained by international events and is a reflection of international currents in the L.S.I., the group leads a completely "national" existence. This is confirmed by its program on "International Relations".

The R.P.C. represents a serious movement within the S. P. towards Marxism. Its program is not yet Marxian, but has moved a long way in that direction. The great number of omissions from its program gives it at best a skeleton character. It is not sufficient, however, to offer skeleton views to the socialist workers. You must take each fundamental question and painstakingly analyze it from the vantage point of Marxism. Each question has to be thoroughly and completely discussed, every variant considered.

#### R. P. C. Program

The entire program is six pages long. Within these six pages are contained the position of the R.P.C. on: The Road to Power, War, Labor Policy, a Labor Party, the United Front, N.R.A. Farmers, Negroes, the Middle Class, the Soviet Union, International Relations and Conclusions. Quite obviously in such boundaries a program can not touch properly on any of the questions it discusses. But this is not the main criticism we have to make. Our main criticism of the R.P.C. is that on the fundamental questions it is either ambiguous, incomplete, or wrong. This is in spite of the fact that in general the program is of a left character, in the direction of Communism.

The question of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat is a case in point. After declaring in favor of it, the program says nothing of the Soviets, their position in the struggle for power and their relation to the establishment and existence of the proletarian dictatorship. On the one hand it speaks of the working class state as "an entirely new type of state", without saying anywhere that the capitalist state must be destroyed and replaced by the workers' state. Because of this lack of clarity it can conclude this section of the program by saying: "Once socialists are in possession (!) of the state machinery by the mandate of the workers, their task is to secure and insure the governmental power for the victorious revolution by arming the workers for its defense against all possibility of a counter-revolutionary resistance, and to proceed to transform the economic and social basis of society." Which state machinery is referred to here? It is by no means clear. Apparently the capitalist state machinery! By the mandate of the workers! What kind of a mandate? The seizure of power as a result of the armed struggle of the proletariat or a ballot victory? The R.P.C. may protest and say: But we have already declared that we are for the workers state, the new type of state based upon the Workers Councils. Nevertheless, it is not clear precisely what is meant in the program.

#### The Question of the State

The question of the state is the most important question for the revolutionary movement. It is upon the evaluation of the state that the workers' movement remains divided; on this question the 2nd International split. The organization of the Communist International was the outcome. And here too, the syndicalists and anarchists are divided from the rest of the workers' movement. Quite seriously and earnestly, we suggest that the R.P.C. make a thorough study of the documents of the Communist International on the question of the State and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, prepared for the 2nd Congress. Once clarified, the R. P. C. can become the instrument of clarifying and educating the ranks of the S.P., drawing large sections of its workers to the side of the revolution.

On "International Relations" the program is wholly inadequate and is in fact false. It says: "The Socialist Party of America must make

every effort to get the above principles (of the R.P.C.—A.G.) adopted by the Labor and Socialist International in order that it may be the effective instrument in promoting the world revolution". The program concludes with the following declaration in bold type: "THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO REASON (absolutely none—A.G.) WHY THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF AMERICA CAN NOT MEET THE OPPORTUNITY WHICH CONFRONTS IT TODAY IF IT ADOPTS A CLEAR, WELL-DEFINED PROGRAM BASED UPON THE ABOVE PRINCIPLES AND TACTICS AND SETS UP ADEQUATE MACHINERY FOR EFFECTIVELY PUTTING THESE PRINCIPLES INTO ACTION." On one of the most decisive questions facing the workers movement today the program actually says little and what it does say is wrong. It orientates itself completely upon the 2nd International. The question of Stalinism, the existence and role of Centrism, and the movement for the 4th International are entirely left out of the program. Without even as much as a mention of these questions it is clear why the R.P.C. has no genuine international orientation.

#### "Reforming" the 2nd International

These questions are of fundamental character. Around these the R.P.C. can make or break itself. While on many issues it is moving toward a position of Marxism, it is not there yet. When Lovestone says that "in substance, the program of the R.P.C. is Marxian", it only expresses his patronizing attitude toward the R.P.C. and his desire to tie this movement to the kite of Stalinism. Genuine revolutionaries will endeavor to help the R.P.C. to move completely to communism, that is, to revolutionary Marxism. From its position on "International Relations" it is obvious that the R.P.C. orientates itself on the basis of the policy of reforming the Socialist Party and the Labor and Socialist International. There is not the slightest hint that the fundamental character of social democracy make it impermissible to remain within its ranks. The possibility of a break is not even mentioned in the program. And as already pointed out, its relation to the other international movements is not even as much as mentioned. The R.P.C. must begin rapidly to clarify its position on all these questions, and make clearer its point of view on those points expressed in the program. It should root itself deeply among the proletarian layers of the party and seek support there. We shall endeavor to help the R.P.C. make these steps forward and draw the proper conclusions to their present struggle.

—ALBERT GLOTZER.

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## Theoretical Organ Out July 1st

An excellent first number of the NEW INTERNATIONAL magazine will greet readers when the long-awaited monthly theoretical review of the International Communists comes off the press on June 15th. The partial list of articles and special features to appear in the first number of the NEW INTERNATIONAL will appeal to all interested in reading a journal of revolutionary Marxism.

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3. The American Workers Party: Communism or Centrism—by Max Shachtman.
4. The Marxism of Sidney Hook —by Maurice Spector.
5. On the Communist Party—by Arne Swaback
6. Decline of the Progressive Miners of America—by Joseph Angelo.
7. The Crisis in the Socialist Party—by J. P. Cannon.
8. Stalin—by L. D. Trotsky.
9. Boom, Crisis and Strike Wave —by Weaver.
10. Is France Next?—by Marsh.
11. The Vienna "Commune"—by A. Max (pen name of a prominent German Communist).
12. Archives of Bolshevism (unpublished manuscripts).

Included in the Book Review Section are: Celine's "Journey to the End of the Night", reviewed by Earl Birney; Rivera's "Portrait of America", reviewed by Paula Mendez; Eastman's "Artists in Uniform", reviewed by David Ernest; Bauer and Deutsch on the Austrian Civil War, reviewed by Max Shachtman. Other material, in addition, will appear, all of which will help to lay the foundation for the growth of a leading theoretical organ of Bolshevism.

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# A Critical Analysis of the American Workers Party

**Editor's Note**—The following is the third of a series of articles contributed to the discussion of the movement for a new party by Felix Morrow.

The preceding articles have discussed two of the main tendencies which stand between the A. W. P. and the road to the new revolutionary party and International.

I. The A. W. P. has failed to break critically with the reformist past of its predecessor, the Conference for Progressive Labor Action; there is danger of reformist hangovers, especially since the contemptuous or indifferent attitude toward theory, expressed by leading A.W.P. members, prevents examination of fundamentals.

II. The most significant example of the A.W.P.'s insufficient break with reformism is that its present criticism of the Stalinist party is little different from that earlier voiced by the reformist C.P.L.A. By placing the blame on "sectarianism", the American scene, and a lack of emphasis on the regeneration of the fundamentals of Communism which gave the Comintern, including the C.P.U.S.A., its powerful vitality up to 1924.

III. When we examine the character of the internationalism espoused by the A.W.P., here again we find the baleful influence of the myth of "sectarianism". The A.W.P. Program says:

"... The workers in each country are faced with certain conditions, they have a certain background, tradition, psychology. A revolutionary party must 'feel' all this, feel how the workers in the country feel and think. This cannot be communicated to it from the outside.

"These fundamental principles of revolutionary strategy have been disregarded by the Third International." (p. 28)

The elevation of national peculiarities into "fundamental principles" and the attribution of Stalinist failure to their disregard—both are false.

The fundamental principles of revolutionary strategy flow from the nature of world capitalist society and its present stage of development. Needless to say—needless to anyone who has read the documents of the early Congresses of the Comintern—special peculiarities in specific countries are to be allowed for; and these the parties in the given countries should deal with.

But the problem of allowing for such specific conditions has never been a crucial one. Certainly this problem was not the cause of Stalinist failure. What, for example, has the theory of social fascism and the united front from below (which are practiced of course on a world scale) to do with "how the workers in the country feel." What these theories disregard is the nature of

### 3. What is Its Position On Internationalism?

world capitalist society, specifically the nature of reformism and the proletariat. These errors have nothing to do with national psychology, conditions, etc.

From such a false starting point, the A.W.P. moves, not in the direction of a revolutionary international, but of a loose league of national parties like the Second International. Once the "feel" of the country is identified with "fundamental principles of revolutionary strategy", and it is asserted that "This cannot be communicated to it (the party) from the outside" (outside—what a word to describe the world proletariat!) we cannot but expect that the whole question of the international will be put in terms alien to the Communist tradition. Here are the crucial sentences of the A.W.P. Program:

"Unquestionably, international machinery is needed through which the labor and revolutionary movements may exchange views and organize joint activities to advance the ultimate object of a workers' world. Under certain circumstances, the most direct and practical kind of cooperation between the labor and revolutionary movements of two or more countries is possible, and may profoundly influence world developments, as e.g. a general strike against war in several countries. Joint revolutionary movements may conceivably be carried through simultaneously in several countries in some international crisis, and an international revolutionary general staff is required in such a situation." (pp. 27-28). (my emphasis)

This passage is full of fundamental errors. We shall consider them under two points: 1. The discipline of a revolutionary international. 2. The role of an international revolutionary general staff.

1. Just what is meant by the two references to "labor" is not clear. Let us hope that it cannot mean labor parties, for no revolutionary international can include reformist organizations. Now, no party can belong to a revolutionary international without adhering to its principles and decisions. Decisions are to be preceded by thorough discussion throughout the parties—but the "exchange of views" is to be followed by conclusions by vote of the majority; and the conclusions must be binding on all parties in the International. For what revolutionary parties seek is not the mere unity of the workingclass in and of itself—which is correct, and valuable, on the trade union level—but a fighting unity for revolutionary overthrow; and for this, the highest type of uniform discipline is necessary. To say, as the A.W.P. Program says, that parties "may exchange views"—and to say nothing about coming to conclusions, and the binding nature of the conclusions—this is to be ambiguous about the essence of a revolutionary international.

2. The A.W.P. Program borrows the term "international revolutionary general staff" from the communist tradition. But what does it do with the term? In communist tradition the term is a synonym for... the International itself. The work of the International is a continuous work. Its task is the grand strategy of the world revolution. What is the relation between the general staff and the party leadership of a given country? The party leadership is itself part of the general staff and participates in laying down the grand strategy. But this communist conception of the general staff has nothing in common with that of the A.W.P., which makes the general staff into a united front committee. "Under certain circumstances", "joint", "simultaneously", "staff is required in such a situation"—these are phrases which describe temporary united fronts. They do not describe the role of the revolutionary general staff.

Whether we can agree with the A.W.P. eventually or not, let us at least begin with clarity. Where terms are used without specific meaning being given to them, they have their historical meaning. The general staff is a term of the communist tradition meaning a permanent, continuously functioning, organ of the world party. If all that the A.W.P. proposes as international machinery is the united front, temporary, and occasional, let it say so; but let it not give to this instrument—a useful, but limited and transitional one—the title which is historically associated with the highest organ of the world proletariat.

Were the foregoing quotations all that the A.W.P. has to say on the question of the international, there would be nothing more to say, for such views are not those of a truly

# Under the Iron Heel of Chiang Kai Shek

Shanghai, May 2, (By Mail).—Cold inertia holds the Chinese labor movement in its paralyzing grip. May Day passed in Shanghai yesterday without causing the faintest ripple. The North-China Daily News reports laconically: "Police authorities took precautionary measures against possible disturbances by reactionary elements. Nothing untoward happened during the day." Even the mild demonstrations of former years, when a few Communists gathered at crowded street corners, shouting slogans, scattering handbills, and disappearing as soon as a policeman came upon the scene, were abandoned this year. In other industrial cities it was the same. In Kuomintang China, the reaction reigns supreme, triumphant, unchallenged.

Last year's wave of workers' defensive struggles occasioned by the growth of oppression and the more and more devastating attacks on the workers' livelihood, has weakened almost to the point of petering out completely. Without independent unions and in some cases without unions at all; deprived of a militant, class-conscious leadership; poverty-stricken and without funds to maintain an effective strike organization—the strikes that took place were doomed in advance. A whole series of defeats, with scarcely a bright spot of partial victory to relieve the gloomy picture, lately culminated in the loss of a strike by the four thousand workers of the Mayar Silk Works, largest of its kind in Shanghai. For several weeks the workers held out against a 10 percent wage-cut and then returned to work in disorderly retreat.

This strike is worthy of some detailed attention, since it is characteristic of the whole recent strike movement in China. The Mayar workers struck alone. Their lead-

ers held no prior consultation with the workers in other silk factories with a view to enlisting their support. There is no union for the entire industry. Indeed, most of the silk workers are entirely unorganized, although they are among the most fearfully exploited of China's industrial proletariat. They work a 12-hour day for a pittance beside which the fifteen-dollar weekly income of a C.W.A. worker in America appears munificent. The Mayar workers struck under other strong disadvantages. Theirs was the last of a series of strikes that have taken place in the Shanghai silk industry during the past two to three years. Other sections of the silk workers had gone down in defeat one after the other. Thus, without prior agreement, there existed no prospect that the Mayar workers would defeat the support of their already defeated fellow-workers by means of sympathetic strikes.

Defeat in these circumstances was inevitable. But the Mayar strike should and could have been used as the basis for a great campaign to organize the workers in the entire silk industry with the perspective of a future struggle on an industry-wide scale. This was not done. The members of the Left Opposition, who had valuable contacts with leading strikers, failed to get the necessary slogans put forward. They only thought of them when the strike was already on the wane and plunging to defeat. Moreover, they failed to advance the democratic slogans of the Left Opposition and link them up with the strike struggle, although conditions were most propitious. The strike was proscribed by the authorities and the strikers forbidden to hold meetings or demonstrations. Here was a first-class opportunity to popularize democratic demands among a large number of workers and to link these with our central

slogan for the convocation of the National Assembly.

Despite government prohibition the strikers did demonstrate. But instead of demonstrating before the factories with a view to winning the support of their fellow-workers in the silk industry, they went into largely futile gatherings before the Bureau of Social Affairs, a Kuomintang organ whose function is to break strikes by deceit, cajolery and intimidation.

The Stalinists possess no influence among China's industrial proletariat. Privately they will admit that the optimistic material found in the congress speeches of the "general leader" and his henchmen—Piatnitsky, Manulsky, et al.—are so much balderdash. In the strike of the Mayar silk workers they played no part. Their slogans for the workers are vain admonitions to "Join the Red Army" and "Support the Soviet Districts," which in the circumstances are a stupid mockery of the workers' struggle.

Thus May Day, 1934 passed unnoticed in Kuomintang China, except for official Kuomintang gatherings and a Nazi flag-raising ceremony which took place before the German consulate-general in Shanghai, when fascist orators emphasized the significance of May 1 as definitely commemorating "the nationalization of labor as an integral factor of German life today." While these ceremonies proceeded, proletarian China bowed its back under the lash of reaction. In Shanghai, life proceeded as usual. In the pale dawn the workers streamed in their tens of thousands to the factories. Along the water-front and in the streets, with the sun high in the heavens, the coolies strained at their inhuman loads, watering their tracks with their sweat.

Not a voice of protest nor a note of rebellion anywhere! —LUCIFER.

revolutionary party. But on the very same pages with the foregoing quotations appears the explanation of them. The whole section of the Program dealing with the International is, in fact, pervaded with a fear of contradictions arising between the development of the American party and the work of the International. Here, again, it is clear that the A.W.P. has not thought out thoroughly the differences between the pervasions of internationalism practiced by the Stalinist bureaucracy, and the necessary principles of a genuinely Communist International. This is what is behind such formulations as this in the Program: "The problem of developing an effective International is an exceedingly complex one. The American Workers Party will be concerned to do all that is in its power toward its solution, and remain in sympathetic contact and engage in discussions. . . . Empathically, however, we assert that our absorbing concern . . . is . . . on our own doorstep. . . . 'Emphatically, however' is the crucial phrase. This counterposing of the two tasks—the International and the party—is then resolved by declaring that "we shall best serve the toilers of all lands" by making the American revolution. This would indeed be a great service—but has it occurred to the A.W.P. that the internationalism demanded of them is not a question of social service on their part to help the workers of other lands—such, indeed, is the flavor of this section of the A.W.P. Program—but that the cooperation of the workers in other lands may play a decisive role in the American revolution?

It could easily be shown that the indifference toward the role other peoples will play in the American revolution arises from a still unclear theory of the state on the part of the A.W.P. The Program states: "State power is national, not international. It has to be taken in Berlin, London, Paris, Washington. . . ." Remember, the power of the American class extends across the two American continents, into China (now becoming as important to America as it is to England), and creeping across Europe. Who shall say, at this moment, that the opportunity for the American workingclass to overthrow the state, will not come because the Chinese revolution will break out just when the American bourgeoisie is most dependent on China. (Of equal weight with its role for China, had it been successful, was the role of the Chinese Revolution of 1923-1927 in facilitating the English revolution). And if the South American, Caribbean and Asiatic workers are part of the domain of the American bourgeoisie, should they not be united with the American workers, not in temporary agreements or mutual expressions of good will, but by a general staff? Once this is agreed to, the relation between two imperialistic regimes logically leads to the inclusion of all workers under the one general staff.

Wrong as the international perspective of the A.W.P. is, however, and dangerous as the consequences of the position might be if held on to, it would betray a lack of insight if one were not to see the healthy instinct behind such a remark as Muste's at the recent A.W.P. conferences: "The 1917 Revolution was made with no international aid." Of course Muste is wrong; of course he ignores the extraordinary international experience of the Bolshevik leaders; he ignores the international aid of . . . Marx and Engels. But the healthy instinct is there, nevertheless. What Muste is saying is that the American Revolution can be made with no more aid than the Russian, if necessary.

But this healthy instinct has nothing to do with an attitude which may seem to be similar but is poles apart. Muste is wrong; by his own principles he can be shown, I think, that they logically require a genuinely revolutionary international, a permanent general staff of the world revolution. When, however, at the same conferences, J.B.S. Hardman spoke, he said: "Russian interference with other countries was invariably bad—precisely because of the things which made the Russian Revolution successful: Lenin's knowledge of Russia was only surpassed by his lack of knowledge of other people." This is not only to rewrite falsely the history of the Russian Revolution, making it depend on the "feel" of the country. This is also—for Hardman is talking here of the Comintern from its first days—to renounce the possibility of internationalism. For to designate the heroic internationalism of 1919-1924 as "Russian interference"—this is but a step away from chauvinism.

It is to be sincerely hoped that the A.W.P. turns its steps away from this false road, and moves instead in the direction of the new revolutionary party and international. —FELIX MORROW.