

QUESTION BOX

YIPSEL, BRONX—

Question: Could you briefly give the Communist position as to why it would not be possible for a Socialist-controlled government to legislate its way to a Socialist society? Where can I find something by Trotsky on this question?

Answer: The "Question Box" of August 4th had occasion to point out, based upon quotations from the "liberal" historian, Beard, that even if we recognized the reformist basis, there was no reason to believe that a party with revolutionary aims could capture a parliamentary majority in this country, since the Constitution itself was framed to prevent such a possibility. By this of course we had no intention of recognizing the reformist assumptions because an analysis of the historic process forces us to conclude that the matter will be settled by the dynamics of the class struggle itself in which the parliamentary arena occupies but a subordinate role. However, even if we grant the possibility of the election of a REAL LABOUR government, we are forced to the conclusion that this could only be the beginning of a civil war.

Listen to Trotsky in his answer to the British advocates of Socialist gradualism: "... For the Conservatives, as for the remnants of the Liberals, it would be a question of discrediting the first independent Government of the working class at any cost. For them it would be a question of life or death. This is not in the least the same as the old struggle between Liberals and Conservatives, when the differences did not get outside the 'family' of the possessing classes. Any serious reforms undertaken by the Labour Government in the spheres of taxation, nationalization, and a real demoralization of the administration would quicken a mighty flood of enthusiasm in the working masses, and—since appetite comes from eating—these successful MODERATE reforms would inevitably set in train more and more RADICAL reforms. In other words, every new day would separate the Conservatives still further from the possibility of returning to power. The Conservatives could not but take a quite clear account of the fact that the question was not of an alternating change of Government, but of the beginning of the social revolution by parliamentary means. The resources of State obstruction, and legislative and administrative sabotage in the hands of the possessing classes, are immense, since, no matter what their parliamentary majority, all the State apparatus from top to bottom is inseparably linked with the bourgeoisie. To it all belongs: all the press, the most important organs of local self-government, the universities, schools, the church, innumerable clubs, and voluntary societies generally. In their hands are the banks and the whole system of social credit, and, finally, the apparatus of transport and trade, so that the daily food ... including that of the Labour Government, would depend on the great capitalist combines. It is absolutely obvious that all these gigantic means will be brought into action with frantic violence in order to dam the activity of the Labour Government, to paralyze its exertions, to frighten it, to effect cleavages in its parliamentary majority, and, finally, to cause a financial panic, provision difficulties, lockouts, to terrorize the upper ranks of the workers' organizations, and to sap the strength of the proletariat. Only an utter fool may not comprehend that the bourgeoisie will bring into action heaven, earth, and the infernal regions in the event of the actual coming to power of a Labour Government.

"... What will be left for a Labour Government to do? Either ignominiously to capitulate, or to put up an opposition ... for the suppression of opposition of that kind a serious material force and a strong State apparatus are indispensable. Neither the one nor the other will be found on the side of the Labour Government. The police, judiciary, army, and militia will be on the side of the disorganizers, saboteurs, and fascists. The bureaucratic apparatus must be destroyed, replacing the reactionaries by members of the Labour Party. There will be no other way than this. But it is absolutely obvious that such thoroughgoing, although fully 'legal', State measures will extraordinarily sharpen the legal and illegal opposition of the united bourgeois reaction. In other words: this also is the way of civil war."

Question: Particularly because of the German and Austrian experiences, I have become convinced that the reformist road is no longer possible. My experience with the official Communist Party has shown me that it is only a disruptive force in the labor movement so there remains only the "Trotskyites" or the "Lovestonites" through whom I can enter the ranks of Communism. Why should I prefer one as against the other?

Answer: The "Lovestonites" stand for reform of the C. I. and base themselves upon the same false theoretical premise as the Stalinists, i.e., the theorem of "Socialism in one country", which is the fundamental root from which flows all of the Stalinist distortions and lunacies. Were you to join the "Lovestonites" you would only find yourself in the camp of those who are trying to crawl back into the swamp, whose true nature you recognize. There remains but one choice for you: the organization which stands for new Communist parties and a new International.

JAMES SH., NEW YORK (Continued)

Question: What was the attitude of the Communist League to the election platform of the official Communist Party in 1930 and 1932?

Answer: In general the League did not attempt to go into a criticism of the details of the C.P.'s election platform. We were concerned mainly that the workers give the C.P. their support since, primarily, every such vote meant a vote for revolution. The following excerpt from our election appeal essentially states our position for that time: "Our differences with the Party's policies, which isolates it from the masses and impedes the development of the revolutionary movement in this and other countries, cannot eliminate the fact that the Communist Party is the only working class party in the field, the only revolutionary party. ... The Left Opposition therefore ranges itself alongside its party and calls upon every worker to cast his vote for his party, the Communist party." (Militant, Oct. 29, 1934.) It must be remembered, of course, that we then considered ourselves a faction of the party. That, of course, was yesterday.

You will find whatever the League had to say, in print, on these elections in the October Militant for 1930 and 1932, which are on file at the 42nd Street Library.

Question: What were the chief differences between the Proletarian party and the Workers party in their early days?

Answer: The first difference arose out of the refusal of the Proletarian party to adapt itself to the illegal conditions forced upon a revolutionary party in those days. When the Workers party came out from underground with a program making a legal party possible, the Proletarian party refused to join it, claiming the program of the Workers party to be non-Marxist because it had been established on a minimum basis, and particularly because the P.P. considered the struggle for immediate demands to be incorrect.

LEADING PHILADELPHIA C. P. MEMBER
DECLARES FOR FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

October 17, 1934.
To the Philadelphia District Committee of Communist Party U.S.A.
To the Membership of the C.P., U.S.A.

Dear Comrades:

About two months ago, by request of the Philadelphia District of the Communist Party, I was asked to state my position on the Negro question in writing. This I did to the best of my ability, concluding that whatever my political differences with the Party might be, I was ready to carry through the Party line. In spite of my willingness to submit to Party discipline, I was arbitrarily removed as District Secretary of the I.L.D. and told that I could not hold any Party post until I agreed with the Party on the Negro question.

After many weeks of study, careful deliberation, I have arrived at certain definite conclusions, not only on the Negro question but on other vital problems concerning the working class.

The Negro Question

The key to the Negro problem in the United States, according to the Party, is the idea expressed by the slogan "Self-Determination of the Negroes" in the so-called Black Belt in the South.

One of the marked attributes of a national minority is that there is a general feeling among them that they are a nation. An intense, minute examination of the literature concerning Negro problems, etc. from the year 1816 to the present does not record any appreciable aspiration or sentiment for a Negro nation in the black belt. The culture of the slave (folk songs, etc.) are not of a national character, but have a distinct class content. The only nationalist sentiment in the United States is the Neo-Garveyite groups who center around the "back to Africa" and pan-Islam movement. In spite of our high-gear propaganda and superhuman salesmanship, the Party has failed to convert these nationalist utopians to renounce the visionary idea of Nationhood in Africa for Nationhood in the Black Belt. The imposed slogan of Self-Determination has failed to blossom, unless the Party is willing to claim credit for the isolationist-Segregationist "49" State project.

The Utopian Dream of Self-Determination Under Capitalism

I want to quote from the theses of the Second Congress of the Communist International (1920) on the National and Colonial Question. I think such a quotation will aid towards clarity:

"It follows from the fundamental principles laid down above that the policy of the Communist International on National and Colonial questions must be chiefly to bring about a union of the proletarian and working masses of all nations and countries for a joint revolutionary struggle leading to the overthrow of capitalism without which national inequality and oppression cannot be abolished."

Now then, can one support the theses that it is even probable for the peasantry of the Black Belt to establish Self-Determination (Nationhood) without a successful proletarian revolution? The Black Belt is an integral part of the American field of exploitation of the capitalist. It is just as fruitful and dear to them as New York or California. Plain common sense leads me to believe that the capitalists who control the Federal Government would mobilize the armed forces of reaction for the suppression of a National revolutionary insurrection in the Black Belt in the same manner as they would ruthlessly put down a working-class insurrection in Rhode Island. Under American capitalism a Negro nation in the Black Belt has as much chance of existing as a Soviet Rhode Island with the rest of the United States intact under the rule of American imperialism.

The Negroes are Not a Nation in the United States
In our Negro population, as it came from the western coast of Africa, there were Wolofs and Fulas, tall, well-built and very black, hailing from Senegambia and its vicinity; there were hundreds of thousands from the slave coast of Tshis, Ewes, and Yorubans, including Dahomians; and mingled with all these, Sudanese Negroes proper, were occasional contributions of mixed stock, from the north and northeast, having an infusion of Moorish blood. There were other thousands from Lower Guinea, belonging to Bantu stock, not so black in color as the Sudanese. These Negroes came to the American shores with a distinct language, a different religion, a separate culture, etc. The master class has been able to obliterate the Negro national character. A nation, we must remember, like other social phenomena, is subject to the law of change; it has its beginnings and also its end (Stalin).

The African, on arriving in this country, was not permitted to converse in his native language but was forced to adopt the language of his conquerors. His native culture was tabooed, he could no longer tread the same religious path but had to worship the God of his master's making. With the

exception of race, the twelve million Negroes in the United States have been fused into the American nation. Do we not have the same religion, language, culture, and dwell on common territory as other inhabitants of this nation? The Black Belt is no exception, and I will say that even here the Negroes do not have geographical solidarity. Take a glance at this data.

There are 189 counties in the United States that have 51 percent or more of the population Negro. These counties are located in eleven southern states, scattered from Virginia to Texas. The total Negro population in these 189 counties is 3,041,219. The total white population is 2,079,919. These counties with Negro majorities constitute only 17 percent of the counties in these eleven states. These states are divided into 1,069 counties.

Discussion Article
A Critique of the Stalinist Theory
Of Self-Determination

The following contribution to our discussion on the Negro question is written by a comrade, formerly very active in the League of Struggle for Negro Rights in Kansas City. This is the first article of a series by comrade Williamson. Other contributions, not exceeding 700 words are invited.—Ed.

The Stalinist theory of self-determination, or the theory that the official Communist Party believes will make the Negro Share Croppers lead a national agrarian revolution in the southern section of the United States, despite the national attention that it is receiving, is destined to failure or defeat. Like most of the ventures of Browder, it will not stand the acid test. The theory was probably first adopted by the corrupt misinformed central committee of the Communist Party for the purpose of strengthening Stalinism in the United States and accelerating revolutionary developments throughout the nation; but their false tactics and approach to the question has actually retarded the development and growth of Communism among both white and Negro workers.

Already the petty bourgeois Negroes have seized and capitalized upon the theory of self-determination for the black belt in many sections of the country. The Pacific Movement of the Eastern World, with headquarters in St. Louis, Mo., recently organized by Japanese agents in this country, seeking to win the support of the Negro people in case of war between the United States and Japan, and their petty bourgeois Negro lackeys, who are seeking freedom from the white capitalist, so as to have more liberty to rob the Negro worker, have taken the theory of the black belt from the Stalinists and converted it into the future black republic of North America.

Self-determination for the imaginary black belt extended to one of the many national minorities of the country, tends to convey the idea of further separation of the so-called races and is foreign to Marxism. It is not possible under capitalism and not necessary under socialism or communism.

However, when it comes to the colonial peoples we are faced with an entirely different economic and social problem. The colonial people represent a national majority, have a different language, in many respects a different culture, different customs and traditions from the people in the imperialist country, and, as such, should be given the right of self-determination. Cuba, Hawaii and Haiti are such countries.

The American Negro, on the other hand, is so closely interwoven into American custom and tradition that we cannot do him and the cause of world socialism or communism justice by struggling for a Jim Crow black republic in America which will breed more antagonism among blacks and whites.

Our fight, the fight of the Communist League of America, shall

Race Equality in the United States, Self-Determination for West Indies, Haiti and Africa

Communists must march forward with the battle-cry of race equality. Not a moment can be lost. The fascists have proclaimed in both hemispheres a war of extermination against the Jews and non Aryans. In the United States fascist organizations are awakening. In Germany it is the Jew who is faced with extermination at the hands of the ruthless bloodhounds. In the United States, under the slogan of "Race Inferiority", "White Man's Burden", etc. the fascists and the forces of reaction have set the trap for the brutal elimination of an "inferior" race (Negroes). Only a broad, educational, agitational and revolutionary struggle for the realization of race equality can save the Negro

people from annihilation from the strong-arm attacks of the fascist hordes.

For War Against Our Own Imperialists

It was Lenin who emphasized the idea of workers of advanced countries waging a sharp struggle against their own imperialists for the freedom of the colonies. Our Party must certainly correct itself on this point. The Party did not raise high the slogan of self-determination for Liberia and the West Indies, and for Negro national minorities in South and Central America. England even today is busily occupied attempting to utilize the League of Robbers (League of Nations) for the seizure of Liberia. Italy has boldly shouted to the world that it will make the Negro kingdom of Abyssinia an Italian colony. These are problems that demand an immediate program of action. The Central Committee and our leading organs must understand that regardless of language, ideology, customs, or what land the Negro resides in, he is an oppressed race. This fact alone makes it imperative that events in Liberia or Abyssinia are of prime importance to the Negroes of America.

The Trade Union Policy and its Relation to the Negro Problem

The trade union field is conspicuous by the absence of a clear-cut policy on Negro work. Our trade union, T.U.U.L., has failed to exert influence among the Negro working people. This weakness can be attributed to the traditional chauvinistic attitude of the American trade union movement. The desertion of the A. F. of L. by our Party and the attempt to build a dual trade union, did not in the least eradicate the distrust of the Negro workers for the trade unions in general. The Negro workers could not feel the so-called principle difference of the two trade union centers. Therefore, it was natural for Negroes to accept the A. F. of L. because of its strength and universal recognition.

The Communists have this historic task: to wage an uncompromising fight for race equality, and job equality in the trade unions. The Negroes will judge the Communists on the ability of the left-wing to break down racial barriers in trades, industries, professions where Negroes are barred because of color. Unless the Communists and left-wing in the A. F. of L. speed up the fight for race equality, unionism will march in giant strides to defeat.

COMRADES! Back into the A. F. of L.: Build the left-wing! Raise to the sky the banner of race equality. By action convince the Negro worker that they are welcome in the unions as equal co-partners in the common struggle for a decent standard of living.

Democratic Centralism versus Bureaucratic Centrism

What is the cause of the mistakes outlined above? Since the departure of the Comintern from revolutionary internationalism, and the adoption of the anti-Leninist theory of "Socialism in One Country", the bureaucracy, in order to maintain power must do away with democratic centralism, and push into the background genuine workers' democracy in the Party.

This makes it impossible to penetrate with new ideas; takes away all opportunities to discuss freely within the Party the various differences which occur, and therefore handicaps the practical application of Communist work. The rule of the bureaucrats chokes the initiative of the rank and file, and undermines the very basis of a revolutionary party.

The taking away from the membership of the right to participate actively in the formulation of policies, strategy, and tactics, and of electing its committees freely, is a definite break from the teachings of Lenin. The leadership allows only the viewpoint to be discussed, and he who has an opinion which differs from the official position is immediately branded, and measures are taken against him.

Is it possible to rectify these mistakes from within? I am definitely of the opinion that it is not. Experience has shown that the bureaucrats will not permit criticism. Any healthy criticism directed against their policies is met with slanders, lies, and expulsions.

It is extremely difficult for a worker-Communist who has devoted five years to active participation in the building of our Party, to break with all those with whom he has shared common experience and struggle. No attempt to discredit by slander can disprove the fact of my work as indicated by my record (Section Organizer C. P.; District Agit-Prop. Director; District Organizer, I.S.N.R.; District Secretary I.L.D.).

However, it gives me consolation that all honest revolutionists will follow me and will be comrades-in-arms in the building of a NEW REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS PARTY and a New (Fourth) International.

LONG LIVE THE EMANCIPATION OF THE NEGRO RACE!
LONG LIVE THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION!
With Communist Greetings,
(Signed) JAMES W. WATSON

WORLD OF LABOR

NON-AGGRESSION WITH A VENGEANCE

The term non-aggression has been used to define the united front pact between the Communist and Socialist party of France. A document signed by leading representatives of the centrist parties in question convinces us that if anything, this description is an understatement. L'Humanite for Sept. 15 carries the decisions of a "coordination committee, instructed with the application of the united front pact." This committee met on Sept 11 at the Cooperative House, Paris. In attendance were Cebelin, Thorez, and Leon Blum, Paul Faure, Parinet, Lagorgette, Descombreux for the S. P.

After smugly rubbing their hands over the "results" of the united front, they arrive at the main point under consideration and for which, undoubtedly the meeting was held. We quote from point 11 of the document:

"The representatives of the two parties are in agreement that for the loyal execution of the pact, attacks directed against either one of the two parties, even in the course of meetings organized separately by either one, should be suppressed."

The readers of the Daily Worker will probably remember that much mud was slung at us by one, Harry Gannes for the decision of our youth section to join the Young Socialists of France. With a stupid wise-crack he dismissed the fact that the Young Bolshevik-Leninists had renounced none of their program and would continue the fight for Marxism and a new Youth International within the effervescent ranks of the French Yipsels. We had expected nothing better from a Stalinist scribbler who is paid for concocting the best slander against the Bolsheviks. Facts still speak louder than calumny, and long quotations from Le Combat des Jeunes were reprinted in the Militant so that there be no doubt as to the veracity of our statements. We rest our case with the firm conviction that every honest revolutionary worker can judge it on its merits and will come to a position of agreement with us.

Now, let those that holler so loud about capitulation to the social-democracy and counter-revolution explain to us how they are fighting the Blums and the others when they agree not to attack them even at their own meetings. Our fight against the social democracy, its principles and leaders, is to the bitter end, regardless of whether this is done from within or without. The Stalinists, not for the first time—remember the Anglo-Russian Committee—are in a love-feast with those they only yesterday branded as social-fascists, no criticism anywhere or anyplace.

We venture to say that, besides slander, there will be no answer. With lights out and shades down the Stalinists enter a united front with the social democrats on the one condition that the crimes of both bureaucracies are smothered with silence. Thus the great desire of the masses for united action against Fascism is dampened by the bureaucrats of both parties whose agreement more and more resembles a thieves' pact.

STRIKE WAVE IN SOUTH AMERICA

The last few weeks have witnessed a decided increase in the number, importance and intensity of labor struggles in practically every South American country. The month of September was marked by a series of large local strikes throughout Brazil, culminating in the general strike at Para. The very promising railroad strike in Colombia was run into the ground due to inefficient leadership and organizational looseness. Also in Colombia at the present time an organizational campaign is under way in preparation for a general strike of coffee workers throughout the country. Coffee is the principal export of Colombia.

Ecuador now comes to the fore with a general strike in the textile industry which commenced on September 29th and which is now 100 per cent solid. The textile strike has the unlimited backing of the whole organized labor movement of the republic and a general strike on a national scale is quite possible.

BOLIVIAN COMMUNISTS THREATENED WITH DEATH PENALTY

On May 1, 1933, the Bolivian government made the great "discovery" of a "communist plot destined to destroy the internal peace" (so necessary for the carrying on of the Chaco war) "subsidized by Paraguayan gold." In this manner "legal" means for repression against our Bolivian comrades in La Paz were found! The few remaining comrades at that time still in the city on the point of organizing an anti-war protest demonstration for International Labor Day were placed under arrest.

From the very outset, the charges levelled against our comrades were evidently based on framed up evidence. It was claimed that they were attempting to buy off the General Staff of the Bolivian Army, conspiring in a small group, out of contact with the masses and "preparing bombs and hand grenades, some of which were found in their possession." Any one with the least understanding of the tactics and method of struggle used by communists can readily see how ridiculous these charges were.

Meanwhile, making it impossible for them to secure counsel, Duran Boger, Zabaleta, Uleroga, Rodriguez, Rojas, Gallardo, Maraz, Moya Quirga, Abaon, Ozuna, Miranda, Cora and others were interned in the "inquisitorial section" of the public jail, in the section known as the "guano" where prisoners are even denied the ordinary essential services of prison hygiene. All communication with the outside was forbidden as was any intervention of outside persons into the case. Their only recourse was the hunger strike, under the most disastrous circumstances and without any outside support. Comrade Abaon died and the others became completely emaciated and broken in health. It was then that the prisoners were granted defense counsel and provided with beds and water.

Salamanca wants to "legitimize" the policies of his regime through the blood of the Bolivian Communists. Fascism is organized in the shadow of the red scare and the ground is prepared for future massacres of the militant workers. The reality is that the weakness of our comrades at the present time serves the purposes of the bourgeoisie admirably.

The State Attorney is now demanding the death penalty against our imprisoned comrades, for the crime of organizing the anti-war struggle of the tolling masses against the Chaco slaughter.

The Bolivian comrades, beaten to the ground and crushed beneath the militarist boot, gagged under the Military Code, have no other possibility of defense than the international action of the militant workers of other countries. Only demonstrations and mass actions of the workers on an international scale can save them.

The Chilean Communist Left has called on all working class organizations to back up the international campaign for the defense and support of the workers of Bolivia and Paraguay against the imperialist war in the Chaco.

FALL TERM OF INTERNATIONAL WORKERS SCHOOL
TO OPEN OCTOBER 15th

The International Workers School will open at its new headquarters, 144 Second Avenue, on October 1st, with the following courses:

1. ABC of Marxism Carl Cowl, Instructor
Every Friday at 8:00 P.M.
2. History and Principles of the International Communists Max Shachtman
Every Wednesday at 8:00 P.M.
3. State and Revolution Jack Weber
Every Monday at 8:00 P.M.
4. American History Felix Morrow
Every Wednesday at 8:00 P.M.
5. Elementary Marxist Economics Alfred Weaver
Every Friday at 8:00 P.M.

You are urged to register now for whatever courses you are interested in. Registrations are accepted daily at the office of the school. Each course is \$1.50 for the complete term. Further information may be obtained by telephoning Gramercy 5-9624.